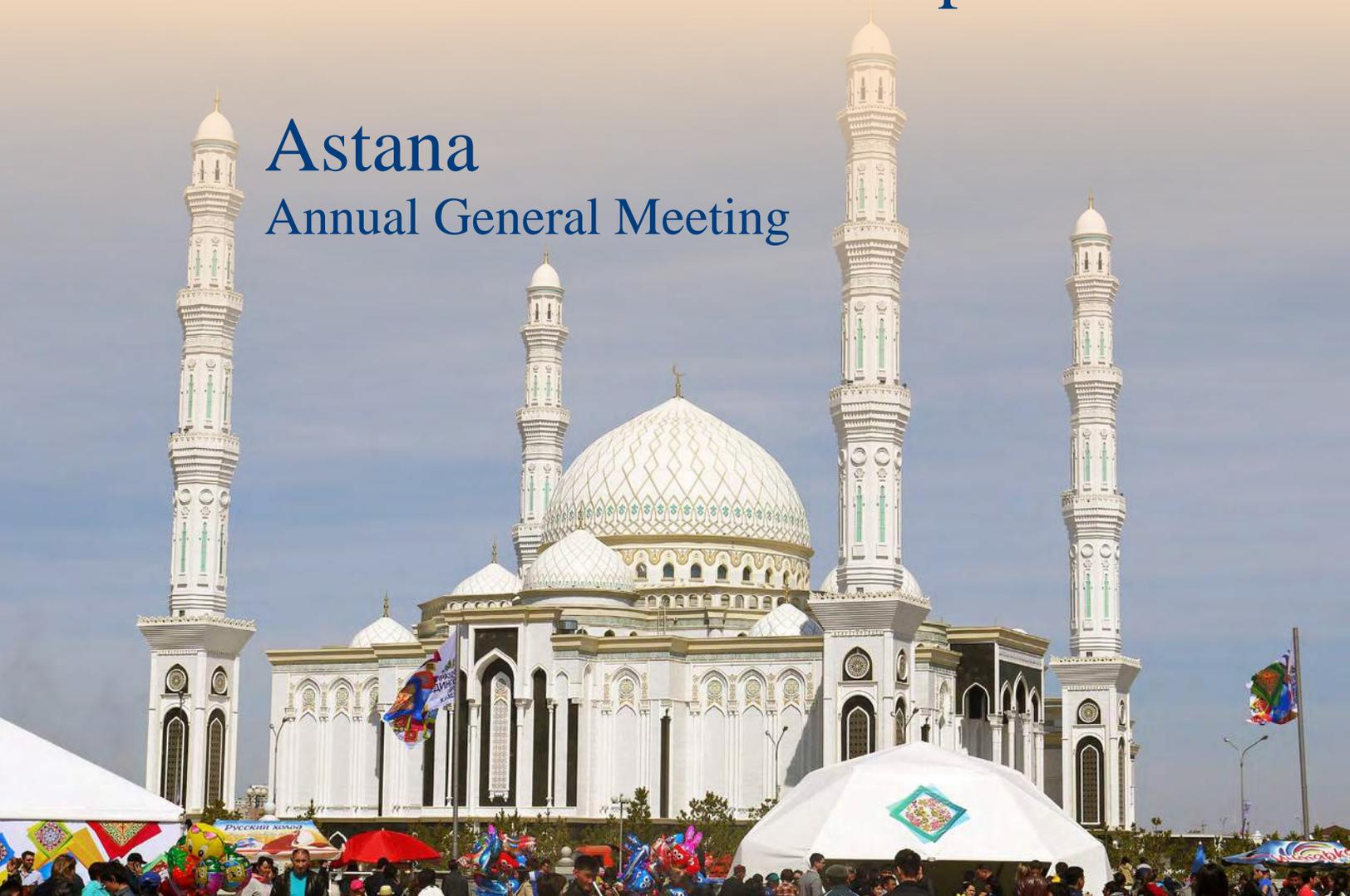


People, Places, and Passages



Chapter News

Astana Annual General Meeting



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Our Cover



Top left: Nestor Diasanta's self-caricature; top right: Philippines East Group with the Angono Higitantes; below: Khasret Sultan Mosque, Astana, Kazakhstan, from the plaza fronting the Palace of Independence, venue of the ADB and AFE 2014 annual meetings.

AFE–ADB News

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ADB's Third President Taroichi Yoshida (1919–2014)



Mr. Taroichi Yoshida, the third President of the Asian Development Bank (1976–1981), passed away on 14 March 2014, at the age of 94. He followed his beloved wife, Mutsuko, who had preceded him 8 months earlier.

True to his personality, the wake and funeral services were carried out modestly, inviting only close acquaintances and ex-ADBans to pay their last homage. This made the occasion all the more impressive.

Former ADB staff members who had served him

during his tenure made it customary to meet him annually on the second Sunday of each New Year at a hotel in Tokyo. The gathering, called “Barrio Fiesta,” has continued since 1982, attracting about 50–60 people every time. It is with profound grief that we find ourselves bereft of the irreplaceable nucleus.

Condolences may be sent to his son, Mr. Tadashi Yoshida, at 2-8-30-315, Sakuragaoka, Setagaya-ku, Tokyo, Japan 156-0054, or to tyoshida1972@mercury.ne.jp by email. ■

AFE–ADB Updates

From the AFE President

Hans-Juergen Springer (ADB 1972–2002)



The main event in the early part of the year was the election of the AFE Vice President. Of the two candidates nominated by members, Jill Gale de Villa and Gam de Armas, Jill received the larger number of votes and was reelected for another term of four years from 1 July 2014

to 30 June 2018. I would like to thank our members for actively participating in the election process, which shows that the membership is supporting the work of the Association.

The next major event was AFE's annual meeting in Astana on 2 May 2014. Attendance at the ADB annual meeting from 2 to 5 May was smaller than at previous annual ADB meetings; so was the attendance at the AFE annual meeting. The remote location of the meeting venue, long travel time, expensive air fares, and difficult visa arrangements probably all contributed to make Astana less attractive than other annual meeting venues.

The ongoing ADB review of the Staff Retirement Plan (SRP) figured heavily in the discussions at both the chapter coordinators' and annual general meetings. Based on briefings by BPMSD staff after the annual meeting, which revealed that ADB's current pension plan—effective since 2006—is not very generous compared with other international plans, it is our view that changes to the plan for current pensioners are unlikely. We will keep you informed about the final outcome of the SRP review as well as the subsequent review of other benefits including the health insurance scheme.

On 24 June I handed a check amounting to P600,000 to the CEO of Habitat for Humanity Philippines Foundation. The funds will be used, together with funds from the National Housing Authority, to build six houses in Culion, Palawan or Tacloban, Leyte, two areas severely affected by last year's typhoon Yolanda.

Let us look forward to next year's annual ADB meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan from 2 to 5 May 2015, and AFE's annual

meeting on 2 May. Azerbaijan is an attractive country for visitors, with its long history predating Roman times as a vibrant part of the Silk Road. We have included a brief article on Azerbaijan in this issue. Hope to see you there! ■

From the AFE Vice President

Jill Gale de Villa (1993–2005)



Update: Insurer. The website indicates that we are now covered by Cigna Life Insurance Company of Europe. Apparently this switch happened quietly about a year ago.

We have had several inquiries lately about health insurance claims, pertaining to what is covered. Some advice from ADB and Vanbreda (–Cigna) follows.

Room and Board Limits. When going into hospital, check that the room and board rates are within the allowable rates for the area. If it is an emergency and you can't check, be sure to contact Vanbreda before checking out and let them handle costing discussions with the hospital. In a recent case, a hospital in California charged a current staff member a huge amount, and the victim has had to pay the difference because she did not bring Vanbreda into the issue before checking out. Current room and board limits are on the Vanbreda website.

Guarantee Certificate: Access and Limitations. In the Vanbreda website, after logging in, you can find the certificate as the last item under *Claims* in the lower left of the page--you scroll down to it. Click on "Insurance certificate" to download and print a certificate from Vanbreda that informs the hospital the insurance will cover you. The hospital will contact Vanbreda, which will contact its adjusters, which will discuss with your medical provider and/or the hospital, and will then tell the hospital that they will guarantee payment for what is considered to be an appropriate number of days or coverage. This is done to avoid hospitals and other providers taking advantage (as in the case cited above).

Is It Covered? Whenever contemplating a procedure, check whether the specific procedure and method is covered. Do this by e-mailing or calling Vanbreda in Malaysia. Call them at 323-217-6824, 800-9687-4647 (toll free from the Philippines), 1-855-882-52-67 (toll free in the US), 32-3-217-5730 (Belgium), or e-mail and ask that they call you at a specific time and date. Malaysia's busy times for telephone calls are 12 noon to 1 pm Kuala Lumpur time, and sometimes 10 am to 1 pm, often depending on how many professional providers are calling for information.

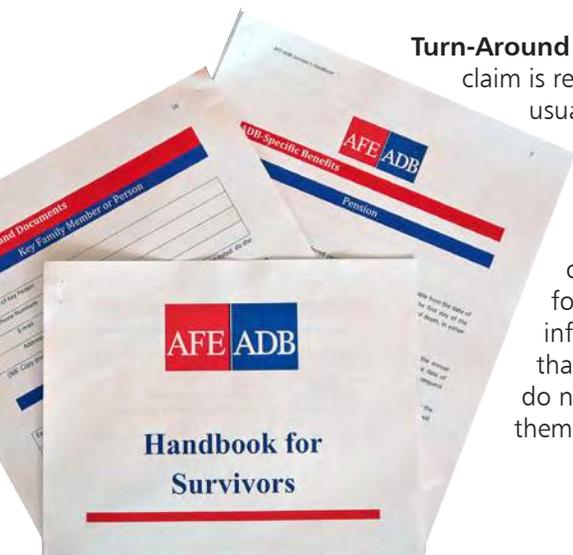
Some procedures are covered, but only to a certain extent. For example, for cataract surgery, only replacement with normal intraocular lenses is covered, not corrective lenses. For cataract surgery, the cost reimbursed will only be equivalent to that of a normal intraocular lens. And not all methods of cataract surgery are covered.

Some procedures are not covered because they are not considered "customary and usual." We are asking that the website carry a more precise and extensive list of procedures that are fairly common but are not covered because they are still considered experimental or insufficiently proven.

Checking your Claims Statements. The most reliable way to keep up-to-date with your claims statements is online. If you are not online, you may have your statements sent via regular mail. This can cause delays in receiving information. If you have a family member you trust, and who has the time to assist you with your claims, you could ask her or him to check your e-mail and your Vanbreda account, or you could ask Vanbreda to communicate directly with that person—to do this you officially write Vanbreda to give permission for the other person to have access to your medical information.

Providing trusted family with access to your filled out *Handbook for Survivors* will be very helpful. If you need a new copy, email AFE-ADB@adb.org and request one, or write to us for a hard copy.

Turn-Around Times. Once your claim is received, Vanbreda usually responds within 10 working days either by informing you of the settlement or by asking for additional information when that is needed. If you do not hear from them, e-mail them. ■



Helping Hands

AFE Helping Yolanda Victims Recover

Gamaliel de Armas, Jr. (ADB 1981–2000)



As noted in *AFE-ADB News* #44, a committee I chaired as Philippine Chapter Coordinator, with Amading Astudillo, Lou de Belen, Manny Faelnar, David Parker, Hans Springer, Ophie Sta. Ana, and Jill de Villa, explored ways of extending assistance to Yolanda victims with the over P750,000 received from AFE chapters and members.

Back to School. The repair of classrooms at Tagpuro Elementary School in Tacloban was the first project completed. AFE member Tsukasa Maekawa delivered the P30,000 needed for labor and monitored the construction. The 2-week repair work was finished by 1 March 2014 in partnership with the Scandinavian Children's Mission, which provided free construction materials. This brought great joy to the students and teachers, who had been using makeshift shelters exposed to the elements. In addition, the flooring of the student center, to be converted into a library room, was cemented.



Magical moment: Tsukasa Maekawa receives a framed set of students' appreciation letters and Resolution of Thanksgiving from the school and Parent Teachers Association of Tagpuro Elementary School.



Houses built using a new earthquake- and typhoon-resistant design with steel posts anchored to a cement slab foundation.



Gam de Armas and Hans-Juergen Springer with Habitat's CEO Charlie Ayco and staff member Arlene Ramirez, 24 June 2014.

Rehousing Victims. Recovering from the devastating effects of super typhoon Yolanda, especially when one's house is completely gone can be daunting. To help meet this challenge, we partnered with Habitat for Humanity Philippines to build six newlydesigned typhoon- and earthquake-resistant core houses, with a matching grant from the National Housing Authority. These houses, constructed with steel posts embedded in a solid concrete foundation with meshed bamboo or meshed steel cement clad sidings, will have a four-sided roof. The houses will be built in a community with roads, electricity, and water supply. Construction is expected to start as soon as the housing site in Tacloban or Culion has been delivered by the government.

Livelihood and Lessons. Many fisherfolk lost their only source of income due to the typhoon. This is where the Negrense Volunteers for Change (NVC) Foundation Inc. steps in. For P25,000, NVC supplies a fiberglass *banca* (saving trees) with engine to fisherfolk who lost their boat to Yolanda and meet other requirements. NVC educates the beneficiaries and their households about environment

conservation, such as through mangrove planting and catch management; monitors the fisher's daily catches; and provides donors with reports on progress via email. The fishers furnish the outriggers, are responsible for repairs, and are not allowed to rent or sell the *bancas*. NVC stresses stewardship over ownership. The AFE funding paid for five *bancas*, which will be ready for delivery in July or August to beneficiaries in Tacloban, Ormoc, Leyte, Iloilo, or Cebu. ■



Fishermen beneficiaries with *bancas* funded by Negrense Volunteers for Change. The beneficiary provides the outriggers.

B's Bohol Earthquake Project

Simon Baily-Gibson (ADB 2005–2012)



Ed: For more images of this heartwarming project, visit Simon's Facebook page. To contribute to the continuing charitable work and needs, e-mail Simon at bailygibson@gmail.com.

I wrote about our extraordinary earthquake and super typhoon Yolanda experience in the March 2014 News. Eight months after the 7.2 magnitude earthquake brought the island of Bohol to its knees, reconstruction work continues in earnest and Bohol is back in business!

Although bridges have been rebuilt and roads repaired, much still needs to be done. With no small amount of trumpet blowing, envoys from Manila handed over

P2.4 billion of disaster assistance funding to our governor with the assurance that Bohol was never forgotten. That may be so, but some local folk, struggling to repair their broken homes, might need convincing that they have been remembered. That said, help is finally here, and some families have received donations of plywood, roofing tin, and other building materials in our neighborhood. But, it does not seem to have been well coordinated, and there are insufficient resources for a much-needed home-by-home assessment.

Continuing Assistance: Much Needed. We continue to be amazed by the response to B's Bohol Earthquake Charity, the simple little fund Flor and I set up immediately after the earthquake. We have received an astonishing P1.6 million (about \$36,700) from 135 wonderful donors in 16 countries from as far as Peru in the west and New Zealand in the east.

Social media proved highly effective with friends of friends on Facebook and LinkedIn circulating our appeal. An article published in the *Gulf News* brought in further contributions from our Dubai days in the '80s and '90s. Old school friends from the United Kingdom; a sponsored swim in Sussex, England; a work place collection in Melbourne, Australia; and a ladies mahjong lunch club in the United Arab Emirates all chipped in. And not to forget my energetic 89-year-old mother who tirelessly canvassed her friends and villagers in North West Wales for over P300,000 (about \$6,900).



A happy Boholana in a home rebuilt using funds from B's Bohol Earthquake Charity.

All this has enabled us to donate building materials to 93 local families. The average donation for each home has been around P10,000 (about \$230) although some bad cases have received much more. For those in the West this may not seem like much but it's surprising what a difference such a contribution can make. For a small and simple dwelling, that's quite a lot of stuff to be getting on with. Most of the recipients have no means of saving that amount of money from their pitiful earnings and are already heavily in debt.

