staff news
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Reflections on This Year's "Quiet" Annual Meetings

The Annual Meetings are so complex and demanding that most participants see only a small and very intense part of them. That they run so smoothly year after year is a tribute to the extraordinary organizational work done by the Joint Secretariat and the Secretary's Department. This year Staff News *looks at several of the many individual contributions. We have chosen rather at random, making an effort only to avoid duplicating those covered in the past.*

The Photographers

Possibly no one has a better overview of the Meetings than the Fund's photographers. Their perspective is unique and the pace unavoidably hectic. They cover aspects of the Meetings for the *IMF Survey*, for *Staff News*, for general public relations needs, and for some outside publications. They also do work for the Managing Director, including this year, for the first time, photographing his "bilaterals"—the meetings held with individual Governors.

With five distinct assignments and as many different requirements, "it was all you could do at times," photographer Padraic Hughes said, " to keep your exposure values and focal lengths correct. I felt like a combat photographer. I was racing all the time. One night we came back and found our processor busted. We had to have the pictures by morning, so we spent the night disassembling the processor and putting in new gears."

"It was more or less nonstop from day one," Denio Zara, Supervisor of the Photographic Unit, agreed, "but I enjoy it very much. If there is history to be made, you were right there."

More than 130 rolls of film later, there were few subjects that had been missed. "I had everyone I wanted except Mexico's Finance Minister," Denio Zara said. "I never caught up with him." Generally, though, their timing was perfect. "The one day I had an hour for lunch," Padraic Hughes recalled, "I was walking outside the hotel when someone told me about demonstrators blocking the entrance to the Sheraton. I spent my whole lunch hour shooting the protest, then ran to the Managing Director's office just as the next finance minister was coming in."

The bilaterals are brief photo sessions ("we would come in," Denio Zara explained, "snap snap, and come back and print"), but both felt that expanding coverage to the bilaterals was indicative of a greater

***Above,** Managing Director Michel Camdessus sits for one in what would be a series of television interviews. Below are Fund photographers Denio Zara (bottom) and Padraic Hughes.*

Above (left) Bill Broadfoot and Tony Chin discuss Print Shop operations; above (right) is Shelton Gallun, who worked on the Meetings' audiovisual requirements; below, Hugh Simpson.

openness in the Fund and a growing recognition that photography can play a role in improving its image.

The bilaterals also produced one of their more dramatic moments. "I was in the Managing Director's meeting room with several senior staff," Denio Zara said, "when I saw this finance minister and the MD coming in together. I was about to take a picture of them shaking hands, when I saw a hand coming up and grabbing my camera. I felt another hand grabbing my jacket. I didn't know what was going on.

"I looked at the Managing Director and he looked at me—very puzzled the both of us. The MD said, 'No pictures?' I said, 'I don't know.' It seems their security people hadn't expected a photographer. Hugh Simpson, the Managing Director's aide, handled it very well. The finance minister and the Managing Director later restaged their initial handshake and it was perhaps my best photograph of all the bilaterals."

Photographers have favorite subjects. Ronald Reagan was one of Denio Zara's. "Reagan was very photogenic. He would turn his head one way and then the other, so that you could photograph either side. You always came up with a good photo. We photographers also love to see expressions. The Managing Director, for instance, is a great subject. He uses quite a few hand movements, particularly when he is speaking Spanish. At the last press conference he answered a Latin American journalist in Spanish and I had all the photos I needed right there."

With the Managing Director

People had commented that these Meetings were unexciting, that nothing had come out of them, but Hugh Simpson, the Managing Director's Personal Assistant, felt they might have missed the point. "The Meetings provide the opportunity for lots of contacts and allow us to punctuate the year. As is evident from the Board's schedule, a great many things get done for the Meetings. Everyone wanted to have his program approved and in place. They help to concentrate the mind."

The days just before the Annual Meetings are the most intense for the Managing Director's office. "The worst time is between Sunday and Monday," he observed. "Sunday begins with the Group of Ten ministers at 8 a.m. and goes on until the end of the Interim Committee dinner late Sunday night. Monday morning officially begins with an Interim Committee meeting at 7:45 a.m., but the Managing Director by that time has already met with staff to prepare for the Interim Committee press conference. Then there is the Development Committee meeting before we pack up and move to the Sheraton."

Bilateral meetings are fitted in as and where they can be—many taking place Thursday and Friday after the Meetings. The Managing Director saw about forty finance ministers or heads of organizations this year. Managing the flow of scheduled appointments created its own tension. "For us," Hugh Simpson admitted, "the most stressful time is when we act like traffic policemen. Inevitably some meetings take longer than we allow for. Do we keep someone waiting? Do we reschedule their appointment? Can they come later or do they have a plane to catch? There's a lot of improvisation. What's difficult is that all the visitors are important."

This year's opening press conference took place in the Board Room for the first time. "There was a real sense of occasion," he noted. "Cameras filled the middle of the room and the Board Room was much fuller than usual. Afterward an hour was set aside for TV interviews. Something like six different TV companies had set up in the anteroom, each around a different sofa. The Managing Director went from one to the next. He has exceptional stamina. When I told him after an hour that that was all, he said, 'Oh, no more?'

"I don't remember anyone sitting down this year and saying, oh, let's be more open. But it is certainly in everyone's mind and it is worth doing, even though it's more work. For television especially, there are logistical problems with equipment and with the background needed for shooting, but EXR did a very good job in going out and making television interested in the Annual Meetings. We are well pleased with the results."

Above, Ernesto Hernandez-Cata at the WEO press conference. Below, Flemming Larsen.

Favorite moments? "I enjoy the press conferences," he admitted. "You hear how good the MD is at explaining what has been going on and making that very vivid." Much of the Meetings, though, were a blur of phone calls, papers, and running between plenary hall and office. "I don't think I saw daylight until I finally got outside on Thursday. I was blinking in the sunlight. There was a sense of homecoming when I came back to the Fund. It was bright, airy, comfortable. It's unusual to have that warm feeling about any office."

The WEO Press Conference

As the press conference on the *World Economic Outlook* has proven, there will be more than information officers and journalists on the front lines when the Fund deals with the world's media. This year the *WEO* press conference was given by Jacob A. Frenkel, Economic Counsellor and Director of the Fund's Research Department, with Ernesto Hernandez-Cata, Senior Advisor, and Flemming Larsen, Chief of the Current Studies Division.

The logistics of the press conference are handled informally. Broad answers to policy questions tend to be fielded by Jacob Frenkel, with more technical questions taken by either ErnestoHernandez-Cata or Flemming Larsen. But there is no fixed pattern, and after Jacob Frenkel's replies, Ernesto Hernandez-Cata noted, "We generally feel free to add what we feel should be added."

