imfstaffnews

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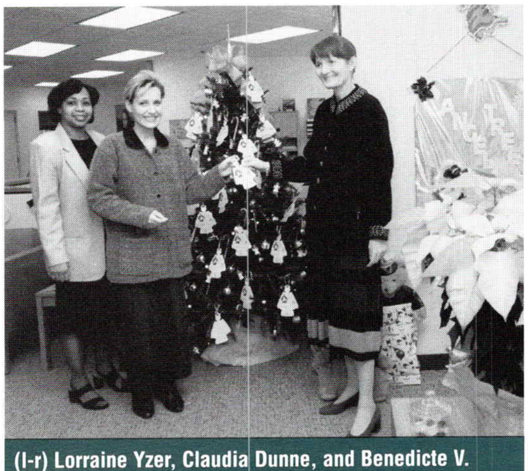
TRE Unites to Make a Difference

One week before Christmas, TRE hosted a holiday party for local children whose parents are prison inmates. The party launched a new outreach program by TRE staff—Uniting to Make a Difference.

The initiative, spearheaded by 12 members of TRE staff, with guidance from Juanita Roushdy of Civic and Community Relations, encourages TRE volunteers to use their skills in a variety of community service projects. Lorraine Yzer, who introduced the program, feels that getting involved in projects to help the less fortunate remind her how blessed she is. Genora Dass agreed, adding: "I am always interested in giving of myself when the opportunity arises."

The **Angel Tree Prison Fellowship Program** is designed to strengthen parent-child relationships by connecting parents in prison with their children, sometimes helping to sow the seeds of reconciliation between a prison inmate and his or her family. Prisoners provide contact information for their children to Angel Tree, which in turn distributes the information to local churches and organizations. TRE signed up to provide gifts for 27 children—from infants to 16-year-olds. The children were contacted for their wish lists, which were written on paper angels and placed on a Christmas tree in the Immediate Office. TRE staff participated by purchasing, or donating money to purchase gifts, sending holiday greeting cards to the incarcerated parents, and providing fruit baskets to the guardians of the children.

The children and their guardians who came to the party enjoyed an entertaining afternoon of craft work, sing-alongs (to the sound of an accordion played by Charles Kelly), and homemade goodies prepared by the staff. Benedicte Christensen read messages to the children from their parents as she presented them with the gifts. Polaroid photos of the children receiving their gifts were sent to their parents in signed thank you cards. "The thought of giving a present to a child went beyond the material purpose of the program," com-



(l-r) Lorraine Yzer, Claudia Dunne, and Benedicte V. Christensen decorate the Angel Tree.

Inah Niare gets crafty with one of the children.

mented Elena Frolia."It was the smile on the child's face in knowing that mommy or daddy was thinking of them. This was one of the most worthwhile projects I have ever been involved with." Hilary Corbett concurred. Barbara Virgo participated because she wanted to make the holiday brighter for the children.

This was the first of several community service projects in TRE, whose next project is well under way. Partnering with the well-established INVOLVE mentoring program, many TRE staff have volunteered to mentor school children at Thaddeus Stevens Elementary School to help them improve their test scores and advance academically by tutoring them in reading, comprehension, and math. TRE staff will also be trained by the Literacy Volunteers of America to tutor adults who cannot read well enough to fill out job applications, follow bus schedules, or understand medicine labels.

Besides the natural reward each staff member gets from volunteering, "these activities provide opportunities to practice organizational, interpersonal, and communication skills," notes Jim Corr. "Sharing with others is a great way to reduce stress and improve morale." For further information on the program, please visit TRE's website under "Ongoing Projects." ◆

Claudia Dunne

Editor's Note: If your department would like to tailor an outreach program for the needs of its staff, contact Juanita Roushdy of Civic & Community Relations (e-mail "community relations" or "jroushdy," or call ext. 37085).

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Street Smarts

Security staff have a major responsibility for ensuring the safety of Fund personnel all over the world—at headquarters, in resident representative offices, and on mission or other travel.

In the past year, the field security office visited 17 African countries and four EU1 countries to assess and improve security provisions in those locations. Despite these efforts, security-related incidents can occur. Therefore, the security staff is making a focused effort to raise safety awareness and advise the staff on security-related issues. This is the best way to prevent security problems in the long run.

As part of this effort, Staff News *will feature a regular security column—to provide you with information on security issues, safety tips, and recent incidents that IMF staff have experienced. While most people want information pertaining to them to remain confidential, incidents need to be reported so that appropriate measures can be taken. It is also useful for us to see the kinds of things that are happening so that we can better avoid potential problems when we are traveling. Each column will report on recent security-related incidents and provide "security tips" to help you avoid such incidents.*

African Department

Vehicle vandalism. An official vehicle assigned to a resident representative was vandalized and items were taken from it while in storage at the port of entry. This was the first time this had occurred in any post. In future, vehicles will be stored in shipping containers.

Office theft. A Fund office that had moved recently was broken into, and items were stolen from a locked conference room.

Stolen SAT phone. In another case, a resident representative's satellite phone was stolen from the Fund's office. Evidence suggests that someone with regular access to the premises and possibly a set of office keys carried out the theft. The office of the Minister of Finance was immediately notified and additional protection for the office has been requested.

Assault and battery of a long-term expert. As a Fund long-term expert and his spouse drove up to their residence, military guards from a neighboring residence stopped them and hassled them. The soldiers were not the usual guards, who were familiar with the expert and his spouse. The expert reversed the vehicle and called a neighbor who helped resolve the problem. The expert and his spouse were then allowed to enter their residence. The Fund's resident representative has reported the incident to the United Nations Designated Official for Security (UNDO), and appropriate measures to ensure the safety of the expert and his spouse are being taken.

European I Department

Pickpocket. A staff member reported that a thief stole her wallet from her purse while she was on a train.
Theft. A resident representative reported that his bicycle, which had been locked up near the Fund's official residence, was stolen.
Opened/missing pouches. Recently, the field security office has received reports from the field of opened or missing pouches supposed to be delivered by DHL. The field security office is investigating these incidents with the Fund's courier unit and DHL.

Security Tips

Preventing Street Crime
(taken from the *International Security Guide*)

• Read local papers and speak to local contacts to learn where high-crime areas are located; ask hotel staff about neighborhoods to avoid.