The families the fund has helped are very thankful. The image above shows one happy face from the village. Many of the donations were handed out within weeks of the disaster and certainly before any other help was forthcoming. The main problem now is a shortage of skilled labor and sufficient funds for families to pay wages.

At left are before and after shots of houses that were totally destroyed and, with the funding provided, have risen anew on the same site day by day.

Aftershocks, Moving On. As if we need to be reminded about the horrors of last year, we still feel aftershocks, and shattered nerves are quickly shaken once again. Although much less frequent, some are still severe enough to give a broken house a significant jolt. But we feel we've waited long enough and the rebuilding of our own home will commence in July; hopefully we'll finish most of it by year-end so we can move on in 2015. ■



Above: Homes destroyed by the earthquake. Below: The families' new homes, build with funding from Simon and Flor's project, on the same plots; earthquake damage still evident.



Baku, Azerbaijan: For the 2015 Annual Meeting

Hans-Juergen Springer



Azerbaijan booth at Astana Annual Meeting.

Next year’s annual meeting will take place from 2 to 5 May in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan, called “the Land of Fire,” is south of the Caucasus mountain range, bordering the western shores of the Caspian Sea, the world’s largest internal body of water. Azerbaijan is fairly easily reached by air from Europe and the Middle East.

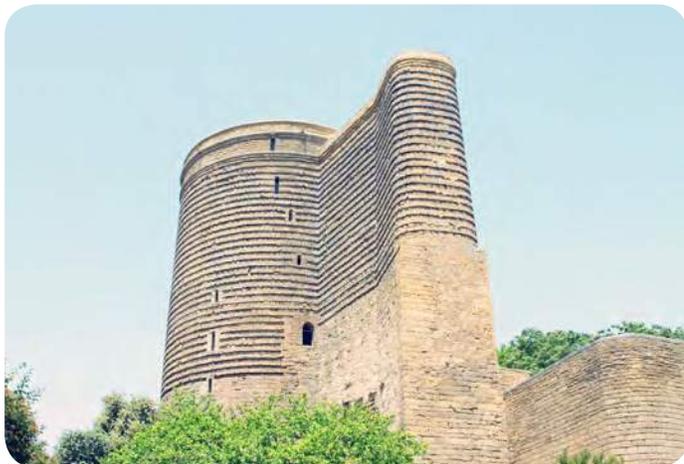
Ancient trade routes along the Silk Road from Asia’s Far East to Europe passed through Azerbaijan. Its well-documented history starts with the conquests of the armies of Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C., followed by the Romans introducing Christianity in the 4th century A.D. Arab control and the introduction of Islam came in the 7th century A.D. Mongol raids took place in the 12th and



Carpet shop in the Old City.

13th centuries, followed by Persia’s domination. Tsarist Russia took control early in the 19th century. Finally in 1991, Azerbaijan became an independent country.

Azerbaijan’s varied scenery ranges from snow-capped peaks in the Caucasus mountains to lowland forests and beaches along the Caspian Sea. In addition to nature’s attractions, the country offers historical monuments left by the many conquerors that swept through it. As Azerbaijan’s land area is small (about the size of Austria), distances are easy to traverse. It takes, for example, only 8 hours by car to reach its western border with Georgia or 12 hours by



Maiden Tower—the ancient symbol of Baku.



Old City, also known as Icheri Sheher, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with the Flame Towers—the symbol of modern Baku—in the background.



Museum of Azerbaijan Literature, named after Nizami Ganjavi (1141–1209), a great medieval Persian poet.

overnight train to reach Tblisi, capital of Armenia. Guide books recommend (and actually cover) visits to neighboring Georgia and Armenia, also very attractive for travelers.

Baku, a city of about 2 million people, is on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Baku has a long history and reached prominence in the 15th century. Baku's old city, now a UNESCO World Heritage site, is known for its caravanserais and the Palace of the Shirvanshas—rulers of Azerbaijan in

the 15th century. In more recent years, Baku has benefited from the country's main export, crude oil. International hotels have sprung up, and the city's infrastructure has been improved. Transport in the city as well as the rest of the country is fairly well developed. Baku has a good network of buses and a Metro system.

Beside enjoying the country's natural and architectural sights, visitors will also delight in Azerbaijan's traditional carpet industry, its caviar from sturgeon in the Caspian Sea, and fine wine and brandies from well-established vineyards. Daytime temperatures in early May are about 20° Celsius. May has an average of 4 rainy days and 8 hours of sunshine per day.

We'll keep you posted on the 2015 annual meetings of ADB and AFE when details, especially on visa requirements and hotel accommodations, become available. The annual meeting website, not quite complete yet, is www.adb.org/annual-meeting/2015. The Internet provides lots of information on the many sights Azerbaijan has to offer, and Wikipedia offers some good information too at <http://wikitravel.org/en/Azerbaijan>. Do mark 2–5 May 2015 in your calendar. ■

Visit <http://afe-adb.org>

What's New at HQ?

ADB's new third atrium to the main building is nearing completion, as the interior is being finished.



Looking down at the front of the new atrium, with the finishing in progress.



ADB's three atria, from the roof of the car park building. The new atrium is on the right.

Kazakhstan 2014

Chapter Coordinators' Meeting: Minutes

Palace of Independence • Astana, Kazakhstan • 2 May 2014



Ron Hamilton, Günter Hecker, and Shahida Jaffrey.



David Parker, Hans-Juergen Springer, and Jill Gale de Villa.

Present

AFE–ADB President Hans-Juergen Springer (HJS), Vice President Jill Gale de Villa (JGV), Treasurer David Parker (DP)

Coordinators and coordinators' representatives: Ron Hamilton (New Zealand), Günter Hecker (Europe), and Shahida Jaffrey (Pakistan)

Observers: Naseer Ahmad, Ulf Freiwald, Ashraf Malik, and Robert Wihtol

Opening

The meeting commenced at 9:30 a.m. HJS welcomed the participants, and the agenda was adopted.

HJS announced for the record that Jill Gale de Villa, whose term as AFE–ADB Vice President was due to end on 30 June 2014, had been reelected to the position.

The minutes of the chapter coordinators' meeting in Delhi in 2013 were then approved.

AFE–ADB President's Report

HJS outlined the highlights of his report, which had been circulated to members, and is summarized in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) minutes.

AFE–ADB Vice President's Report

JGV outlined the highlights of her report, which had been circulated to members, and is summarized in the AGM minutes.

AFE–ADB Treasurer's Report

DP outlined the highlights of his report, which had been circulated to members, and is summarized in the AGM minutes. In addition, he noted that, while revenues exceeded expenses in both 2012 and 2013, a small deficit

is possible in 2014. Business travel expenses are expected to be higher than in 2013, partly because the AGM in 2014 was in Astana, and the salary of the administrative assistant will again increase. ADB provided a subsidy of \$24,100 for 2014, \$825 more than for 2013.

Financial Matters

Discussion followed on the structure and adequacy of AFE's annual membership fees in terms of the long-term sustainability of AFE. With rising costs it may be necessary at some stage to consider whether the annual fees should be increased, and if so, by what percentage for former national and international staff, respectively. A thorough review, which could also take into account other things AFE could do with additional money, would be useful but could be very time-consuming. In the context of hiring someone to assist in such work and getting the necessary additional computers and office space, HJS mentioned AFE's ongoing requests to be allocated additional space, either by moving into the new atrium or taking over some offices near AFE's current office.

As to how AFE managed with the existing membership fees, he explained that the Association is lucky to have the assistance ADB provides in funds and facilities. While



Naseer Ahmad and Ashraf Malik.

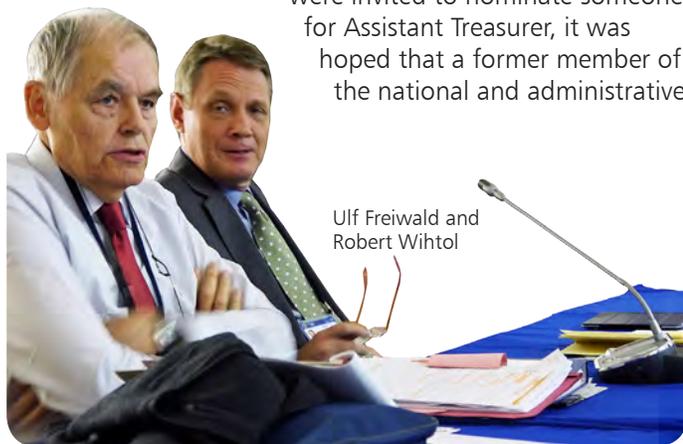
some participants at the meeting said they could accept some increase in the fees, an increase could be met with resistance from constituencies that want more funds to be given to the chapters.

Surviving spouses of AFE members are not required to pay membership fees (an arrangement that one coordinator thought might not be justified). HJS said that this had been decided long ago by Mr. Khan, and should not be changed without due consideration. It could, however, be reconsidered later on.

A question was raised on the allocation and use of the ADB subsidy for eligible local expenses. Some chapters, such as Pakistan, were not receiving any allocation because members get together, if at all, only infrequently and in small groups, and in some cases are willing to pay the full cost themselves. A coordinator asked whether some of the subsidy could be reallocated to pay, for example, for more staff in the AFE office. In response, HJS commented that, as stated in ADB's Guidelines for the Use of the Subsidy to AFE-ADB, the subsidy is provided to AFE "in recognition of the important role it plays in fostering the Bank's development mission and in order to help the Association defray its administrative costs..." At this stage, he felt it is important to continue using the subsidy to assist the chapters as much as possible because of the role they play in fostering ADB's development mission through enabling members of particular countries or areas to maintain contact with one another and remain interested in ADB and informed about its activities.

Election Procedures

A provision in AFE's bylaws states: "If the Executive Committee does not include a former ADB national officer or administrative officer residing in Manila, the Executive Committee members may appoint such a former officer as an additional member of the Executive Committee...." HJS noted that so far no one had been appointed under this provision, because when members were invited to nominate someone for Assistant Treasurer, it was hoped that a former member of the national and administrative



Ulf Freiwald and
Robert Wihtol

staff (NAS) would be nominated. However, no nominations were received. When the position of Treasurer becomes vacant, efforts will be made to see if a former NAS member with the right background can be elected.

Regarding the election procedures, HJS said the experience of the recent election for the position of Vice President drew attention to procedures that need to be reviewed. First, many members simply placed a mark on the ballot against the name of their preferred candidate, whereas the bylaws require that they write 1 and 2 against the candidates' names in the order of preference. As a result, the votes of those members were invalidated. However, if there are only 2 candidates, writing both 1 and 2 is unnecessary. The requirement in the bylaws, in the case of 2 candidates, should accordingly be changed.

Second, some members simply sent an email saying "I'm going to vote for ...," because they found it difficult to vote using the computer-based system to fill in their ballots. Such votes, too, were considered invalid. It will therefore be necessary to see what provisions could be made to make voting easier. For example, confidentiality could be made a lower priority for members who prefer to vote in the body of their email.

About 12% of the votes received were invalidated. (Had they been tallied, the election results would not have been different.) Consequently, election procedures will be discussed in a "post-mortem" meeting with Bruce Purdue, who had largely redrafted the bylaws and was the returning officer (the official who conducts the election and announces the result) for the recent election, and Julia Holz, the scrutineer in the election. The meeting might also consider the need to establish voting regulations that would supplement the bylaws.

Staff Retirement Plan

HJS referred to his statement in the President's Report about the major benefits review ADB is undertaking and the fact that pensioners were denied representation on the Steering Committee. He added that the Vice President for Administration and Corporate Affairs also gave assurance that pensioners, deferred pensioners, and current beneficiaries will be consulted if any changes that would be applicable to them were being considered. In the Vice President's view, consultations with stakeholders are distinct from the review process. Similarly, he felt that there needs to be a distinction between stakeholders and membership in the Steering Committee.

HJS said that further discussions with relevant staff in BPMSD gave the impression that there may be no intention to change the pension benefits, except that attempts could possibly be made to do away with or replace the minimum guaranteed 3% increase, which has benefited members in some countries with low inflation

rates. However, he thought it unlikely such attempts will succeed, because it would be difficult to take away what retirees thought was an assured benefit. Article 13, Amendments, of the Board-approved SRP document states that if ADB wants to make changes that would deprive current staff, retirees, and other beneficiaries of those benefits, then such changes will require their consent.

Discussion followed on the possibility of preparing a resolution for sending to ADB expressing concern about whether the ongoing review of the SRP will affect retirees, and about the rejection of AFE's request to have a seat on the SRP Steering Committee. Chapter coordinators decided, however, that these concerns should be stated in the minutes of the chapter coordinators' meeting rather

than sending a resolution. The coordinators interpreted ADB's rejection of the request for a seat on the Steering Committee as meaning that there would be no major changes in the pension benefits applying to retirees, i.e., that any changes in the pension benefits would be grandfathered.

Other Business

Internal Audit. A member mentioned for future consideration that it may be useful for AFE to have an internal audit function.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m. ■

AFE–ADB 28th Annual General Meeting

Palace of Independence • Astana, Kazakhstan • 2 May 2014

The meeting was chaired by AFE President Hans-Juergen Springer (HJS) in the absence of AFE Chairman Bong Suh Lee, who was unable to attend because of another engagement. HJS called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m. For the record, he announced that in the recent election for the position of Vice President, there were two candidates, G. de Armas and Jill Gale de Villa (JGV). The winner was JGV, who will serve in the position for the next 4 years. The meeting agenda was adopted, and a moment of silence was observed for the members who had passed away in the previous 12 months.

Minutes of 27th Annual General Meeting

The minutes of the 27th Annual General Meeting in Delhi in 2013 were adopted.

President's Report

After AFE–ADB's revised bylaws were approved by the membership in April 2013, the Executive Committee focused on expanding the scope and improving the security of AFE's website. Work on this is ongoing.

AFE Yolanda Fund. Contributions were about P763,000. Under the chairmanship of Philippines Chapter Coordinator G de Armas, a committee decided on the following recipients:

1. Habitat for Humanity, P600,000 to provide housing in the Tacloban area; Daang Bantayan, North Cebu; and Culion, Palawan; with additional funding from the National Housing Authority, the total became P1.2 million;
2. construction of five fishing boats (*bancas*) and provision of training on environmentally friendly fishing for affected fishermen in Negros, for a total of P125,000; and

3. a special P30,000 grant to repair an elementary school building in Tagpuro, Tacloban.
(The remaining P8,000 will be donated for school supplies.)

Pension. At the annual Pension Committee meeting on 2 April 2014, TowersWatson's annual actuarial report on the Staff Retirement Plan (SRP) was discussed and the recommendations for funding the SRP in 2014 were endorsed. ADB has again made substantial contributions to the SRP. The underfunding has only slightly improved, because it is gauged on a 5-year moving average that still includes 2009.

A comprehensive benefits review started in late 2013 with a review of the SRP. The SRP review is to be completed by mid-2015. HJS had made representations, in writing to the Vice President and at the recent Pension Committee meeting, for pensioners to be represented on the Steering Committee—just as ADB staff are—but the request was denied. The reason given was that the Steering Committee's work is not focused on retirees' pensions. Such a decision is surprising; in a recent World Bank benefits review, retirees were included on the corresponding committee.

While the World Bank has increased its retirement age from 62 to 67 years, ADB's remains at 60 despite the obvious benefits increasing it would have for the SRP. HJS had suggested to the Pension Committee 2 years ago that ADB consider increasing the retirement age. He hopes the Steering Committee of the SRP review will take such considerations into account.

Membership. AFE's membership has increased from 2,534 to 2,656, of whom 1,464, or 55%, are pensioners. In the rest

of 2014, AFE will focus on the SRP review and the upcoming review of the health, long-term care, and life insurance.

Vice President's Report

Health Insurance. Vanbreda's report indicates that claims in 2013 under the Group Medical Insurance Plan were somewhat higher than in 2012. Premiums are expected to increase in 2014, but by how much is not yet known.

Life Insurance. Randy Earman had taken the initiative to discuss with BPMSD whether the life insurance could be made more flexible. Vanbreda subsequently reported that they are not able to make changes to avoid the diminishing returns with age, or increase the coverage for retired enrollees.