The hectic period before the press conference leaves no time for formal preparation. A number of notes and briefings are prepared for the Managing Director for the Interim Committee, the Group of 10, and the Group of 7 meetings. "We have all these issues in our mind, so that serves as our preparation," a member of the team said. "It has also become customary for the Economic Counsellor to provide a tour d'horizon of the *WEO* before accepting questions, and we do prepare a four- to six-page note on the main issues."

Going on the record seemed to produce no special anxiety. In the past the press attributed comments to "a senior staff member"; now those comments could be attributed to individuals. No apprehensions about "misspeaking"? "My personal view on how not to misspeak," Ernesto Hernandez-Cata remarked, "is to tell the truth as you see it. That may lead occasionally to some short-term friction, but in the long term you do a much better job by just saying, in an amiable and diplomatic way, of course, things as you see them."

The tenor of the questions did not seem to be altered, but one participant felt this was a more animated, more policy-oriented press conference. "There was the usual interest in projections," Ernesto Hernandez-Cata added, "and the extent to which they differ from official national projections." There were questions about the current account imbalances of the industrial countries, the U.S. federal deficit, and a rather surprising interest in specific technical issues—the current account discrepancy prompting particular fascination. The rather long-term scenario included in this *WEO* also seemed to prompt interest in the implications of prospective demographic developments on saving and on macroeconomic issues.

"The members of the press read the *WEO* year after year and they are sensitive to its nuances," Flemming Larsen noted. The questions asked during these press conferences tend to be remembered as the next *WEO* is being drafted, and interest in a particular topic, such as the current account discrepancy, can be reflected in the staff's work. The communication works both ways.

The *WEO* team seems comfortable with the new openness. "It's healthy," one participant observed, "to have to express your views clearly to the world, but in doing so, we must bear in mind the confidentiality we have promised member countries—that limits the extent to which we can be precise in quantita-

***Above** (left) Conferences Advisor Erik Friis (left) with E. J. Capbert (SEC) and Bill Grundy (SEC); above (right) Geraldine Jacob (OMD) and Brigitte Camdessus; below (far left) Catherine O'Neill (EXR) and Deputy Managing Director Richard Erb; and below (left) Greg Mordin (ADM).*

tive detail about individual countries. We have to be careful, but it is useful to explain why we do the things we do and why we view the world the way we do. If we can convince one member of the audience that our policy advice is meant to be constructive, I think we've gained something."

Working with the "NGOs"

One of the intriguing ironies of the evolution of the Annual Meetings is that as their official length has shrunk, the extent and importance of the related activities that the Meetings have spawned have grown dramatically. Among the newest, and increasingly influential, participants in the Meetings are the nongovernmental organizations—the NGOs.

The Berlin Meetings last year were the first in which visitor passes were issued to NGO representatives. This year 148 NGO representatives attended the Meetings, assisted now by a newly established Public Affairs Division of EXR. Robert Russell, chief of the division, noted that the Managing Director this year met with two sizable groups—one religious, the other environmental. "Many NGOs also use the occasion to arrange meetings with individual Executive Directors or finance ministers. Many are now organizing their own annual conferences to coincide with the Annual Meetings of the Fund and Bank."

While the Public Affairs Division also assists NGO representatives who wish to meet with Fund senior staff, Robert Russell stressed that much of the division's work during the Meetings is designed to facilitate initial contacts for these groups. With visitor passes and more ready access to Meetings participants, the NGOs have become adept at setting up their own schedules.

One continuing regret—and a constraint that hampers NGO activities at the Fund during the Meetings—is the unavailability of the Visitors' Center. The Center, which is part of the Public Affairs Division, hosts the press corps for three days before the shift is made to the Sheraton, but the facility is otherwise closed for all activities during the two-week period before and during the Meetings.

On Interpretation

Interpreters cover the main meetings, as well as the smaller meetings, the press conferences, and the bilaterals (primarily for the Bank). They even provide "whispered interpretation" for working dinners and lunches. For Peter Motton, an Interpreter with the Interpretation Section of BLS, the bilaterals are the most intense. "You are performing all the time. Even when you are not speaking, you must listen. So you can't relax at all. There's just one of you. You can't rely on a teammate to take over when you need a break."

The unexpected is expected, and the adrenaline always runs high before a meeting. "I always have a certain amount of stage fright before any new meeting," he admitted. "You feel a little keyed up, but that's good, because it keeps you alert." An interpreter normally waits for a half sentence—for the formation of an idea—before he or she interprets, but the speaker can, and does, change thought in midstream. And new terms crop up each year. One popular new phrase was "term sheet"—literally a list of conditions.

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Upon Leaving Office...

An Interview with Former SAC Chairman Reinold van Til

Staff News interviewed Reinold van Til in early 1988 (the interview appeared in March 1988). He had just months before become a member of the Staff Association Committee and had been elected its Chairman. He has now concluded a second term as SAC Chairman and reflects here on a very busy two years and the mix of satisfaction and frustration he feels on leaving office.

These past two years have been demanding. Have they been satisfying ones for you?

Yes they have, but not without a certain degree of frustration—a frustration that I think reflects the feelings of the staff. We have felt that staff motivation, staff morale, and the identity of the institution have diminished in recent years. It is interesting to read the recently published results of the attitude survey conducted by the Staff Association of the World Bank, which show an alarming decline in confidence in that institution. I suspect attitudes here might not be substantially different, but that's conjecture since we have not done that kind of survey. This year's report of the Ombudsman, however, illustrates some of these changing attitudes.

I haven't talked about staff morale for two years. I've always avoided it, because everybody got annoyed when you raised the issue, but the continuing evidence we get from staff members indicates a deterioration in staff morale.

There may be more willingness to do an attitude survey now that the job grading, appeals, and compensation exercises have been completed....

If the institution is interested in what the real situation is, it should not be afraid of the results. It is much better to face these results than try to push problems under the rug. I fully realize, of course, that the Administration Department has a lot of work on its hands and has very limited staff resources. The SAC is not free of blame either. It could have commissioned an attitude survey as the Bank SAC did. We have allowed other things to take priority, but if the Fund really wants to follow what is going on among its staff, and how productivity and efficiency are being affected, it should do these surveys regularly. We are fond of quantification, so let's also quantify staff attitudes, commitment, productivity problems, and the bureaucratic procedures that are in place here and try to get an objective assessment of the internal functioning of the Fund.

