



# QUARTERLY News

The magazine of the Association of Former WHO Staff Members (AFSM)

*Supporting former staff and helping them to stay in touch and informed*



### **You probably won't find this fruit in your local supermarket**

It is the fruit of the tree known as Poolbox in English, Soncoya in Spanish, Pomme-canelle rouge in French, *Annona purpurea* in Latin. For thousands of years the ancient Mayan civilizations of Central America cultivated this one (they called it Chak-oo) and many other fruit trees. The fruit is good to eat, and the juice can be used to treat colds and fever. But, you ask, what is it doing gracing the front cover of the magazine? Well, an AFSM member in Mexico has been rescuing these ancient Mayan fruit trees. Turn to page 19 to read more.



**The WHO Headquarters main building is now being renovated, and is shown here with two giant external elevators installed to carry specialists to the different floors**

Completely empty, the first task is the painstaking and hazardous process of removing all traces of asbestos used in the building's construction – quite common at that time – today, its use is strictly prohibited. Windows are sealed shut and all members of the specialist work-force follow rigorous procedures, for everyone's safety.



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## EDITORIAL

With numerous WHO 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations to report – in words and photos – to give you an appreciation of the very varied range of events and the DG's involvement, as well as regular topics, this issue of QNT is exceptionally long. We hope you will enjoy it.

The front cover presents the new AFSM logo which was approved recently. Sadly, it was deemed that our old logo did not meet the criteria stipulated in the latest WHO guidelines on the use of the WHO emblem and programme-specific logos. So, a lengthy process of submission and negotiation of several proposed designs for the new logo was undertaken. We now introduce the logo which was accepted by both the Executive Committee and the WHO department responsible for communications.

We recently sent out a request to our readers asking them to agree to forego the printed edition of *Quarterly News* in favour of reading the magazine on-line. Quite a few of you did agree to this change and we have been able to reduce the print run significantly. However, the signals coming from WHO suggest that we will need to do better in future! So please reconsider your preference and let us know.

*Keith Wynn*

## EDITORIAL BOARD

Keith Wynn, *Editor-in-Chief and layout*,  
Yves Beigbeder, Sue Block Tyrrell,  
David Cohen, Maria Dweggah,  
Lindsay Martinez, Jean-Paul Menu,  
Dev Ray, Rosemary Villars.

The translation of all articles is undertaken by the Editorial Board and Catherine d'Arcangues, Michèle Evans, Edmond Mobio and Anne Yamada.

The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board.

Please send your contributions for publication in QNT to: Keith Wynn  
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**Health Insurance (SHI):** Tel.: +41 (0) 22 791 18 18; in case of absence please leave a message, someone will call you back, or send an e-mail to: [shihq@who.int](mailto:shihq@who.int). The HQ SHI Helpdesk is in office L 3. Presently, there is no access for retirees.

**Pensions (UNJSPF):** Contact by e-mail no longer possible, to send an **electronic message** use the contact form on the Fund's website, <https://www.unjspf.org/contact-us/>. **Visitors: Geneva:** Palais des Nations, Client Support Centre, Building H, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, from 10:00 to 13:00. **New York:** 4<sup>th</sup> floor, 1 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza (DHP), Corner of 48<sup>th</sup> Street and 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, New York, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, from 12:00 to 16:00. **Documents for NY by post, address to:** United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, c/o United Nations, P.O. Box 5036, New York, NY 10163-5036, USA. **Documents for NY by courier (DHL, etc.) or registered mail, address to:** United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, 37<sup>th</sup> floor, 1 DHP, 885 Second Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA. **Documents for Geneva, address to:** UNJSPF, c/o Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. **Telephone: Geneva:** +41 (0) 22 928 88 00 or **New York:** +1 212 963 6931. **See also the list of Toll-Free and local numbers** at <https://www.unjspf.org/contact-us/>. In the case of **non-receipt of the monthly benefit** or **the death of a beneficiary**, visit the website: <https://www.unjspf.org/emergency/> for instructions.

*Remember to always have your Unique ID number handy when contacting UNJSPF.*



## WHO CELEBRATES ITS 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

### Let the celebrations begin...

As members are aware, the AFSM has been invited to take part in events to celebrate this anniversary which will run until April 2024: firstly, members were invited to submit poems and then to submit stories/anecdotes/self-explanatory photos for posting on the WHO75 campaign website.

Unfortunately, to-date, few responses have been received and we take this opportunity to encourage you to share your experiences through stories/anecdotes/photos/poems during the course of this anniversary year.

***The few days leading up to WHO's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday on 7 April were busy ones.***

#### **5 April**

On 5 April, a party was organized for the staff at HQ and local AFSM members were invited – see the article on page 6 by Maria Dweggah who represented our Executive Committee.

#### **6 April**

In the morning of 6 April, the DG, together with the Mayor of Geneva Marie Barbey-Chappuis, inaugurated an open-air photo exhibition of WHO's work during the past 75 years: ***"Picturing Health"***. More than 50 photos were on display on the Quai Wilson, from 3 April to 1 May.



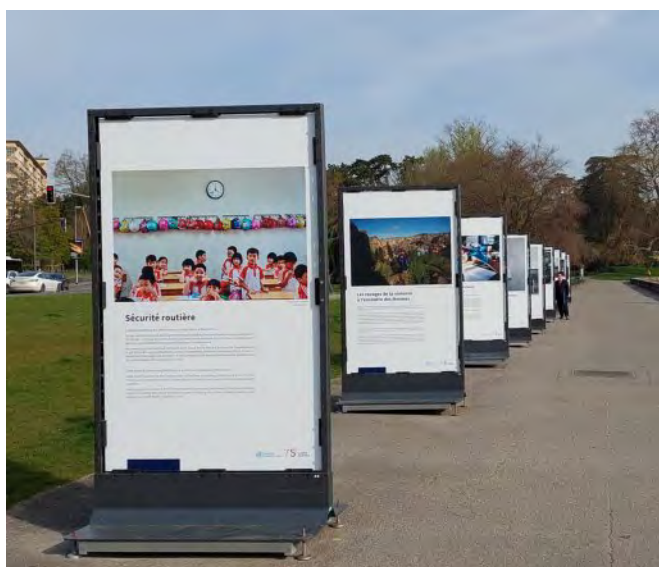
The DG, together with the Mayor of Geneva Marie Barbey-Chappuis, and a traditionally dressed Geneva Huissier. Photo: © WHO



The exhibition is formally opened. Dr Tedros and the Mayor of Geneva Marie Barbey-Chappuis wielding scissors. Photo: © WHO



Admiring the pictures depicting 75 years of WHO activities. Photo: © WHO



Just some of the many display panels. Photo: Sue Block Tyrrell

The images taken from WHO's archive collection included some by renowned photographers such as Robert Doisneau, Paul Almasy, Jean Mohr and Monique Jacot. Local AFSM members were informed about the exhibition and we hope that many were able to go and admire the photos. Two members of your Executive Committee were present at the inauguration and were amazed to find out that physical activity was already being promoted by WHO as early as 1958!



Dr Tedros welcoming Sue Block Tyrrell and Robert Bos, committee members representing AFSM, to the open-air exhibition.

Photo: © WHO



Some more of the displays. Photo: Sue Block Tyrrell

## 7 April

The DG spent 7 April, WHO's actual birthday (which fell on Good Friday, a public holiday in Switzerland), in a very special way. He had been informed about the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of AFSM member Gwendoline Carnelley – see the article on page 7 – and had decided to pay her a visit. The AFSM was invited to be represented and join the DG, members of the Communications team and a representative of the Staff Association to visit Gwen as she is known to her friends. Gwen was presented with a bouquet of flowers and a Certificate of Appreciation for her services to WHO. On receiving it, she informed us all that she had thoroughly enjoyed working at WHO. The WHO team took two wonderful cakes – one for Gwen's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and the other for WHO's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. Understandably, Gwen was quite overcome by the visit and all the attention she received. It was a wonderful way to spend WHO's 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. The DG also took time to talk to all the residents in the home where Gwen lives, and the local press recorded the event.



Gwendoline (Gwen) Carnelley and the DG blowing out the candles on Gwen's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary cake, and the WHO 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary cake comes next. Photo: © WHO

## 8 April

On 8 April, a free concert was held at the Victoria Hall in Geneva. Local AFSM members were advised where to secure tickets and when they were all gone, the Executive Committee was informed that a few had been kept aside and were available to our members. See the article on page 8 by Barbara Fontaine, and the letter from Dev Ray on page 37.



## WHO. Already 75, where does the time go?

I had also celebrated my 75<sup>th</sup> two weeks earlier, so it was a question I was also asking myself as I walked into the WHO building. The party was held in the cafeteria of the new building on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April, a day before World Health Day. As I was in Geneva and available, I went along, the area was packed with people, 95% of whom I did not recognize. A few other retirees were there, and I was asked if I was willing to participate in the cake cutting ceremony, so I said sure. Following speeches and a much-appreciated choral performance by health care professionals, the event moved to the cake cutting. As you will see in the photos, there were four of us – a retiree representing the “senior” retirees, a young woman who was part of the Young Professionals programme, the DG, and myself representing the “only slightly younger” retiree demographic.



Our AFSM member Jaiprakash (Jay) Bansal cutting the first cake with a member of the WHO “Young Professionals programme”.

Photo: © WHO



Dr Tedros and committee member Maria Dweggah getting to grips with the second cake. Photo: © WHO

Below: Georgette Cohen, AFSM member, with the DG.  
Photo: Pascale Touyere

Following the cake cutting, I sat on the side just musing, reminiscing, thinking, observing and I was taken back to 1998, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary when the AFSM and the WHO Staff Association collaborated in the planning of the all-day event. It started off with a race for children in the early morning, an international food fair, the “memory lane” structure that provided visitors with written material and memorabilia of the past fifty years, and the opportunity to discuss the history of WHO with the “old-timers.” There were live bands, clowns and musicians, and everyone pitched in, all categories, all levels. The evening event was very well attended. I remember that one entertainment was, how can I say it politely, an exotic dancer. The person in charge of this aspect of the party misread the business card! Some were a bit shocked, others enjoyed it, and the show went on...

**Maria Dweggah**



## AFSM celebrates its third centenarian

21 March 2023 was the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of AFSM member – Gwendoline Carnelley – known to her friends as Gwen.

Gwen is the third AFSM centenarian that we know of. The first was Ronnie Peters – 30 March 1915 to 4 March 2016 – and our second centenarian is Dr Thomas Barns, now 104 years old, who continues to live in Bangkok.

Of British nationality, born in the North of England, Gwen began her career in WHO in 1949; first at headquarters in the Office of Conference and General Services and then in the Office of the Director-General. Wanderlust then started and Gwen worked for 2 years from 1956 on a WHO/UNDP project in Sri Lanka before returning to HQ to work for Dr Prince Mohan Kaul, an Assistant Director-General. Two years later, she was on the move again to spend three years on an Inter-Regional Project in Iran, and then a year on an Inter-Regional Project in Ghana.

Gwen returned to HQ in 1972 and spent three years in the Division of Environmental Sanitation before returning to Iran in 1975. In 1976, she moved to the Regional Office in Manila, with two years in the Health Services section and two years in the office of the Regional Director. Gwen decided to take early retirement, as from 1 July 1980. An impressive career!

Gwen celebrated her centenary in her retirement home in the Canton of Vaud, Switzerland. Local officials from the Canton and from the Commune were there to pay their respects, together with several friends and carers. Two members of your Executive Committee – Anne Yamada and Sue Block Tyrrell – drove to find the home and to see Gwen. Anne had worked with her in Manila and Sue's office colleague Pat Brown had been a friend of Gwen's, so Sue recognized her and was able to make a connection.

Gwen was quite overwhelmed with the *apéritif* event. She received many gifts, including wine and jewellery, and some beautiful flowers, notably a big bouquet from the AFSM together with a card, and a special card from King Charles and Queen Camilla. The DG had written her a letter of congratulations which we read out to her. We were sad to leave her but will return to visit her again, and Sue was lucky to join the DG's group on its visit to her on 7 April.

Many happy and healthy returns Gwen.

### *Anne Yamada and Sue Block Tyrrell*



Gwen on her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, with some of the staff and friends from her retirement home, and with two visitors from AFSM, Anne Yamada and Sue Block Tyrrell. The congratulatory card from King Charles and Queen Camilla, and the AFSM bouquet, are on the table.

Photos: Sue Block Tyrrell



## The Healing Arts Concert, Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> April

As part of WHO's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, the Healing Arts Concert, bringing together performing artists from around the world, was held on 8 April at the elegant Victoria Hall in Geneva, Switzerland. By entitling the concert thus WHO was also celebrating the therapeutic value of the arts, both for the performer/creator as well as the spectator/viewer appreciating the piece of work, very much in line with its mandate of promoting health.

The evening got off to a dignified start with illustrious speeches, first by the Geneva Mayor, Marie Barbey-Chappuis, followed by the former and first female President of the Swiss Confederation, Ruth Dreyfuss, whose laudatory address praising WHO's accomplishments over the years set the tone for the enjoyable evening to come.

The Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, then welcomed all to the WHO birthday celebration and thanked Geneva for hosting the WHO these last 75 years.

The concert opened to a packed house with the



elegant and masterful interpretation of Bach's *La Chaconne* (Partita No. 2, Part 1) by Charlie Siem, a young English classical violinist who regularly performs on the international stage.

Following on was the Scottish Ballet dancing the world premier of *Stages*, a corporal tribute to intergenerational rapport, the dancers themselves ranging in age from 17 to 61. The fluid harmonious movements in sync to musical waves were pleasing to both eye and ear.

Next was a medley of instrumental and vocal pieces filling the concert hall with musical enjoyment. First was Debussy's *Clair de Lune* performed by a local pianist, Anatasia Voltchok and sung by the rising star South African soprano Pretty Yende. After that, two local pianists, Ms Voltchok and Ms Mot interpreted *en duet* Gershwin's *An American in Paris*.

We then discovered the Global Scrub Choir, a group of over a thousand health workers brought together during the pandemic by the Australian Royal Melbourne Hospital Scrub Choir with the aim of promoting, safeguarding and investing in the health and care workforce. Performing Paul Simon's *Bridge Over Troubled Water* in true modern fashion of mixed virtual and physical presence, a small group was on stage while others zoomed in their voices from various parts of the world, including Brazil, Japan, Norway, South Sudan, Switzerland, UK, and Zambia.

In addition to the performing arts of music, singing and dance, we were treated to an emotional theatrical monologue excerpt from *The Vanishing Point*, a recounting of Christopher Bailey's journey into blindness and what he discovered along the way. Chris is the Lead for the WHO Arts and Health programme with its focus on the healing power of the arts. This is the WHO team that brought together the Healing Arts Concert.

The *Orchestre des Nations* then took the stage to entertain us with its interpretation of Fauré's



elegant *Pavane* with its mesmerizing and soothing flute theme, followed by its accompaniment to Ms Yende singing *Dovrak's Song to the Moon*, and René Fleming, the world-famous American soprano and arts and health advocate, singing Fauré's *Mandoline* and Reynaldo Hahn's *L'heure exquise*. The *Orchestre* then interpreted Debussy's *En bateau* et *Le Cortège* before accompanying once again the singers. The last piece on the official programme was *Sull'aria* from Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*, a delightful soprano duettino performed by Ms Fleming as the Contessa and Ms Yende as Susanna.

Much to the audience's delight, *Sull'aria* was not the last performance. The unannounced encore, and



Dr Tedros in the foyer with AFSM member Pascal Diethelm. Photo: © WHO

high note of this extraordinary birthday celebration, was Renée Fleming's exquisite performance of Puccini's famous opera aria *O Mio Babbino Caro*.



Her interpretation, according to musicologists, is the "best of the best", outshining that of other sopranos, including Maria Callas and Montserrat Caballé. True to form, Ms Fleming enthralled the audience with her phenomenal mastery of vocal nuance and sublime emotion, bringing a dynamic closure to a truly exceptional Healing Arts concert.

Happy Birthday WHO! Brava brava!!!!

**Barbara Fontaine**



The Victoria Hall was built in 1891–1894 by the architect John Camoletti and financed by the British consul, Daniel Fitzgerald Packenham Barton, who dedicated it to Queen Victoria and gifted it to the City of Geneva in 1904.



## Happy 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday WHO



*Seventy-five years young and very much alive,  
Our Organization is even stronger, continuing to strive  
Towards Health for All, coping with many a threat,  
Covid-19 being the most dangerous yet.*

*WHO is now even more of a household name,  
This pandemic has brought it so much more fame,  
With so many challenges to overcome worldwide,  
Encouraging nations towards mutual support side by side.*

*WHO's mandate set in '46, in the month of July  
Is still valid today, after 7 decades have flown by –  
Striving for the highest attainable standard of health  
For all the world's peoples whatever their level of wealth.*

*Much has been done but much lies ahead: we know well that diseases emerge*

*To threaten our security and populations to purge.  
Past achievements are many and need more recognition,  
With lessons learned kept in mind to strengthen our mission.*

*Many communicable diseases are now under control  
Thanks to WHO's global coordination role.*

*In response to statistics showing key shifts worldwide,  
WHO focuses more on the noncommunicable disease side,  
But, as we well know, viruses still love to challenge our knowledge and skill*

*In responding to outbreaks before large numbers they kill.  
WHO has relied on its key International Health Regulations  
Setting guidelines on reporting outbreaks across nations,  
But now, a legally binding pandemic accord is of great need  
To protect from future emergencies, it will be a crucial deed.*

*Success examples are many, it is true  
But let's focus here on a selected few.*

*Programmes on immunization and polio have gained much renown*

*But smallpox eradication remains the jewel in WHO's crown.*

*Special Programmes have stimulated research worldwide  
On human reproduction and to stem the tropical disease tide.*

*WHO's programme on AIDS moved on to UNAIDS and  
Other work incubated new initiatives now well-known and grand,*





*Such as GAVI, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Malaria and TB,  
With efforts on Health for All laying groundwork for UHC <sup>1</sup>.  
Many guidelines are well used and the Essential Medicines List  
Helps each Member State's decision-making and each scientist.  
MDGs <sup>2</sup>, then SDGs <sup>3</sup> set targets for agencies and nations  
To improve the well-being of all the world's populations.  
The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control treaty  
Was adopted by the World Health Assembly unanimously.*



*Eight Directors-General for the 75 years spanned  
Chisholm, Candau, Mahler, Nakajima, Brundtland,  
Followed by Lee, Chan and now Tedros Ghebreyesus,  
Helped by six Regional Directors and DGs Emeritus.  
General Programmes of Work have reached number thirteen,*

*Which sets a vision for the "triple billion goals" scene,  
"1 billion more people benefitting from UHC,  
1 billion more people better protected from a health emergency,  
1 billion more people enjoying better health and well-being respectively",  
Ambitious goals for the world's leading public health agency.*

*Now, five priorities are crystallized at this time,  
Promoting, Providing, Protecting, Powering, Performing for health – a 5 "P" rhyme.*

*So, WHO's important work remains vital for many years to come  
And it needs much more resources, both for staff and income,  
Especially for strengthening Country Offices, at the forefront  
Of WHO's work at country level, they bear the brunt.*

*Successes are due to hard work of staff, current and past,  
May their experiences be built upon, their legacies last  
Into the future, for tomorrow, for the next 75 years plus  
To achieve Health for All, indeed for all of us.*

*Thanks WHO for 7+ decades of work in which you can take pride,  
With numerous lives saved in many countries worldwide.*

*Well done dear WHO, many congratulations to you,  
Bonne continuation, many happy and healthy returns too,  
WHO75, Health for All and Proud to be WHO.*



**Sue Block Tyrrell**

<sup>1</sup> Universal Health Coverage    <sup>2</sup> Millennium Development Goals    <sup>3</sup> Sustainable Development Goals

## News from your Association

Your committee has been quite active during the last three months, as you will notice from a number of specific articles: involvement in the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WHO, webinar on pensions, 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Global AFSM Council among others.

We were happy to have confirmation from the Administration that access to WHO buildings in Headquarters is now unrestricted for retirees. The only provision is to show evidence of Covid-19 vaccination before being given the badge.

Unfortunately, we were informed that the opening of the SHI Help Desk, originally planned for 25 April, has been postponed until further notice. Our permanences are still on hold but we plan to resume them soon when our office is adequately equipped. We will inform you.

You will notice that we have changed the logo of our association. The previous one did not meet the new requirements set by WHO. We hope you like it.

### ***The AFSM Executive Committee and the Editorial Board of the Quarterly News***

On a beautiful sunny day of Spring, we visited Alain Vessereau in the nursing home in the Geneva countryside where he and his wife currently reside. We arrived early so had time to admire the beautiful gardens which surround the building which dates to 1875, though completely renovated in 1986. They



are fortunate to have family living nearby who visit frequently and are well looked after by the caring personnel of the residence.

Though now in his 90's, Alain has retained his sharp mind and unique sense of humour. Like many other of our members, Alain remains interested in what is going on in WHO and asked questions which demonstrated he was up to date. We informed Alain of the photo exhibition on Quai Wilson to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WHO. He showed such interest that his son Didier travelled to Geneva to take pictures of all 60 photos to share with Alain. The exhibition terminated on 1 May so he was just in time.

For those readers who may not be aware, Alain was a founding member of AFSM and was Chairman and subsequently member of the Executive Committee for many years. He was also keenly interested in both our health insurance (SHI) and the UNJSPF while in WHO. Alain was President of the SHI Surveillance Committee and was instrumental in obtaining the DG's approval to hold the first joint meeting of SHI committees with strong regional participation. This was the beginning of a close working relationship with the Regions on all matters related to SHI which prevails up to today.

We enjoyed our afternoon together and promised to return later in the year.

***Sue Block-Tyrrell and Ann Van Hulle***



## AFSM–UNJSPF webinar on pensions for those in retirement, 13 March

Following the offer made by staff of the UN Joint Staff Pension Fund at the last AFSM General Assembly in October 2021 to give a seminar on key points of interest to retirees, we had been in contact with the Fund about the content and organization of such a seminar, later decided to become a webinar to enable the maximum number of AFSM members around the world to participate.

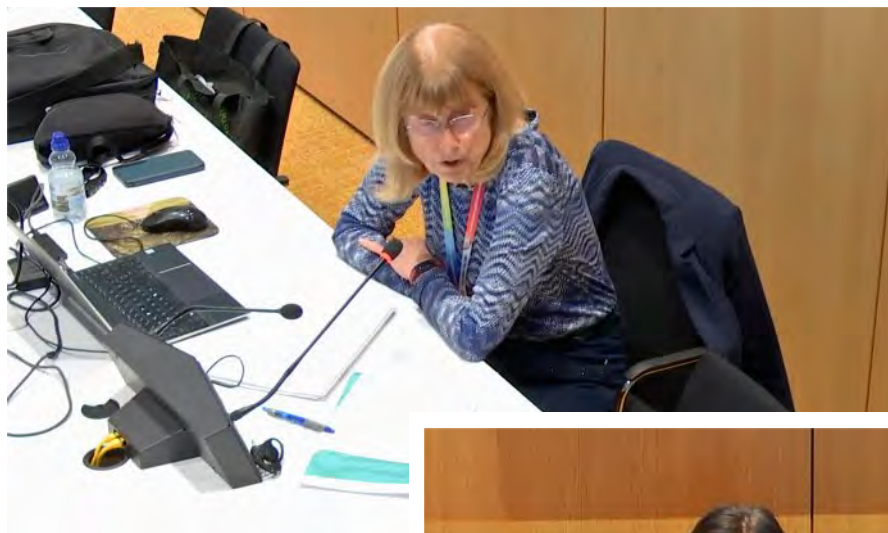
Our Executive Committee members and all AFSM members, including members of AFSMs in the Regions, were consulted about the agenda and their suggestions formed the points for discussion. All AFSM members across the globe, including members of the Regional AFSMs, were invited to take part, listen to the presentations and ask their questions in the Q&A function of Zoom.

Two members of the Client Services team at the Pension Office in Geneva gave the presentations, and two other members of their team handled the

Q&A. French interpretation was provided for the presentations and the questions were accepted in English, French or Spanish. Participants received answers in the language of their question.

The webinar was well attended: 280 participants had registered and about 180 came online, with almost 170 remaining until the end. About 80 questions were asked and answered. Several members asked for more such webinars on pension matters and we will keep this in mind for when there is new information from the Fund to be shared.

We were very grateful to our colleagues in the Geneva Office of the Pension Fund for all their help in the organization of the webinar. It was recorded and the link was shared with all AFSM members. In case you missed it, the recording can be found at [bit.ly/42a9Lzh](https://bit.ly/42a9Lzh).



*Left:* Sue Block Tyrrell opened the webinar, and introduced the key speakers.

*Below:* Ms Denise Gustin-Gardella and Mr Philippe Gay from the Geneva Office of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) made the presentations.

Two other members of UNJSPF, Ms Mercedes Burguete and Mr Frederic Guy responded to questions from the participants at the end of the webinar.



## NEWS FROM WHO

### Highlights of news from WHO

#### Governing Body meetings

**76<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly, 21–30 May 2023** – all the discussions are available on the WHO website for three months from the closure of the session, <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches>.

With the theme “***Saving lives, driving health for all***”, the Assembly was held under the presidency of the Honourable Dr Christopher Fearne, Deputy Prime Minister of Malta. It was indeed a special Assembly, not only in celebration of WHO’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary but, thanks to the DG’s generosity, the AFSMs – ours in HQ and those in the Regional Offices – were invited to attend. It was a privilege to have our own nameplate in the big meeting rooms and to be able to sit with our colleagues from the Regional AFSMs. The October QNT will contain articles on our quality time together, appreciating the first opportunity to meet in person.



An historic photo. For the first time ever, AFSM – at the DG’s invitation – had a seat as observer at the 2023 World Health Assembly, complete with the Association name card. On the video screen is AFSM member Gwen Carnelley, invited to address the WHA by Dr Tedros during his closing remarks.