Long-Term Care Insurance. Because of the premium schedule that increases sharply with age, each year members are requested to consider individually, rather than as a group, the cost of this insurance versus their own likely needs. The plan seems highly favorable to the insurer.

Benefits Review. The benefits review ADB is undertaking will include health and other insurance. This is a concern because of pressure from the Board on the current benefits. The insurance benefits are much more vulnerable than pensions. We are therefore making efforts to keep in touch with ADB to find out what is being considered. While some members have access to good national health insurance plans, many do not, so it is important that the health insurance be retained in a way that helps to all cover members adequately.

Washington, DC Meetings with Other Alumni Associations. JGV and HJS attended the 5th annual meeting of seven alumni associations of international institutions. The meeting focused on networking and communications as essential to maintaining the utility and viability of the associations. Experts made presentations on the use of social media for such organizations. Participants agreed that the associations would benefit from greater use of social media. AFE is investigating this, taking into account the time and intricacies involved in managing social media. Consideration could be given to Facebook, which would require more work to run it; LinkedIn, which would require almost no work, but is more important to members trying to continue with their careers; and Twitter.

Publications. The Publications Committee continues to issue AFE News twice annually. Feedback is welcome. Members are encouraged to submit articles and images about the activities of the authors and/or other members that will be of interest to the general membership. JGV asked that members observe the deadline for submission of articles.



Ron Hamilton, Patrick Pillon, Günter Hecker, Ashraf Malik, Robert Wihtol, Naseer Ahmad, and Shahida Jaffrey.

Treasurer's Report

AFE's finances continued to receive a clean bill of health from the auditors. Revenues exceeded expenses by \$2,567. This was a little smaller than the surplus of \$4,783 in 2013, with a decline in revenues (-\$4,106) outweighing the decline in expenses (\$-1,890). Net assets (assets less liabilities) at the end of the year were \$155,443.

About 12% of AFE members pay their annual dues by check, cash, or credit card. Members are encouraged to keep their payments up-to-date, because AFE's financial strength depends largely on the support of all its members.

Members appreciate the subsidy ADB provides to help AFE defray its administrative costs, and in recognition of the important role it plays in fostering ADB's development mission. For 2014, ADB provided a subsidy of \$24,100, \$825 more than for 2013. The ADB subsidy allocated to chapters helps make their reunions more attractive and affordable, and hopefully that encourages members to attend—which is particularly important for helping chapter members maintain contact with each other, ADB, and AFE. Accordingly, the subsidy allocation and the principles the chapters follow in availing of the subsidy will be kept under review to ensure that the subsidy is used effectively in meeting their development needs.

BPMSD Statement on SRP and Insurance

HJS commented on BPMSD's statement, which was circulated to AFE members with other documents for the meeting. The statement includes the following: "there is adequate beneficiary protection. Assets are held by ADB with the legal obligation that staff and ADB contributions are irrevocable and the fund is payable only to beneficiaries. Accrued benefit entitlements are protected which cannot be amended to reduce benefits accrued to date."

The actuarial valuation of the SRP will be published in the SRP Annual Report and will be made available online to all staff through the Staff Development and Benefits portal and to retired participants via the ADB Alumni portal, and in hard

copy on request. BPMSD and OIST are working diligently to streamline the pension administration procedures and improve the timeliness and level of service for clients.

BPMSD’s statement noted

- **Group Medical Insurance Plan:** stop-loss limits are now \$4,020 for international staff and PHP52,180 for national and administrative staff;
- **Post Retirement Group Life Insurance:** 522 participants were covered in 2013, including 37% of new retirees; and
- **Long-Term Care Insurance Plan:** at the end of 2013, 452 retirees and spouses were enrolled..

Other Business

Philippines Chapter Statement. Lita Gamboa read a statement from Philippines Chapter Coordinator G. de Armas, who was unable to attend the meeting. In the statement, clarification was sought on whether expenses relating to chapter activities, other than annual reunions, qualify for reimbursement from ADB subsidy to AFE. The statement also suggested that

1. the ADB subsidy be allocated to chapters based on the number of members who attend each chapter’s annual reunion;
2. the chapter coordinator be copied when the AFE Office sends payment requests to a member with an overdue account, so the chapter coordinator can help in the collection effort; and
3. any proposed new measure to be presented to the AGM for voting be circulated to all chapter coordinators at least 6 months before the AGM.

After discussion, it was decided that the statement would be circulated to chapter coordinators so they can study it and provide comments.

With regard to the suggestion of the Philippines Chapter Coordinator on how the ADB subsidy should be allocated to chapters, A. Kuek said that before a decision is reached on



Lita Gamboa presenting a statement by Gam de Armas.

the principles for determining the allocation, such principles should be clearly identified, and chapters should be consulted.

Social Networking and the AFE Website. U. Freiwald stressed that when AFE embarks on social networking, members who do not want to be involved in it should not be forgotten. The AFE website, however, is widely used by members, and he hoped for speedy completion of the work on upgrading it.

29th Annual General Meeting in Baku. The September issue of AFE News will contain a write-up on Baku, Azerbaijan, where the 2015 AGM will be held in conjunction with the ADB Annual Meeting, to help stimulate members’ interest in attending the meeting.

Request for Summary of Pension and Insurance Issues. A. Kuek suggested that members would find it helpful to have a summary setting out the current position on issues such as representation on the SRP Steering Committee. It should also provide some assurance that questions relating to benefits are being taken up with ADB and that benefits will not be eroded. JGV acknowledged that summaries clarifying the present position would be helpful, and could be updated from time to time. She suggested that they be put on the AFE website. She could not foresee the outcome of the review, but said that AFE will do its best to request ADB to at least maintain the present benefits. The constant increase in the stop loss, which was noted earlier in the meeting, could also be discussed.

Timing of AGM. Lita Gamboa asked whether the AFE AGM in future could be arranged such that it does not coincide with the accompanying persons’ program (APP) tours. HJS responded that while the AGM has to be held on the first day of the Annual Meeting, the practice has been that the APP tours also start on that day. All that can be done is to appeal to members to join the AGM.

Health Insurance. HJS noted that in the case of the SRP, a board-approved document gives some assurance that pension benefits cannot be easily taken away, and there is funding and a pension committee. The situation with the health insurance is not the same, although that does not mean that ADB would take it away from retirees. ADB’s contributions for health insurance claims are funded out of the annual administrative budget, and claims are referred to an insurance company through Vanbreda as the administrator. For the Group Medical Insurance Plan, ADB is dealing with an insurance company with which it has a contract. The other international organizations have their own funds, i.e., they are self-insured.

The annual contributions ADB makes to the SRP go into a fund that receives good returns on its investments,

whereas the funds it keeps for its administrative budget have a low return. It has been explained, even to the Board, that it would be advantageous for ADB to put money into a fund for the health insurance, like the SRP fund. This was suggested by three ADB staff members in 2000 in a very technical paper, which unfortunately did not go anywhere. In that year, ADB had plenty of liquidity, and a fund that could have cost, say, \$40 million at that time would today cost very much more.

HJS added that, for the first time, BPMUSD is thinking about putting some money into a fund, which could be a precursor to a health insurance fund that could earn interest, etc., like the fund for the SRP. BPMUSD calls it prefunding. The BPMUSD paper on this matter is in an advanced stage, but when it will go to Management and the Board is not yet known.

On the question of whether ADB's health insurance is secure, JGV gave the example of ADB's unilateral removal of the stop-loss benefit for retirees in 2005. Retirees negotiated with ADB and went to the Tribunal, but lost their case. Like R. Wihtol, she agreed with G. Hecker's comment that ADB has a moral responsibility not to change the health insurance. When many former staff members left ADB they decided, on the assumption that ADB's health insurance will remain unchanged, that they would not take up health insurance in their own countries. As a result, they now have no alternative for health insurance. ADB should be constantly reminded of this.

HJS noted that for the SRP, there is a pension committee, with ADB, staff members, and pensioners represented, but



Ulf Freiwald discussing some points.

for health insurance there is no similar tripartite committee where ADB could be reminded of matters like the one just discussed. About 3 years ago, AFE proposed that such a committee be established. Although the then Director General, BPMUSD, agreed in writing, the committee was never established. This matter will continue to be pursued.

HJS noted that it is important to be realistic and aim to ensure that the current benefits are protected. At present, it would be unrealistic to presume that benefits could be expanded.

Adjournment

There being no further business, HJS adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m. ■

Participants in the AFE–ADB 28th Annual General Meeting and Social Functions

Guest of Honor: ADB President Takehiko Nakao

AFE–ADB Members

Austria

Ulf and Monique Freiwald

Finland

Robert Wihtol

France

Patrick Pillon

Germany

Günter and Enriqueta Hecker
Hans-Juergen Springer and Elizabeth Reyes

Japan

Tsuyoshi Takahashi

New Zealand

Ron and Leith Hamilton

Pakistan

Naseer Ahmad
Shahida Jaffrey
Ashraf Malik

Philippines

Estrellita and Herman Gamboa
David and Arnie Parker

Leodegario Saet

Jill Gale de Villa

Singapore

Anthony and Gia Kuek

United States

Soon Hoon Ahn
Y-Chie Primo
Paul Yeung

Cocktails and Greetings

AFE's Cocktails this year featured excellent food, well presented, in a space that was both adequate and conducive to meeting and greeting. ADB President Takehiko Nakao spoke on the challenges ahead and the plan to merge the Asian Development Fund and ordinary capital resources, to increase the amounts ADB can lend. Attendance this year was lower than usual both due to the distance involved in getting to Astana and because the host country offered free admission to an excellent ballet performance that many were loathe to miss.







Opening the 47th ADB Annual Meeting.

Opening ceremonies at the Palace of Independence featured speeches by the Chair of the Board of Governors, Kazakhstan’s long-time President Nursultan Nazurbayev, and ADB President Takehiko Nakao.

President Nakao’s full speech is available on video at <http://www.adb.org/news/videos/annual-meeting-presidents-speech-at-the-opening-session?ref=annual-meeting/2014/videos>. President Nakao thanked Kazakhstan for hosting the meeting, noted the thriving new capital and

its architecture, and discussed the current situation in Asia and the Pacific.

He mentioned the many challenges, as determined through ADB’s midterm review of Strategy 2020.

Challenges include

- poverty reduction, which remains the region’s top problem, as 20% of Asia’s people are poor (this is 60% of the world’s poor);
- improving inclusiveness to address inequalities;
- a huge infrastructure gap;
- environmental degradation;
- climate change;
- how to tap the full potential of regional cooperation and integration; and
- in middle-income countries, challenges include rapid urbanization, aging populations, sustaining inclusive growth, and avoiding the “middle-income trap.”

President Nakao noted: “To meet the challenges, ADB must sharpen its operational focus.” The seven strategic priorities he listed are:

- **Inclusive growth**—ADB will increase its emphasis on inclusiveness and the quality of growth and expand operations in education, health, social protection, and inclusive business; on closing gender gaps; and on improving governance.
- **Climate change and disaster risk management**—ADB will continue to strongly support mitigation efforts, and put much more emphasis on adaptation, a need obviated by the

recent devastation Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) wreaked in the Philippines.

- **Regional cooperation and integration**—ADB will support connectivity, and facilitate trade and financial integration. President Nakao noted that, since CAREC, subregional countries are better connected, cross-border trade has expanded, and investment opportunities have grown.
- **Infrastructure**—ADB will help to address the huge infrastructure deficit by mobilizing more investment and paying greater attention to operation and maintenance. “When I visited Papua New Guinea last June, a minister mentioned to me that the most important work by ADB in his country is enhancing connectivity between communities by building roads and improving ports. Such infrastructure is essential for people to go to hospitals and schools. It also improves access to jobs and markets, thereby helping more people out of poverty.”
- **Middle-income countries**—ADB can work closely with these countries in promoting South–South cooperation.
- **Private sector development**—In addition to being a project financier, ADB will be a more active project developer, expanding our support for public–private partnerships.
- **Knowledge work**—Client countries increasingly seek ADB’s knowledge and expertise. “I have asked all departments of ADB to be an integral part of our knowledge work.”

After the speeches, the performances at the opening, which were short, excellent, and most impressive, included a couple of arias, dance, and Kazakh traditional music.

Notable among the governors’ speeches that followed were the People’s Republic of China’s announcement of its new infrastructure bank.





The **ADB President's Cocktails** and the **Host Country Cocktails** were held in the Palace of Independence and provided opportunities to mingle with friends and meet new people. We were able to touch base with many people we have not seen for a while, including Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda, the ever energetic Yumiko Kuroda, former BPMSD DG Mamoru Umemoto, Penelope Price, and many others. The host country cocktails also featured good food and camaraderie, plus an ensemble of musicians in Kazakh attire entertaining us with background music performed on a combination of indigenous and western instruments. ■





Around Astana

Elizabeth Reyes, Hans-Juergen Springer, and Jill Gale de Villa

What a different place Kazakhstan is; what an exotic mix of peoples, living out their 20-year history as an independent nation! There are beautiful pale-faced Russians and Asian-looking Kazakhs, with every shade in between. All are helpful, proud, and assured citizens, interpreting their fast-track modern lifestyle to us AFE visitors from the outside world.



Baiterek.

Their pristine capital city, Astana, is quite an unreal experience: a modern fantasy landscape, sited somewhere in time between Singapore, Sarawak, and Las Vegas! An architectural showplace like no other. All the shiny or symbolically shaped buildings on the horizon became the city's landmarks. All compete for the eye, while standing unrelated to one another. From

the global pyramid and the giant tent to the space-age library and the soccer helmet stadium, from the blue-folding concert hall and the neoclassical opera house to the "great wall" of 18 ministries—civic Astana straddles a long central promenade and culminates with a golden ball in the tall spire of Baiterek, the National Monument. Astana comprises an extravagant, exhibitionist landscape—where the ADB Annual Meeting 2014 unrolled.



May 1 in front of the Palace of Independence, celebrating Kazakhstan's ethnic diversity.



Khasret Sultan Mosque.

Kazakhstan had put together several official tours that permitted us a variety of opportunities to get to know the country better and to become acquainted with Astana's many new buildings. We noted the gleaming white Nur Astana Mosque; the pyramidal Palace of Peace and Harmony and the Khan Shatyr tent—both designed by Sir Norman Foster; as well as the stadiums and opera house, all arrayed across the flat landscape.

Probably the most moving day tour was to the **Alzhir Memorial**, known as the Women's Gulag. Several busloads travelled 37 km from the capital to the Alzhir, called the Museum of Political Repression. This detention camp was built in 1937 for "wives of traitors to the homeland." During the infamous purging of Soviet intellectuals and traitors (1930s–1940s), Stalin banished thousands of women (considered dangerous because they were related to political prisoners). The women were sent to this bleak camp in the Steppes. The Alzhir Camp



Display at Alzhir.

would detain them for about 7 years, force them to labor on the barren land, and take children 3 years or older to be raised by the Soviet state.

The Women's Camp was closed in 1953. In its place in 2007 rose this solemn memorial dedicated to the thousands of women once incarcerated there. Our articulate Russian guide told the haunting story through photographic materials, and asked us "to imagine the wife of the former ambassador to France arriving here in only a silk dress and heels—to face Kazakhstan's brutal winters with temperatures down to -40C ."

Kazakhstan prides itself on assuring tolerance of all religions. A tour of religious establishments took us first to the largest mosque, **Khasret Sultan Mosque**—a beautiful building inside and out, which opened in 2012. An imam took us around and described the mosque and its contents. Next stop was the **Russian Orthodox Church**, with its many beautiful religious frescoes. The church opened in 2010. We then drove by the **Synagogue**, which we could not visit as it was the Sabbath, then the **Roman Catholic Church**—stark in style, with a beautiful stained glass cross in the back wall. At both churches, the priests explained the buildings and their contents.

The **jewelry tour** was of course very popular, and took us first to a museum where the curator explained Kazakh jewelry. Interesting information included that (1) formerly, silver was considered to be the most precious metal, for its beauty and for its medicinal qualities; (2) women's jewelry had hollow spaces and tinkled like bells—a girl who walked soundlessly was considered to be placid and thus more desirable for marriage; and (3) women wore matching bracelets over the sleeves of their upper garments—to keep the sleeves closed to the biting winds of the area. We were then whisked off to a shop selling jewelry, paintings, and antiques including carpets.