There is a natural and human tendency to see criticism as a personal attack, but it should not be interpreted that way. On the estate tax issue, for instance, we raised the alarm because we felt that progress in resolving this issue was too slow. There was a problem a year ago in November when the Fund was completely surprised about the new legislation and then very slowly initiated a process of trying to find out what was going on. We simply don't have the mechanisms to deal effectively with all kinds of regulations that come from the Hill. We have had changes in the employment authorization for dependents of G-IV visa holders that seriously affected a number of families.

Some of these issues indicate that the G-IV status does not offer the protection normally accorded international civil servants. It raises the question of whether the whole issue of G-IV status should be reconsidered. With respect to the estate tax legislation, the issue is broader because it discriminates between U.S. and non-U.S. citizens.

The outgoing SAC has wrestled with a number of serious concerns. How would you assess the progress made?

We had concentrated on several major issues: compensation, the administrative tribunal, pensions, and continuing problems with the administration of the medical plan. In terms of accomplishments, the only thing that has been finalized is compensation—and that has been finalized in the sense of a solution for this year. There are many, many questions still surrounding the system's operation, including the choice of comparators. Also as a result of this year's exercise, a number of anomalies have developed in the salary structure; some people who have served several years in the Fund may now receive a lower salary than new staff in the same grade. We knew the problem would arise. Unfortunately, not enough funds were made available to resolve this inequity.

What is also significant in administrative policy matters is the role of parallelism with the World Bank. The Bank received a larger increase on the grounds that they were behind. It left a little bit of a nasty taste among Fund staff that the issue of parallelism was driven so hard. Although I don't want to anticipate what might happen next year, I wouldn't be surprised if we have another full round of discussions on the methodology, the comparators, and the whole decision-making process.

A related topic is the proposed strengthening of the merit component within the context of a review of the performance appraisal exercise. There is a Fund-wide committee examining the issue, but we should not uncritically accept the statement of the JCC that the merit component needs to be strengthened. There is very little, if any, evidence that the present system of merit awards differentiates insufficiently. I think there needs to be more reflection on that whole issue.

First of all I'm not convinced that a further differentiation is called for in an organization such as this, where a collegial approach is favored for all kinds of issues. If it has not evolved to date—in spite of the possibilities offered by the present system—maybe it is simply because supervisors, and department heads, think that too strong a differentiation might be counterproductive. We haven't studied this issue and lack very basic information about whether it is beneficial for the organization. We seem to be starting from virtually a blank sheet of paper and trying to suggest improvements.

Where are we on the administrative tribunal?

After a number of Board discussions, there are disturbing signs that the Board may decide to have an administrative tribunal without meaningful jurisdiction, which is essentially what would happen if decisions of the Executive Board and/or the Board of Governors are excluded from the tribunal's purview. The whole rationale for an administrative tribunal would be to create a mechanism that would permit the decisions of the highest authorities in the Fund to be tested against international law and the law of the Fund. If we exclude these decisions, we don't need an administrative tribunal, because our Grievance Committee, which deals with complaints about the implementation of administrative decisions, seems to be functioning fine.

There is a lot of misunderstanding on what the extent of jurisdiction would mean in a pure, legal sense. It is quite clear from the operation of administrative tribunals around the world that these tribunals do not constrain management's, or the Board's, freedom and prerogative to take decisions for the institution. I would find it very strange if we could not have a proper administrative tribunal.

Another issue that concerns us is that there appears to be resistance to having a formal role for the Staff Association in the administrative tribunal. I believe it would be a big mistake to exclude the Staff Association. The institution should fully recognize the role of the Staff Association as a representative of the staff and also realize that it represents an efficient means of handling cases that affect the whole staff. At the same time it is clear, of course, that the SAC has to act responsibly in what it brings to the tribunal. It should be understood that the administrative tribunal is a last resort—to be used only when all other means have been exhausted.

Have there been any further developments on the reform of the pension plan?

On pensions I don't know how much we can say at this stage. We have gone through a long cycle of discussions and revisions. The basic issue remains the adjustment of the grossing-up formula. To get from net to gross you have to adjust the tax rates, and the question is how you do that. But, of course, as soon as you open up the subject of pensions, you also talk about their adequacy, and you need international comparisons.

A pension plan should be a very stable element in any organization, because it basically serves the long-term interests of the institution. Given the provision that you have to go from net to gross and given the fact that these tax rates should more or less reflect the international tax rates, there is a built-in mechanism for change. That raises issues of how you go from one system to another and what the impact of frequent changes might be. If you are hiring somebody and say, well, our pension plan is this at the moment but it can change every five years, then you cannot offer the stability someone would expect from a pension plan.

It has become very clear in our discussions that the pension plan should not be used as a direct instrument of personnel policies. Of course, in one way or another the total compensation you offer is linked with your overall personnel policies, but changes in the pension plan should not be inspired by short-term personnel objectives. The pension plan should be neutral to an institution's personnel objectives. There may now be support for a higher turnover rate for staff in order to seek greater dynamism in the institution. But these things go in cycles; five years later it might be discovered that productivity and efficiency and stability are not really served by a high turnover. If you redesign your pension plan constantly to reflect these changes, it becomes very messy and very unstable.

There seems to be a general desire to settle the pension issue before the new year. There are, of course, problems coordinating the administrative policies of the Bank and the Fund, where differences have to be resolved in the name of parallelism.

You also mentioned the administration of the medical benefits plan. We seem to be struggling to find a means to control costs. The current emphasis is on making health care consumers more cost conscious, but early evidence in the United States suggests that these efforts may largely be ineffective.

In terms of cost savings, we are talking about peanuts here. These administrative measures, such as first getting a cost estimate, impose a burden on the staff member in already often difficult personal circumstances. Obtaining medical services is not the same as bringing your car in for repair, where you first call around to see where you can get the lowest price. If it is clear that some physicians overcharge, I would rather have an ex post evaluation, and, if needed, a recommendation to avoid certain physicians. But do not operate a system where staff first must negotiate with doctors how much they can afford to pay.

It has been suggested that the Administration Department organize a seminar on this issue, informing staff how these cost assessments are made, what the policy is, how it functions, and what staff need to do. It would be a good idea; nobody understands the rules of the game.

This is the third year in a row that there have not been enough candidates for SAC positions to hold an election. Does that apparent trend trouble you?

We work with volunteers and a fairly large circle of people who provide various services. One of the problems is that work pressures deter people from making a commitment to the activities of the Staff Association. We are often relying on the same group of people. It would be much better, and I think we could do more, if more people participated. It's not a good sign when you see an absence of competition for representation on the committee. This may, in part, also reflect low expectations on the part of the staff, coupled with some skepticism about the effectiveness of the SAC. A lot of people are asking, and we ask ourselves, whether all the effort we are putting in somehow translates to better policies.