*Photo: AFSM Sue Block Tyrrell*

As in the past few years, the Assembly was preceded by the Walk the Talk event which grows annually in numbers – this year 7000 people participated, including some AFSM members – see page 40.

The high-level welcome took place in the afternoon in the presence of many special guests – Presidents, Prime Ministers, the President of FIFA, the new WHO Goodwill Ambassadors for Arts and Health and the Global Scrub Choir. The statement by Dr Tedros was special, referring to WHO’s key activities over the past 75 years and linking them to the Directors-General involved, including Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland who was present in the room. We encourage members to find time to read the speech at <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-high-level-welcome-at-the-seventy-sixth-world-health-assembly---21-may-2023>

In appreciation of their exceptional endeavours and lifelong commitment to health, Dr Tedros presented the DG’s Global Health Leaders Awards to Professor Jean-Jacques Muyembe of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and to Professor Peter Piot of Belgium.

As usual, the Assembly had a heavy agenda which included daily Strategic Roundtables to discuss key global health priorities. The DG’s report to Member States can be found at <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-report-to-member-states-at-the-76th-world-health-assembly---22-may-2023>. The Secretariat’s report for 2022 can be found here <https://www.who.int/about/accountability/results/who-results-report-2022-mtr>. WHO is marking its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary by calling for a renewed drive for health equity. During the Assembly, the DG and FIFA President Gianni Infantino signed a four-year extension of their Memorandum of Understanding in



place since 4 October 2019, reiterating their commitment to continue to promote health through football. <https://www.fifa.com/about-fifa/president/media-releases/who-and-fifa-team-up-for-health>.

Details of the various awards can be found at <https://www.who.int/news/item/26-05-2023-awards-for-outstanding-contributions-to-public-health-presented-during-the-seventy-sixth-world-health-assembly>

The Programme Budget for 2024–25 was approved, with Member States committing to a 20% increase in assessed contributions and, in discussing efforts to sustainably finance the Organization, including through a replenishment mechanism, the Assembly requested that a plan for a First Investment Round in 2024 be presented to the Executive Board in January 2024.

Resolutions and decisions were passed on the following issues:

- A roadmap towards a Global Health and Peace Initiative  
<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/roadmap-for-the-global-health-for-peace-initiative--draft>
- Behavioural sciences for better health
- Strengthening diagnostics capacity
- Policy options and cost-effective interventions for the prevention and control of noncommunicable diseases
- Integrated emergency, critical and operative care for universal health coverage and protection from health emergencies: delegates noted that the emergencies programme is underfunded and overstretched: WHO is currently responding to over 55 emergencies that have received official grading, 14 of which require support from all three levels of the Organization
- Accelerating efforts for preventing micronutrient deficiencies and their consequences, including spina bifida and other neural tube defects, through safe and effective food fortification
- Strengthening the health of indigenous peoples – a landmark resolution
- Infection prevention and control (IPC), adopting the first-ever WHO global IPC strategy
- Increasing access to medical oxygen
- Accelerating action on global drowning prevention
- A landmark resolution on strengthening rehabilitation in health systems
- The impact of chemicals, waste and pollution on human health
- Voluntary Health Fund for small island developing states
- Achieving well-being: a global framework for integrating well-being into public health utilizing a health promotion approach
- Social determinants of health and their impact on health and health equity
- Health emergency in Ukraine and refugee-receiving and -hosting countries, stemming from the Russian Federation's aggression
- Reform of the global internship programme, with a deadline of end 2025 for at least 50% of interns to originate from low- and middle-income countries.

During his closing remarks Dr Tedros gave the floor virtually to AFSM member Gwen Carnelley who had celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in March 2023 – see the other references to Gwen on pages 5 and 7.

### **153<sup>rd</sup> session of the Executive Board, 31 May 2023**

New elected Board members are Australia, Barbados, Cameroon, Comoros, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Lesotho, Qatar, Switzerland, Togo and Ukraine.

The Board's 153<sup>rd</sup> session was held on 31 May, with Dr Hanan Mohamed Al Kuwari, Minister of Public Health of Qatar in the Chair. The Board completed the 10 items on its agenda in less than five hours. In

his opening remarks – <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-153rd-session-of-the-executive-board---31-may-2023> – the DG commented on the just completed World Health Assembly, the approval of the budget for 2024–2025 and the agreed Investment Round. His speech writer had pointed out that flexibility in funding was nothing new as it had also been mentioned by WHO’s first Director-General during the first World Health Assembly in 1948!

Dates of future meetings were agreed as below, and an Executive Board retreat will be scheduled:

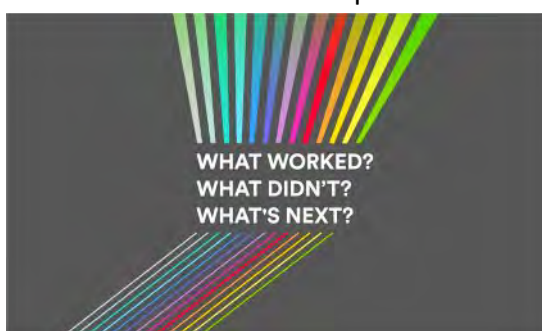
- Meetings of the Standing Committee on Health Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response, whose main role is to provide guidance to the DG through the Executive Board on matters pertaining to health emergency prevention, preparedness and response – 13 and 14 September 2023 and 17 and 18 April 2024
- 154<sup>th</sup> session of the Executive Board – 22–27 January 2024, preceded by the Programme, Budget and Administration Committee (PBAC) from 16–19 January
- 77<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly – 27 May – 1 June 2024, preceded by the PBAC from 22–24 May.

### Selected items of other news

- Details of **the new headquarters’ leadership team** can be found at <https://www.who.int/director-general/who-headquarters-leadership-team>
- On 9 March, WHO issued its first **Global report on sodium intake reduction** which shows that the world is off-track to achieve its global target of reducing sodium intake by 30% by 2025. When eaten in excess, sodium increases the risk of heart disease, stroke and premature death.
- On 29 March, **WHO certified Azerbaijan and Tajikistan as malaria-free**. A total of 42 countries or territories have reached the malaria-free milestone.
- From 3–5 April, the **Fifth Global Forum on Human Resources for Health**, the largest gathering of the health workforce, took place focusing on the theme of **Protecting, safeguarding and investing in the health and care workforce**. <https://www.who.int/teams/health-workforce/about/5thglobalforum-hrh>.
- From 3–6 April the Fifth Meeting of the **Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB)** to draft and negotiate a **WHO convention, agreement or other international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response** took place: a draft accord is due to be presented for approval by the World Health Assembly in May 2024. <https://inb.who.int/>.
- During the week of 17 April, governments examined in detail more than a third of over 300 proposed amendments to the **WHO International Health Regulations 2005**.
- On 19 April, WHO released a new guide on **developing national programmes for age-friendly cities and communities – National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities**. <https://www.who.int/teams/social-determinants-of-health/demographic-change-and-healthy-ageing/age-friendly-environments/national-programmes-afcc>
- Also on 19 April, WHO announced that **The Global Compendium of Country Knowledge on Covid-19 vaccination** is now available on TechNet21. <https://www.technet-21.org/en/covid-compendium>
- On 20 April, WHO launched the **Health Inequality Data Repository**, the most comprehensive global collection of publicly available disaggregated data and evidence on population health and its determinants. <https://www.who.int/news/item/20-04-2023-who-releases-the-largest-global-collection-of-health-inequality-data>.
- During **World Immunization Week 24–30 April**, under the banner of **“The Big Catch-Up”**, WHO and partners announced a new effort to vaccinate millions of children and restore immunization progress lost during the Covid-19 pandemic.



- On 26 April, WHO launched a **new initiative to provide guidance on integrated planning for responding to any respiratory pathogen** such as influenza or coronaviruses – ***Preparedness and Resilience for Emerging Threats Initiative***. <https://www.who.int/initiatives/preparedness-and-resilience-for-emerging-threats>.
- On 3 May, a new progress report was jointly released by the 13 signatory agencies of the **Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Well-being for all** – ***“What worked? What didn’t? What’s next?”*** outlining what has and has not worked in strengthening collaboration and support to accelerate progress towards health-related Sustainable Development Goals.



- Also on 3 May, WHO issued an **updated Covid-19 Global Strategic Preparedness, Readiness and Response Plan 2023–2025** to guide countries on how to manage Covid-19 over the next two years in the transition from an emergency phase to a longer-term, sustained response – ***From emergency response to long-term Covid-19 disease management: sustaining gains made during the Covid-19 pandemic***. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-WHE-SPP-2023.1>.



- Also on 3 May, WHO and partners launched a revised **manual to help decision makers curb the scourge of pedestrian deaths and injuries in road traffic crashes**. In 2016, over 310 000 pedestrians were killed in crashes, accounting for 23% of all global deaths. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240072497>.
- On 5 May, the **DG concurred with the advice of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee** regarding the coronavirus 2019 disease pandemic, that **Covid-19 is now an established and ongoing health issue which no longer constitutes a public health emergency of international concern** (PHEIC).
- On 10 May, the **5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee on the Multi-Country Outbreak of mpox** reviewed the situation of the disease and considered that the long-term challenges would be better addressed through sustained efforts in a transition towards a long-term strategy to manage the public health risks posed by mpox, rather than the emergency measures inherent to a public health emergency of international concern.
- On 12 May, the **International Agency for Cancer Research (IARC) inaugurated its new building in Lyon**.
- A ***Science in 5*** video posted on 12 May, highlights three things to keep in mind when taking **antibiotics**, YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJOQ1FY\\_C0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJOQ1FY_C0)
- On 15 May, WHO released a new **guideline on non-sugar sweeteners (NSS)**, which recommends against the use of NSS to control body weight or reduce the risk of noncommunicable diseases. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073616>
- On 16 May, **WHO called for safe and ethical artificial intelligence (AI) generated large language model tools (LLMs) to protect and promote human well-being, human safety and autonomy, and preserve public health**. It is imperative that the risks be examined carefully when using LLMs to improve access to health information, as a decision-support tool, or even to enhance diagnostic capacity in under-resourced settings to protect people’s health and reduce inequity.
- On 17 May, WHO launched a new **Health Service Delivery Framework for Prevention and Management of Obesity**, as a health system-focused component of the **WHO Acceleration Plan to Stop Obesity**. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240073234>.

- On 18 May, WHO's Technical Advisory **Group for Covid-19 Vaccine Composition advised on the composition of future formulations** of Covid-19 vaccines.
- On 19 May, WHO released the 2023 edition of its annual **World Health Statistics report** with new figures on the **impact of the Covid-19 pandemic** and the latest statistics on progress towards the **health-related Sustainable Development Goals**. <https://www.who.int/data/gho/publications/world-health-statistics>.



- Also on 23 May, in its first-ever report of its kind, the **WHO Council on the Economics of Health for All**, established by Dr Tedros, outlined a bold new path to **reorient economies to deliver what matters – health for all**. <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/health-for-all--transforming-economies-to-deliver-what-matters>.
- On 24 May, at WHO, panellists made an impassioned plea for urgent climate action as it hosted a **Strategic Roundtable at the World Health Assembly on the Role of the Health Communities in Climate Action: taking stock and moving forward**.
- On 26 May, **WHO and the Republic of Korea signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a global training hub in biomanufacturing**. This global training centre will serve all low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) to produce biologicals, such as vaccines, insulin, monoclonal antibodies, and cancer medicines.
- On the occasion of **World No Tobacco Day** on 31 May, WHO launched its publication **World No Tobacco Day 2023: grow food, not tobacco** which contains startling data showing how people around the world are going hungry while nations grow tobacco instead of food. Tobacco is responsible for 8 million deaths a year and **governments across the world are still spending millions to support tobacco farms**. Details of awards to individuals/organizations in each of the six WHO Regions for their accomplishments in the area of tobacco control can be found at **World No Tobacco Day 2023 awards – the winners**. <https://www.who.int/news/item/25-05-2023-world-no-tobacco-day-2023-awards--the-winners>.
- On 6 June the awards ceremony of the **4<sup>th</sup> Health for All Film Festival** took place WHO. <https://www.who.int/initiatives/health-for-all-film-festival>.
- On 20 May, WHO and partners **launched a global network to detect and prevent infectious disease threats** through the power of pathogen genomics. **The International Pathogen Surveillance Network (IPSN)** will provide a platform to connect countries and regions, improving systems for collecting and analyzing samples, using these data to drive public health decision-making, and sharing that information more broadly.
- On 23 May, **WHO and Google announced a multi-year Collaboration Agreement to continue providing credible health-related information** to help billions of people around the world respond to emerging and future public health issues – World Health Organization and Google's collaboration to provide health information. <https://blog.google/technology/health/world-health-organization-google-collaboration-health-information/>.

Further information and documentation can be found on the WHO website – [www.who.int](http://www.who.int).