A last tour was a delightful boat ride on the **River Ashim**, for a waterline view of Astana's skyline.

Our being in Astana on **1 May** brought an unplanned bonus. Right in front of our meeting venue—the Palace of Independence—unfolded a spirited celebration of the many ethnic groups ("nationalities") comprising the population. On that balmy afternoon we watched diverse peoples in varied costumes—Kazakh, Russian, Chechnian, Georgian, Armenian, Korean, and many more—these different peoples who have settled in the new republic. All were performing



Silver pendant at the Jewelry Museum.



Hans-Juergen Springer talking to BBC reporter on the river cruise.

traditional songs and dances particular to their own cultural group and showing their crafts. Families gathered to photograph the costumed participants and enjoy the pop-music show, while children enjoyed flying their kites.

During the Annual Meeting, a temporary museum opened inside the Palace of Independence. For those who discovered its presence, it was indeed a jewel, with well-presented displays of Kazakhstan’s most beautiful costumes and artifacts. And on the 3rd floor was a large 3D display of Astana’s layout, present and planned. ■

Gracious Old Almaty

Elizabeth Reyes and Hans-Juergen Springer



After the eye-candy experience of the pristine new capital Astana in northern Kazakhstan, it’s hard not to wax effusive over the mature and graceful old town of Almaty in the south. Almaty began as a nomadic settlement in the steppes; by 1854 it had evolved into the Tsarist outpost of Fort Verniy. Into this fortress migrated Cossacks and Tartars, to

merge with the nomadic Kazakhs. The outpost blossomed and earned city rights by 1865, along with the legendary title of *Alma-Ata*, Father of the Apples.

Today Almaty is a vibrant, modern city of the Central Asian steppes, the proud center of the commerce, science, and culture of the giant republic of Kazakhstan. Built on a north–south axis upon a mountain slope, Almaty bears the constant view and unique backdrop of the high Tien Shan mountain range. Majestic snow-capped peaks peer down upon Almaty’s buildings, parks,

and fountains; and the breezes blow down her wide, European-style boulevards.

Almaty is in a high-risk zone for earthquakes, but it has survived and been rebuilt to stand up in the modern world. Strolling down well-planned 35-meter wide streets, we enjoyed the apples, other fruits, and vegetables; the tall canopies of greenery; and sidewalk beds of flowers (colorful tulips!). Flocks of birds chirped high in the trees. This is the most cosmopolitan city in Central Asia—ideal for gracious urban walks among squares and gardens, fountains, and public parks. Here is, too, the chance to leave city limits and take an aerial gondola ride to the ski resort of Shymbulak. From the altitude of 2,200 meters, a cable car took us into the snow, even in early summer, at 3,200 meters.

In one long day spent within the sprawling, sylvan Panfilov Park (master planned by forester Eduard Baum) we savored the fine natural, historical, and cultural aspects of Almaty. The 56-meter high **Holy Ascension Cathedral** is a remarkable survivor of the destructive 1911 earthquake. Made entirely of wood, this beautifully colorful and restored monument symbolizes the cultural unity of the Russian architect Zenkov, the Christian religion, and the Muslim Kazakh peoples. At another end of the park stands Zenkov’s all-wood gabled building, now housing the **Museum of Folk Musical Instruments**. And in between stands the classic Soviet War Memorial honoring the dead of the Great Patriotic War.

In the 1970s, the burgeoning city gained her share of giant monuments such as palaces, art museums, and sports complexes, erected among the city squares. By early 2000, Almaty had transformed her skyline anew with glass and steel skyscrapers—proclaiming her as Kazakhstan’s cultural and financial capital.

Even though the political center was moved north to brand new Astana on the barren steppes, the old city of Almaty has remained gracious and graceful—with the majestic backdrop of the snow-capped Tien Shan mountains. ■



Chapter News

Philippines

North Group Revisits Tagaytay

Daisy De Chavez (ADB 1978–2006)



I am happy to report that my inner child is still ageless.

James Broughton

We knew it all along, but, there, it's been said for us. Tagaytay never

disappoints. The short trip up to cool off was pleasant, discounting unpredictable traffic. Pre-departure, reminder was made to go easy on liquids lest our vehicles overshoot the WC stop in the race to get our wish list done within the 10-hour deadline. So far no one mentioned "it Depends."

Of the group, Marie is the absolute caller of color, and orange was the announced dress code for the day. It can be annoying when one's closet has nothing of the color. Once on the road trip, we talked—except for a few counting zzzs with eyes wide open. We discussed what seniors usually talk about: alternative health news, grandkids, caring for still thriving parents, family trips to faraway places with strange sounding names; and then we played whats-in-your-bag, hoping to perhaps uncover indispensable items that give away our youth, but the best we could come up with was a plastic whistle (a girl scout forever?) and a high school ID-card (time of her life). What goody-goody two-shoes are we! Araceli, teacher-like, asked who could remember who was the President of the Republic when that ID-card was issued. The response sounded like a question: "Macapagal?" Can't be Macapagal-Arroyo, that's for sure! We took to being children-in-car again ... noticing service vehicles on the road with a threat-sounding "Me reklamo?" (Any complaint?) painted along its backside. "Hows my driving?" from earlier years sounds better. But how come we never see this courtesy on our psychedelic painted jeepneys?

As the billboard hype and noisy commerce of the metropolis fade away, willowy eucalyptus trees, piles of produce and colorful fruit stands, grasslands and farm animals slide past our window the closer we get to Tagaytay. It is sad to see fast rising towering structures racing for limited space obstructing the gentle pastoral



Taal Vista Lodge. First row (l-r): Leonie Francisco, Cynthia Diaz, Vangie Mendoza, Cristy de Guzman. Second row: Cherrie Melencio, Marie Galura, Rose Reyes, Thess Redito, Becky Balbago, Daisy de Chavez, Carmen Dimayuga. Last row: Fe Abundo, Shawn Gochangco, Glo Ferry, Edna Ronas, Ara Patricio.

scene, and we fear more of them will take away much from the draw of the place.

So now we arrive at the familiar Taal Vista Hotel, with a panoramic view of the Lake. By the way, Taal Vista celebrated its 75th year—as pristine and genteel a lady as ever; big celebration in October 2013. Along the darkened corridor an easel announced an ongoing "ADB Seminar." Ah, "been there, done that" we thought in unison. We moved through subdued lighting indoors, and out the sliding doors to a whole new world of the happiest bluest sky. The sun was high, perfect for picture-picture time ... out came the cameras and cellphones to re-record once again well-loved scenes of smokey craters floating in the mist, now featuring laughing ladies by the lake. Selfies too, why not? Sometimes you never know the value of a moment until it becomes a memory.

Lunch was savory comfort food, and yet we changed venue for dessert and coffee on a whim. The air was balmy with strains of baking goodies, and choosing from quickly changing trays took time. Huge lounging cushions on wooden daybeds graciously invited us to sit for a spell, and the aroma of brewing coffee draws us in line like an invisible croupier. In line, the cashier, a jolly lady of some substance shares the wisdom of starting a diet called "tomorrow." For today we savor the moment, ignoring the harbingers of signature diets. How lovely to sip coffee or long-spoon a slow boat of tricolored banana split and nibble on warm cookies while swapping inanities springing from our ageless inner-brat abandoning all vanity by the portals of secret trust ... till,oops, reality bites.

Last stop, the Mahogany Market for timeless favorites. My glaucoma was begging my eye shades to not-forsake-

me-oh-my-darling, but, before I could dig them out, all passengers had shot out of the van—What arthritis? What recent cataract surgery? What frenemy? This market is known to offer organic beef, but we had all agreed not to put any meat purchases in the van. There was also no room in the van for baby trees. Vanji recalled last time’s tree purchase was washed to death by her resident Manang Biday who regularly doused the hapless saplings with frothy laundry water. As the few stragglers started to get back in the van, this señora came up with pointy lips and rolling eyes unable to contain herself over the strangest purchase ever made this side of geriatric naivete. We followed her lips to our sunburned snowy-haired driver grinning with big white teeth clutching a package of fresh bull’s “jewels”—obviously the makings of extreme cuisine. But what was he thinking??? To be the Anthony Bourdain of the Philippines? And what’s a henhousefull to think but ... “pasaway ka, ha!” (so contrary, aren’t you) didn’t you hear “no-fresh-beef purchases”? That, to cover our tittering imaginings.

With a-good-time-was-had-by-all feeling at the end of the day, we were all eager to get home and get down to the business of watching art imitating life on the small screen.

Between the entry and the exit there’s a labyrinth of halls, between yesterday and tomorrow there is more than a day.
Barbra Streisand ■

Bonding in Bicol

Raquel Cabiles (ADB 1971–1997)



Going to Bicol was a request by one of the frequent ex-ADB Balikbayans, Dorotea Marquez Gazo (Dora) and her husband Juanito (John) from Sydney, Australia. John had never been to Bicol so I suggested that we go the next time they come visiting. Most of the L-Club members were not available hence we invited other friends to join us.

The trip was set from 28 January to 4 February 2014. I had to get consent from my sister and brother-in-law (Beng and Boy Rodriguez) for the visit of eight people—John and Dora Gazo, Jack and Ophie Sta Ana, Dette Sta. Maria (from Toronto) with her sister Linda Bergenholtz, and Denden Velasquez, a friend of Dora’s from California. We



Jack and Ophie Sta. Ana, Dette Sta. Maria, Denden Velasquez, Raquel Cabiles, Linda Bergenholtz, and Dora and John Gazo.

flew to Legazpi City, were met by our hired van, and went to the Rodriguez Farm in Barangay Comun, Malinao, Albay. Beng said that it was raining almost daily in Bicol and she hoped we would bring some sunshine. Her prayers were answered: we had generally good weather when we were there, except for some occasional downpours.

The hired van took us to different places during our week-long stay, among them, Lignon Hill in Legazpi City; Cagsawa Ruins in Daraga, Albay; Mayon Resthouse; Rizal Beach; Bulusan Lake; San Mateo Hot and Cold Spring in Sorsogon; Tiwi; Joroan; Naga City; and Tabaco City.

Our lodging was at the Farm. We stayed in a big, open room, where each of us had a place to sleep. We experienced a carabao-cart ride around the farm, saw 14 piglets born on the night we arrived, and enjoyed sumptuous meals including *laing* (a spicy Bicolano dish made with taro leaves), Bicol express, and *ginataang pako* (fiddler fern cooked in coconut milk) prepared by Beng, as well as feasting on the native fruits from the farm—jackfruit, guyabano (sour sop), chico, bananas—plus coconuts, corn on the cob, and fresh fish and crabs that we enjoyed and gave us all additional pounds. We also had the opportunity to harvest some cacao.

Dette, Linda, and I braved the Safari all-terrain vehicle (ATV) ride to Mt Mayon’s lava front. We had a good view of Mayon Volcano from the Lignon Hill. It was awesome. First-timers John and Jack were lucky to see the tip of the Mayon Volcano up close, as it is usually hidden in cloud.

On the fourth day, Dette and Linda visited their 103 year-old aunt with Jack and Ophie in Naga City. Dette and Linda left on 1 February to meet other relatives in Manila. The rest of the group flew back to Manila on 4 February. ■

Gimik Kultura: Angono Gallery Tour

By an Anonymous Participant

The AFE–ADB East Group, Philippine Chapter, went for a *gimik* (a slang word meaning to hang out with friends), Kultura in Angono, Rizal, on 14 September 2013. The trip was coordinated by the group of Marikina, Taguig, and Taytay with Ernie Bondoc, Arnold Jalandoni, and Luz Sanchez as coordinators, assisted by Logee Tiamson and Raquel Cabiles. The husband and wife team who live in this pretty town, Logee and Elaine Tiamson, volunteered to show us around and arranged our itinerary for the day. Their lovely daughters acted as our official photographers. Two guides from the Angono Tourism office joined the group. They, together with Logee, took turns in giving information about the town and well-known artists of Angono.

Angono is the Art Capital of the Philippines, the hometown of two National Artists—Lucio San Pedro for music (*Ugoy ng Duyan*) and Carlos “Botong” Francisco for visual arts. Other artists such as Jose Blanco and the Blanco family, and Nemesio Miranda live here and open their homes as galleries for public viewing.

With Logee leading the 32 participants in five vehicles, our first stop was **Yab Design**, formerly AAA, owned by a Filipino, and now owned by a Dutch national. Yab Design produces handmade decor of polyester resin with fiberglass and specializes in life-sized and larger-than-life figurines of all sorts. It also manufactures special designs on request. The company exports its products worldwide.

Then we went to Angono Municipal Hall for the group picture with the famous **higantes**—giant effigies made of papier mache supported by bamboo and wearing colorful clothing. As Logee said, we have not been to Angono if we do not have a photo (see group photo) with the *higantes*.

Next was a walking tour of murals along Doña Aurora Street where **Botong Francisco’s** home is located. As a tribute to the painter, murals cast in cement, based on his paintings line the walls of his street. The murals were done by Charlie Anorico, another Angono artist. We visited Botong Francisco’s home, which was also his studio. We were

welcomed by his artist grandson, Carlos Francisco II. At a street corner nearby is a metal mural on the fence around the house of Maestro Lucio San Pedro showing the notes and lyrics of the song “*Sa Ugoy ng Duyan*.” We sang as we walked around the corner.

Further along the road is **St. Clement Parish Church**. There we paid homage to the patron saint and witnessed adults being baptized. Then we walked to the **Blanco Family Museum** on Ibañez Street. Known as “a family that paints together.” Jose “Pitok” Blanco, the father, all seven children—Glen, Noel, Michael, Joy, John, Kaye, and Peter Paul—and their mother Loring are brilliant painters. The Blanco children did not have formal painting schooling; their skills were honed by their father. Each child presented a masterpiece painting to their father, who determined if it was good enough to pass the course as a painter. The museum showcased the early works of the children, from childhood to present. It is so wonderful that most of them started really very young at age two. The entrance fee is P70.

After seeing all the beautiful paintings, we looked forward to a delicious lunch at a specialty restaurant, **Balaw-Balaw**. *Balaw-balaw* is a Filipino term for fermented rice with shrimps. The restaurant also housed the Ang Nuno Artists Foundation Gallery on the second and third floors of the building.

After the delicious lunch, we walked to **Nemiranda Gallery**, a block away, owned by Nemesio Miranda, a painter and sculptor. One well-known mural by Angono artists led by Miranda depicts the EDSA revolution at the EDSA Shrine.



First row, left to right (sitting): Leo Saet, Oskee Nunez, Marose Alvero and Boy Capiro; Second row: Arnold Jalandoni, Logee Tiamson, Eva Perez, Lina Ledesma, Mina Jacinto, Marissa Espiritu, Raquel Cabiles, Edith Infante, Yoly Arcinas, Randie Marquez, Fe Sebastian, Tina Asilom and Ernie Bondoc; Third row: Elaine Tiamson, Margie Enriquez, Denden Armamento, Yeb Rosales, Vagie Collanto-Leon, Esther dela Cruz, Midi Kawashima and Keitaro Tanaka; Fourth row: Sonia Bigtacion, Yoly Leones, Meng Dimayuga, Alma Yao, Volet Guno, Ester Vergel de Dios and Susan Francisco.

We then decided to see the Binangonan Hills and scenic natural landscape, including the view deck overlooking Metro Manila, Ortigas Center, and the nearby towns of Pasig, Cainta, and Taytay, and the Thunderbird Resorts. Our last stop was Antipolo to visit the church and buy some *suman* (cooked glutinous rice wrapped in leaves) and *kasoy* (cashew nuts) to take home and for which Antipolo is famous.

It was a very rewarding *gimik*, and we enjoyed the company of former officemates. We are very grateful to Logee and family for taking us to Angono. ■

New York–New Jersey Chapter Wigs It

Nannette Guinto Amorado (ADB 1982–2007)



As always, ADB parties are fun—wherever they are!