• A man should carry his wallet in one of his front pockets or in his inner jacket or suit pocket. A woman should carry her purse at waist level with the flap closed and facing toward her body. Don't carry a purse with a shoulder strap around your neck; this could cause serious injury during a purse snatching.

• Carry small bills for purchases in one place (like a pocket) and conceal larger denomination travelers' checks. Use a money belt or inside-the-waist belt for valuables.

• If you are confronted in a street robbery, do not resist—the thief may become more violent if you do.

• If robbed, file an official report with the authorities, particularly if items that you declared on entry were stolen. Also notify the field security office, the Fund's resident representative, and the UNDO as soon as possible.

Security incidents that occur overseas should be reported as soon as possible to the field security office. A web-based Security Incident Report form can be found at http://www-int.imf.org/depts/tgs/asg/security/secincident.htm. Headquarters staff may be reached by phone at (202) 623-6174, -9380, -6172, -6742, and –9460, or by facsimile at (202) 623-6022. After normal business hours (Washington, D.C. time), FSO staff can be reached through the 24-hour Security Operations Center, telephone (202) 623-6868. Resident representatives and their families should carry this emergency phone number at all times. Report security incidents that occur at headquarters by calling the SOC any time. ◆

(l-r) Charlie Gleichenhaus, Sarah Tenney, Eddie Rangel, David Cook, Inger Prebensen, Frank McLaughlin, and Ralph Walker discuss recent security incidents.

Computer Security

Laptop computers are some of the most popular items stolen from the Fund. If you have a laptop, here's how to keep it safe:

At headquarters

• Use approved security cables to secure your laptop when you aren't in your office.

• Always keep the laptop's docking station locked and store the key in a *locked* drawer or cabinet, or on your personal key chain.

• Store confidential information on a diskette in a locked safe, drawer, or briefcase, or on your person.

Away from headquarters

• Keep your laptop with you at all times while traveling from point to point.

• When placing your laptop on the X-ray conveyor belt at security checkpoints, wait until the person in front of you has cleared the machine before proceeding. Watch your laptop as it enters and exits the scanner.

• Store confidential information on a diskette in a locked safe or drawer, in a locked briefcase, or on your person.

• Transfer important files to the network via remote access or copy them to a diskette.

• Don't let anyone else use your computer.

• If unsure about leaving your laptop in your hotel room, put it in the hotel safe.

The Geneva Invasion

The morning coffee and *pains au chocolat* had been consumed, the pouch from headquarters delivered, the mail opened, appointments fixed, and lunch arrangements made—in short, things were proceeding normally in the life of the Geneva Office that Thursday morning in October.

The lead-up

The previous days had been more exciting than usual—thanks to the Annual Meetings in Prague. On Monday, the police dropped by to inform us that our office was targeted for a demonstration the next day. They were horrified to see that the office was "manned" by three women. Grant Taplin, the head of the office, was contacted in Prague, and he, concerned for our safety, decided to close the office the next day. A minor demonstration took place, complete with anti-IMF slogans on advertising posters, but the demonstrators had no staying power and did not threaten a return the following day, so it was back to work on Wednesday.

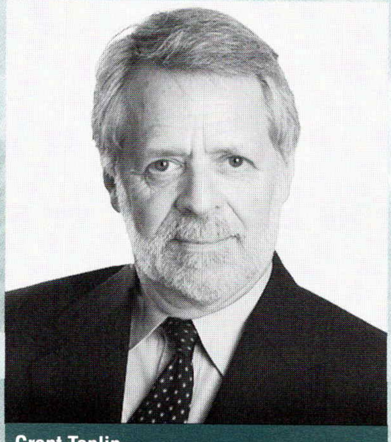
I was alone in the office that morning, but was not alarmed. I had my panic button in case of emergency. I had pressed it once before, by accident, and within minutes, two machine gun–toting police were nearly breaking the door down. That morning, the only excitement came from an abusive phone call from "a citizen of the Czech Republic" appalled by the Prague demonstrations. I assumed he wanted to apologize for the hassle the IMF delegates were suffering; instead, he launched into a virulent anti-IMF tirade. I told him I didn't need to listen to his ranting and put the phone down. He called back immediately, in a more conciliatory mode, telling me he had nothing against me personally and asking where I was from. "Scotland" I replied. "Well, why don't you go back where you came from" he shouted, "you international blood-sucking leech, you IMF fat cat!" "I thought you had nothing against me personally?" "Well I've changed my mind. Give me someone important to complain to," he said. Happy to get rid of him, I gave him EXR's phone number.

The Geneva Office is on the ground floor of a large block in a residential area. Two-thirds of the building is taken over with regular apartments, while the rest houses diplomatic missions. Occasionally, a mission has been the source of minor demonstrations, but up to that week the IMF had been pleasantly trouble-free since the office opened in June 1965. There is no security guard in the lobby, and as the IMF became increasingly high profile, headquarters became more concerned about our lack of security. Just that week we had installed a new video monitor/intercom system and strengthened the outer door with steel and an electric lock. No harm could come to us now.

The break-in

That Thursday, Grant and I were in the office, quietly going about our business, when the doorbell rang at about noon. I sprang to attention, in security-conscious mode, scrutinizing the new video monitor. The screen was filled with the face of a young female student who had taken an *Annual Report* and some other information on Wednesday. She had gone off happily, and I was pleased with another satisfied customer. This time she wanted a copy of the *Articles of Agreement*. I buzzed her in and went to the door. Behind her stood a smiling young man. Next thing I knew, their friends—who must have been lurking round the corner—pushed past me into the office. I wailed "Oh NO," and "GRANT!"

I pointed my finger accusingly at the girl who had initiated this ruse. "You! I'm very disappointed in you." She had the grace to look abashed. But only a little. Grant came striding out of his office. However, he is not particularly threatening, so the invaders continued to mill about, albeit a bit unsure as to how to proceed. The *Articles of Agreement* girl assured me that no harm would come to us, but it would be better if we left. I retreated to the safety of my desk and my panic device, accompanied by a small coterie of invaders, while Grant became the principal object of attention. He resolutely sat down on a chair by the door, announcing that he was the director of this office and would NOT leave. Whereupon, a couple of the demonstrators promptly picked up the chair, with Grant still sitting on it, and carried him out. He


Grant Taplin

Judith Campbell during a more normal workday at the Geneva Office.

was like some heathen god being borne triumphantly aloft by his excited and worshipful acolytes.