**Sue Block Tyrrell**



## BOOK REVIEWS

## Arboreto Cholul. Rescate de los frutales mayas olvidados (Cholul Arboretum. Rescuing long-forgotten Mayan fruit trees)



Format 29.5 x 19 cms

76 pages

Published in February 2023 by the *Grupo Arboretum Cholul*.  
Avenida Cedro 303, Cholul, 97305, Merida, Yucatan,  
Mexico.

Digital version: Available free of charge at  
<https://archive.org/details/ArboretoCholul>

ISBN: 978 607 99089 2 8

We publish a selection of photos on the next page, and more can be viewed in the digital version of this magazine on page 47.

For as long as he has called the region his home, AFSM member John P. Ehrenberg has been gripped by a deep appreciation for the fruit trees of Mexico's Yucatán peninsula. This passion for the local flora, shared by his wife Perla and three children, is what led the pair several decades ago to begin planting various species of these indigenous trees at their home in Cholul, just north of the state capital of Mérida. Many years later, in 2018, this loving endeavour of conservation culminated in the opening in Cholul of the Mayan Fruit Tree Arboretum – a thriving, living museum of autochthonous fruit trees.

The project was established by John, Perla, and a group of some 70 local residents in order to catalogue and preserve the stunning variety of the Yucatán's native fruit trees which have, sadly, seen a steady decline in recent years. The project is also undeniably a strong testament to the transformative power of community-led conservation: in the face of serious and interlinking crises of climate, biodiversity, and waste, such projects provide not only a vital source of inspiration, but also an organizational blueprint for those engaging in similar efforts elsewhere in the world.

The fruits of the project's group have now been catalogued in *Arboreto Cholul – Rescate de los frutales mayas olvidados*, a beautifully illustrated book packed with information about these fruit trees and their truly magnificent properties, which range from the medicinal to the nutritional, the gastronomical to the cultural. The text is in Spanish; however, the Prologue and Introduction are also in English. To top it all off, the book is free to access at the link provided below.

<https://archive.org/details/ArboretoCholul>

**Jack Rogers**

(Freelance editor, Bristol, UK. [jackmacarthurrogers@gmail.com](mailto:jackmacarthurrogers@gmail.com))





Above: During the presentation at the book launch.



Right: Perla and John, founders of the Arboretum, relaxing at home.

To tempt you to look at this publication, some photos of various fruits, and one of the exquisite drawings from the book.





## READERS' RECIPES

### Cointreau savarin with summer fruits (serves 6 to 8)



#### Ingredients

##### **For the savarin**

260 g flour  
 4 eggs  
 1 sachet of brioche yeast or baker's yeast  
 5 cl of milk  
 5 cl of water  
 180 g butter + 20 g for the mould  
 50 g caster sugar  
 A ring mould

##### **For the syrup**

0.5 l of weak tea  
 175 g caster sugar  
 1 dl Cointreau or any other orange liqueur

##### **For the filling**

500 g peaches, 1 orange, 1 banana  
 2 lemons, 500 g strawberries or raspberries  
 5 cl Cointreau  
 50 g sugar

##### **For the glazing**

2 tablespoons orange jam  
 5 cl Cointreau

#### Recipe

Prepare the dough: mix the flour and yeast in a large bowl, pour in the warm milk and water. Stir then add the melted and cooled butter, the caster sugar and the whole eggs. Work the dough until it is smooth and supple. Cover it with a cloth and leave it to rise in a warm atmosphere so that it doubles in volume.

Butter a ring mould. Work the dough very vigorously and put it into the mould (it should fill it halfway). Cover it again with the cloth and let it rise. When the dough fills the mould, put it in a hot oven, gas mark 7 or 210°C for 35 to 45 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare the syrup: make a weak tea, sweeten it and add the Cointreau.

Remove the cake from the mould, soak it with the Cointreau syrup while it is still hot. Leave to cool and prepare the filling: peel the orange and cut it into quarters, peel the peaches and cut them in half, peel the banana and cut it into slices. Soak all these fruits with the juice of one lemon, the Cointreau and 50 grams of sugar.

Wash and hull the strawberries, mash them with the juice of the second lemon and strain them to obtain a *coulis*. If you use raspberries, do not wash them, simply rinse them.

Melt the orange jam in a small saucepan, strain it and add the Cointreau. Brush the savarin with the glaze. Then fill it with the fruit salad.

Serve with strawberry or raspberry coulis, accompanied by a glass of Cointreau on the rocks or Champagne.

**Michèle Evans**

## NEW MEMBERS

### We have pleasure in welcoming the following members into the AFSM family

#### New Life Members

Marie-Pierre Austin  
Edith Ephram  
Clare Forbes-Hedberg  
Tracy Mawer  
Sylvie Mortier  
Chizuru Nishida  
Jeanne Schmid-Ryan

#### Conversion to Life members

Sihem Landoulsi

#### New Annual Members

## MEMORIES FROM THE MAIN

### Stories from the main building of WHO

*Not all WHO staff worked in an annex, and not all of the most interesting stories emanated from an annex, the main building holds its fair share of anecdotes. So, we now invite our readers to send in their stories about life and work in the WHO main building, to be published anonymously unless requested otherwise.*

One day I was waiting for the lift furthest from the reception in the main building. I was joined by the Legal Adviser (Mr Claude Henri Vignes). The lift arrived, there was no one in it, so I got in and Mr Vignes followed me in. He then turned to me and said, in jest: *"I do hope you realize that it is not every woman in WHO that I would risk getting into a lift alone with these days!"*. Through his Legal position he had inside knowledge of harassment complaints.

Although he and I knew each other well, I understood completely what he meant! One male staff member actually quit the Organization when he was unjustly accused of harassment, not wanting his reputation to be sullied, nor to go through all that would be entailed in trying to prove otherwise.

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This tale about Mr Vignes reminded the editor of a lunch at the Permanent Mission of France. This happened back in the days when all incoming telephone calls went through the WHO Switchboard, and callers were transferred to the staff member they requested. The switchboard operators were working in an extremely busy, noisy and stressful environment, and when requested by a French-speaking caller, the names *"Monsieur Vignes"* and *"Monsieur Wynn"* sound almost identical.

Consequently, I received some of Vignes calls and he received some of mine. One of the calls that I most frequently received in error was from an utterly charming woman at the Permanent Mission of France, enquiring whether I was free for lunch with the Ambassador. At first, I just replied that she had the



wrong person and that I would transfer her. After many of these misdirected calls she and I realized what had happened, yet again, and would chat while I was attempting to transfer her call.

One day the telephone extension for Mr Vignes was permanently engaged, it was proving impossible to transfer the call, and I jokingly said to the Ambassador's assistant that if we couldn't find Mr Vignes, I would be delighted to have lunch with the Ambassador instead! Eventually I succeeded in transferring the call to Mr Vignes. A short while later Mr Vignes called me and asked if I would accept to join him for lunch at the Mission. The Ambassador's assistant had explained to the Ambassador the difficulty we had in getting hold of the right person and the Ambassador had extended the invitation, via Mr Vignes, to me as well. Of course, I accepted, if only for the sake of the *Entente Cordiale*!

## UNIAG – UNITED NATIONS INTER-AGENCY GAMES – 2023

### 48<sup>th</sup> UN Inter-Agency Games, 18–22 October 2023, Algarve, Portugal

Following a delay in its organization, the 48<sup>th</sup> United Nations Inter-Agency Games (UNIAG) will now be held on 18–22 October 2023 at Vila Real de Santo António, in the Algarve region of south-east Portugal, near the airport of Faro.



The host organization UNIDO has advised that it is progressively packaging guidance on registration, accommodation, travel, visas, etc., and will be posting this on the website:

<https://www.interagencygames.org/newsite/>

The Games will undoubtedly repeat the disciplines of previous years (athletics, badminton, basketball, beach volleyball, chess, cricket, darts, football, golf, pétanque, pool billiards, swimming, table tennis, tennis and volleyball), and possibly add one or two, all of which now provide for joint or separate men/women competitions. As usual, registration

should be made through agency focal points at HQ, regional and field locations (WHO/HQ: Arnaud Devilliers [devilliers@unicc.org](mailto:devilliers@unicc.org)). Note that multi-agency teams are now commonly formed on site and one does not need to register beforehand as part of a team.

Vila Real de Santo António is an attractive choice of venue. Originally a traditional Mediterranean fishing village, it has become a popular tourist destination with its nearby beaches, pine forest reserves and extensive sporting facilities. It is located on the river Guadiana, the natural frontier with western Spain. Tourism opportunities include ferry crossings to the opposite shore (and its one-hour time zone difference): <https://algarve-south-portugal.com/fr/vila-real-de-santo-antonio-portugal-fr.html>.

This largest annual gathering of UN active and retired staff will be sustained by the community size nature of the small town and what promises to be optimal weather.

**Derrick Deane**

## AFSM CRUISE 2024

### Captivating landscapes and historic cities of Andalusia and the Algarve

26 September to 3 October 2024  
(8 days and 7 nights)

On the MS La Belle de Cadix,  
5 anchors (5 stars), 88 cabins



#### An “all-inclusive cruise” comprising:

- Flights to and from Geneva and Seville
- Air-conditioned cabins with shower, WC, hair-dryer, safe, telephone, television, WIFI
- Full board and all drinks at table and in the bar
- 10 excursions
- Evening Entertainment

#### Price per person

Middle deck	Double cabin	2,908 Euro
Middle deck	Individual cabin	3,593 Euro
Superior deck	Double cabin	2,974 Euro
Superior deck	Individual cabin	3,627 Euro

The prices are higher than in previous years, however it is an 8-day cruise compared to 6-days in the past. Furthermore, this is one of the most popular destinations for a cruise.

#### Programme

This cruise offers a unique itinerary on two rivers with contrasting landscapes between two countries, Spain and Portugal.

Navigation on the Guadalquivir and in the Gulf of Cadiz to Huelva.



Navigation on the Guadiana in the heart of a nature reserve.

It includes three jewels of the Andalusian golden triangle – **Seville, Cordoba and Granada** – also the caravel park of Christopher Columbus in Huelva and, in addition, Alcoutim which is an authentic small Portuguese village.

Day 1	Geneva to Seville
Day 2	Seville – Cordoba
Day 3	Seville – Isla Minima – El Puerto de Santa Maria
Day 4	El Puerto de Santa Maria – Jerez – Cadix
Day 5	Alcoutim
Day 6	Huelva – Seville
Day 7	Seville – Granada
Day 8	Seville to Geneva

#### For inscriptions

**email:** [c.hager@bluewin.ch](mailto:c.hager@bluewin.ch)

**or by post:** Charles Hager, Route de Chêne 64 c,  
1208 Geneva, Switzerland.



## NEWS FROM FORMER WHO STAFF MEMBERS' GROUPS AROUND THE WORLD

### News from around the world

**AFSM-HQ:** The fourth meeting of the Global Council of AFSMs was held via Zoom on 28 March. Organized by AFSM-Geneva, it was remarkable in more ways than one. The six Regional Associations were represented and AFSM-Geneva by its three Co-Presidents. New perspectives and expectations regarding long-term care as well as the participation of retiree representatives in the Health Insurance Committees and the WHO Pensions Committee were presented and discussed.

However, the highlight of this meeting was the address by the Director- General.

Welcoming the participants, he emphasized his firm belief that retirees continue to be part of the WHO family and recalled the actions he had taken to make his views a reality.

He then invited all the Associations to present to him their main challenges, difficulties and prospects. He took the floor again to present his plans for greater involvement of the Associations and retirees in WHO's activities. He encouraged the Associations not to be "shy" and to present him with a list of requests to enable them to exercise their mandate more effectively. He will encourage Regional Directors to better recognize their presence and provide them with the necessary means. *"We should not only ask for your support for WHO but, as WHO your own Organization, we should also support you"*.

Finally, he offered Associations his support to send observers to the World Health Assembly in May. This offer was accepted.

The interventions and proposals of Dr Tedros far exceeded their expectations requesting institutional recognition of their Associations, and the participants expressed their sincere thanks to him.

The next virtual meeting will be organized by AFSM-AMRO/PAHO in September 2023. The Associations will also be invited to hold their April 2024 meeting in Geneva in order to participate in the closing of the WHO 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in Geneva.

Following the proposal of Dr Tedros, the Associations drafted and submitted a letter listing their main needs and emphasizing the importance of greater recognition by WHO.

***Sue Block Tyrrell, Jean-Paul Menu and Dev Ray***

### Regional reports

**AFSM-SEAR:** I am writing this on 7 April. So, my greetings on the occasion of World Health Day.

Every year since 1948, this day marks the celebration of World Health Day. In this year, countries of the world came together and founded WHO to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable – so everyone, everywhere, can attain the highest level of health and well-being. From its inception at the First Health Assembly and since taking effect in 1950, this celebration has aimed to create awareness and trigger actions on a specific health theme globally.

This year 2023, World Health Day theme is “**Health for All**”, so everyone, everywhere, can attain the highest level of health and well-being. Also today, the World Health Organization will observe its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary under the theme **75 Years of Improving Public Health**, along with its 194 Member States and other partners, by calling for a renewed drive for health equity.