We know all the hard work that has been done and we see not enough of it reflected in the outcome. That frustration is inherent in the job, but it remains a frustration. If you know people have done their homework but the message doesn't get across, you ask yourself why you are doing it. Obviously if you try to give the right advice and it is not taken, well, that is not the happiest of circumstances. On the other hand we fully realize that the management of the institution takes decisions on policies. I am concerned, however, that the extent of problems is not fully perceived by the institution.

We have done our best and what else can we do? Two years as SAC Chairman is a bit much in addition to your regular duties, because you basically lose many of your evenings and weekends. But you do meet a lot of people you would never meet otherwise. And you get a thorough knowledge of what is going on in the institution. That makes it interesting. I have enjoyed it, but at the same time I am perfectly happy to hand over the work and follow with interest what the new Committee is able to achieve for the Fund staff.

CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL TOY FUND

The festive season is just around the corner, and this year's Toy Fund drive for the Children's Hospital National Medical Center will start on Monday, December 11 and close on Wednesday, December 20 (the drive is two days shorter than in previous years). Toys donated by Fund staff and their families are for children who, through illness or injury, are separated from their families over Christmas.

Children's Hospital is a nonprofit organization that has been treating children for well over one hundred years. Patients range from newborn infants to 19 year olds. They receive medical attention regardless of their families' ability to pay. The hospital treats one out of every three children hospitalized in the Washington metropolitan area, as well as children referred by doctors around the nation and from many other countries. In addition to the 279 patient beds at the hospital itself, it has three clinics in Washington, two in Maryland (Rockville and Laurel Lakes), and one in Virginia (Fairfax).

Fund staff and their families have given generously in the past; the most collected was 15 boxes in 1987. Last year 13 boxes were sent; the donated toys reflected a wide spectrum of imaginative gifts—from activity books and computer games to cuddly toys for the younger children, including a Kris Kringle family with cheerful uniforms and jaunty tartan hats and scarves.

Children's Hospital asks that only **new toys** be donated and that they **not be gift wrapped** so that volunteers can match toys with patients before they wrap and label the gifts. Donations can be left in boxes that will be located in the main lobby and in the International Families of the Fund Office (InFFO, Room 1-528).

Judith York

The 87-year old Mt. Washington Hotel at Bretton Woods will soon be accommodating guests year round.

Tiger Burning Dimly

One fine spring morning some 15,000 years ago, with much groaning and crunching, a glacier began to recede from the granite summit of Mount Washington in New Hampshire. It left behind, under a bothersome surface of scree, a thick layer of permafrost, which remains to this day. As a result, the rocks are still cold to the touch and precipitate out of the moist west wind a more or less permanent fog. On a not so fine autumn evening during September I was balanced precariously on a glacial boulder near the summit, when suddenly the fog parted like a theater curtain and revealed in the green fields below the immense white wings of the Mt. Washington Hotel at Bretton Woods, where for us in the Fund and the Bank It All Began.

For several days I had been trekking in the Presidential Range of the White Mountains. The climb from the valley up to the tree line had been easy: a steady, not too steep ascent in a cooling drizzle that reinforced the sweet and nostalgic evergreen scent of the northern forests. Once it emerged from the trees at about 5,300 feet, the trail led across jagged and constantly shifting glacial debris, which made the going more difficult. Following the stone cairns (thousands of them: the accumulated infrastructure of a century of labor by the Appalachian Trail Club to guide blizzard-struck hikers to safety on the otherwise featureless mountaintops), I arrived on the afternoon of the first day at Madison Hut, a stone structure that offered a hearty meal (lasagne) and a bunk (in stacks of five!) to anyone so loopy as to be this far from civilization on the top of a windswept mountain that looks like the nether end of Labrador. The next day I had made my way carefully in the fog (one mile an hour) along the peaks to the summit of Mt. Washington without ever having seen more than five yards ahead of me. The sudden revelation of the lovely Mt. Washington Hotel was a reminder that civilization had advanced beyond the Pleistocene wreckage of the mountain tops.

Two days later I drove up the mile-long drive to the hotel. It is impressive. Construction of the hotel, set on 2,600 acres, was begun in 1900, employed 250 workmen (including a number of Italian craftsman to do the glorious plaster work), and cost the princely sum of $1 million. The hotel opened in the summer of 1902, and soon as many as 57 trains a day were bringing guests, their servants, and mountains of baggage to the Bretton Woods railroad station. It has been opened every summer since then except for 1930 (the year after the crash) and 1944 (when the U.S. Government took over the building for the Monetary Conference). Bretton Woods, incidentally, is named after Bretton Hall, the ancestral home in Yorkshire of Governor Wentworth, a colonial administrator in the last days of British rule. The area was originally a royal land grant given in 1773 to the discoverer of a passage through Crawford Notch, a nearby gap in the White Mountains. The hotel brochure notes that "the Mt. Washington is famous in its own right as the site of the 1944 Bretton Woods Monetary Conference." The building is now a National Historical Landmark.

If you are tempted to submit to pampering by the staff of 350 in this historical venue, be prepared to part with from $85.00 to $160.00 per person, per night, double occupancy. Of course, the tariff includes breakfast and an elegant dinner in the main dining room, an octagon, "so that no one is seated in a corner." (I don't understand that one: doesn't an octagon have more corners than a rectangular dining room?)

No need to hurry to call for reservations as the hotel is open only during the summer, from May 26 to October 15. However, a $15 million renovation is planned to winterize the building, to which, I regret to have to report, the ravages of 87 winters have lent an air of decayed elegance. The refurbished hotel will be open all year round beginning in 1993, so you will then have no excuse for putting off the nostalgic pilgrimage.

One of the wings contains a kind of visitors' center with lots of photos of the 1944 conference that brought the Fund into being. A number of faces are to be seen familiar to those who take an interest in the history of the Fund. Near the concierge's desk, a sign notes that George Washington never slept at the Mt. Washington, but many of the rich and famous did. It lists, inter alios, Winston Churchill, Princess Margaret, President Taft, Joseph Kennedy (father of JFK), Mary Pickford, Henry Morgenthau, Jimmy Connors, Babe Ruth, the Ink Spots, and Mae West. "What, no Keynes?" I asked the concierge, a youth of twenty years, who had obviously never heard of our intellectual founder. "We couldn't list everybody, sir." replied he, and, seeing my disappointment, added, "But, sir, I'm sure Keynes was a tiger." Now what can that possibly mean?