With Grant out of the picture, I was on my own. It seemed there were about 50 of them, but we have since learned there were only about 15. I exhibited my panic device, whereupon a few of the girls took fright and ran to the door, but they couldn't open it, thanks to the new locking system. We were all in this together. I thought I could hold the fort until that sensational moment when the police, brandishing their machine guns, would kick the door down. Nothing happened. I kept looking out the window, expecting to see them rushing to my rescue. But—nothing. I couldn't believe it. (We had received new panic devices a couple of years ago, and unfortunately I'd forgotten they had a blocking switch that must be slid down before the button will activate....)

Meanwhile, the demonstrators were crowding around insisting on my departure, but still too polite to manhandle me. Eventually the one in charge became rather stroppy and screamed, "Sortez-la!" ("Get her out!") and, once they worked out how to open the door, I was propelled out, somewhat more ignominiously than Grant.

Outside, Grant was telephoning the police from the concierge's office. More demonstrators surged up the back garden and around the front of the building, unfurling banners reviling the IMF and protesting the continued detention of the Prague prisoners. The concierge promptly locked the back door to block their entry and then did what all good Swiss (although he's Spanish) do at that time of day—went off for lunch. When the police finally showed up, they were worth waiting for. A SWAT team, handsome in navy blue, very cool, elegant, and assured, talking to persons unknown on mobile phones. Although they seemed in control, Grant and I were alarmed by the loud hammering coming from inside the office ....

The response

It seemed as though every big gun of the Geneva *gendarmerie* had been wheeled out. Crime in Geneva is so low that they were probably grateful to have something to do. Not only the *Commandant* paid his respects, but also the *Sous-Commandant* and the *Commandant remplaçant*. Negotiations with the demonstrators were being conducted by the Deputy Mayor of Geneva and two members of the local parliament. Grant was in consultation with the police and security officers at headquarters, as the terms of surrender were being negotiated. I perched on a table in the lobby and watched the show. After three hours, the demonstrators agreed to come out as long as the IMF did not press charges. Grant agreed, as long as there was no major damage to the office, although the police insisted the demonstrators be identified, searched, and photographed. By the time they were led out, they looked somewhat less confident, apart from one who stuck his tongue out at us.

Once back in the office, we discovered little damage. The front door had been wedged shut with a block of wood—hence the hammering—and the lock had been stuffed with paper clips and was broken. The locksmiths couldn't believe they were back repairing it a mere day after installing it! The demonstrators had been drinking coffee out of wine glasses and had sent faxes—on IMF letterhead—to President Vaclav Havel and the Czech Mission in Geneva, deploring the brutality of the Czech police and demanding the release of demonstrators detained in Prague prisons. The Czech Mission telephoned to inquire if this was an "official IMF statement"—and were relieved to find that it was not! The group also had tried to send e-mails to Vaclav Havel, but they had been returned as undeliverable.

Headquarters reacted promptly. Deputy Managing Director Aninat called Grant to make sure that all was well, and the next day we received a visit from John Balnaves (Security), who had been dispatched immediately from Washington to debrief us and to see what more could be done to reinforce our present security arrangements.

We had laughed to see one of the demonstrators brandishing a homemade flag bearing the legend "This Plant Needs Watering" that Susan Prowse had stuck in her plant before leaving Geneva to work in London. The flag was returned to us with an added message underneath: "And Prisoners Need Freedom." It is a memento of an unusual Thursday in the life of the Geneva Office. ◆

Judith Campbell

A Prescription for Change

Fund Expands Medical Benefits

The medical benefits plan is now more family friendly. It has expanded benefits to cover some people previously excluded from the plan, including domestic partners of staff members and handicapped children over 24. It has also improved benefits in other categories. These moves place the Fund's plan in line with that of many European organizations and at the forefront of many U.S. companies. Staff News *spoke with Kent Humphries (HRD) about these changes.*

What were the changes to the Medical Benefits Plan?

We extended benefits to domestic partners in both opposite-sex and same-sex couples. We also now require staff members who wish to drop their spouse or minor children from the medical plan to prove that the person they are dropping has other insurance. We have had instances where a staff member was having marital problems and just dropped a spouse's medical coverage. We wanted to amend the MBP to prevent this type of conduct, particularly since many spouses were unaware of the fact that staff members could discontinue MBP coverage at any time without providing a reason. Family members, particularly those on G-IV visas, may not have immediate access to alternate medical coverage, and the Fund expects that its staff members will take care of their families while they are here. We also made it administratively easier for people who live apart to file medical claims, extended coverage to handicapped children who are over age 24 when their parent joins the staff, extended the coverage for former spouses under the extension option, and now allow retirees to add family members after retirement. We also reduced the cost of coverage for "other dependents."

Why were these changes made?

The changes were prompted by several factors. First, HRD periodically notices problems in the plan's administrative provisions that need to be addressed. We also monitor developments in similar plans in other international organizations to keep our plan provisions comparable. Finally, some Executive Directors expressed interest in addressing the issue of benefits for domestic partners—at least in connection with medical coverage. The complete list of changes was determined in late June, and eight weeks later, it was pretty much finished.

What has the staff reaction been to the MBP changes?

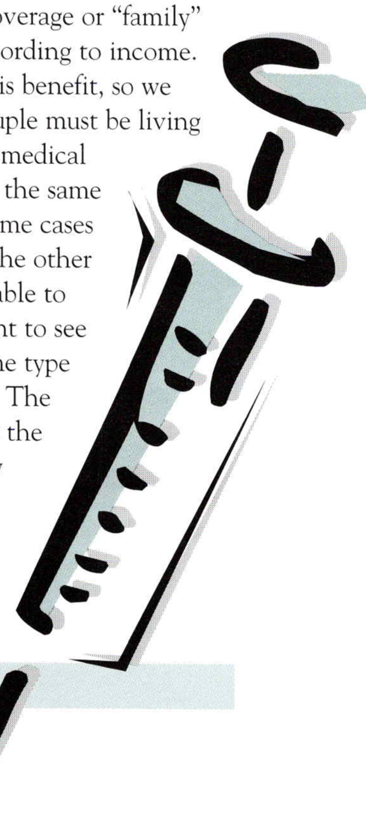
Even before these changes, benefits under the medical benefits plan were some of the best available in the United States. I don't think staff are fully aware of that, but it is an extremely generous plan.