All of the major world religions stress the importance of maintaining a healthy body and mind, which is also central to the tenets of many schools of traditional medicine and their respective practitioners. Health, as defined by WHO, is a state of complete mental, emotional, and social well-being and not only the absence of sickness or disability. Several of the countries have included this kind of right to health in their constitution.

On this day, we are proud and privileged to remember and pay homage to the Organization as our benign benefactor, and look back on our own work and contributions as staff members of this great Organization.

We are indeed proud to be “**Once WHO always WHO**” and continue our journey to achieve Health for All.

Wishing you and your loved ones the best of health and happiness.

**M.R. Kanaga Rajan** (President, AFSM-SEAR)

**AFSM-Africa: AFRO Retired but Not Tired: The Executive Committee continues its regular activities** by preparing for its 3<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly, scheduled for the third week of June. The major focus will be the revision of its statutes to adapt to the current dynamics that now emphasize the activities of retirees' associations in countries. We are sending two members to attend the 76<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly (WHA) 21–30 May 2023, and for this we thank Dr Tedros sincerely for his support towards the formalization of AFSMs with WHO, which led to this invitation for all AFSMs to send two members to attend the WHA, as well as to the closing ceremony of the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the WHO in 2024. We now continue our focus on the activities of the associations of retirees in the countries, with a briefing note on the **Association des Anciens Fonctionnaires des Nations Unies au Niger** (Association of Former United Nations Civil Servants in Niger). (AAFNU-N)



AAFNU-N was created on 7 July 2012, by 66 members from 18 United Nations agencies, during a Constitutive General Assembly. It is affiliated to the Federation of Associations of Former International Civil Servants (FAFICS) which currently brings together 69 national associations, including 17 in Africa<sup>1</sup>. Several members of AAFNU-N are members of the Association of Former WHO Staff Members-AFRO (AFSM-Africa). Our association celebrated its ten years on 26 February 2022.

<sup>1</sup> Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Congo DRC, Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo

The objectives of AAFNU-N are:

- to promote solidarity among its members;
- represent them with Administrations and Organizations of the United Nations System in matters of pensions and post-retirement insurance;
- receive and disseminate information and news on all matters of common interest;
- support the purposes and principles of the United Nations System;
- promote the participation of members in development actions at the national, regional and international level.

It is headed by an Executive Bureau supported by two Standing Committees on pension and health insurance issues, our two priority action areas, and



five Technical Commissions (Health, Food and Nutritional Security, Education, Peace and Security, Intergenerational Relations) established on the basis of the expertise available within the association and the priorities of the country.

The main achievements recorded relate to:

- the regular convening of statutory meetings;
- the operation of our e-mail and WhatsApp platforms;
- support for retirees in managing their pensions and preserving their health;
- carrying out social and recreational activities for members and their families;
- carrying out solidarity activities in favour of certain population groups;
- development of a partnership with the Government;
- participation in events organized by United Nations Agencies with which it often cooperates in the form of consultancy;
- participation in the actions and activities of FAFICS and AFSM-Africa.

Two major difficulties have marked the functioning of our association during these first ten years:

- the low participation of members in the activities of the association and
- the difficulties in paying dues.

We would like to pay tribute to the many colleagues who have worked for the smooth running of AAFNU-N during its first ten years.

Among them: Dr Ari Toubo Ibrahim (FAO), President of the Association; Ms Fatoumata Agnès Bembello (CEA), Vice-President; Dr Kadri Tankari, (WHO) Secretary General; Françoise Alzouma (WHO), Treasurer General; Abdoulaye Mohamed (ILO) Secretary for Social Affairs; Alhousseini Diakite (UNICEF) Secretary for Information; René Wright (FAO), Chairman of the Pensions Committee; Dr Jean Marie Trapsida (WHO), Chairman of the Health Insurance Committee.

**Kadri Tankari** President of AAFNU-N, Member of the AFSM-Africa Coordinating Committee

### **AFSM-EMR: *The Reason for WHO being special.* My story.**

At 08:00 on the 24 May 1974 I reported for duty on my first day as a WHO staff member, newly recruited from ILO. I was full of positive energy and a lot of hopes.

By 14.00 on the 24 May 1974, I had decided to resign. Coming from another UN Organization, I thought that working in WHO would be familiar, but unfortunately the whole atmosphere seemed different and disappointing. That was the quickest decision in my life. Fortunately, however, not every decision made in haste actually happens, my new colleagues said to me "*forget all you learnt in ILO*". (I still remember those words, even after all these years).

So, I stayed, and finally retired on 1 October 2010, having had a very successful career and years of happy service, full of good memories. WHO became my second home.

I worked for Programmes like Diarrhoeal Diseases, Acute Respiratory Infections for Children, and Immunization, which were all initiated by WHO. The Organization and its staff worked hard and the programmes were successful.

Then, UNICEF started joining these programmes as donors and partners. As UNICEF are more switched-on to the media and press communication, the public only ever heard about UNICEF.

Whenever I was asked where I work, my answer naturally would be WHO, so they correct me "*Oh! you mean UNICEF, of course we know about them, they immunise our children*". No way to convince the public that WHO is the lead Organization, deciding on the policy and the planning of any health programme. The reaction was always "*Yes! Yes! But we know it is UNICEF*". Being part of the team of such activities I felt frustrated.

Trying to find a new way of explaining the work and responsibility of WHO, the reaction was very interesting "*So you have good physicians*", and they would immediately start listing all of their diseases.

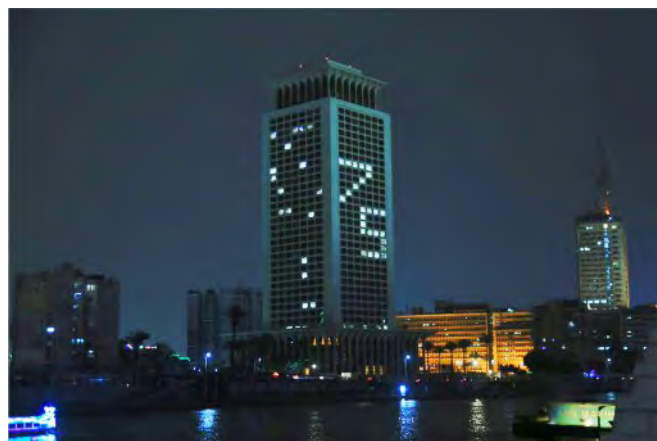
I was tempted to give up saying I worked in a UN Organization whenever I was asked about my work. Then, and the only blessing of Covid 19 (from my own personal view) was that from the day WHO announced the Covid 19 pandemic in January 2020, the world started understanding that there is an Organization responsible for Health. WHO was mentioned around the clock and around the globe. Now, stating that I am a retiree of WHO and still part of the family, is now considered special. It was the first time that people understood that UNICEF and WHO are two different Organizations.

***Why celebrating World Health Day 2023 is special for me.***

- The President of Egypt addressed the population with a very encouraging message about WHO, broadcast on National TV. Special recognition was extended to the collaboration with the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office.
- One of the famous ancient temples at Cataract, in Aswan, was especially illuminated in recognition of WHO and its efforts in the field of health.
- The Cairo Tower is a special symbol for Egyptians. This well-known landmark is visited by Egyptians and tourists alike, and was also illuminated to mark the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of WHO.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs building was also illuminated, marking the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of WHO.



The ancient temples at Cataract, in Aswan are not normally illuminated. One was especially lit up in recognition of WHO and its efforts in the field of health.



The Ministry of Foreign Affairs building in Cairo, with the lights in certain offices left on to create "75" in tribute to the WHO Anniversary.

Finally, I lived to see the day when everyone, regardless of their background, knew about WHO and its work, without having to explain what these three letters stand for. And, moreover, being proud to belong to WHO even after retirement. ***"Once WHO always WHO"***

***Hanaa Ghoneim***

**AFSM-Manila: Working towards doing better for the Region's Former Staff Members.** We continue to provide support and assistance to Members such as in complying with requirements for their benefits, providing information and updates on developments and serving as the LINK between and among Members, and extending assistance and aid for Members' surviving families.

AFSM-Manila believes it can still do better to support and serve Former WHO Staff who have settled down in Member Countries outside the Philippines. The EXECOM has therefore agreed to amend the AFSM-Manila Statutes to broaden geographic coverage, from being Manila-centric to become the Association of Former WHO Staff Members in the Western Pacific Region or in short, AFSM/WPR. Membership is expanded to include former WHO staff who transferred to and retired from other UN



agencies, retirees from other UN agencies or members of AFICS-Phil. as *Associate Members*, and current staff close to retirement age willing to join, as *Observers*. It is proposed to invite the Chairperson of the WPR Staff Association (SA) as an ex-officio Member of the AFSM EXECOM to further enhance AFSM–SA partnership.

**AFSM-Manila doing work through Effective Collaboration with Partners.** Establishing and enhancing Partnerships is the highlight of the Association’s activities. Collaboration with the **Staff Association** remains strong with open communication and a shared concern for staff welfare (both current and former) and working for their best interests. As an offshoot of previous discussions with AFSM, the SA has initiated activities that prepare current staff for retirement such as talks that cover topics like pensions and health insurance. For our part, officers of AFSM-Manila served as Mentors, as invited speakers in support for a series of Regional retreats. A meeting with SA Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for Internal Affairs was held on 13 March and discussed how the AFSM, in collaboration with the SA, may continue to respond to concerns and better support former staff members in countries of the Region, and explored potential collaboration in 2023 such as in the celebration of WHO’s 75th Anniversary and the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing. The SA supports official recognition of the AFSM especially in Member Countries and shared ideas on plans for events/activities that would promote better understanding of AFSM as an association and its mandate.

**Partnership for the Decade of Healthy Ageing with AFICS-Philippines** was launched on 1 October after Dr Linda Milan, AFSM-Manila, made a presentation on the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing during the AFICS EXECOM meeting held on 19 September. The ***Joint Declaration of Commitment and Support to the UN Decade of Healthy Ageing (2021-2030) was approved by both associations and signed on 30 November 2022.*** A virtual meeting with the UNRC was held on 6 December, where the Joint Declaration of Commitment was discussed. The UNRC showed interest and expressed support, and was requested to



encourage UN agencies in the Philippines to actively support the Decade. To date, a total of 9 short feature stories on a member’s journey to healthy ageing have been posted in the AFICS-Phil website since its maiden issue on 1 October. To raise funds for the 2022 Outreach Project with 3 Care Facilities for Older

Persons as beneficiaries, the online auction, “*Treasures from Our Global Journey*” was held on 30 November. The first tranche of assistance was turned over on 27 December, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> tranche is scheduled in May. A novel idea for fund-raising was a combination “bonding and sightseeing tour” to historic and scenic places in the country targeting members, their families and friends. The idea was for AFICS/AFSM members (who hail from selected destinations) to serve as Organizers/hosts and coordinate the programme/itinerary with local governments who, with their tourism officers, would be happy to show what their places have to offer, as well as share their plans and programmes to former UN staff/officials. Tour fees would include a top up for specific Outreach Projects. The first event, “*A Taste of Laguna*” held on 12 March 2023, was a one-day tour of historic and pilgrimage places in a province south of Manila. This first foray into organizing “local tours” was a fun and learning experience for Members/hosts but definitely achieved its twin objective of bonding/sightseeing and raising funds for a worthy cause.

**Linda Milan**

**AFSM-PAHO/AMRO:** The Newsletter of March 2023 has been published; an interesting issue with articles of value to all of us.

The *Editorial* by Gloria Coe reflects on the creation of AFSM-PAHO/AMRO in 1990 and the fact that several members of the Board are now in their 90's and looking forward to handing over to younger members. Elections are scheduled for later this year.

Carol Collado and Roland Chacón have prepared the *Health Insurance and Pension Update*. Under SHI, Covid again leads, and although the threat is receding, because of the uncertainties and risks of long-Covid precautions are still required. The SHI elections are mentioned and everyone is encouraged to vote. A review of centenarians around the world listed their recommendations for a long life, "keep breathing" being one suggestion. Under Pensions, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Pension Board Session is reviewed.

The following article *Techno Tips: Practical Application of Artificial Intelligence* was written by AFSM and ChatGPT, the latter being a natural language processing tool driven by AI technology that allows for human-like conversations. Step aside writers and editors, the future is here!

A report of the *Caribbean Christmas Party 2022* by Mena Carto is next. But this was no usual party; this one was entirely virtual, attended by 20 former staff who had worked in the Caribbean. Worth checking to see if anyone you know attended this party to discover their antics.

Back to sad reality for the next article, *Caring for a Person with Disabilities – My Experience Living and Caring for My Son after Traumatic Brain Injury* by Maria Teresa Cerqueira. A heart-rending and also a heart-warming account of a mother's roller-coaster life since the accident. A long, but inspiring account.

Yvette Holder continues with Part 8 of her series *Musings of an Ageing Woman*. She expands on the previous instalment which looked at the thorny question – whether or not to go and live with your children, and in this part assumes that you have done just that. She lists the pitfalls, and of course the upside elements, with her usual humour.