The New York–New Jersey Chapter of the AFE–ADB had one last 28 September 2013 at the Holiday Inn (La Guardia), New York City. While the venue was smaller than earlier parties of this chapter, and despite the hiccups (the aircon was

not functioning, and the waiters were slow in serving the food, family-style), the whole event was just awesome from beginning to end.

The theme was “Let’s wig it!”

Just imagine—women and one brave man (!!!) wearing wigs of all shapes and colors. So as each person wearing a wig came in, ooohs, aahhs, and adoring screams and scandalous laughter resounded! The brave man was no other than the spouse of Juliet Capati, whose wig was brought all the way from Azerbaijan, so he claimed.

Apart from reuniting with our friends from

outside New York–New Jersey—such as Tita Acupanda, Marissa Ayento, Precy Lizarondo, Annie Romero Jameson, and Mila Simolde—there were new faces such as Tito Molina with his pretty wife Chona. The regulars from this area were ever present—Angel Calilap, Chat Cortes, Emma Dumalag, Ruth Esnilio, Chato Ledoñio O’Buckley, Nena Villena Tañedo, and Vivian Villanueva. Our dear Lazaro dela Cruz danced all night long, showing no signs of “senioritis”!

Jill Gale de Villa and Hans Springer were sorely missed. The party timing this time did not match with their travel time to the United States. But we did circulate and read Jill’s message to everyone. Finding the perfect time has always been a challenge, considering hotel availability and our work schedules. Don’t know why work gets in the way of leisure!

Our game master (Nena) was a real gem, having thought of three crazy games. The most hilarious one was the “longest line.” For this game, two teams of men had to create the longest line, connecting everything that they have. So they took off their coats, belts, neckties, and three even lay down on the floor as part of the line!! Finally, one took off his shirt and lay half naked on the floor!!! We were all waiting with bated breath in between riotous laughter to see if he (or a challenger) would take off pants!!! Of course, his team won hands down! Everyone was almost rolling off the floor laughing through the night! Some were laughing teary-eyed and unmindful of dissolving eye make-up! I thought I would have to call 911, with blood pressures shooting up!

Never ever a dull moment with New York–New Jersey Chapter parties!!!

This year was co-chaired by Margie Ferrer Baccay (my partner in crime) and myself, with the usual great support of Emma, Ruth, Nena, Chat, and Oscar Colmenar. Next year’s chair will be Chato Ledoñio O-Buckley. Wow! More fun with Chato, I bet you! Check this out, folks!

Until then. Ciao! Ciao! ■



People, Places, and Passages

Impression: Sahara

Yinguo Huang (ADB 1992–2013)



I became interested in the Sahara Desert in my younger days from *Stories of the Sahara*—an autobiographical account of the life and love of the Taiwanese author Sanmao while she was living in the Sahara Desert with her Spanish husband. Sanmao's book may no

longer be best-seller in Chinese bookstores, but back in those days when the People's Republic of China was still transforming from an isolated country, her book was a hit among Mainland readers for its romantic taste of multiculturalism. Since then, I had visited 41 countries, but a trip to the Sahara Desert remained on my wish list until after my retirement from ADB. In early 2013, a consultancy assignment with the African Development Bank (AfDB) in Tunis provided a perfect opportunity, as the Sahara is just a short flight away from the Tunisian capital. After completing my official duties, my wife Lucy and I embarked on a 5-day-adventure to the desert.

The trip did not start well, though. We were supposed to take off at 7pm for the flight to Tozeur—a southwest Tunisian town near the desert, but by 9pm, the twin-propeller plane was still sitting on the runway with

passengers on board. An engineering vehicle was outside my window; several maintenance staff ran by our seats to the cockpit. It seemed something had gone wrong. After 2 hours with no explanation, we became worried and almost wanted to disembark. But the desire to see the Sahara overcame our fear. We stayed on.

We finally arrived in Tozeur at midnight. To our pleasant surprise, our hotel room was incredibly spacious with a huge tastefully decorated Arabic-style bathroom. After we settled down, we were surprised again that the wife of the hotel owner called us downstairs to enjoy a Tunisian dinner. To our even greater surprise, when we asked to settle the dinner bill, she said it was free. Breathing the dry, fresh cool desert air, I had the soundest sleep I could remember.

Waking up next morning, we found our hotel surrounded by a forest of date palms. Our AfDB friends had said Tozeur is a beautiful oasis. It truly is! For Tunisians, Tozeur is the home of Aboul-Qacem Echebbi, a poet respected throughout the Arab world; one of his poems has become the Tunisian national anthem. Tozeur was a Roman outpost in ancient times. For us, Tozeur was a base camp for the Sahara.

After breakfast, our guide Ali was waiting at the gate with his Land Cruiser, wearing a Tuareg robe and a turban. Lucy found Ali handsome as he had some similarity to Johnny Depp in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, especially with the dark liner around his eyes. Later we asked him why he wore makeup like women. He laughed, explaining it reduced the sun's glare from the desert and protected his eyes from





Our tour guide, Ali.

flying sand. He also explained how the robe could help cool the body in the heat and turbans save lives in sandstorms. This was our first lesson in desert survival.

Under the blue skies and bright morning sun, we drove through the date palms heading south toward the Sahara. As the density of the trees diminished, miles and miles of smaller bushes appeared outside the window like orange yellow carpets stretching far away to where the Atlas Mountains formed the skyline. Gradually, desert bushes disappeared, replaced by a vast flat crust of salt sparkling under the sun. We entered Chott el Djerid, which is the largest salt lake in the Sahara and is famous for frequent mirages. The lake was dry due to the season, so we could walk on the salt crust as far as we wished. With no other living creature in sight and surrounded by utter silence, we felt like we were walking on another planet. One scientific study says the red and yellow colors of Chott el Djerid are due to minerals, such as iron and sulfur, similar to those on Mars.

By noon, we arrived in Douz, another oasis on the south side of the salt lake. Douz is known as the “gateway to the Sahara”—the last town we would see before entering the desert. Lunch was served at a family restaurant, with couscous and lamb under a date palm. Outside Douz, we ran into a flock of goats. I alit to take a picture of the shepherd, but he



Shop owners at Douz.



A Sahara shepherd and his newborn kid.

ran away; and then he ran back with a baby goat in his arms. He put the kid down in front of me with a big smile. Ali said, “It’s a newborn. Look! It still has the cord.” I took a few shots and asked Ali if I should tip the shepherd, remembering I was forced by a stranger in northern Tunisia to pay 10 euros for photographing an eagle owl. Ali waved his hand “of course not! He just wanted to show you his new kid. It is a good luck in Sahara to see a newborn!” We continued our journey to the south. Before we realized it, we were embraced by the Sahara with an ocean of endless sand dunes stretching to the horizon.

Three hours later we arrived at Ksar Ghilane, a small oasis famous for its hot springs and orange sand dunes. The late afternoon desert sun blazed a golden hue on the palms and sands, making the view even more striking under the blue sky. We took a 2-hour camel ride to the remains of an ancient Roman fort in the middle of the desert. On the way back, the sky turned pink purple; from the hump of our camels, we watched our first sunset in the desert. It was surreal.

We camped somewhere further south of Ksar Ghilane. Ali set up a bonfire on a sand dune and taught us how to bake bread on the sand. While we were enjoying the freshly baked desert bread with lamb barbeque, Ali’s friend played Tunisian music with an instrument made of goatskin. The stars in the desert were so bright and appeared to be very close, as if we could touch them. The temperature had dropped to 5°C (from the daytime 25°C) when we climbed into our sleeping bags in the tent.

Next morning, we visited another hot spring in the middle of nowhere. I had always thought the desert was just one color, the color of sand. Now I know I was wrong. Through the crystal clear water, we could see the bottoms of the streams were dyed by rich minerals, in red, orange, pink, blue, and green—like a huge abstract painting. The water at the mouth of the spring is about 45°C. Lucy enjoyed a soothing foot washing while I was chasing the camels and gazelles up the stream with my camera.

We drove a little further south before turning northeast to Matmata, a small settlement of Berbers living in traditional



Underground home of a Berber family.



Colorful oasis at Chebika.

underground “troglydte” structures. That this area had regular settlements and not just wandering nomadic tribes was not generally known until 1967. Ali told us Berbers generally don’t like to live in towns; many still live in deserts, with one home miles away from another. Ali led us to visit one such Berber family in the afternoon. Driving for nearly 1 hour in the desert, passing by many blossoming almond trees, we saw no human settlement. Just as we were wondering where the family was, Ali said we had already arrived. The home was built completely underground with a large open pit; around the pit are artificial caves used as rooms. On the surface we could see nothing except for a well for storing rainwater. Beside the well, there was a World War 2 fuel drum marked “FL. KRAFTSTOFF 1941.” Not sure if Rommel reached this far during the Tunisia Campaign. After a tour of the cave rooms, we had a chat at a small table in the pit with the Berber family and enjoyed the local mint-almond tea. On the way back to Tozeur, we asked Ali to show us another family that was off the foreign travelers’ route. The search wasn’t easy, but we finally found one. Unfortunately, the home was wide open, and the owner was away. As the sun went down, we found ourselves in Chott el Djerid again. The entire sky turned orange-red as the huge illuminating sphere touched the horizon of the mysteriously darkened salt lake. I had never seen such a sunset before.

On the last day of our Sahara adventure, we drove a couple of hundred kilometers northeast of Tozeur to some more popular tourists spots such as the Tamerza Canyons, the abandoned village in Chebika, and a filming

site of *Star Wars*. Ali said these places could be packed with tourists during peak season, but we were lucky as February is off-peak and has the best climate of the year. From a high view point at Chebika, I couldn’t believe what I saw was real: a lush green palm grove nestled in a golden red canyon with blue streams flowing through the valley. I had never seen such a rich combination of natural colors from my camera viewfinder at one time!

The Sahara is an ocean; what we saw in a few days is just a water drop, and what I have described here is just the surface of this tiny drop. Deeper than the surface of colorful impressions of mother nature, we also had a glimpse of the unspoiled hearts of the Sahara people.

On the last night of Ali’s work as a guide for us, we settled our payment plus a gratuity for his excellent service. The next morning, just before we got in our taxi for the airport, Ali showed up again. In his hands were four gifts: a big piece of egg-shaped Sahara moqui marble and a hand-painted Berber clay plate for me; a camel tooth necklace and a pair of Berber clay shoes for Lucy. What he gave to us is much more than the gratuity we gave him. He said he just wanted us to remember the Sahara. We certainly will. ■



A Berber mother and daughter.



A Sahara boy with his pet—a desert fox.

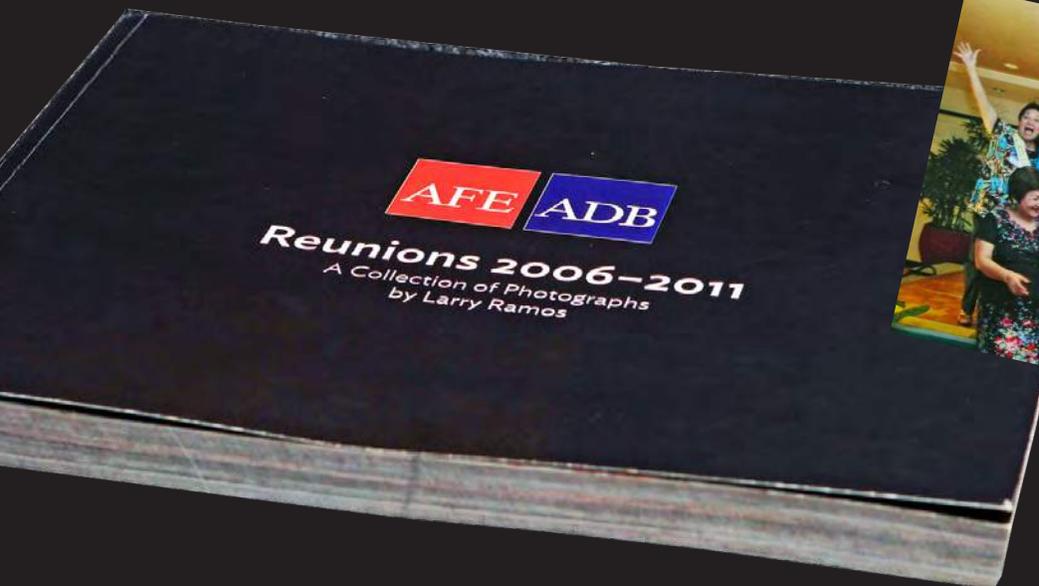
AFE-ADB Reunions 2006-2011: A Collection of Photographs

Larry Ramos (ADB 1989-2000)



Ed: After retiring, Larry Ramos has continued his photography; worked on his farm; made some remarkable craft items (such as his beautiful leather shoulder bag, folding bamboo book stands, and a delightful bamboo and coconut shell back scratcher [I have one]); etc, which you can see on his Facebook page. And he is collecting his images. His new book, AFE-ADB Reunions

2006-2011: A Collection of Photographs is a very nicely laid-out and printed, collage-collection, coffee-table size book of our happy Manila faces smiling across several years—a "Years Book," if you will. You can see the book at the AFE office, and if you would like to own one, contact Larry at larry.littlerock@yahoo.com.





Bends and Shades

Jahed-Ur Rahman (ADB 1988–1999)



When Jahed-ur Rahman, as many of us knew him in ADB, recently passed through immigration at Manila’s airport with a visa stamped in his passport “Dependent of Lazeena Rahman”—his daughter now working at ADB—he mused about the many bends and

turns his life had taken. He came from a small town in Bangladesh; moved to Dhaka, Manila, Islamabad, back to Dhaka, then to Vancouver; and finally retired in Chicago. Jahed was a little amused by the visa stamp, as only a few years earlier, when working at ADB, his daughter carried a stamp in her passport “Dependent of Jahed-ur Rahman.” So ends a book about Jahed’s life that nobody in the small town of his birth would have expected from the son of a mid-level Bengali civil servant.

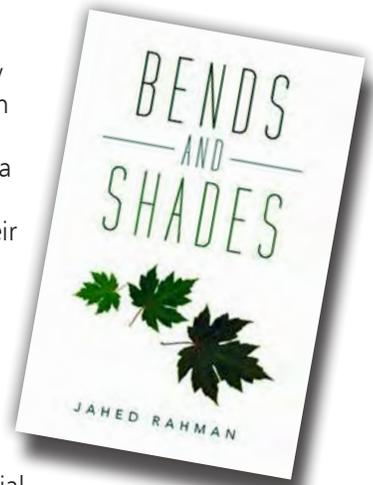
Jahed describes in much detail, with local color, and interspersed with many Bangla terms and expressions, his growing up in Sonapur without electricity and piped-in water supply, his hesitancy to enter marriage before he could support a family, and his eventual transfer to a well-paid job at ADB. His early life story is set against the backdrop of historical events in his birth country. Jahed was 8 years old at the time of India’s bloody partition, when Pakistan emerged as a country, in two parts separated by different languages and India’s vast land mass. He was 32 when Bangladesh was born as a country after a battle for independence, which, again, cost many lives.

Being a civil servant in Bangladesh, initially one of the least developed countries, Jahed’s life was in the early years not blessed by material rewards. His developing personality was, however, steeped in a solid Muslim faith. Having basically an optimistic outlook on life, Jahed managed to sail around the many cliffs that life puts in the way. His marriage to Shaheen was arranged in accordance with local customs and was, as he puts it, “not a union between two persons, but a marriage between two families,” as is also customary in his country. But when his eldest son, educated at the International School Manila and at an American university, wanted to marry a woman of a different faith and ethnic background, Jahed and Shaheen did not object and are now blessed with two grandchildren, to whom they are very close.

What makes two people like Jahed and Shaheen choose retirement in the United States, far from their own country? Jahed answers: “Except for one nephew, the

entire next generation of my family has migrated to North America.” So have he and Shaheen, but their move to a new country does not mean that they have forgotten their own. As Jahed says: “I do miss Bangladesh.”