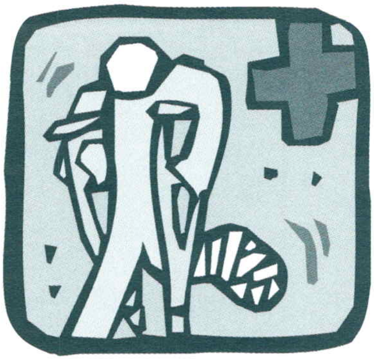
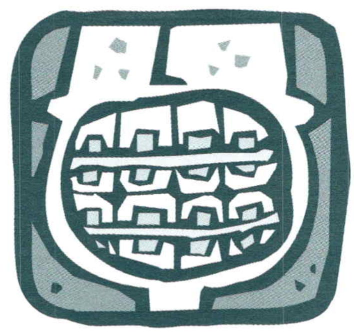
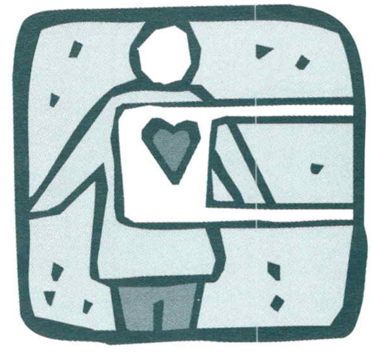
On the whole, staff appreciate the changes. First of all, we made the plan more family friendly by addressing issues affecting domestic partners, spouses and children, and allowing retirees to add family members after retirement. For another category—other dependents—we made medical coverage more affordable. People always appreciate reducing their expenses!

How much will it cost to include domestic partners and what are the requirements to register?

In general terms, 75 percent of the cost of the MBP is paid for by the Fund, with the covered employees paying the remaining 25 percent of the total cost. The cost of medical coverage to all MBP participants will not be affected by the decision to extend coverage to domestic partners. At this point only 22 people have signed up for domestic partner benefits, perhaps because many domestic partners already have medical coverage through their own employer. Employees may cover a domestic partner under "couple" coverage or "family" coverage, with the cost varying according to income.

We don't want people abusing this benefit, so we established that in most cases, a couple must be living together for at least one year to get medical coverage for a domestic partner. At the same time, we recognize that there are some cases where people can't live together—the other person may live overseas, or is not able to get a visa—so in those cases we want to see phone records, plane tickets, or some type of proof that there is a relationship. The one-year requirement shows us that the relationship is ongoing. But it really hasn't been a problem. The kind of documentation we look for are copies of drivers' licenses with



both partners at the same address or evidence of financial interdependency, as well as a notarized form saying the relationship has been in effect for one year. To make it easier for staff, we set up an e-mail box where staff can send an e-mail and say they established a domestic partner relationship on such and such a day. And we e-mail the person back saying, okay from the Fund's point of view, now you need to take certain steps to demonstrate that the financial interdependency criteria are met. So, after a year from the date of the e-mail, the person's partner will be eligible for medical benefits.

Will other benefits for domestic partners be looked at?
Yes. Based on the views expressed by the Committee on Administrative Practices (CAP), HRD is committed to producing a follow-up paper concerning the extension of other benefits to domestic partners. It is expected that this paper will be ready in the third quarter of 2001. If the Fund does move forward to provide broad benefits for domestic partners, we will be leading the other international organizations in this area. But we must tread carefully to ensure that we do not create inequities in other areas.

Why was the cost to "other dependents" lowered?
The cost of "other dependents" coverage was determined by an Executive Board decision in 1991, which determined how the rates would change in the future. However, over the past decade, the rates rose to a level that was quite unfair—we also weren't paying for claims for preexisting conditions of other dependents for the first three years. This category is for parents and parents-in-law, most of whom come from other countries—they are the oldest, and potentially sickest, members of the medical plan—and they really don't have any place else to go for medical coverage. For a parent to meet the criteria to come to the United States on a G-IV visa, a serious event has to happen—perhaps including the development of a serious medical condition—so that the parent cannot continue to live alone. And it didn't seem right for us to be charging the children of this small group of people such high insurance rates after facing the difficult circumstances that brought them here in the first place. So now we are paying for preexisting conditions, and other dependents are paying the same unsubsidized rate for coverage as people under the extension option.

One of the important things our health plan does, other than just pay for your medical bills, is indemnify your income, insuring that you won't have to spend more than 7 percent of your income on medical expenses. And before we made this change, if you had an "other dependent" with a serious preexisting medical condition that wasn't covered, you could easily go over that 7 percent limit. ◆

Staff reaction to MBP changes

Staff reaction to the changes in the medical plan, according to George Tsibouris, SAC Vice Chair, has been good: "The majority of e-mails and comments to SAC after the policy was changed were positive. It was an important step for the Fund," George continues, "to recognize that its staff is very diverse, and although it is impossible to please everyone, this is a step in the right direction."

A staff member who signed up for domestic partner benefits put it this way:

"For me, this change means that the Fund accepts me for who I am, and values me as a person. It is important for me because I am not used to feeling that way. This is a great place to work."

Approaches to Managing Knowledge

Data. Information. Knowledge. Whatever you call it, these days our lives are filled with it. And managing it effectively is a challenge for us all. In the Fund, previous approaches to knowledge management included long-tenured senior staff to preserve the institution's experiences and memories through time; heavy emphasis on working in teams to help staff share experiences and memories; and close involvement of management in the review process to broaden the experience and memories brought to bear on individual cases. These approaches may have worked well enough when the Fund was smaller and under less pressure, but these days, as our size and mandate have expanded greatly, we have to address the issue more systematically and use new approaches. Dennis Jones, a Senior Economist in PDR, spoke with an expert on the subject, Dr. Madelyn Blair, an organizational change consultant who helps organizations manage knowledge. She is the president of Pelerei, a consulting firm that has worked with the Fund on several projects, including with the Working Group on Stress.

Dr. Madelyn Blair

What is knowledge management?

Let me begin by asking a few questions. Do Fund mission leaders, after a mission, call the team together and ask each member to talk about what worked well and what didn't? Do they then discuss the points raised to determine how the mission might be improved for the next time? If the answers to these questions are yes, then those mission leaders are acting as knowledge managers. If all team members participate enthusiastically in the discussion of the mission, then they are acting as knowledge managers. And if the Department Director tells the mission leaders that they should do this every time, then she, too, is acting as a knowledge manager. Knowledge management operates at many levels when it works.

More formally, knowledge management is how an organization encourages and stimulates knowledge sharing and learning to help it reuse the information it already has. Knowledge management is everyone's responsibility and works only when many levels of staff are involved.