David Driscoll

Cashier Sachiko Franchi Retires After 18 Years with the Fund's Cafeteria

The Fund Cafeteria has lost another familiar face. On October 17 Sachiko Franchi retired after a lengthy career with the Marriott operation. The job had been her first in the United States. She had met her husband, a U.S. soldier, in Japan and had married him and followed him to the United States. A Japanese friend of hers who was working at the IMF Cafeteria encouraged her to work there as well. "My husband didn't think I'd last three days, and I lasted nearly 18 years," she said. "If my blood pressure had allowed, I would have liked to complete 20 years. I really enjoyed the people. I'll miss them." she said.

It's not completely clear, though, just how much peace and quiet she will have at home. In addition to a husband there are three dogs, a Himalayan cat that recently took up residence, two parrots, one canary, and one ferret. She insists they all get along, but admits they have their quirks. One parrot—the one positioned closest to the kitchen—thinks he's a microwave oven. "He beeps every time the microwave goes off." He also meows and does an ambulance siren for good measure. The other parrot couldn't be bothered with these things. He spends his day calling the dogs—"Buffy, come here," "Fifi, come here." David Letterman might be interested in this household.

Those who have chatted with Sachiko over the years know that she is also a passionate sports fan—of the Capitals, the Redskins, the Orioles. Her recently diagnosed high blood pressure, which was finally brought under control with medication, has forced her to give up the Caps' season tickets that she and her husband had held for 14 years. "I can't handle too much pressure," she says, "and it wasn't fun anymore. I couldn't eat anything at the Capital Centre. No popcorn."

She'll be watching the Caps on TV for now. "It's very different," she sighed, "but I don't get as excited."

Administration Department Update

The Administration Department is currently dealing with the usual wide range of issues and problems. On the front burner in the Department are the Pension Plan review, which will be brought forward to the Pension Committee in the near future; the effects of the new federal estate tax laws on expatriate staff; and the review of the Medical Benefits Plan, which is becoming increasingly important as the costs of the Plan continue their recent rapid rise. In addition, in coming months there will be a growing focus on the Administrative and Capital Budgets for the next financial year, which starts May 1.

Many other matters of general interest and importance are being studied, and each ADM division and unit was asked what it would like to tell you about its present work. Here are the results:

Staff Benefits Division

A major headache for Chris Ahl, Chief, Staff Benefits Division, continues to be the quality of claims processing under the *Medical Benefits Plan*. Initially, after the transfer to Metropolitan Life last year, the error rate was much too high. It has improved since then, but is still not down to an acceptable level. Chris and Sharon Dove, who heads the Insurance Unit, have recently discussed with Metropolitan Life shifting the processing of Fund claims—currently done in an office in Long Island—to a smaller office close to Wilmington, Delaware. Medical and dental claims will be brought together in that one location, and the expectation is that services will be better customized to deal with the special features of the Fund's Plan.

Sharon Dove points out that poor claims processing is not confined to the Fund. A recent survey showed dissatisfaction with claims administration rising among employers, with 75 to 90 percent of companies reporting deteriorating service from large insurance companies.

When you visit the ***satellite health room*** on the red level in the main Fund building, you will probably notice that business is not very brisk. That is likely to change in coming months as we expand the range of services offered. The plan is to appoint a physician to provide services on a part-time basis, starting in January. Some remodeling of the Health Room will be needed.

Elena Polyak in the Staff Relations Unit reports that although the utilization has been disappointingly low, we will extend for one more year the arrangement with the World Bank, under which Fund parents have access to ten slots at the ***World Bank Children's Center***. If you are interested in using the World Bank Children's Center, please contact Mrs. Pearl Waxman, Director (477-9198), for information.

Elena is also studying the feasibility of an arrangement elsewhere to provide short-term child care in emergency situations. A number of area employers are exploring or experimenting with this type of arrangement and more information on it is sought. Typically the service would be available to parents when a child is ill, regardless of their normal child care arrangements. We will keep you informed as this alternative is investigated further.

Irene Chung and her staff in the ***Benefits Administration Unit*** would like to thank you for observing their request that calls and visits be made before 3:00 p.m. They feel their work flow has improved greatly, making it much easier to give prompt service during the seasonal rush for home leave and education benefits.

Administering ***home leave*** is a complicated operation, and most non-U.S. staff have had some experience with these complexities. We are looking at ways to simplify these rules; the World Bank is working on the same problems. As part of this review, we will also be taking a look at how the "points" system has been working out.

Compensation and Job Grading Unit

Two major projects are in progress under the supervision of Dorothea Anderson, the head of the Unit—the market survey of compensation, which will feed in data on which the 1990 review of salaries will be based, and a survey of benefits in the comparator market, which will provide information on how the overall level of Fund and Bank benefits stacks up against the outside market. The last major benefits survey took place in 1985, and at that time Fund-Bank benefits were found to be reasonably in line with the market.

Staff Development Division

Jean-Pierre Gollé, the Division Chief, has a number of projects of great interest, including reviews of the relationship between performance and merit increases and of policies on promotions. Comments on these topics will be sought from departments and SAC in the near future.

One major annual exercise conducted by Staff Development is the ***Interdepartmental Mobility Scheme for Economists***. Moves are reviewed by the Economist Committee, and 21 moves were approved at a meeting of the Committee in early October, of which 7 will take effect before the end of the year and most of the remaining will take effect in 1990. This will bring the number of economists who have switched departments in 1989 to about 70—nearly one fifth of the economists in grades A13-A15.

If you are bemused by the proliferation of committees, here is a new one to add to the list—the Noneconomist Committee. It has responsibility for helping promote the mobility and career development of noneconomist staff—including support staff. Its first meeting was held in October, and it reviewed its own role and terms of reference, and discussed the grading of division chiefs' secretaries. For the first round of the new mobility exercise for noneconomist staff, 38 staff members applied for a move. Of these, 28—or 3 percent of eligible staff—were support staff. Due to the small number of applicants and the diversity of their backgrounds, no transfer has yet been agreed upon, but the Staff Development Division is continuing discussions with staff and departments to make sure that mobility opportunities are made available to noneconomist staff. It will also continue to explore the possibility of external assignments.

How should supervisors deal with "problem employees"—someone whose performance is not up to par, or whose attendance is irregular, or who seems to be having problems in dealing with his work? Marlene Thorn, the supervisor of the Training Unit, has developed a three-hour workshop to help supervisors to deal with these problems. The first workshop will be held in December.