The Newsletter continues with an account of further travels by Marilyn Rice (Editor-in-Chief), this one entitled *My New Trip to Argentina and Chile*. A long-planned trip delayed over and over again by Covid finally happened at the end of last year. Starting in Buenos Aires (and a tango lesson) before a city tour. Then heading south to Calafate, taking in the UNESCO World Heritage Glacier National Park, before crossing into Chile. There the group hiked the *Torres del Paine* National Park. From here they arrived at the port town of Punta Arenas, where they boarded a ship taking in many calls through the Magellan Straits to Cape Horn. An amazing trip.

Next, Sumedha Mona Khanna explains all we need to know about *Wearable Technologies in Health Care*, describing various devices and how they can help seniors. From fitness trackers, health watches, ECG monitors, blood pressure monitors, glucose monitors, and biosensors.

*Where Are They Now?* by César Hermida Bustos, describes a busy life in Ecuador after retirement from PAHO/WHO, including sitting on the other side of the table at meetings of WHO governing bodies as Vice-Minister of Health. He then set up the first "University for the Elderly" program in Ecuador.

Appreciation is given for the administrative and logistical support promised on 29 March 2023 by Dr Tedros to the global, regional, and country-level AFSM associations, acknowledging our importance as members of the WHO "family".

An interesting and informative edition with much to interest our readers; we recommend that you access it online. The Newsletters can be read in English at <https://www.afsmpaho.com/copy-of-newsletters> and in Spanish at <https://www.afsmpaho.com/newsletters-spanish>.

**Keith Wynn**



**WHO Retirees' Representatives in Scandinavia:** In March, we took part in two informational webinars: one on long-term care hosted by AFSM-PAHO, and the UNJSPF pension webinar for retirees hosted by AFSM-Geneva. We also participated in the meeting of the Global Council of AFSMs hosted by AFSM-Geneva. Following the Global Council meeting, the DG invited two representatives from each of the AFSMs to attend WHA76. This initiative by the DG is an encouraging development for EURO as we are in the process of formalizing our own AFSM.

In April, lists of missing CEs were circulated to the Regions from AFSM-Geneva through AFICS and the WHO Pension Office. We have been following up on the list of 25 names in EURO.

We are in dialogue with EURO Staff Association on pension questions and on information-sharing about upcoming and recent retirees. We continue to elaborate on our plans to formalize our own AFSM for the European Region.

Plans for a summer get-together of former staff and a pension briefing are currently in the works.

*Melodie Karlson, Jenny Madsen, Sharon Miller*

## A PHOTO FROM THE ARCHIVES



Following the recent coronation of King Charles III in the UK, we were reminded of the time he met with WHO staff members – while still Prince Charles – during his visit to WHO headquarters in Geneva on Tuesday, 23 May 2006, following his address to the 59<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly.

## IN MEMORIAM

### Recent deaths<sup>1</sup> of former WHO staff members as reported to AFSM

Baldry	Linda Jill	31.12.2022	Lopez Espino y De Antunano Francisco J	16.01.2023	
Belsey	Mark Allen	02.03.2023	Mina	Janet Casin	05.02.2023
Bernard	Edith	24.01.2023	Montoya	Alberto	16.12.2022
Boutros	Ivy Bishara	01.02.2023	Ndinga	Julien	31.10.2012
Canales	Guido	04.12.2022	Nino Buitrago	Jairo Hernan	02.12.2022
Carrenard	Marie-Nicole	24.10.2022	Niyomviphath	Saiyud	25.01.2023
Chan Sum Fat	Chan C I	21.12.2022	Olayinka	Idris	21.12.2021
Diallo	Amadou	04.02.2023	Ozab	Lloyd John	18.01.2023
Donnat	Pierre C	28.12.2022	Perera	Bertie	28.12.2022
Eriksen	Eva	11.02.2023	Pina	Arsenio Daniel F	22.11.2022
Filipe Junior	Antonio Pedro	08.12.2022	Pisa	Zbynek	19.10.2022
Gagara	Magagi	01.01.2023	Prost	Andre M E	03.02.2023
Garcia Gomez	Emiliano	04.12.2022	Roggensinger	Pauline	10.01.2023
Gill	Margaret	12.01.2023	Shah	Puroshottam M	28.02.2023
Guimond	Marie B I	20.10.2022	Sharma	Hari Chand	09.03.2023
Guirguis	George A	12.01.2023	Shirai	Akira	03.01.2023
Gultekin	Mehmet S	Not known	Skrinjar-Nerima	Boga	29.11.2022
Hryciuk	Tamara	28.12.2022	Stephenson	Howard William	06.01.2023
Islam	Sirajul	21.01.2023	Tommasino	Massimo	18.12.2022
Jurjevskis	Ija	Not known	Touunkara	Abdoulaye	10.01.2023
Kalo	Isuf	19.01.2023	Visse	Leone	08.02.2023
Kassankogno	Yao	17.12.2022	Wibowo	Adik	30.12.2022
Kassatski	Anatole	Not known	Willis	Lidia	01.01.2023
Lanier	Monique	04.02.2023	Ziade	Marie	18.02.2023
Leite	Luiz Gonzaga A D S	07.01.2023			

The deaths were also announced of the survivors of former staff members: Abdulkader, Naimet; Abeyesundere, Nalini; Afolabi, Olajide; Borg, Margaret; Drobny, Gladys Yo; Galve Comellas, Ana Maria; Gupta Swarn, Kanta; Higginson, Nan; Houssika, Madeleine; Lanier, Monique Yvonne; Leroy, Anne Marie; Lothe, Judith; Martinez De Duharte, Dora; Peterson, Robert William; Pull, Paule Marie; Razakaso, Odette; Roy, Monique; Sangou, Josephine; Sogodogo, Tenin; Swoboda, Eveline; Towle, Faith; Uemura, Misako; Vaillant, Jeanine; Vasickova, Marie; Yekutiell, Margaret Patience; Zielinska-Kalicinska, Teresa; Zwirn, Guisela R.

<sup>1</sup> The present notification of deaths was gratefully received from UNJSPF and covers Q1 2023. We have endeavoured to ensure that deaths already published have not been repeated in this list, however we apologize in advance if there are omissions or repeat entries. The editorial policy is to publish, once only, the names on the list of death notices we receive, and this regardless of whether an obituary has already been published; appears in the current issue; or will appear in a future issue.

## Monica Wernette, born 8 August 1951, in Clay Center, Kansas, USA, died 13 January 2023, in Manhattan, Kansas, USA



A lifelong learner, Monica earned her Bachelor of Science degree from Washburn University in 1974 where she developed her interest in public health. She went on to study epidemiology at Georgia Institute of Technology and obtained a Master of Public Administration in Public Health from Kansas State University.

Monica's studies led her to a long career of public health service spanning the globe and earning her many accolades. In 1983, President Reagan awarded her the Peace Corps Most Outstanding Volunteer Award (African region), for her work in tracking down the monkey pox virus in the tropical rain forest of Zaire. From the Peace Corps, Monica went to work with CDC in Swaziland and Lesotho, then in Haiti and Liberia for USAID.

When the HIV/AIDS virus emerged, Monica's expertise in epidemiology and her African experience, led to her being tapped by WHO to be

the Senior Team Leader for its Africa region. Based in Addis Ababa, Monica found herself working in one of the world's hotspots for not only combatting HIV/AIDS, but also in the middle of a civil war. Monica would later regale her friends and family with stories about teaching workers in "Addis" the importance of disease prevention while advising the new leaders of Ethiopia about the importance of public health.

The capstone of Monica's career were the years she spent in Geneva, Switzerland, serving as the field support team global director for UNAIDS. Her love for people and her passion for public health made her the perfect person for this work, and she developed numerous lifelong friends from many different cultures and walks of life.

Monica leaves behind her a legacy of generosity, kindness and love. Those who were lucky enough to know her will remember the twinkle in her eye, her ever-present smile, and her love of storytelling. She was truly a citizen of the world and an extraordinary person who will be missed by a legion of family members and friends.

*Kim Wishard and Laurie Ingels*

## André Prost, born 7 June 1944 in Maîche, France, died 3 February 2023 in Lons-le-Saunier, France



André Prost was a rare individual with the qualities of intellectual incisiveness, an engaging personality and an ingrained moral code in equal measure. His professional achievements and drive to transmit have inspired lasting impressions. Our minds will long be marked by his

clarity of thought and purpose, and our hearts by the empathy and loyalty of his friendship.

Studying medicine at the University of Lyon, André focused early on developing countries. He completed his residency in Morocco, then returned to Lyon to defend his doctoral thesis on underserved countries. He then earned post-doctoral diplomas in Parasitology in Lyon, Tropical Medicine at the *Ecole du Pharo* in Marseilles, Applied Epidemiology at the *Institut Pasteur* and Public Health at MacMaster University in Canada. André joined the Ministry of Health of former Upper Volta as regional medical director in 1969. WHO recruited him in 1975 as Parasitologist and then Chief, Epidemiological Evaluation Unit of the Onchocerciasis Control Programme. His recruitment



to the World Bank in 1981, where he served as Project Officer for China conducting multiple missions on rural health, as well as missions to Upper Volta, Thailand, Ghana, Guinea, and Niger, confirmed his concentration on the political aspects of public health.

André returned to WHO in 1985 as Epidemiologist in Environmental Health. In 1989, he joined the Office of Dr Nakajima, the then Director-General, in Programme Development and Monitoring and served on the Management Committee of the Director-General from 29 October 1991 to 3 June 1993. On 1 March 1992, he was named Representative of the Director-General in Brussels when the Maastricht Treaty shifted the European Union into an arena of new political concerns over health.

Recalled to Headquarters after 21 July 1998, André **Odile Frank**

Dr André Prost accompanied my early stages at WHO. Sustained by his humour and nourished by his great humanism, our paths crossed during celebrations. His knowledge of life made me confer with him, rather like a big brother. André, I am honoured to have met you and thank you for this fine example to which I will respect. **Marie Gaspard**

True aristocracy is not that of titles, fortune or birth... Authentic aristocracy is you, dear André! Those rare few who, like you, had the elegance to combine humanism and high intellectual qualities. We will never forget the example you set. **Xavier Descarpentris**

André was a great public health doctor, as well as a top-notch entomologist whose expertise was sought after internationally. Much more than all that, André was a very dear friend, a man of infinite kindness with a deep sense of hospitality, listening and empathy. **Denis Broun**

joined WHO's External Relations as Special Advisor and Director in charge of dialogue with governments and the public sector, overseeing resource mobilization. Following retirement in 2004, he continued teaching and served on the Board of Governors, GAVI Fund Affiliate and as Special Adviser to the Board of Directors, International Finance Facility for Immunization.

Animated by a lifelong passion for entomology, André became a renowned expert on African neuropterology. In addition to his many public health publications, he published widely in entomology and was elected Secretary of the International Association of Neuropterologists.

André Prost was awarded the title of *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* in 2012.

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**Nancy L. Hurst (née Roberts), born 12 July 1951, in New Jersey, USA, died 25 March 2023 in Maine, USA**



Nancy Louise Hurst, passed away peacefully after a fiercely fought battle with cancer, she was 71. Her family was by her side to send her off on her next adventure.

Nan was born in New Jersey. As a child, she spent a year living in Switzerland and always

longed to return. At the ripe old age of 19, she grabbed her nest egg, waved good-bye to her family and headed back to Switzerland. It wasn't long before she met Graham, a charming Brit and the love of her life. Shortly thereafter they were married and had two lovely daughters. Nancy spent most of her working years at the World Health Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. She also cleverly found a niche in the Swiss retail market – greeting cards with sentiments printed in English for the Internationals in and around Geneva. She started selling cards “*Tupperware party*” style, but

eventually opened a shop, RSVP, which had a very successful run under Nan's watch.

Familiar with the area from both family vacations and tales of her long line of Maine ancestors, Nancy and Graham came to Boothbay in 2009 and bought a summer house. They were so taken with the welcoming community and the wonderful friends they had made that they decided to start a new chapter in their lives and become full-time residents.

Nancy befriended everyone she met. She was an excellent cook and hostess and loved having people over for a visit or to join Graham and her for drinks or dinner. When she wasn't creating in the kitchen, she could be found pottering in the garden, sitting in the sunshine on the deck, or cozied up by the fire in the house she loved. She also enjoyed her volunteer time for the St. Andrews Auxiliary Thrift

Shop, happiest manning the cash register where she could meet new people and chat.

Nancy loved having her family come visit and looked forward to big family reunions in the garden. She will be sorely missed by us all. Besides husband Graham, she leaves behind her children, Megan (Hervé Gaufreteau) and Jessica (Fabrice Sutter), grandchildren upon whom she doted, James and Benjamin Gaufreteau, and Alexandra and Amelia Sutter, sisters Sally Toffic and Ann Roberts, step sister Robin Wachenfeld, sister-in-law Lisa Roberts, step mother Carol Roberts, step father William Wachenfeld and many nieces and nephews. Nancy was preceded in death by her brother Douglas Roberts Jr.