We all believe that we know what knowledge is, but in knowledge management, it helps to have a common understanding. First, data are not the same as knowledge: they are sets of discrete, objective facts. Information is not knowledge, although it is considered to be data endowed with meaning. In the end, knowledge is not neat and simple, it is dynamic. Two leaders in knowledge management, Thomas H. Davenport and Laurence Prusak [in their book, *Working Knowledge: How Organizations Manage What They Know*], define knowledge as "a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information.... In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms." It is what makes organizations go. And, thought of as an asset, knowledge increases with use.

I also like how Professor Nancy Dixon, who has done extensive research and writing on knowledge management, distinguishes between "know what"—the kind of information we learn in school—and "know-how"—common knowledge that is linked to action—how things are done.

Peter Drucker, professor of management, has said that a learning organization is one where the whole organization grows, and he wasn't referring to physical growth. He was referring to the ability to grow in understanding, productivity, and effectiveness. And it was the Director of the Systems Thinking and Organizational Learning Program at MIT, Peter Senge, in his landmark work, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, who helped leaders understand that solving problems within the context of the larger system meant that staff needed to have a broader view and be more open to learning. Leaders began to value the work of helping their organizations become places of learning. This realization was a part of the start of knowledge management.

Why is knowledge management important for the Fund?

Knowledge can add speed to action. When a problem has been solved, that solution can be used elsewhere with a shorter learning curve. When a useful solution has been defined, it does not need to be defined again if knowledge of it is accessible. Having ready and quick access to the knowledge facilitates and speeds up decision making and actions and can improve the quality of work. The power of knowledge can help deal with complexity more effectively, more flexibly, and even more creatively. Broader understanding coming from multiple and diverse perspectives helps solve more complex problems, often in new ways. Knowledge provides a sense of context by definition and, thus, can reduce risk and can aid judgment. In the Fund, that could mean using "guidance notes" to help staff interpret—for operational purposes—policy developed by the Board and management. Another example would be the existence of a ready repository of information dealing with common document production problems: nowadays, that could be online to allow questions and answers or a topical search.


Dennis Jones

There is no organization today that cannot benefit from reducing risk and making better judgments by enhancing its abilities to use what it already knows or acquire and use new knowledge. Given the many activities in which the Fund is involved, and the many different participants who may be involved in these activities, being able to share knowledge quickly and effectively would increase the chances of staff making better judgments in their normal operational work.

How is it done?

I think that Dixon [in her book *Common Knowledge: How Companies Thrive by Sharing What They Know*] has done the best work on describing how knowledge has been managed and has created a framework for thinking about it. She describes five systems for managing knowledge: (1) a system that helps a team learn from itself so that it does the job better the next time; (2) an approach that helps a team in another location tackle the same type of problem; (3) an approach that helps those with tacit knowledge transfer their insights to another team working on a nonroutine task; (4) an approach that transfers knowledge across teams at the strategic level that impacts large parts of the system; and finally (5) the transfer of expert knowledge about tasks done infrequently. Each of these situations demands a different approach.

For example, when a team needs to learn from its members (as in the first case), the system that helps this happen can be as simple as a formal meeting where lessons learned during a project are shared with all members of the team together and discussed for the next time. Is this happening in some departments already, and, if so, is it a widespread practice? If the answer is yes, then how is it done when it is done well so that others might capitalize on this? When the problem is complex or particularly costly to complete (as in the third case), the tacit knowledge of others who have gained this through other projects with similar characteristics is called for. Sometimes called "peer assists," the experienced members may join the current project team which presents details of the new project and then allows those with the tacit knowledge to give their insights to the team. The approach needs to be appropriate for the situation. And organizations that have taken knowledge management seriously have done so by using many approaches.

This would seem to have much relevance for the Fund, for those who have to both develop and implement policy. Which organizations have already done it?

One of the early adopters of knowledge management, Ernst and Young, realized that they often reinvented the wheel in their work. The company decided that if it was able to harness the lessons from the first time, it could apply them to the second, tenth, or hundredth time and become significantly more efficient and effective and thus more competitive. Ernst and Young is one of the first success stories in knowledge management. British Petroleum uses peer assists to make more cost-efficient decisions about exploration and drilling—particularly vital when a drilling rig can cost up to $200 a minute.

As recently as five years ago, it was possible to count easily the number of organizations formally doing knowledge management. Today, many organizations are trying their hand at making it work for them. The World Bank started knowledge management in 1996 and was recently awarded an American Productivity and Quality Center award for its work in the field. Aspects of the Bank's story and the results are engagingly told in *The Springboard: How Storytelling Ignites Action in Knowledge-Era Organizations* by Steve Denning, who played a major role in helping the Bank achieve its award-winning approach.

What should be the Fund's first step?

The Fund should recognize that the knowledge it has is a market force—both within the Fund and outside. Once knowledge is seen as a market, the Fund needs to ask itself how it can make that market more efficient by understanding how it works today and might work tomorrow. Since it is not feasible to share all knowledge, it is critical to determine which knowledge produces the greatest benefit. Thus, an effective step for the Fund is to examine its functions to determine where the greatest value can be gained quickly from improved knowledge sharing. This process of developing value propositions is known and available. ◆

Brian Stuart, Director of TGS, had the following to say about knowledge management:

"I had the great privilege of meeting with Drs. Blair and Dixon on knowledge management. I went into the meeting with the mind-set that in the Fund we are now focusing our information technology on data and information management and when we get that job done we can start on knowledge management (building computerized knowledge banks with text files and audio and maybe even video files). But I was cautioned that the current thinking is that computers may not be as great for knowledge management as previously thought and that big knowledge banks were being called increasingly into question. In its place, people were now emphasizing the human element of knowledge management—working in teams, peer review, and flying in organizational people from different parts of the world to share experiences face to face. That led me to the thought that we in the Fund have been doing knowledge management all the time. Going forward, I think we need to continue the information technology effort to improve data and information sharing. At the same time, we need to work more formally on knowledge management and see how the information technology effort in the data/information area can support what may be a heavy human element on the knowledge-sharing side."


Brian Stuart

Christmas at Calvary

INVOLVErs and volunteer coordinators from Calvary Women's shelter prepare sumptuous meals.