A paper is being circulated to departments and the SAC concerning *developmental training*—that is, training and education not directly related to a staff member's current job. At present, the Fund provides support for part-time undergraduate study outside working hours, and consideration is being given to extending support for graduate-level study in the main work areas of the Fund.

Several supervisors who had attended the *Management Development Program* volunteered to get feedback from their staff on what they wanted most from their bosses. About 100 staff responded, and the following familiar conclusions emerged:

- More recognition and acknowledgement for their work.
- More information on departmental priorities—and especially changes in priorities.
- More direct feedback from supervisors on performance.
- More career guidance from supervisors and from the Fund.

Jim Corr in the Staff Development Division is taking the lead in reviewing the *selection and management of the Fund's resident representatives*. He will be looking at how they are chosen, and how they are used by different area departments. If you have experience as a resident representative, give him a call on extension 8774 and share your thoughts with him.

Administrative Services Division

Bruce Hobbs, Acting Chief of the Administrative Services Division, is ready to deal with the world's growing environmental concerns by bringing the Fund into compliance with the District's new *recycling* law. The first step entails separating office paper from other trash.

Another initiative is a review of the *messenger service*. All department administrative officers will be asked to give their views on how the system can be improved. In the meantime, Bill Pfister, who runs the messenger unit, has some simple advice: "think twice or three times before you ask for a special messenger." Apparently the demand for "specials" just keeps growing, and this seriously interferes with basic service. Over the two-week span of Annual Meetings there were over 1,000 requests for "specials," resulting in over 7,000 deliveries.

Recruitment Division

Chief of the Recruitment Division, Peter Swain, reports that the fall recruitment drive for candidates for next year's *Economist Program* and *Summer Intern Program* is now in full swing. Personnel assistants are busy handling the large volume of applications received, and personnel officers are out "on the road" interviewing at U.S. and Canadian universities. This year, as an experiment, visits will be made to some of the top schools of government, diplomacy, and business, in addition to the departments of economics, to increase the sources from which the Economist Program draws. During the year, recruitment missions have also been to Africa, Latin America, and Europe. In the next six months missions are planned to the Middle and Far East to ensure that we maintain a representative nationality distribution among the staff. Everyone is waiting with interest to find out to what extent recent pay increases will improve our recruitment statistics for the Economist Program.

Budget and Planning Division

For the staff in the Budget and Planning Division, the arrival of fall means gearing up for the annual cycle of the Administrative and Capital Budgets. If you ask Lindsay Wolfe, the Division Chief, what the budget will mean for the staff at large, he just grins and replies, "All I can say is that it's an unrelenting workload for the staff in my division from now until May next year."

Legal Services Consultant

Before you rush off to get expensive legal advice, particularly on such matters as immigration or the tax situation of G-IV staff, give Joyce Reback, the Legal Services Consultant, a call or go and see her. With her experience with the problems of Fund staff, you will probably get answers immediately on matters that you would typically pay outside lawyers to research.

Suggestion Box

Far from receiving a flood of suggestions, the opening of the Suggestion Box has resulted in an initial trickle that has now slowed to an occasional drip. One or two serious ones have come in on the taxation of G-IV staff. Others have taken an anti-smoking position and one suggested planting more flowers around the exterior of the Fund.

Keep on suggesting! Please use the internal mail system to send your proposals or advice. These can be submitted signed or anonymous and should be addressed to **Suggestion Box, Room 6-306.**

David Cutler

Beads, Stones, and Stories, on a String

"I'd always liked stones," Catherine Fleck mused. "Even as a child I liked to collect them and bring them home. And I have always liked working with my hands. I enjoy crafts." After years of crocheting, her childhood attraction caught up with her. She has turned to beading and designing jewelry. A fascination with stones, a love of things old, and an eye for combining different colors, shapes, and textures have found expression in hand-strung necklaces and earrings—many of which were on display at the World Bank's International Arts and Crafts Fair (November 14–16).

An Editorial Assistant with the Commodities Division of the Research Department, Catherine Fleck has worked at the Fund since 1969. Her interest in beading dates back not nearly so long. In 1987 she was visiting a Chinese store when she struck up a conversation with the woman who owned the shop and was busily stringing beads. "The lady, who has since become a good friend, asked me to try this . I said, 'oh, no, it's much too difficult.' But she stood there and explained the technique of knotting to me. I went home, practiced it, and have been beading ever since."

Many of the materials she uses in her jewelry are semi-precious stones, among them onyx, jade, carnelian, coral, old ivory, amber, rose quartz, and garnets. She is particularly drawn to exotic, antique pieces, and these frequently serve as the focal points of her necklaces. Her current work features elements that have often had previous lives—1920s flapper beads, a jade top to a teapot, old Yemeni beads signed by their creator, and rare Peking glass. Old silver beads have been a particular favorite of late. "I'm fascinated by really good workmanship," she says. "and I'm intrigued by things that have a past. I always wonder where these beads might have been and what stories they could tell."

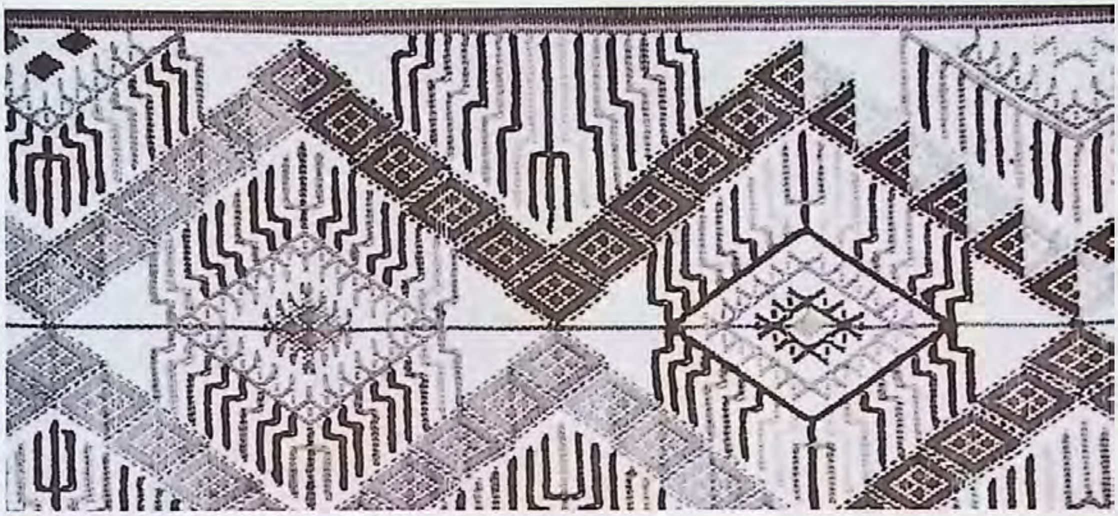
***Carnelian antique Chinese monkeys** and painted porcelain beads grace this necklace and lend it a playful air.*

***Catherine Fleck** works with a wide variety of materials. Here are some recently created necklaces and earrings.*

In her search for beads and other pieces that could be incorporated into her work, Catherine Fleck taps a number of sources. The Washington area hosts several shows each year that attract collectors, and fellow beaders have their own sources and a lively network to exchange pieces. Materials come from all over the world, old and new and in an endless variety of colors, shapes, and sizes. The trick is to take a striking piece—or pieces—and construct a new piece of jewelry around it.