### ***Nancy's family in the USA***

## **ASTRONOMY**

### **The skies for July–December 2023**

The planets close to the Sun – Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars – race along in their orbits and as a result each year they are seen in different places in the sky. But the giant planets Jupiter and Saturn plod around their orbits in a much more stately fashion. Jupiter takes 12 years to orbit the Sun, and Saturn 29 years. In 2020 they were close together in the second half of the year, but this year they are farther apart. You can pick them out from the stars quite easily.

Jupiter is easiest to spot, because it's brighter than any star and is in a fairly empty part of the sky. Saturn is also bright, but less so, well to the west of Jupiter. The one thing that sets both Jupiter and Saturn apart from the stars is that like the other bright planets, they do not twinkle.

A star is so far away that it appears as a point of light, so its beam is easily disturbed by turbulence in our unsteady atmosphere and it twinkles. A planet, however, has a disc, even if it is too small for our eyes to see, so its light is more constant.

For more help and advice look on the Society for Popular Astronomy's website, [www.popastro.com](http://www.popastro.com), and click on *Get Started*, where we have a step-by-step guide to get you stargazing!

***Article kindly provided by the British Society for Popular Astronomy***

## READERS' LETTERS

### Reply to *Memories from the Main: Coffee Trolley-Service*

I refer to the *Memories from the Main* in the April issue (QNT 131) and the recollection of the door-to-door and floor-by-floor tea/coffee trolley-service run by Mme Henri. In fact, the problems associated with this tea/coffee trolley-service were the first nut I had to crack when I joined HQ – replacing Michel Fèvre who was about to leave for the Delhi office.

This trolley-service was supplied by the restaurateur Mr Curchod, and was a legacy from our time at the Palais des Nations. However, providing a trolley-service in UNOG was quite different from providing the same service in WHO. We were in a building with 8 floors and 2 basements and the restaurant was situated on the top floor. The trolley-service was haphazard, not cost-effective and difficult to control. Furthermore, the trolley-service staff were known to be topping-up the thermos flasks with water from the hot taps in the WCs, and selling croissants bought at Migros. So, automates on each floor – providing a selection of teas and coffees – replaced the trolley-service, and eventually the COOP became the restaurateur.

**Hugo Tomyska**

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### What is wrong with “World Health”?

No, I don't mean the World Health Organization. I'm referring to the term “Global Health” which is increasingly being used in the literature. What's wrong with using “World Health”.

It is generally agreed that Health is a universal value and a multidimensional concept. The “globality” of health refers to the complex nature of this concept. “World Health” refers to all nations of our planet. So, the term “Global Health” is not a substitute for “World Health” in this particular case.

In a book published in 2005 by Dr Gunn, Dr Piel, Prof Sayers and Davies (sadly, all deceased) and myself, we chose for its title “*Understanding the Global Dimensions of Health*” \*

The initial proposal was to use the words “Global Health”, but Dr Piel argued, and rightly so, that if we truly believe that “Health” is a universal value with multidimensional aspects, the term “Global Health” would be less precise than “World Health”.

Hence our book title, which underlines the “universality and multidimensionality” of the concept of Health.

Food for thought.

**Pierre Mansourian**

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\* *Understanding the Global Dimensions of Health*

S. W. A. Gunn, Chief Editor

P. B. Mansourian, Coordinating Editor

A. M. Davies, Associate Editor

A. Piel, Associate Editor

B. McA. Sayers, Associate Editor

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## **Some personal observations on the WHO 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert**

Further to the report by Barbara Fontaine of the pieces interpreted at the concert (*see page 8*), I was also fortunate to attend the concert, which was held in Victoria Hall in Geneva. It was free to all, but the tickets went fast and my seat was on the outside row on the ground floor. However, it did not detract from listening or observing.

First, some comments on the audience. The hall was quite full but about 10% of the seats were unoccupied since some of the ticket holders did not attend. This is a problem of conducting a free concert – some people just do not value items obtained free. Also, it was remarkable to see some families appearing with small infants – from the age of one to six. Some of us were afraid of how they would behave during a concert, usually marked by a silent audience during the performance. However, much to my pleasure and surprise the infants behaved admirably and none cried or made noises during the performances. I wonder how many concerts they have already been exposed to but credit goes to their parents. The only jarring note was the movement of one or two women – with noisy high heels – from one side of the hall to the other during a performance, but a minor point.

It was a lovely concert, with a diverse set of performers including world renowned sopranos and a happy atmosphere. The organization and conduct of the concert were much appreciated including the donation of time and effort by the performers. The concert concluded with a “*Happy Birthday to WHO*”, sung by all the performers and the audience.

As I left the concert, I reflected on how lucky we were to work for WHO – a humanitarian organization working on international health which is seen as a gold standard by the public.

***Dev Ray***

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## **A personal tribute to Dr André Prost**

I had the privilege and pleasure of working with Dr André Prost on a one-to-one basis for six years at the WHO Office at the European Union (WEU), an experience providing me with a unique insight into this specific period of his career. I later understood that it had been a particularly difficult time in his personal life which made my role that much more important, and resulted in a collaboration beyond anything I had anticipated and, needless to say, an enduring friendship.

André’s posting to Brussels in September 1992 to establish WEU came about in response to the entry into force of the Treaty of Maastricht, which gave the European Union a mandate in public health. The Director-General at that time, Dr Nakajima, decided that a dedicated local office was required to handle subjects which fell within the purview of both WHO and the EU, to avoid duplication of costs for our mutual Member States. Appointing an HQ Staff Member was, however, somewhat contentious, since the Regional Director felt this to be within the remit of EURO. This was also the period when candidates for the position of Director-General were garnering support, with the election due at the Executive Board in January 1994; Dr Nakajima perceived André to be too close to his principal rival, which provided a further reason to distance him from Geneva.

André was extremely unhappy with this decision, but had no other option but to accept. Although the Director-General was insistent on André’s departure from HQ, he was nonetheless sympathetic to André’s family situation, with his two younger sons being in their final years at school; thus, André was

able to negotiate a deal which allowed him to travel back and forth between Geneva and Brussels on a weekly basis. This continued throughout his Brussels posting, although he did regularly spend a week at HQ touching base with colleagues, relaying “*intel*” from his discussions with Commission staff.

Once I had taken the decision to quit HQ and join him in Brussels, I had to allay his self-doubts about being the right person for this prestigious role. It took a couple of months of persuasion that European Commission staff would expect the WHO Representative to be medically qualified in order to command respect, and I encouraged him to seize the opportunity offered to broaden his horizons from medicine and epidemiology to diplomacy. He eventually admitted that I had been right!

So, for those six years, there were just the two of us – one Professional and one General Service staff member – covering the entire gamut of subjects of mutual interest to WHO and the EU in the field of health and development. Realising that he could not possibly carry out all the functions required of him, André happily delegated some of the less significant representational roles to me, primarily at the European Parliament. I regularly attended its Committee Meetings in Brussels, principally the Environment & Public Health Committee, occasionally the Cooperation & Development Committee, depending on the topics for discussion on the agenda. I was there to observe, take notes and report back, but if necessary I could approach any MEP raising health-related questions where WHO could provide assistance, and arrange a contact with André if so desired. André also facilitated my attendance at relevant plenary sessions of the Parliament in Strasbourg – again, this demonstrated his confidence in my capabilities, and I felt very fortunate to be working with someone who trusted me so implicitly. I knew my limits, and he knew I would never exceed them.

Throughout our tenure, relations with EURO were often fraught. André and I did travel to Copenhagen to try and smooth tensions, but I’m not sure this really helped. It did allow me to meet my counterpart, Jill Conway-Fell, and the two of us developed a good working relationship, which enabled us to clarify some of the more absurd missives that arrived in Brussels; they provided us all with some amusement.

During the first couple of years, André had no fixed residential base in Brussels, and stayed in a hotel for four nights a week, three weeks out of four. That I know to have been particularly lonely, but I never heard him complain. So, to alleviate the isolation, we also spent a good part of our “free time” on more congenial and social activities in each other’s company. At least once a week we went for a drink after work – the Grand’ Place has several places serving beer (of course!) and wine. We often had dinner together; there is no shortage of excellent restaurants in and around the Belgian capital! We found the best place for “*moules/frites*”, and sampled other local dishes – *Waterzooï* and, in season, “*jets de houblon*”. We occasionally went to the cinema, to classical concerts and even once to the opera. We also visited the historic sites of the Waterloo battlefields together with old family friends of mine who lived in the area. Given that Napoleon had been defeated there, a fact that we delighted in emphasizing, André took our teasing quite well! A little later, after he had rented a flat, he often spent weekends in Brussels, where he loved to browse in the flea market on Sunday mornings. We also went a little further afield. Bruges, of course – the Venice of the North – with its canals, iconic clock tower in the town square, old cloisters (and for me, the lace-makers), and its old hospital, now a fascinating medical museum, with everything labelled in ..... Flemish! I never did master that language!

For the greater part of our Brussels assignment, my car was the only vehicle available, so I was not only André’s administrative assistant, but also his unofficial chauffeur when the occasion demanded. Luckily, that was not very often, but I did once have to drive him to the Royal Palace when he was invited to attend the ceremony for King Albert’s award of a baronetcy to Peter Piot. When Dr Nakajima paid a visit to Brussels, the Belgian Health Ministry provided an official car for the day, although I had to drive André to the airport to be on hand to greet him on arrival, and André insisted I be present on the DG’s

departure. Otherwise, the public transport system served us both pretty well within the city and for trips to Strasbourg. The introduction of high-speed rail links to London (Eurostar, 1994) and Paris (Thalys, 1996) facilitated our travel to those two capital cities when required.

André was recalled to HQ by Dr Brundtland when she took office in July 1998, and, ever concerned for my well-being, was instrumental in facilitating my return to Geneva at the end of that year. Thus ended the most challenging period of my WHO career, and yet the most rewarding, thanks to André's innate ability to assess and harness potential, to encourage independence and reward achievements. We worked closely together as a team, in isolation from the structure of HQ. It could be rather lonely at times, but I am glad not to have missed out on this opportunity to work alongside André. He was a kind and considerate "boss", generous with his time and hospitality and had a wicked sense of humour, with that disarming smile and twinkle in his eye; I'm afraid I already miss all those attributes. He was true to his friends, but unforgiving to those who crossed him. His death at a comparatively early age has been an unexpectedly profound shock.

### ***Patricia Downes***



Patricia Downes and André Prost at an event jointly hosted by Belgium and WHO, at which André was invited to make a presentation.



## WALK THE TALK

### Walk the Talk: The Health For All Challenge, 21 May 2023

Very early on a fresh, but thankfully dry, Sunday morning, “*Team AFSM*” – aka Mary and Keith Wynn – set off for Geneva for the 4<sup>th</sup> Walk the Talk event. With the fun warm-ups due to start at 07.30 there was no time to lose.

By the time we arrived some of the warm-ups had already started, but there were still plenty of other activities to choose from. Fast moving dance routines from *The Quick Style* and *Sherrie Silver* were a highlight for one of the team! The editor has two left feet!

At 08.30 Dr Tedros took to the podium, first to present an award to Jacinda Ardern (former New Zealand Prime Minister), then to launch the official opening of this year’s Health for All Challenge, and by 09.00 we were off. Well, nearly!

First, the master runners set off, with dual Olympic champion Deratu Tulu and running legend Paul Tergat setting a cracking pace. Then, there were so many participants – more than ever; we believe many thousands of people thronged the *Place des*

*Nations* – that it took a few minutes for the front of the crowd to move off before we got to the start.

Your team had opted for the 4.2 kms walk, regrettably the 8 km option available on the earlier events is no longer a possibility, rather than the 3 km walk. We had an enjoyable brisk walk towards the Red Cross building, then up Avenue Appia, through the WHO campus, and out towards the US Mission. We then descended the steep hill past the *Chateau des Penthes* towards the Botanical Gardens. Through the gardens to the WMO building and a steady climb back to the *Place des Nations*. We had made such good time, despite meeting several WHO staffers we knew, that we continued walking past the *Place des Nations* and completed the 3 km option too.

Another highly successful Walk the Talk, gaining in significance year-on-year, and an increasingly popular event with the public, earning a lot of goodwill for WHO.

**Mary & Keith Wynn**



A partial view of the *Place des Nations*, taken very early in the morning, showing the gathering crowds and the enormous popularity of Walk the Talk. Photo: AFSM / K Wynn

More photos of the event can be found on the back cover and on page 48 in the digital edition of *Quarterly News*.

## WHAT OUR MEMBERS ARE DOING IN THEIR RETIREMENT

### An interview with Shaun Smyth; Artist

*Quarterly News* magazine met with AFSM member, Shaun Smyth, who worked in the Graphics Unit of WHO from 1982–2000 and was active as an extremely talented draughtsman. His technical drawings of medical equipment, medical interventions and surgical techniques were used to illustrate many award-winning WHO publications.