Who could imagine that Christmas 2000 would find us still cooking for the Calvary Women's Shelter? For six years, INVOLVErs have baked, boiled, sliced, and diced for their Calvary dinner program. But 2000 was special. The number of cooks and helpers grew; menus were more daring; and best of all, it continued to be a great success with the homeless women at the shelter and with the volunteers. A heartfelt thank you to all the Calvary volunteers for their efforts in making 2000 a landmark year!

Every year the Calvary group, as the INVOLVErs call themselves, collects money for a sumptuous holiday meal for the shelter—ham, turkey, stuffing, and all the accompaniments—an absolute feast! This year we even had enough money to deliver a Christmas Eve lunch of croissant sandwiches, tortilla wraps, brownies, and clementines. The ladies really felt special. But they were in for yet another surprise. Along with the lunch came a brand new Panasonic microwave, a gift from the Calvary group. Noticing the appalling condition of the shelter's microwave, which took forever to heat food, volunteers Anne Rousseau, Marta Vindiola, Mar Sue Myint, and Martha Silva de Berta launched a Microwave Drive to replace the shelter's relic. It was a huge success and such a delight for the ladies (and volunteers) at the shelter! Now they can get a hot meal fast!

How does a "non" cook cope?

Chris Withee is an integral member of the Calvary group. He loves to participate in the shelter dinner. But, there's one thing very peculiar about Chris: he can't cook. His service is to bring his enthusiasm and wit to the shelter every single month. And what a hit he is with the ladies at the shelter! He charms and coaxes them to try a dish they perhaps have never tried before, especially since our dinners have something of an "international" flavor!

Other members who do not cook contribute money, bring desserts, rolls, salads…there is a way for everyone to contribute! Some even stand and watch.

A family affair

What brings a family together better than food? Cooking for the shelter dinner does just that. Some volunteers, like Marina Primorac, use the dinners as an excuse to get their children to try something new…others get their kids involved in preparing the food. Cecilia Weikert also brings her daughter Carolina to the shelter to help serve. It is a rewarding experience for all. ◆

Lucia Casaravilla

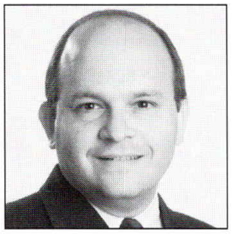
For more information about the Calvary Shelter Program, please contact Lucia Casaravilla (lcasaravilla@imf.org).

Holiday fun

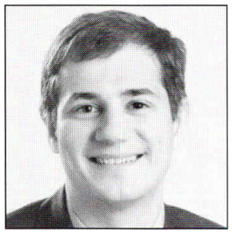
Ho ho ho's are the same in any language, and there were plenty of them at INVOLVE's Christmas party for the Children of Community Lodgings in Alexandria. Mauricio Bourdin coaxed many a shy, wide-eyed child to tell him what they wanted for Christmas, while his helpers gave out the many gifts donated by INVOLVErs.

*new*imfstaff

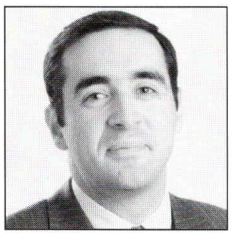
Justino Ayres
Brazilian, is a Computer Systems Officer, TGS. Previously a contractual staff member with TGS, he holds an M.B.A. from Loyola College, Baltimore and a B.S. from the Aeronautical Institute of Technology, Brazil. He is married, has two sons, and enjoys traveling and spending time with family and friends.



Peter Berezin
Canadian, is in the Economist Program, WHD. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Toronto and an M.S. from the London School of Economics. He includes cycling, tennis, and badminton among his interests.



Laurent Bouscharain
French, is in the Economist Program, AFR. Previously an economist at the French National Statistical Institute (INSEE), he was educated at Ecole nationale de la statistique et de l'administration economique. He is interested in tourism, nature, and wine.



Alina Carare
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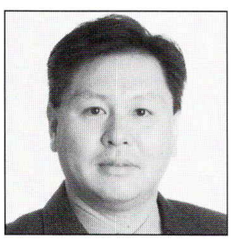
In-Kang Cho
Korean, is an Assistant to the Executive Director, OED. Before coming to the Fund, he was an assistant secretary to the President for Economic Policy, Korea. He holds an M.A. from Saitama University. He is married and has a son.



Sean M. Culhane
A U.S. national, is an Assistant Editor, EXR. Previously an editorial director, M.E. Sharpe Publishers, he holds an M.S. from the London School of Economics. He includes travel, skiing, gourmet cooking, and maritime history among his interests.

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Dodji K. Danklou
Togolese, is a Staff Assistant, EU1. Formerly a bilingual secretary with the Burkina Faso Mission to the United Nations, she has a university degree in secretarial sciences. In her free time, she enjoys travel and jazz.

Anu Das
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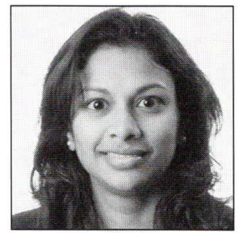
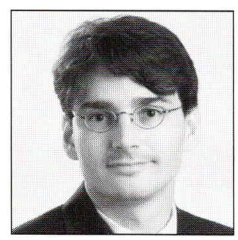


Lodewyk (Louis) J.F. Erasmus
South African, is an Economist, AFR. He was previously an Advisor to the Executive Director, OED, and an economist at the South African Reserve Bank. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Pretoria, South Africa. He enjoys reading and long-distance running.

Stefano Fassina
Italian, is an Economist, FAD. Before coming to the Fund, he worked in the Economic Affairs Department of the Italian Prime Minister's office. Educated at Bocconi University, Milan, he enjoys cinema.

Enric Fernandez
Spanish, is in the Economist Program, WHD. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Chicago and includes cinema, soccer, eating, and cooking among his interests.



Gulrukh Gamwalla–Khadivi
Pakistani, is a Staff Assistant, INS. She was previously a contractual staff assistant, STA. She holds an M.A. in commerce from the University of Karachi. She enjoys traveling, reading, and playing with her young son.

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Mangal Goswami
Indian, is an Economist, MED. Formerly a regional economist/strategist with ABN AMRO Bank Singapore, he holds a Ph.D. from Kansas State University. He is interested in emerging markets, macroeconomics, soccer, and traveling, and is married.

Tipayaporn Haritaworn
Thai, is a Research Assistant, STA. Previously a Computer Systems Assistant, BTS, she holds a B.S. in accounting from Bangkok University. She lists tennis, skiing, museums, and traveling among her interests.