Catherine Fleck may purchase a piece and know exactly what she wants to do with it or she may buy another on whim and tuck it away until the right elements to complement it are found. The flapper beads waited until she happened upon some old Austrian glass beads that matched them perfectly.

What she enjoys most, she says, is combining old pieces in contemporary settings. She had stories to tell for those who dropped by at the Crafts Fair—stories not just about each necklace, but about each bead!



Details from a textile *that was presented as a gift to the Fund. Textiles have been among the most popular of the new artwork. This one hangs on a corridor wall on the eleventh floor.*

Artwork Lends New Color, Texture to Fund Corridors

Those waiting for the new wing elevators now have something other than the doors to gaze at. And some long bare stretches of corridor are bare no longer. Over the summer the Facilities Section installed 66 new pieces as part of its effort to replace damaged artwork and provide new pieces to areas, such as the new wing, that had long been without ornamentation.

In charge of the project were Rebecca Kudla, designer, and Mary Beth Hakeem, Chief of the Facility Design Unit. Work began with an inventory of the Fund's existing collection. American Art Design did the survey, evaluating the condition and placement of the wall hangings throughout the building. It found 11 pieces missing since the 1985 survey and determined that others had been damaged over the years. Carts had dinged some of the large photographic pieces and the absence of acid-free mattes on many pieces hung when the building opened had left silk screens and prints damaged.

Some artwork was restored and hung again, but American Art Design recommended replacing pieces that had been irreparably damaged and purchasing additional artwork for some of the newer areas in the building. As a first step, Rebecca Kudla and Mary Beth Hakeem reviewed the Fund's holdings of gifts and chose several large textiles that would subsequently be hung on the tenth to thirteenth floors. To fill the remaining need, they contacted several art dealers, including Beaux Arts of New York City, Gallery 4 of Alexandria, and Walker, Ursitti-McGinniss, American Art Design, and Carrington-Todd, all of Washington, and asked them to provide a selection of works suitable for the Fund, its public corridors, and its modest budget.

There were constraints in addition to a modest budget. The Fund has traditionally eschewed both figurative and landscape art in order to avoid seeming to favor particular nationalities or regions. Virtually by default, then, the selection concentrated on abstract art.

With these strictures in mind, the art dealers presented Rebecca Kudla with over one thousand pieces. She made an initial selection and showed these pieces, which were largely monotypes, etchings, lithographs, and serigraphs, to Pam Grosvenor and Mary Beth Hakeem. Several others, including Geoffrey Vaughan, Chief of the Facilities Section, saw the selection and offered their opinions before Jim Kaiser, Chief of the Administrative Services Division at the time, okayed the final choice.

For another opinion, the Facility Design Unit also asked the Art Society, in the person of Lawrence DeMilner and Charles Collyns, to look through their provisional selection. The Art Society found the selection pleasing, but expressed concern that the selection was not particularly reflective of the unique international nature of the institution. They recommended the Fund be more adventurous in its selection, and perhaps include other media, but they acknowledged the budgetary and other constraints that would make that difficult. The Art Society did, however, offer its assistance in locating possible sources of international art for future purchases.

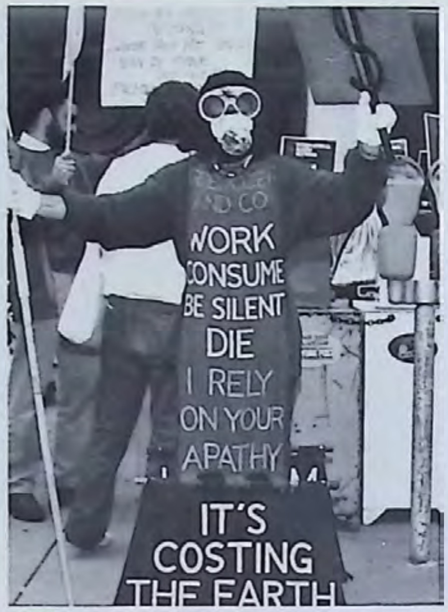
Initial staff reaction has been favorable. The large textiles, Rebecca Kudla reports, have elicited the most, and the most positive, comments. Of the 75 pieces purchased, 9 have still to be hung—these are pieces largely intended for the Concourse Level and the Snack Bar (once all of these renovations are complete).

Meetings (continued from page 4)

Buzz words prompt "some head scratching," as can an alliterative turn of phrase. "Mr. Conable nearly floored us this time," Peter Motton recalled, "when he made his opening address to the G-24 Ministers. He said something about Washington being a city where hurricanes hardly happen. [Hugo had just sidestepped the city.] We *My Fair Lady* fans immediately spotted that from the elocution lesson, of course, but how to put it in other languages...."

It's figures, rather than figures of speech, that interpreters dread most. "We absorb concepts in one language and push them out in the other," Peter Motton observed, "but numbers are numbers. You must visualize a number, write it down, and then translate it. If there are a lot of figures, your colleague will write them down to save you that extra effort. Even a single figure, such as two billion, can cause you some hesitation. Did he say billion or million? Was it two or four? And different languages have numbers that sound alike. In English it's sometimes very hard to distinguish between 15 and 50."

The work is fraught with pressure and the Meetings can produce particularly long days, but the work has its own rewards. "It's draining," Peter Motton said, "but it's exciting."



A demonstrator *outside the Fund.*

High Tech

A lot of machines are relocated within the Fund for the Annual Meetings. Susan Burwell, from BCS, shepherded some of them and also oversaw the installation of 25 leased computers at the Sheraton. Compared with the Berlin Meetings, this year's Meetings went smoothly. "We leased all our equipment in Berlin and I arrived a few days before the Meetings to discover that they had misunderstood our instructions and had loaded a German version of DOS. I couldn't load any software because I didn't know how to type the word "copy" in German. The keyboards were also different." Fortunately she had brought her own software and was able to load it before the Annual Meetings started.