Jahed and Shaheen are immigrants who have socially integrated very well, mixing with neighbors of other faiths, ethnic backgrounds, and social standings. They have demonstrated an open mind and liberal attitude toward their new country that sets a fine example for migrants at a time when most countries struggle to integrate newcomers to their lands. ■



Smart World, Dumb World

Will Alan Loxley (ADB 1994–2005)



Ed: Will Loxley, formerly an education specialist at ADB, has a PhD from the University of Chicago. He has lived in 3 continents, examining school systems to learn how knowledge spreads globally. His findings are in this new book. Interested parties may contact him at loxley_william@yahoo.com. The information here is

from the book’s back cover and inside front cover.

Smart World explores the inner workings of knowledge—one of those invisible forces that rule the world, along with wealth, power, and status—by altering thinking that shapes the outer world of growth and development. To become smarter, the world must develop a strategy where the means (growth) to the end (development) benefits the 7 billion people on Earth in ways that economics produce more with less and scale it fairly....”

“Nations are like communities and individuals—some big, some small, some rich, some poor. To do well, they must learn to draw upon unique sets of historical and comparative advantage to navigate the maze of power, wealth, and prestige that determines position in the world

Birds of a Feather

Colin Rees (ADB 1981–1988)



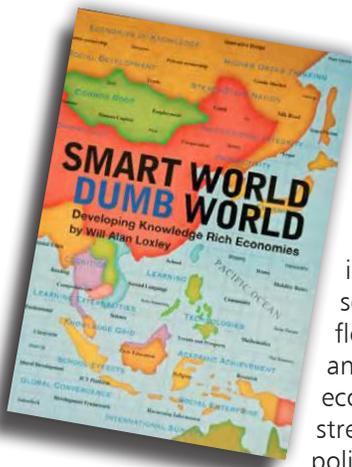
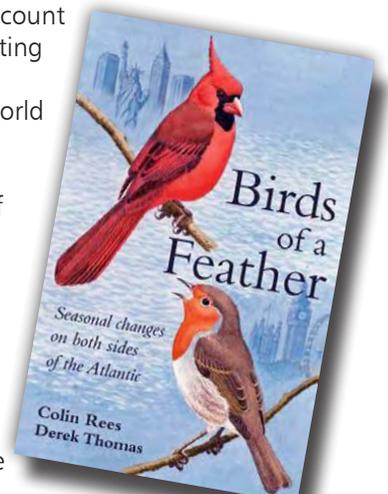
Colin Rees writes: *Just published a book with Derek Thomas entitled **Birds of a Feather: Seasonal Changes on Both Sides of the Atlantic** and thought you might be interested. It portrays the sights, sounds, and colors of the passing seasons observed and recorded over a year in the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK).*

The book takes the reader on walks through grasslands, forests, marshes, and estuaries, and along coasts, describing the wonder of migration, the unfolding of the breeding season, the behavior of wildlife, and the character of birders and bird organizations in the US and UK. We also ponder the challenge of conservation in a rapidly changing world.

All profits go to wildlife conservation.

Amazon's blurb informs us:

"In *Birds of a Feather*, an informative and beautifully illustrated book, Colin Rees and Derek Thomas portray the changing seasons in the UK and US, bringing their observations together with some startling results. With images by artists Robert Gillmor and Ian Rees, the book will appeal to anyone with an interest in birds and their future in North America and the UK. Exploding flocks of Snow Geese rising from icy fields; the arrival of the osprey; the harmonies of the dawn chorus; migrating waders racing south before the surf – these are but a few moments evoking the sights, sounds and colours of the passing seasons observed and recorded over a year by two experienced ornithologists living on both sides of the Atlantic. In the context of their gardens, neighbourhoods and in larger landscapes, Colin Rees and Derek Thomas provide a month by month account of their birding year, commenting upon what they see and hear. They also consider how our world is radically changing the lives of birds. *Birds of a Feather* celebrates the gentle patter of raindrops, the scent and luminescence of spring, swallows of an evening and the first flight of young ospreys. They take the reader on walks through grasslands, forests, marshes, estuaries and along coasts and describe



order. Because wise policies require smart thinking, the wealth of knowledge possessed by each nation becomes key to its development where knowledge creates institutional integrity through sectors of society. When ideas flow freely, the amount, quality, and intensity combine into economies of knowledge that strengthen social networking, political participation, economic productivity, and cultural

creativity. These combinations benefit nations through positive externalities both public and private that build on cooperation found in the common good of nations."

"Every nation finds itself on a different growth path to a different level of gross domestic product while striving to reach the steepest growth path possible to the top economic level.... To be successful, nations must determine the best combination of building blocks that compound the value of social, political, economic, and cultural capital needed to converge nations to the top of the growth curve."

"New ideas are the route to change where basic knowledge learned is essential to a well-functioning modern society, and advanced skills are critical to developing new innovations. Creating and spreading universal knowledge allows growth and development to converge with other nations along a sustainable development path.... Will nations increase their wealth of knowledge knowing its importance for development? Will Greater Asia, with its wide range of knowledge disparities, continue to global knowledge by spreading values of openness through inclusive learning networks that are fair, effective, and sustainable? For answers, we must look to smart nations." ■

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the effects of changing weather on flora and fauna, the unfolding of the breeding season, bird counts, the character of birders and bird organizations in the US and UK. They also address the challenge of conservation in the modern world. Over 45 million people consider themselves bird watchers in the US and 20 million watch birds in the UK making this book appealing to bird watchers on both sides of the Atlantic."

Available at Amazon: http://www.amazon.com/Birds-Feather-Seasonal-Change-Atlantic/dp/1783064099/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1401275919&sr=1-1&keywords=birds+of+a+feather+rees ■

Tiger Tail Soup

Nicki Chen (Eugene Chen worked at ADB 1971–1993)

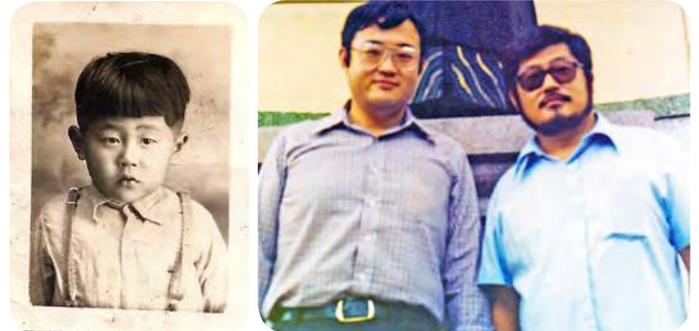


stories the way another suitor might bring flowers.

Those early stories about his childhood in what is now the People's Republic of China (PRC) during World War 2 were the ones I thought about after he passed away in 1998. Many of the anecdotes he remembered were sweet and funny. Others were tragic.

My novel, *Tiger Tail Soup*, is set during that time and place: 1938–1946 in Amoy, PRC, and on the island of Kulangsu. Amoy, which is just across the Taiwan Strait from Taipei, China, is now known as Xiamen. Kulangsu is called Gulangyu.

Although my novel was inspired by Eugene and his stories, the characters in the book are all fictional. The narrator, An Lee, is a young wife and mother. As the novel opens, she's pregnant and wondering why her husband hasn't return from his business trip 10 days earlier. Stepping out onto the balcony, she hears bombs exploding in the distance. When her husband finally



Young Eugene.

appears, he has exchanged his suit and tie for the uniform of a Chinese soldier. During the next 7 years An Lee sees her husband again only twice. Left alone, it's up to her to protect their children, her mother, and her mother-in-law. For a few years, their island, though surrounded by enemy forces, is spared from a full-scale invasion because of its status as an international treaty port. But on 7 December 1941, the enemy launches a coordinated attack on Pearl Harbor and all the international enclaves in the what is now the PRC. In a matter of minutes, Kulangsu becomes occupied territory and life for the family enters a new, more challenging phase.

Like my husband, many Southeast Asian Chinese trace their ancestry back to Amoy and Fukien Province. Unfortunately, few books in English even mention the experiences of the Fukienese during World War 2. We know about the Rape of Nanking, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, and the battles in Shanghai and Chungking. But little has been written about Fukien Province during that war. I hope my novel in its small way will help to fill that void.

When we lived in Manila, I was fortunate to have been able to visit my husband's hometown before the PRC's big building boom changed its appearance. In early 1983, we'd heard that a travel bureau in Binondo was offering a tour for overseas Chinese to Xiamen. We hurried to sign up, never dreaming they meant Overseas Chinese ONLY. When we arrived in Xiamen, Eugene had to use all his powers of persuasion and an old Chinese proverb to convince the hotel to let me and the children stay there. For the next week, as we explored the two islands on foot, I had no idea that I was learning about the future setting for my novel.

Tiger Tail Soup is available in both paperback and e-book versions. If you'd like to sample a few pages, both Amazon.com and barnesandnoble.net have the "look inside" option on their web site.

On my blog, "Behind the Story," many of the topics I cover are related to my novel and to writing. You can find my blog at www.nickichenwrites.com.

I'd love to hear what the "Asian experts" who subscribe to *AFE-ADB News* think of my blog and my novel. Drop me a line at chen.nicole@comcast.net. ■

Five ADB Pioneers

Maru Pastor-Abrea (ADB 1966–1990)



In 1966, before the inauguration of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), a team headed by Cornelio Balmaceda of the Philippines was appointed to work on the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of ADB. The Committee was responsible for drafting and finalizing ADB's Charter and Headquarters' Agreement

for discussion at the Board of Directors before the formal inauguration that same year.

The first five support staff of the Preparatory Committee worked extensively with the team, contributing their expertise at typing, proofreading, editing, formatting, stenciling, and other tasks, which would even require them, most times, to work after office hours. But weekends were reserved for rest and recreation with colleagues. It was also an opportunity to tour the beautiful city of Manila and its immediate outskirts with its rich history.

One such tour was to Corregidor Island, at the entrance to Manila Bay. Enjoying the tour are these five ladies: Cora Custodio-Utzurum, Linda Figuerres-Hubo, Lita Flores-Lavina, Letty Rosales-Klatt, and me. Little did we know that our group was making history as we were the pioneers of what is now an almost half a century old very prestigious bank—the ADB, an international organization that is making a big difference in the world.

Aside from Linda Figuerres, who remained with ADB until she retired, the other four left much, much earlier.

Letty Rosales left in October 1968 and went to school in Champaign, Illinois. She eventually married and is now based in New Jersey with her one and only daughter.

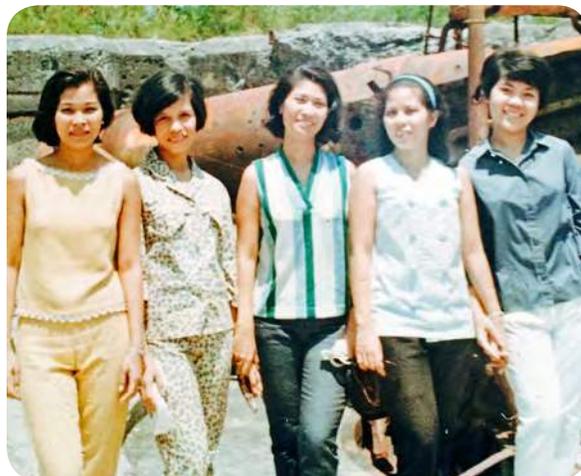
Cora Custodio left for the United States in November 1969, where she eventually married. With her two beautiful daughters, she and her family now stay in San Bernardino County, California.

Lita Flores left ADB in 1972 to join her husband in Switzerland, after which they went, in 1974 to Los Angeles, California until 1980. Back in the Philippines, she rejoined ADB until 1984. Starting in 1984 she traveled again—from Hamburg to Vienna and then Nairobi—before coming back again to the Philippines to retire in 1997. They presently live in Pasig City.

Linda Figuerres, after retiring from ADB, occupies herself with the school she put up in Imus, Cavite.

I left the Bank in December 1990 and joined my husband, who later became manager of the Cuneta

Astrodomo in Pasay City. We retired to General Santos City in 1998 and now are enjoying our mango farm. ■



Time-out from giving birth to ADB, on Corregidor in 1966, l-r: Cora Custodio-Utzurum, Linda Figuerres-Hubo, Lita Flores-Lavina, Letty Rosales-Klatt, and Maru Pastor-Abrea.

Unagi

Taroichi Yoshida (ADB 1976–1981)



Ed: In 1984, former ADB President Taroichi Yoshida wrote weekly essays in the Japan Economic Journal, for its column titled "Topics for Tomorrow." The essay reproduced here demonstrates the author's sense of humor. Fishing with cormorants was once common in Asia; it was also popular among aristocrats in Europe in the 16th century. For fishing purposes, the bottom part of a cormorant's

*neck is bound with a string (which also serves as a leash) so that any fish caught must stay in the bird's gullet and can be recovered. A freshwater eel, unagi, is a much appreciated dish in Japan. It is usually the Japanese eel, *Anguilla japonica*. A word similar to munagi is found in many languages in the Pacific area, ranging from Papua New Guinea in the east to Madagascar in the west. The essay is translated and additional information provided by Eichi Watanabe.*

Some 30 years ago, we invited a foreign guest to a dinner. I was sitting at the end of the table as a young caretaker. During the meal, baked eel was served. The host, an elderly politician, explained (in Japanese), "This is *unagi* (eel),

a favorite dish among the Japanese. The name *unagi* came from the fact that a u (a cormorant) finds it difficult (*nangi*) to swallow an eel. And the original name, *u-nangi*, was later shortened to *unagi*." Then suddenly the host turned to me and said, "You, over there, translate this into English."

Needless to say, I was not particularly proficient in English. The number of bird species I can name in English is quite limited. But on that occasion, the term "cormorant" came to my mind as if by divine revelation. That was, however, the easier part. The main part, referring to a cormorant trying to swallow an eel, was real agony.

Some time later, when I had a chance to meet Mr. Keizo Shibusawa (a renowned businessman-cum-financier) for the first time, he said, "So, you were the one who had trouble with *unagi*." Judging from this, my plight must have been fairly well known by then.

Twenty years later, I was with Asian Development Bank. One day I was consulting the Vice-President (an Indian) on a certain English expression. He was a person of very noble character (like an old-time Samurai) and helped me explicitly and implicitly. He also possessed a vast stock of knowledge. The particular expression we were discussing was the term "difficult." He said, "When the Japanese say something is difficult, they tend to mean that it is almost impossible to do. But we use it in a slightly different sense. The term means that although it may not be easy, it is not altogether insurmountable." Certainly, depending on the way the term is used, there could be misunderstandings between peoples with different cultural background. I had heard of such cases in the past. So, his opinion was worth heeding, I thought.

Be that as it may, I was having a hard time suppressing the giggle arising in my mind while he was explaining the nuance of the term. For, all of a sudden the memory of the "u" incident of 20 years earlier returned. During the translation, I must have been using the term "difficult(y)" repeatedly, such as "a cormorant facing difficulty trying to swallow the fish" and the like.

Even if my translation was literally understandable to the foreign guest, I am not sure if I was able to convey the humorous aspect of the story. But, at least, I was factually describing the u's struggle trying to swallow an eel.

By the way, the origin of the word "*unagi*" has nothing to do with a cormorant. A poem in a collection of poems compiled in the 7th–8th centuries has the following lines:

"Hey, Ishimaro, I would like to tell you something,
They say *munagi* is good against summer-time weight loss,
Why don't you take one?"

(The "*munagi*" was the classic form of "*unagi*." It is also a poem ridiculing a slim person.) ■

Annual Get-Together of Mahjong Chums

Eiichi Watanabe (ADB 1976–1997)



Mahjong games were enjoyed frequently during the ADB days by several staffers. The regular members still meet once a year, spending an afternoon playing the game in a favorite parlor (there are many Mahjong parlors in every Japanese town), followed by a

drinking and dining session in the evening.

Mahjong was developed in what is now the People's Republic of China as a modification of card games brought there by the Portuguese in the 16th century. During the Qing dynasty, paper was replaced with ivory and bamboo as the material. In the late 19th century it spread outside China, including to Britain (some of you might have read in one of Agatha Christie's novels a scene of high-society ladies playing mahjong), Japan, and the United States. Some new rules were introduced in these countries, and the game became more sophisticated. Mahjong has a well-balanced combination of luck and skill. Naturally, the winners claim skill as the more important aspect, and the losers claim the opposite, leading to endless arguments. Four players are needed for a game, making them rivals as well as indispensable partners.