When Shaun retired he changed his style radically from meticulously accurate line drawings to one of large colourful canvases filled with fantastical characters in extraordinary landscapes. These have since been exhibited in Biennials and Collective shows over several years. He was awarded a "best artist" for the 2016 *Arpadi Biennale* (Divonne), and was chosen as the artist for the end of year etching for the *Atelier genèvoise de Gravure* (GeGrav). Over the years many of Shaun's works have found enthusiastic buyers. They have also been exhibited in Lyon (*Salon D'Hiver*, ARA), Belley (*Art Sacré*), *Arpadi* in Divonne, grand format etchings at "*ArtbyGeneve*" in Palexpo with GeGrav and the *Centre de l'art contemporain de l'île*, plus regular collective exhibitions. Personal exhibitions in Estavayer, and being an artist "*en situe*" in Yverdon-les-bains Cartotheque.

Those who are fortunate enough to be on Shaun's Christmas card list will attest to the unique, vibrant, and let's be frank, bizarre characters that recount strange tales. More recently Shaun has again changed his style to producing and exhibiting drawings, attracted by the total honesty of this medium, faults cannot be fudged or painted over.

Intrigued by the many different styles of art that Shaun is able to switch between, seemingly effortlessly, we asked him how it all came about.

More examples of Shaun's work can be seen on pages 49 to 53 in the digital edition of this magazine, and on his website, <https://www.shaun-smyth.ch/index.html>.

#### **Quarterly News. Describe for us your early background**

Confused! I was born in England during the war, and after the war my father became a Captain-Padre in a Cavalry regiment. This meant constantly moving. I attended eight Primary and Secondary schools, including two years in a school in Germany. I experienced nearly every variation of the UK educational system.

#### **Quarterly News. When did you first discover you had artistic talents?**

I enjoyed drawing people and objects for many years, long before Art School.

However, how I first became enrolled in art school was unusual. My mother was shopping in Gloucester and parked next to the School of Art. It started raining, so she took shelter in the entrance, the rain got heavier so she went inside. There, she was admiring the paintings on the walls, when someone asked her "*Do you have an appointment?*" She replied "*No*". The person replied, "*Never mind, the Principal will see you anyway*". She found herself in the Principal's office and lacking a reason, she told him about me. His suggestion led to action and four days later I was enrolled in art school.

**Quarterly News. So, you are partly self-taught, you then had a formal artistic education in illustration, and later etching?**

Yes. I originally aspired to become a dentist, but deciding that the six years necessary to qualify was too long, I chose “art” and ended up doing eight years of Further Education instead. Including the Royal college of Art, Teacher-training in Birmingham and illustration at Northampton school of Art.

**Quarterly News. Your work at WHO was quite different from your present art, was this a dilemma for you?**

Not really, in the beginning most of the work I did at WHO was illustrative. I had had some success as a “surrealist” painter before joining WHO. In those days all the illustrations were hand drawn. The change to computer-assisted imagery came later. This reduced the amount of drawing I did, and changed the emphasis.

Two highlights while working for WHO were, producing 250 illustrations for the “*International Medical Guide for Ships*” (one of which is shown here), and a six-week secondment to Rwanda to teach illustration.

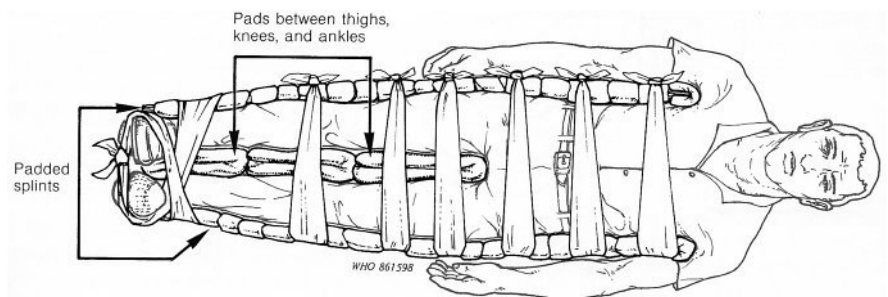


Fig. 37. Casualty with both legs broken: splinting both legs.

**Quarterly News. Since your retirement, you have explored many different styles and techniques, would you tell us more about these?**

The “foundation” of my work allows new techniques to be incorporated, and this gives the impression that there are different styles. Perhaps this has allowed an evolution over a longer period. By changing techniques at different periods, water-colour, oil painting, etching, and drawing, all add something, as complementary but differing viewpoints.

However, the real origins of my work are found in the Middle Ages; “*Apophenia*”, named after Saint Apophenia, renowned for perceiving meaningful connections between unrelated things, who became the Patron Saint of Artists, and was later embraced by the Surrealists.

Finally, science caught up and called it “*Pareidolia*”, which is a much less romantic name for the same ability. By identifying random marks, hidden images appear and can be exploited. There is no underpainting or pre-conceived subject.



This was not straightforward, but over the years became a framework for other lines of enquiry into the relationship between the viewer and the artist.

At the moment I am concentrating on drawings as there is a revival of appreciation for them as original works, with corresponding opportunities for showing them internationally. Technically, they are more difficult, impossible to falsify and are more demanding of the artist. It is an “exacting” form of art, as it reveals a lot about the artists’ own hand and eye. Some watercolours can be considered to belong to the same category.

The Fable of Red Riding Hood and the wolf revisited. Reading the Will. Pencil drawing in three colours.



**Quarterly News. What is your inspiration for the Christmas cards and the large canvases filled with fantastical characters in strange landscapes?**

The inspiration comes during the execution. From a quick, almost abstract start the painting “grows” as more elements are found in it. Those first elements are very important as they will dictate the scale and general organization, and even the subject of the final realization.

The Christmas cards are created for pleasure, but with a nod to some of the English graphic artists such as Hogarth, Rowlandson or Gillray, and French counterparts such as Daumier.



Above: An illustration from one of the 22-year run of Christmas cards. India and the Flying Carpet. Pa learns to fly. Christmas 2016

Right: Stonebird. Acrylic and oil on canvas. 130 x 97 cms.



**Quarterly News. You have intimated that it is difficult to find galleries to exhibit your work. Why do you think this is?**

Two reasons. First of all, “top level” Art Galleries offer few openings for artists who are not part of their regular “stable”. There are myriad smaller galleries, but their audience is limited, where the artist usually has to cover the costs – Gallery space, *Vernissage*, Framing, Publicity and do all the work. Otherwise, I have participated in many biennial exhibitions open to multiple artists, as this is a good way to attract a wider audience.

The second reason is age, which I can do nothing about as it creeps up on all of us! I did have real commercial success when younger before joining WHO, when the majority of international painting was realistic. Then, as Abstract art became the dominant means of expression, I left to continue my own path rather than follow trends. So, I went to Papua New Guinea for three years. (Education in Expressive Arts and Curriculum development)

**Quarterly News. Is there a specific environment or medium that's integral to your work?**

No. Painting or drawing is a solitary occupation. But I usually listen to Irish or Classical music as it is important to be receptive to the subconscious, and I find they help my concentration.

**Quarterly News** thanks Shaun Smyth for taking time off from his studio in Divonne-les-Bains, and we are pleased to show some of his styles in this article, and many more can be found in the digital edition of this *Quarterly News*.



## Walk the Talk: The Health For All Challenge, 21 May 2023



Just before the start of the Walk the Talk, showing the immense popularity. A healthy kick-start to the 76<sup>th</sup> World Health Assembly, starting later that day. *Photo: © WHO / Pierre Albouy*



There were plenty of choices of warm-up sessions prior to the start of the run. This one was led by Geneva University Hospital and the Mexican Mission. *Photo: © WHO / Pierre Albouy*



A view looking back to the *Place des Nations*, just a few moments after the start. Quite possibly the largest Walk the Talk turnout so far. *Photo: © WHO / Pierre Albouy*



## Some more of the photos taken during the WHO 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations The party on the 5<sup>th</sup> April





## Some more of the photos taken during the WHO 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations Picturing Health Exhibition





***Cholul Arboretum. Rescuing long-forgotten Mayan fruit trees***  
**Further illustrations from the book**





## Walk the Talk: The Health For All Challenge, 21 May 2023 More photos



Three proud Fijians flying their flag.



At the WHO campus there were further activities, here a chance to try boxing.



Still at the WHO campus, there were more activities, weightlifting in front of the UNAIDS building.



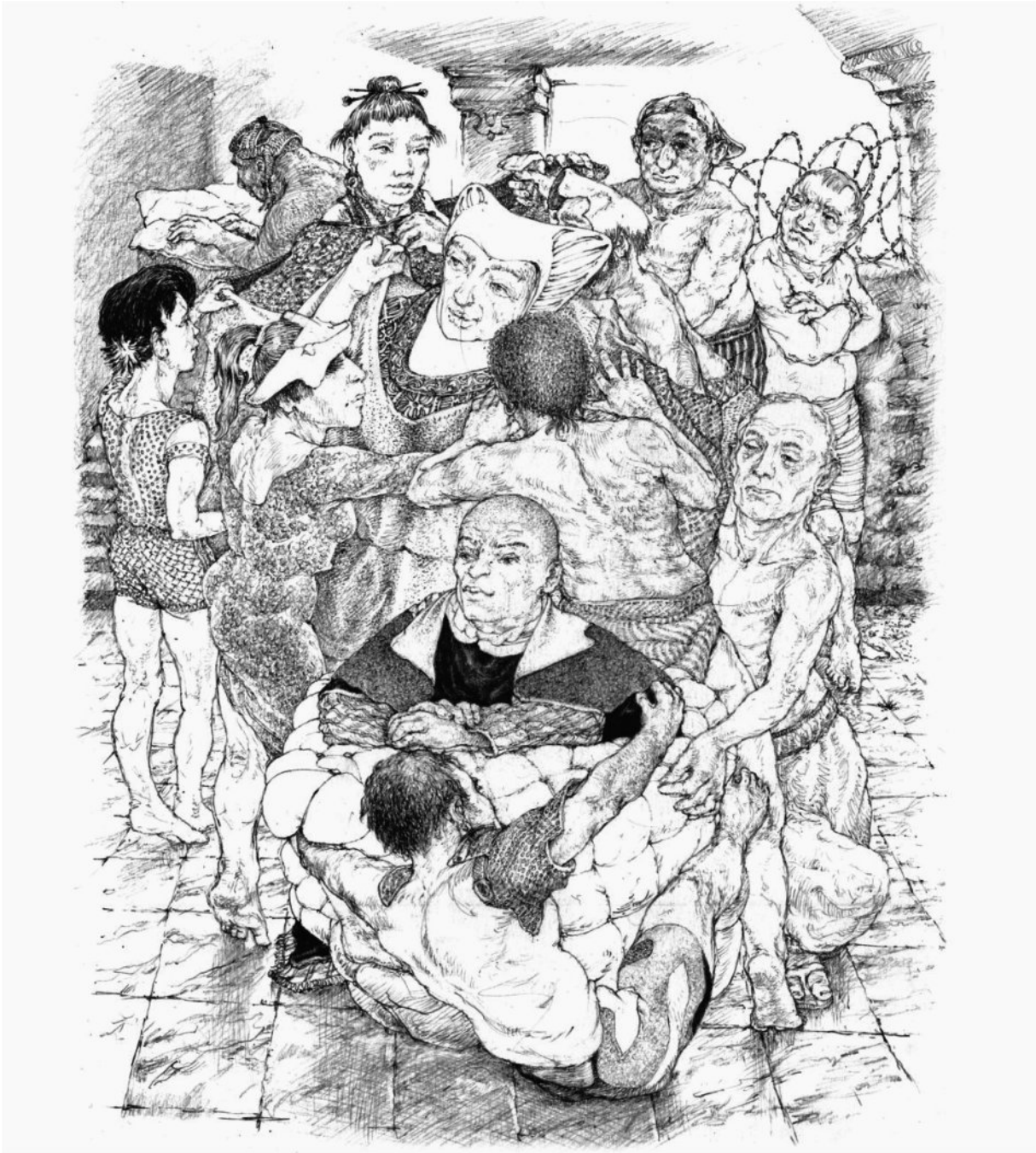
### Some more works by Shaun Smyth



The third temptation (one of a Triptych, each 116 x 73 cms.).  
Oil and Acrylic on canvas



Rudolf counts his wayward sheep.  
Watercolour from 2017 Christmas card



Wrapping up the rich to protect them from harsh reality.  
Or, Wrapping up the rich to protect their outrageous fortunes from slings and arrows; *Shaunspere*.  
Pencil on A3 Paper



View towards the Valais (Ile de Peilz series)  
Etching.





“The King is in the all-together” as seen by the Tailor.  
From the story by Hans Christian Anderson.  
Pencil on A3 Paper



The singer and her musicians. Where have all our lullabies gone?

*(Never harm, nor spell, nor charm, Come our lovely lady nigh; So, good-night, with lullaby. Shakespeare. Midsummer night's dream.)*

Brush drawing in ink on A3 Paper

The foghorn of war awakens ancient demons.  
Pencil on A3 Paper.



Climate change, the bailout.  
2021 Christmas card





Characters from the strange adventures of Father Christmas.  
*Watercolours*