Things ran more smoothly in Washington, but the days were no shorter. A normal day began at 7 a.m. and ended around 1 a.m. In between were a number of panic calls. There were Lexitrons, DisplayWriters, MASS 11s, and NBIs to nurse, in addition to WordPerfect, which was moving closer toward becoming the standard for the Meetings. There were keyboards that locked up and keyboards that needed remapping for foreign languages. There were clear technological improvements, too—one being the data communications line that was set up for BLS.

Susan Burwell invoked doctor-patient privileges, declining to discuss the more frantic moments of the Meetings, but she was pleased to report a personal triumph. "The only time I wear a beeper is during the Annual Meetings," she said. "I used to wear it around my waist and when it went off, it felt like a cattle prod. I would jump two feet. Eventually it occurred to me that I could clamp it onto the plastic cord that held my ID card. That was quite a relief." Small battles. Quiet triumphs.

STAFF NOTES

August 1 –September 30, 1989

TWENTY-FIVE YEAR STAFF

Jack P. Barnouin
Umberto Dell'Anno
Madge C. McLaren

TWENTY YEAR STAFF

George A. T. Donely
Aarno O. Liuksila
Molly Singh
Luis A. Tassara
Harilaos Vittas

RESIGNATIONS

Leighton H. Cumming
Hellmut O. Hartmann
Le Khanh Thi Le

EXPIRATION OFAPPOINTMENT

Bharati Dubey
Robin Gaster
Olli-Pekka Lehmussaari
Ibrahima Ndoye
Zhu Zhong

RETIREES

Federigo Arcangeli

DEATH OF RETIREE

Mathilde Hamilton
September 27, 1989

BIRTHS

To Owen Evans (WHD) and his wife, Patricia Stack, a daughter, Nora Kathleen Stack Evans, on August 29, 1989.

STAFF NOTES

August 1 –September 30, 1989

BIRTHS

To **George A. Mackenzie** (FAD) and his wife, Carolyn, a daughter, Marjorie Gelsthorp Mackenzie, on July 5, 1985.

TRANSFERS

Gladys Alfaro to Support Group, Secretarial Staff from Office of Executive Director

Clemens F. J. Boonekamp to Office in Geneva from Exchange and Trade Relations Department

Chungsuk Cha to Western Hemisphere from Support Group, Resident Representatives and Advisors (Philippines)

Ulhas Ramkrishna Gunjal to Asian Department from African Department

Jorge P. Guzman to Exchange and Relations from Support Group, Resident Representatives and Advisors (Chile)

Peter C. Hole to European from External Relations Department

Peter L. Joyce to Bureau of Statistics from Middle Eastern Department

Roger P. Kronenberg to Exchange and Trade Relations Department from Office in Geneva

Emmanuel K. Martey to Support Group, Resident Representatives and Advisors (Somalia) from African Department

Anne Kenny McGuirk to Exchange and Trade Relations Department from Asian Department

Elizabeth A. Milne to Exchange and Trade Relations Department from Asian Department

Abbas Mirakhor to Middle Eastern Department from Research Department

Klaus P. Regling to Support Group, Resident Representatives and Advisors (Indonesia) from Exchange and Trade Relations Department

Robert K. Rennhack to Support Group, Resident Representatives and Advisors (Chile) from Western Hemisphere Department

Alejandro G. Santos to Support Group, Resident Representatives and Advisors (Bolivia) from Western Hemisphere Department

Robert L. Sheehy to Office in Geneva from Exchange and Trade Relations Department

Anoop Singh to External Assignment (World Bank) from Asian Department

Abdelali Tazi Mokha to Support Group, Resident Representatives and Advisors (Côte d'Ivoire) from Fiscal Affairs Department

P. van den Boogaerde to Support Group, Resident Representatives and Advisors (Egypt) from Middle Eastern Department

Xan Vongsathorn to Asian Department from Support Group, Resident Representatives and Advisors (Western Samoa)

NEW STAFF

August 1–September 30, 1989

John David Brondolo
U.S. national, is a Research Assistant (FAD). He holds an MPP from Harvard and was previously a consultant with the World Bank. Among his interests are tennis, piano, and sailing.

Mariella P. Carrera
Peruvian, is an Accounts Assistant (TRE). She has a degree in business management and previously served as Deputy Finance Officer, New Zealand Embassy. She enjoys reading and aerobics.

Tia J. P. Clarke
U.S. national, is a Training Officer with ADM. She previously worked as a consultant and includes among her interests sound engineering and fashion show and music productions.

Dirk J. de Vos
Canadian, is a Minute Writer with SEC. Educated at the University of North Carolina (Chapel Hill) and at Carleton University, his interests include hiking and reading.

NEW STAFF

Elizabeth Elliott
U. S. national, is a Clerk-Typist (ASD). She holds a B.A. in American literature and among her interests are classical music, drama, and running.

Lourdes Z. Horton
Australian, is a Secretary (OED). Educated at St. Therea's College, Quezon City, she previously worked for Banque Nationale de Paris and the Australian Embassy. She enjoys tennis and piano.

Lijun Li
Chinese, is a Translator, BLS. Previously Section Chief, People's Bank of China, she has a Masters in Banking and Finance for Development and enjoys classical music, Peking opera, and swimming.

Seetha R. Milton
Indian, is a Secretary (BCS) Educated at Spicer Memorial College, Poona, she previously served as a secretary with the Embassies of India and Ghana. She enjoys sports, music, and reading.

Mya Thet Mon
Myanmar, is a Secretary (LEG). Previously secretary to a Japanese chief architect, she studied at Rangoon University and is now attending George Washington. She enjoys cooking and dancing.

Neeraj Rajpál
Indian, is a Research Assistant (TRE). Formerly a consultant with the World Bank, he holds an M.S. in computer science from George Washington and enjoys the Flintstones and barbeque parties.

Joao Santos
Portuguese, is an Economist (AFR). Educated at Catholic University of Portugal and New University of Lisbon, he had been an Economist, Central Bank of Portugal, and a Lecturer, Catholic University.

Mark R. Stone
U. S. national, is an Economist (RES). Formerly with Data Resources and Fleet National Bank, he was educated at Wisconsin and LSE. His interests include exercise and meditation.

Simon L. Topping
U.K. national, is an Economist with BUR. A former Institute course participant, he is currently on secondment from the Financial Statistics Division of the Bank of England.

Photo credits: Denio Zara (pages 1–4, 5, 12, 15); Padraic Hughes (pages 1–4, 9, 13, 14, 16); Children's Hospital (page 7); and Jane Evensen (page 8).

staff news
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