Some members left ADB nearly 3 decades ago and the newest one only a few years back. But, regardless of differences in age and current social status (a professor, a company president, millionaires among them), the old mates can talk freely without bothering about mundane manners, a rare and precious opportunity. The meetings are also nostalgic, making everyone feel as young and sanguine



L-r, front: Akio Kawai, Kouichi Morizono, Masaaki Nagata, T. Kojima, Motochika Toyama; back: Masaki Higuchi, Shinichiro Mitsuhashi, Shigeru Koga, Eiichi Watanabe, and two outsiders.

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as he used to be, although, it must be admitted, by the end of the session, everyone knows who is suffering from what kind of health problems. The annual gatherings have continued for nearly 20 years now. This year's meeting took place on 7 June in Tokyo.

In the photo, I hope you can recognize some familiar faces. ■

Summer in DC

Wilma Gonzales Buenaobra (ADB 1976–1980)



Ed: Filipinos who work at (or have worked at) international financial institutions in the DC area gather yearly for fun and food, with notable participation of AFE members.

The weather was patchy and promised nothing. It was August 20th, annual picnic day in 2013.

The venue, Van Dyck Park, in Fairfax City, was wisely a "rain or shine" pavilion, offering shelter in case the weather's fickleness turned wet, as we always look at the positive side of things. Not only did everybody look forward to the annual ex-ADBers summer picnic, but saw it for what it was. As some organizers from the International Finance Corporation (IFC) summed up, a slightly overcast sky promised a cooler day. A relief and respite from the heat and humidity often experienced in July/August here in Virginia, which makes us feel we are in Manila during March/April.

As for attendance, the prevailing rationale always is and has been: the more people who come, the more merriment and laughter to share. If fewer people come, there would be more food to take home for the "dogs" to enjoy; and those dogs love Pinoy food! Such is the Filipino spirit....a formidable foe to dampen! Real trooper Raffy and Wilma Buenaobra, quickly followed by Baby Cerino, came early enough to set the place up and usher in Mr. Lechon. Later, without any complaint, not even a whimper, Mr. Lechon was adeptly and bravely tackled by sharp scissor-yielding Diane Venegas and Rechie Basco. Watching these two surgeons operate was quite a revelation!

Along with their precious cargoes of food came Precy Lizarondo; Annie Butial; Bobbie and Rolly Montesa; Diane Venegas;

Dimples and Olan Kasilag; Gilda Ordoñez-Baric and daughter Marian; Maan Cruz; Wena Peñaranda with Ariel; Lakan Jose; Mithi Maria; Diwata Maria; Jun Mulato with Kathy and Mateo; Norie Benedicto with Benny and Janelle; Rizel Gutierrez with Rene and Mommy Alejandra Paz (Rizel's mom); Des dela Cruz; Des and Nick Horton; Aileen Melnick; Rechie Basco with Max, Lance, and Tricia.

Our birthday celebrant Elisa Lacerona was treated to a birthday song that would make ABBA blush (and maybe shake their heads?). Honored guests were Nerisse Reyes (visiting from Manila, a seasoned tourist), Margie Baccay, and Lorna del Rosario (NY), who came to invite the group to yet another traditional exADBer annual year-end party on Saturday, September 28th in New York, New York, as Sinatra says.

Noticeable was the dwindling number of babies and toddlers, even teenagers; although some are still expecting (in their dreams). Perhaps because we are getting on and our kids are no longer interested in heavily sinful and delicious food; plus the infantile revelry that we still very much enjoy? Your guess is as good as mine.

This annual limbic brain connection started with the young and young-at-heart, old and new friends animatedly touching base and giving their updates. A scrumptious lunch of real food, no chips and pica-pica here! After an equally diet-breaking dessert spread, with a large sans rival, fruit and buko salads, ripe mangoes, and so on; a brief lull followed. But, before everyone could fall into a deep stupor, the usual mind- and rib-tickling parlor games started. My! Did we follow the good doctor's advice to the letter: laughter is the best medicine. We certainly capped the happy afternoon looking ahead to next year's happy reunion that will be organized by the World Bank staff. ■



ExADB and family.



Diasanta's Caricatures

Nestor Diasanta (ADB 1971–2003)

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Ed: Nestor Diasanta was senior cartography and design technician while at ADB. In his spare time and at home, he enjoyed doing caricatures of people, sometimes as gifts when they left ADB or changed jobs in ADB. He has shared copies with us—come by the office if you want to see more.

Let's see who first figures out who Nes has drawn here—e-mail, text, or mail us at AFE-ADB@ADB.ORG with your answers. Subject line: *Guessing Who.*

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Partnering for Transparency and Honesty

Geert van der Linden (ADB 1978–2006)



*Ed: Much of the following is excerpted from *The Philippines: Young and Old Fighting Corruption* (chapter 7 in P. Landell-Mills, 2013, *Citizens Against Corruption*), by Geert van der Linden, and an interview with him.*

The Corruption Conundrum

After Gerry retired in 2006, and while on a trip to Bangkok, Frank Vogl of Transparency International (TI) asked Gerry if he would be interested in joining a partnership for transparency. A few years earlier four people associated with TI had established a fund to back worthwhile citizen initiatives to combat corruption which led to the setting up of the Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF). PTF is virtually an entirely voluntary organization with just one paid staff member in Washington (<http://ptfund.org>). Gerry joined PTF to help write a business plan but primarily to manage PTF's work in the Philippines. He initiated a country program for PTF that would over a 5-year period fund about 20 projects in the Philippines with an average grant of about \$25,000 each. For the implementation of the program Gerry teamed up with the Makati Business Club's Coalition Against Corruption.

This commenced Gerry's journey to meet and work with citizens committed to combatting corruption.

But in its 5th year of the country program, PTF itself ran out of money. So Gerry embarked on a new adventure—fund raising. He managed to get a \$200,000 grant from AusAID for 5 projects in the Philippines, and then another \$200,000 from ADB, through Claudia Buentjen, then of the Philippine Country Office, for a further 5 projects. Last year Gerry help organize a group of Philippine NGOs in Northern Luzon that bid for and won an \$800,000 World Bank grant to help ensure the integrity of the country's very successful Conditional Cash Transfer program.

Why work with private citizens? The basic premise is that corruption won't go away unless citizens demand its stop and become actively engaged in monitoring the public sector. Most past efforts to decrease corruption have

concentrated on government action (the "supply side") alone, such as focusing on strengthening audit agencies, the judiciary, etc. But such action does not work unless civil society (the "demand side") is actively involved. This is where PTF comes in—funding citizen involvement in ways that work to decrease corruption without endangering the people involved. Gerry says his job is to find projects, help with their design, and monitor implementation. Frustrations include the hugely time-consuming bureaucratic requirements of funders, an onus few NGOs can manage.

Gerry notes that PTF is involved in small-scale projects, not nationwide systemic ones; the aim is for such small projects to work and multiply to a tipping point where citizens see results, gain confidence in their own abilities to act, and move society to a level where there is less corruption and it is not accepted as a "given."

Combating Corruption: From the Ground Up

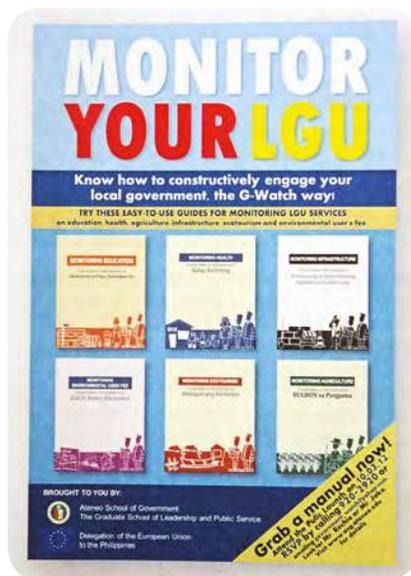
Getting Books to Schools. Some of the projects PTF has backed are truly innovative and amazing. An example is school books not getting to schools. To solve this problem, PTF teamed up with G-Watch, a small NGO led by Dondon Parafino, a dynamic young activist. The NGO was "carrying out a project called Textbook Count. This tackled three related problems: textbooks were costing too much, they were often badly printed, and nearly 40% of the books failed to reach the schools."

Thinking and acting way out of the box, "Dondon and his colleagues decided to mobilize young people to overcome these failures. They trained volunteers to monitor procurement so that printing contracts were truly competitive. Other volunteers were mobilized to make surprise visits to printing plants to check on the quality of the printing: flipping through each book, page by page, they rejected books with missing or badly printed pages. Finally, Coca Cola Philippines and the national Boy and Girl Scout organizations were brought on board to ensure that the books reached the schools. Coca Cola agreed to deliver the books to even the most remote schools for free and local scouts checked that the books arrived at their intended destinations."

In its first year alone, the project saved the country P22 million (about \$450,000), and that went up to P151 million (about \$3.6 million) in subsequent years. And the program has continued without PTF support.

Stemming Abusive Use of Government Vehicles.

Another project PTF supported was tackling corruption in Oroquieta City, an initiative of Ecolink. Ecolink wanted to stop government officials from misusing government vehicles. Ambulances, when needed, were often taking officials shopping or on personal matters, and the



government was footing the gas bill. Government vehicles were seen parked outside nightclubs during evenings and used on weekends. Ecolink mobilized citizens to report such abuses, and then took them up with the local government. The project cost about \$21,700...and in the first year saved the government about P2.2 million (about \$45,000) by cutting down on the abuse.

Involving Youth. PTF also provided a grant to Ecolink for a project called “Junior Graft Watch” to empower youth to fight corruption in the Sanggunian Kabataan—the “national youth movement set up to develop future leaders with financial support from the government. Over the years, the use of SK funds has been marked by widespread corruption.... Ecolink came up with the brilliant idea of using local high school students to put a stop to this corruption by establishing youth-based, youth-led transparency and accountability mechanisms....” PTF funded the pilot projects that allowed this effort to get under way.

“Ecolink reported that 75 fraudulent procurements were exposed and cancelled, and \$12,200 of misappropriated funds were recovered. For PTF, this represented a return of \$6 for every \$1 invested in the project at this initial stage. The more important impact arising from this investment, however, was the empowerment of the youth sector, the Junior Graft Watch in particular, to take responsibility.”

Better Health Services. Another PTF grant helped cut corruption in health services. “There are many opportunities for direct citizen action to fight graft in the delivery of services. For example, PTF has assisted a national citizens service organization, Namfrel (the National Citizens’ Movement for Free Elections), in monitoring the procurement and delivery of medicines to hospitals and health centers, an area that is particularly prone to corruption. Namfrel’s original and primary role is to monitor



elections, but it has looked for other ways for its local chapters around the country to campaign for better governance when there are no elections. Namfrel identified corrupt drug procurement, irregular delivery and poor stock management practices as key problems. The project mobilized volunteers to achieve improvements in all three areas in selected hospitals and health centers. Based on what it learned during the project, Namfrel recommended to the Department of Health various ways for improving its systems. A key factor in the success of this initiative has been Namfrel’s ability to forge a close relationship with the Department of Health, which invited Namfrel to join its Integrity Development Committee reflecting the relationship of trust that has been developed.”

Lessons Learned. “What emerges indisputably from the independent evaluations of completed projects in the Philippines is that, under the right conditions, mobilizing citizens can be a highly effective tool in combating corruption. Whether a CSO organizes citizens to monitor the misuse of official vehicles by municipal officials, or takes on the formidable task of tackling malpractice in the procurement and delivery of textbooks to schools or medicines to health facilities, citizens can play a key role in reducing corrupt practices by exerting a strong demand for better governance.

“No one should expect one-off projects to bring about a lasting reduction in corruption on their own. Indeed, the Scout Governance Camp, undertaken in 2007, and Participatory Monitoring in Isabela Province in 2008, for example, almost certainly have not brought about sustainable change. Why? Well, in the case of the latter, the reform champion was the governor of Isabela Province who, unfortunately ... was not re-elected in 2010. And the Scout Camp was little more than an awareness raising exercise. It was only likely to have had lasting impact if followed by concrete projects that made a dent on corruption. In contrast, G-Watch’s Textbook Count has demonstrated the massive cumulative impact of repeat grants in support of a multi-year program until self-sustaining momentum was achieved.”

Hope. PTF’s work shows that “The impact of small-scale interventions has been leveraged to achieve results on a larger scale ... to effect policy or systemic changes on a national scale. The aim has been to support pioneering interventions which can later, if successful, be scaled up or replicated in other locations. The basic goal is to demonstrate, especially to a younger generation, that corruption is not inevitable, that at every level it is possible for citizens to challenge and reduce it. This impact—giving hope to people that change is possible—is hard to measure but it may be the most important result of all.”



Gerry van der Linden at a civil society organization roundtable discussion organized by ADB, the Government of the Philippines, and the World Bank in July 2014.

The Future. PTF is entirely dependent on volunteers and is always looking for people to give some of their time to advance its cause. Many of the current volunteers are retired ADB or World Bank. The organization would like to have more volunteers on the ground in South Asian countries (such as Bangladesh, India, and Nepal) and in East Asia (such as in Indonesia, the Mekong Region, and Mongolia). In the Philippines there are just two PTF volunteers and Gerry and his fellow volunteer would welcome anyone who is prepared to get involved. ■

Walking

Jill Gale de Villa



For much of the last 20 years, hiking has been my main stress-release-cum-exercise. Since early childhood I have loved getting away from it all, into the woods. Often I go alone, as few friends are willing to get up in the wee small hours (in the Philippines, early means less heat) for an uncertain destination with uncertain weather.

Climbing Friends. About 15 years ago I climbed a small mountain in Batangas “solo” (as climbing alone is termed here). At the top were several groups who had camped out overnight. I greeted a man emerging from a tent, and he greeted me back, asked where I had climbed from, and introduced his group—some members of the University of the Philippines

Mountaineers (UPM). Then he asked if I would lead them down the same way, as they didn’t know that route. On the way down, I chatted with the group and it turned out the leader, Rodec, had recognized me from a picture in one of my travel books. I asked the group to invite me if they ever had an easy climb I could join.

A few days later I received a call from my daughter: “Mom, somebody is on the internet calling you ‘an old woman,’” she exclaimed angrily. So I went online and found that Rodec had posted the story of his group’s climb, including that they had woken up in the morning to find a woman in a backpack outside the tent. He narrated the story of their climb, our meeting, the walk down the mountain, and the chats. And he had ended with

“Not many people climb mountains alone.
“Especially not women.
“Especially not old women.”

I laughed long and hard. In the Philippines, calling someone “old” is not an insult, and in this case I felt he was actually writing with some admiration. Nice.

Even nicer, he and his group started inviting me on climbs. As time has passed, they have variously been married, started having families, and taken jobs, so our meetings have become less and less frequent, but this year there have been three.



Maranat Falls, from the start of the descent to the base of the falls. In the circle: my friends, part way up the falls.



Rodec, me, a friend, and the two guides en route to Maranat.



Going upstream at Pangil River Eco Park.



Ambon-Ambon Falls.

We got a guide, who toted two life jackets (erm...such unaccustomed luxuries) and took us upstream to the first of about 7 river crossings, each accomplished by the guide jumping in the river, swimming upstream a short distance, and returning with a raft to ferry us across. Finally we achieved the gentler Ambon-Ambon waterfall, and swam while others arrived and did the same. This is a great outing for a family, lots of fun for young and old alike, and not too strenuous. We agreed to return another time to find the real Buntot Palos Falls! Rodec's idea is to bring his

Maranat. In April, Rodec invited me and others to a climb that turned out to be a long and very hot hike in an area above Angat dam. It was a beautiful day, and two of his friends joined us. After some wrong turns, we found the start of the trail in Rodriguez (formerly Montalban), Rizal, and some men eager to guide us.

Pretty soon we were off along a long trail with little shade but beautiful views and, amazingly, some life-saving springs. We meandered along the trail, through bamboo groves, enjoying the view that included Angat way below and Norzagaray, Bulacan way in the distance, also far below. The area was deforested and denudation continues—the people here make a very meager living humping huge sacks of charcoal for several hours out of the watershed—for which they get P100.