Frank Kohlenberger
German, is an Economist, TRE. Before joining the Fund, he was an economist at a fund manager and at a financial research firm. Educated at the universities of Frankfurt and Hamburg and at the London School of Economics, he is interested in macroeconomics and quantitative methods. He enjoys movies and modern history.

Taline Koranchelian
Lebanese, is an Assistant to the Executive Director, OED. Before joining the Fund, she was an Advisor to the Minister of Economy and Trade, Lebanon. She has an M.A. in economic policy from Université Saint-Joseph, Lebanon. She enjoys opera, swimming, and chess.

John Kwabena Kwakye
Ghanaian, is an Assistant to the Executive Director, OED. He was an assistant director at the Bank of Ghana before joining the Fund and holds a Ph.D. from the University of Reading, U.K. He enjoys world history and politics and is married with four children.

Fabien Laclavere
French, is an Internal Auditor, OIA. Formerly an international internal auditor at Credit Lyonnais in Paris, he holds an M.A. in finance from Lyon Business School, France. He is interested in traveling and movies and is married and enjoys family time.

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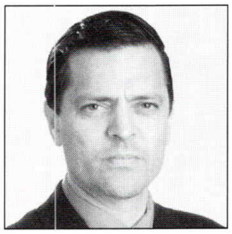
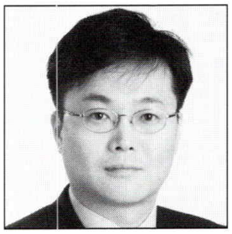
Rodolfo Maino
Argentinian, is an Assistant to the Executive Director, OED. He previously worked at the World Bank and holds a Ph.D in economics from the University of Utah. He is interested in econometrics and international finance and is married with two sons and one daughter.



Tola May
Cambodian, is an Assistant to the Executive Director, OED. Formerly a deputy secretary general, National Bank of Cambodia, he holds a B.A. in economics from the Economic Institute, Phnom Penh.

Gary Montante
A U.S. national, is a DSS Team Leader, TGS. He was a contractual staff member with TGS and holds a B.S. in management from the State University of New York at Buffalo. He enjoys movies and family activities.

Hong Sung Moon
Korean, is an Economist, EU1. Formerly a senior deputy director at the Ministry of Finance and Economy, Korea, he holds a Ph.D. in economics from the University of Missouri at Columbia. He is married with one son and one daughter.



Greta D. Ober-Beauchesne
Canadian, is a Research Librarian, TGS. Formerly an information officer at the IFC, she holds an M.A. in library science from McGill University, Montreal. She enjoys traveling, Master's swimming, and attending social events. She is married with a daughter and a baby son.

Lathouly Panom
Lao, is an Assistant to the Executive Director, OED. He was previously a deputy director general of cabinet at the Bank of the Lao PDR. He holds a B.A. in economics from Australian National University and likes to read.

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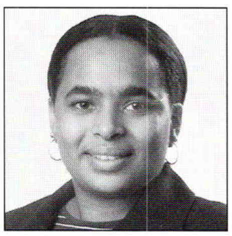
Lorraine Ocampos
Paraguayan, is an Assistant to the Executive Director, OED. Previously the director of the international economics department at the Central Bank of Paraguay, she holds a M.A. from the Freie Universitat Berlin and enjoys art, particularly the visual arts, and literature.

Mona Said
Egyptian, is an Economist, MED. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Cambridge, and is married and has a son.

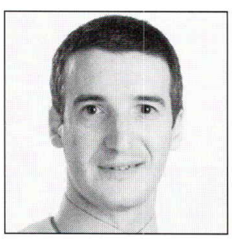
Kisme Mekeshí Scott
A U.S. national, is a Staff Assistant, HRD, where she was formerly a contractual. She was educated at the University of Virginia.



Mehmet Tamay
Turkish, is a Computer Systems Officer, TGS. Formerly a contractual with BTS, he was educated at Istanbul Technical University and the George Washington University. He enjoys sports and writing.

Katie Tuboku-Metzger
Sierra Leonean, is a Staff Assistant, HRD, where she was a contractual staff member. She holds a B.A. in business administration from the University of the District of Columbia. She includes entertaining, reading, traveling, and church leadership among her interests. She is married with a 7-year-old daughter.

David Vogel
Uruguayan, is an Assistant to the Executive Director, OED. Previously a manager of the economics department of KPMG Uruguay, he holds an M.A. in economics from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile. He is married with two children.



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Carl-Johan Lindgren

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Warren Coats
Giselle Devaux
Leyla U. Ecevit
Thomas S. Walter

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Angel L. Antonaya
Olivia E. de R. Carolin
Can T. Demir
Abdelali Jbili
Maria C. Karlsson
Roger P. Kronenberg
Carlos G. Muniz B.
Ashwani K. Sharma
Reinold H. van Til
Rosa Ines Vera-Bunge

Happy Occasions

Ulric Erickson von Allmen (MED) and his wife Linda are happy to announce the birth of their second daughter, Esther, on December 16, 2000.

Separations

Alvaro Santos Almeida
James E. Blalock
Anna Maria De Leva
Felicidad Domingo
Tomoyo Y. Dongala
Mohammad Reza Hajian
Mohmed Mehdi Hamam
Esteban Jadresic Marinovic
Omotunde E.G. Johnson
Eliahu S. Kreis
Atsushi Masuda
Mario M.C. Mesquita
Amr F. Moustapha
Vilma F. Pauig

Monica Perez dos Santos
Carlos Ramires Silva
In-Ok Yoon
Jong-Won Yoon
Siti Mariam Mohd Yusof

Transfers

Scott Bradley Brown to OMD from PDR
Sonia Brunschwig to PDR from AFR
Brenda Veronica Campbell to TGS from SEC
Benedict J. Clements to FAD from EU1
Tito Cordella to RES from MAE
Mariano Cortes to MAE from WHD
Jemma Dridi to MED from STA
Margaret J. Earll to OMD from SSG
Liam Patrick Ebrill to PDR from FAD
Annalisa Fedelino to FAD from MED
Aasim M. Husain to RES from MED
Shogo Ishii to MAE from APD
Jerome R. La Pittus to WHD from STI
Cheng Hoon Lim to PDR from APD
Barbara A. Lissenburg to APD from MED
Catherine J. McAuliffe to AFR from TRE
Alphecca Muttardy to AFR from TRE
Jean-Claude Nascimento to AFR from PDR
Dawn Elizabeth Rehm to FAD from EU1
Anthony J. Richards to APD from RES
Angel G. Sanchez to TRE from STA
Sandra M. Solares to MAE from WHD
Janet G. Stotsky to FAD from WHD
Andreas B. Westphal to EU1 from TRE
Liesbet Willems to FAD from EU2
Luisa Zanforlin to EU1 from AFR

Tribute to Sir Alan Whittome

Sir Alan Whittome, a former Counsellor, and successively, Director of the European Department and the Exchange and Trade Relations Department, died on January 21.