Eventually (I am slow!) we found Maranat, a tall beautiful waterfall with many cascades. It was Holy Week, so there were quite a few campers—yet Maranat is far enough off the beaten path not to be overwhelmed. Here we lunched and swam, and I watched as the men disappeared up the falls to higher reaches. I started back with Orlando, one of the guides, to save the men from having to wait for me so much. About half way, the others caught up, gallantly saying “you made it this far already?”

Pangil River Eco Park. Then in May, Rodec suggested another outing, this time to Pangil, at the end of Laguna de Bay. He wanted to do Buntot Palos Falls. So we started out relatively early, and drove along the northern side of Laguna de Bay, enjoying beautiful views of the lake and the greenery. At what we thought was the start of the hike, we paid an entrance fee to the Pangil River Eco Park, waited for the gates to open, and swarmed in with hosts of others dragging coolers—we had managed to pick the last weekend before school started, and everybody from nearby was out to take advantage of it. And from the coolers and platform chinelas, we assumed these weren't all hikers.

family and they can enjoy the river and tamer route while he goes off to the more adventurous falls.

As our river-trek was really just “a walk in the park” and we were finished early, on the way back to Manila we detoured over the Sierra Madre on the road to Infanta, Quezon. In Real, the town before Infanta, we stopped for a late lunch of delicious seafood, and regretted not having a cooler so we could pack more of it to take home. Then we took the long, winding, little-used, and very scenic Marcos Highway back over the Sierras to Antipolo on the return.



My friends Chadwick, Ivo, Sinag, Rodec, and Ramon doing “selfies.”



An undeveloped beach.



Mangroves on the way to Burot Beach.



Burot Beach, Calatagan, Batangas.

The area has numerous beautiful white sand beaches, places to park and camp, a few toilets that don't get high marks, and security guards who keep the area secure, but the back part is not trash-free. Here we had a wonderfully relaxing day, swimming, picnicking, walking the beach,

Batangas. In June, Rodec was organizing again, and this time, with several members of our (former?) hiking group we weren't hiking—we were beaching. The idea was to camp out Saturday night, but car troubles resulted in camping out at my house and then starting early in the morning for one of the most enjoyable, relaxing days I have ever had. First, down the Cavite coast to the Pico de Loro area, where we stopped when we wanted, enjoyed the forest and the air, and started a day based around "selfies" as people tried out new contraptions to hold cameras in various positions and take images of varying quality and hilarity.

After the tunnel beyond Pico, we started stopping in earnest, first at an undeveloped beach where we wandered along the sand, bought bananas, and were temporarily adopted by a cat.

Then on to Burot Beach (entrance: P65), owned by ShoeMart and mercifully not yet much much developed. To get there we drove through Calatagan town and asked directions. After the entrance gate, we continued through beautiful old mangroves and fishpond areas.

dozing, chatting, just plain hanging out. I do urge you to visit before it is "developed" (shudder!).

Last stop for the day was Calatagan's lighthouse (*parola*), where the third generation lighthouse keeper took us on a guided tour and told us its history. We clambered up its steep steps for a great and very windy view from the top. In front of the lighthouse is a century-old mango tree. Then a late afternoon drive back to reality.

If you are interested in any of these outings, google them: Maranat Falls, Pangil River Eco Park, Burot Beach. ■

New Members

AFE-ADB extends a warm welcome to the following new members of the Association (country of residence is indicated in parentheses):

February 2014

Lampa, Sonia L. (Philippines)
 Lopez, Miguela Enora B. (Philippines)
 Lopez-Liwanag, Ma. Purificacion A. (Philippines)

March 2014

Arago, Asela Maria L. (Philippines)
 Cruda, Helen B. (Philippines)
 Dimaala, Rafael F. (Philippines)
 Kamayana, Putu (Indonesia)

April 2014

Daval-Santos, Mary Lourdes N. (United States)
 Ignacio, Leticia B. (Philippines)
 Rao, Satish Halady (India)
 Santos, Ma. Lourdes M. (United States)



Cape Santiago Lighthouse, Calatagan, Batangas.

May 2014

Agliam, Shirley B. (Philippines)
 Bellinger, Christophe S. (France)
 Calma, Nida A. (Philippines)
 Dagoy, Eleonora T. (Philippines)
 Kawai, Shinji (Japan)
 Khan, Nuzhat (Pakistan)
 Kim, Yoon-Kyung Anne (Republic of Korea)
 Makin, Ian (United Kingdom)
 Price, Penelope (Australia)
 Shiroishi, Yukihiko (Japan)
 Sinsiri, Newin (Thailand)
 Surtani, Jackie Bhagwandas (Hongkong, China)
 Wu, Janice S. (Philippines)
 Wu, Lan-Chun (Jennifer) (Taipei, China)
 Yang, Dan (People's Republic of China)
 Zhou, Xiaobing (People's Republic of China)

June 2014

Akanda, Albab (United States)
 Angeles, Vicente M. (Philippines)
 Athukorala, Sarath Lakshman (Sri Lanka)
 Bradbury, Simon T. (New Zealand)
 Chavez, Arlene B. (Philippines)
 Lacanlale, Orlando D. (United States)
 Loxley, William A. (Philippines)
 Martin, Anneli L. (Philippines)
 Narayanan, Krishnadas (Malaysia)
 Romagos, Christian Paolo E. (Philippines)
 Sinha, Samir K. (India)
 Tejada, Ma. Dolores T. (Philippines)
 Tsuji, Masami (Japan)
 Verzosa, Ma. Elena R. (Philippines)
 Yarcia, Damaris L. (Philippines)
 Zheng, Kangbin (United States)

July 2014

Ablett, David C. (Philippines)
 Cohen, Marc M. (France)
 Feng, Yu-Lan (Taipei, China)
 Francisco, Alma O. (United States)
 Nomoto, Takaaki (Japan)
 Suarez, Rosa Maria D. (Philippines)

August 2014

Humbert, Xavier Yves (France)

**For information
 on membership contact
afe-adb@adb.org**

Senior Appointments in ADB

A FE-ADB congratulates the following staff members on their new appointments.

- Emma Veve**—Director, Urban, Social Development & Public Management Division, Pacific Department (PARD), assumed office on 28 July 2014.
- Hun Kim**—Director General, South Asia Department (SARD), assumed office on 7 July 2014.
- Ma. Carmela Locsin**—Director General, Regional and Sustainable Development Department (RSDD), assumed office on 1 July 2014.
- Juan Miranda**—Managing Director General, Office of the President (OPr), assumed office on 1 July 2014.
- Jitendra Jethalal Shah**—Special Project Facilitator, Office of the Special Project Facilitator (OSPF), effective on assumption of office.
- Chai Sun Kim**—Controller, Office of the Controller, Controller's Department (CTL), assumed office on 25 June 2014.
- Damien Eastman**—Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel (OGC), assumed office on 18 June 2014.
- Dingding Tang**—Chair, Compliance Review Panel (CRP), assumed office on 10 June 2014.
- Ramit Nagpal**—Deputy General Counsel, OGC, assumed office on 4 June 2014.
- WooChong Um**—The Secretary, Office of the Secretary (OSEC), assumed office on 2 June 2014.
- Don Purka**—Director, Infrastructure Finance Division 1, Private Sector Operations Department (PSOD), assumed office on 29 May 2014.
- Shang-Jin Wei**—Chief Economist, Office of the Chief Economist, Economics and Research Department (ERD), effective on assumption of office.
- Muhammad Ehsan Khan**—Advisor, BPMSD and Head, Unit for Institutional Coordination (BPOD-UIC), Budget, Personnel, and Management Systems Department (BPMSD), assumed office on 15 May 2014.
- Ajay Sagar**—Senior Advisor (Infrastructure Finance), Office of the Director General, SARD, assumed office on 29 April 2014.
- Sri Widowati**—Country Director, Sri Lanka Resident Mission (SLRM), SARD, assumed office on 25 April 2014.
- Kazuhiko Higuchi**—Country Director, Bangladesh Resident Mission (BRM), SARD, assumed office on 24 April 2014.

Leah Gutierrez—Assistant Secretary, OSEC, assumed office on 23 April 2014.

Takeo Konishi—Country Director, Uzbekistan Resident Mission (URM), Central and West Asia Department (CWRD), assumed office on 21 April 2014.

Winfried Wicklein—Country Director, Myanmar Resident Mission (MYRM), Southeast Asia Department (SERD), assumed office on 2 April 2014.

Mitsuhiro Yamawaki—Head, Office of Risk Management (ORM), assumed office on 1 April 2014.

Richard Bolt—Country Director, Philippines Country Office (PhCO), SERD, assumed office on 21 March 2014.

Bob Finlayson—Director, Independent Evaluation Division 2, Independent Evaluation Department (IED), assumed office on 3 March 2014.

Robert Jauncey—Regional Director, Pacific Subregional Office in Suva, Fiji (SPSO), PARD, assumed office on 24 February 2014.

Oleg Tonkonojenkov—Deputy Country Director, Bangladesh Resident Mission (BRM),SARD, assumed office on 14 February 2014.

M. Teresa Kho—Country Director, India Resident Mission (INRM), SARD, assumed office on 3 February 2014.

Useful ADB Contacts

Contact	Telephone Number	Email Address
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Gicheon Baik	00 63 2 632 4660 00 63 2 632 5837	gbaik@adb.org
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Insurance Unit		insurance@adb.org
Cristina S. Keppler	00 63 2 632 4115 00 63 2 632 4047	ckeppler@adb.org
Alona Saludo	00 63 2 632 4480	asaludo@adb.org

Obituaries

With deep regret and sorrow we announce the death of the following AFE members. Our heartfelt and sincere condolences to their families.

Taroichi Yoshida: see p. 3.

Tuti Wilujeng Witoyo Kaswadi, former Senior Consulting Services Specialist in the Central Operations Service Office (COSO), passed away on Tuesday, 8 July 2014, at the age of 74. Condolences may be sent to his wife Tuti Kaswadi at Jalan Pondok Hijau 1 No. 20, Pondok Indah, Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia.

Robert Byrnes, former Country Manager in the Country Department (CD), passed away on Saturday, 7 June 2014, at the age of 91. Condolences may be sent to his wife Heather May Byrnes at 124 La Perouse Street, Griffith, A.C.T. 2603 Australia.

P.K. Thomas, former Manager in the Water Supply and Urban Development Division West (IFWW), passed away on Saturday, 10 May 2014, at the age of 82. Condolences may be sent to his spouse Saramma Thomas at Pazhayidath, Yamuna Nagar, Karakulam P.O. Trivandrum 69554, India.

Charles Njio, former Senior Project Economist in the Private Sector Operations Department (PSOD), passed away on Friday, 25 April 2014, at the age of 79. Condolences may be sent to his sister at ellen@indo.net.id or ellen.njio@gmail.com.

Eustaquio Tolentino Jr., former Technical Assistant in the Accounting Division (Bank Reconciliation), passed away on Friday, 4 April 2014, at the age of 74. Condolences may be sent to his wife Norma Tolentino at 7235 Belling Court, Springfield, VA 22150 USA.

Macario Reyes, former Assistant in the Records Disposition of the Office of Administrative Services (OAS), passed away on Thursday, 6 March 2014. Condolences may be sent to his wife Pilar Reyes at Sardinia cor. Basilica Streets San Francisco Village, Muzon, Taytay Rizal, Philippines.

Robert Bakley, former Director in the Post Evaluation Office (PEO), passed away on Sunday, 11 August 2013, at the age of 80. Condolences may be sent to his wife Ruth Bakley at 1995 NW Cary Parkway, #217 Morrisville, NC 27568, USA.

George Jacobs, former Alternate Director, passed away in April 2011 at the age of 92.

Mutsuko Ogawa, former Personal Assistant to the President, passed away 10 years ago.

Chapter Coordinators

Peter Carroll—Australia
 Bruce Murray—Canada
 John Rive—Ottawa
 Fraternidad Rodrigo—Toronto
 Günter Hecker—Europe
 Barindra Ganguli—India
 Dimiyati Nangju—Indonesia
 Tsuneaki Yoshida—Japan
 Yoong Soo Seo—Korea
 John Colin Pratt—New Zealand
 Shahid Mirza—Pakistan
 Gamaliel de Armas, Jr.—Philippines
 Cheng Huat Sim—Singapore
 Ranjith Wirasinha—Sri Lanka
 Clay Wescott—Washington DC, United States (US)
 Nannette Amorado—New York–New Jersey, US
 Yolanda Laurel-Houtby—Southern California, US
 Vacant—Taipei, China

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Articles for publication may be sent in MS Word as e-mail attachments to afe-adb@adb.org. Articles will preferably be 250–750 words. Please send images in a separate file. Comments that will help improve *AFE–ADB News* are most welcome.

Acknowledgements

Josephine Jacinto-Aquino, AFE–ADB's able former assistant, provided invaluable help, including typesetting and layout. Vicky Tan facilitated access to images of Baku, sent from ADB's Azerbaijan Resident Mission. Steve Banta, Wickie Mercado, and Jill Gale de Villa copy edited. They also proofread, as did Arlene Ayson, Malou Magalued, David Parker, and Hans-Juergen Springer. AFE sincerely appreciates ADB's Department of External Relations and printing unit for assistance with finalizing the magazine. Cesar Juan prepared it for mailing.

Announcements

2015 Annual Meeting of the ADB Board of Governors

The **Forty-Eighth Annual Meeting** of the Board of Governors of the Asian Development Bank will be held on 2–5 May 2015 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

Staff Community Fund

The **Staff Community Fund** will hold its Show on 3 October 2014, titled “An Enchanted Evening, the Magic of Giving.” For details contact Susan Onday at local 5681 or email sonday.contractor@adb.org or staffcommunityfund@adb.org.

Chapter Events

The **Europe Chapter** will hold its Annual Reunion on 12–16 September 2014 in Andorra. Contact Rudolf Jonker (harmonie@andorra.ad) or Gunther Hecker (ghecker1@online.de) for more details.

The **India Chapter** will hold its Annual Meeting on 25–28 September 2014 in Bhopal. For program details and cost, please contact Barin Ganguli at shiprabaringanguli75@gmail.com.

The **Australia Chapter** reunion will be held on 21–24 October 2014 in Canberra, Australian Capital Territory. Contact Peter Carroll (pet@bigpond.net.au) for more details.

The **New York–New Jersey Chapter** will hold its 2014 Annual Reunion on Saturday, 25 October 2014 at 6:30 PM at Empire Meadowslands Hotel, Crystal Room, Secaucus, NJ 07094. The party fee is \$50.00/person for registrants before 15 September and \$55.00 onward. For those paying in check, please e-mail Nannette Amorado (nannette.amorado@undp.org) or you may hand it to committee member: Florence Rafulowitz (rafulowitz@un.org), Oscar Colmenar (colmenar@un.org), Maria Margareth Baccay (baccay@un.org), or Nena Villena-Tanedo (villena-tanedo@un.org).

The **Philippines Chapter** will hold its Annual Gathering on 20 November. Treats, games, fun, and an evening of fellowship await those who attend this grand event at the ADB EDR, so register early. The AFE–ADB website will have more details and a copy of the registration form.

The **Southern California Chapter** will hold its Christmas Party on 13 December 2014 at the Swiss Inn Restaurant. Please contact Yollie Laurel Houtby at yolahoutby@gmail.com for information.

The **Canada Chapter** is planning a number of get-togethers in 2014. The Ottawa group’s annual dinner is in October. In addition to holding a number of pot lucks, the Toronto group will hold a more formal year-end gala dinner. The Vancouver and Vancouver Island groups will hold get-togethers in the late fall. When confirmed, dates and venues will be announced to members.

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Please send, by January, articles, photos, updates, or comments for publication in our next newsletter.

Annual Association Dues

Members who have not yet settled their annual Association dues are requested to do so.

Keep Your Address Updated with AFE–ADB

Please keep us informed about any change in your address, telephone/fax numbers, and e-mail address. We don’t want to lose touch with you. Also, if you know any member whose address and other contact details are not listed, or are incomplete or wrong, please let us know.

AFE–ADB

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