In paying tribute to Whittome in the IMF Executive Board, Horst Köhler said: "Sir Alan brought an extraordinary mind and a unique style to the IMF. He was the master of all things within his reach—and his reach was long! Sir Alan's mark on the IMF was enormous, and he has been missed since the day he left."

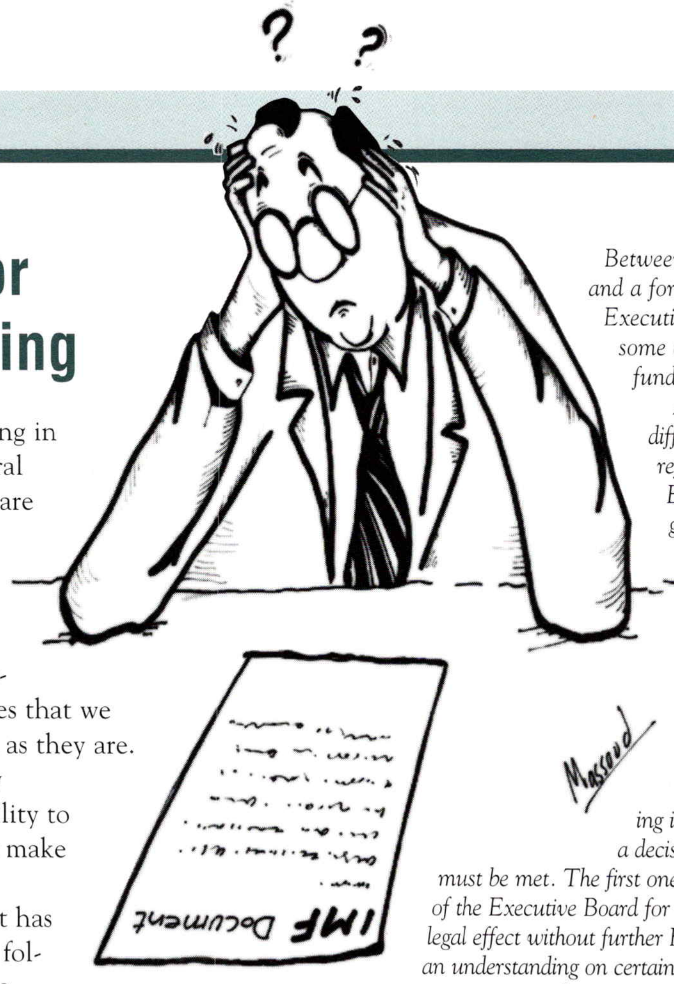
Whittome joined the European Department in 1964. He played a key part in negotiating Stand-By Arrangements and stabilization programs with several major European countries, including the United Kingdom in 1967, 1969, and 1977; France in 1969; and Italy in 1974 and 1977. In the 1980s, he led the Fund's efforts to develop contacts with the Eastern European countries. He also was actively involved in defining and extending the Fund's responsibilities for surveillance over the economies of its member countries.

In 1980, while retaining his position as Director of the European Department, Whittome was promoted to the rank of Counsellor. In 1987, he was reassigned as Director of the Exchange and Trade Relations Department and moved to the forefront of the IMF's efforts to deal with the problems of heavily indebted countries. He retired from the IMF staff in July 1990, but accepted a one-year appointment as Special Counsellor to the Managing Director in August of that year, with responsibility for coordinating among four international organizations a study of the Soviet Union's economy that was commissioned by the leaders of the Group of Seven countries. In February 1995, Whittome was appointed Special Advisor to the Managing Director to undertake a two-month study of the Mexican financial crisis. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 1991.

Sir Alan Whittome is survived by his wife and two daughters from a previous marriage. ◆


Sir Alan Whittome

The Quest for Clearer Writing



No doubt about it, writing in the Fund for the general public is difficult. We are now expected to be more open in what we let the world see about what we do. Yet so much of what we do is complex. We have specific operations and activities that we think can only be described as they are. We can shorten the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility to the PRGF, but we still can't make clear what it does.

Recently, our management has tried to help by asking us to follow the advice of its *Guide to Clearer Writing for Staff* (circulated by Mr. Fischer just in time for Thanksgiving). I don't know if many staff members have read it. Some have, I hope, and will try to follow its advice and succeed. Some will try and fail by their own efforts or by the hand of some other editor. Some will not try, feeling that the effort is either futile or too demanding. Whatever the outcome, time will judge the degree of success.

It is a great challenge to make clear what we do and say. Read any recent Board document and see how a paragraph or two, chosen at random, could be made shorter, crisper, and clearer, and remain accurate. To achieve some of what management seeks, we really need to use simpler language. Some might find this insulting because they believe that the result would be a lower quality of expression. But it is important for the writer to consider the viewpoint of the reader when assessing that point. Another need would be greater brevity—time to craft shorter, yet still well-expressed text—without losing true meaning.

Some text would indeed be a challenge and I like the test posed by the following from BUFF/00/169-Stmt-Staff-Review of Fund Facilities—"Nonamendment" Provisions in Decisions of the Executive Board:

Between a chairman's summing up and a formal decision of the Executive Board there may be some overlap but there are also fundamental differences.

A summing up may perform different functions. It may reflect views of individual Executive Directors or of groups of Executive Directors. It may also reflect a consensus or a majority view within the Executive Board on certain understandings. Depending on the circumstances, these understandings may or may not constitute a decision.

In order for an understanding in a summing up to constitute a decision, two types of conditions must be met. The first one is a willingness on the part of the Executive Board for the understanding to have legal effect without further Board action. For instance, an understanding on certain points, if made subject to agreement on other points, is not a decision as it has no legal effect. Similarly, a declaration of intention has no legal effect and is not a decision. The second condition is that all the requirements for the validity of a decision be observed (e.g., majorities and, more generally, consistency with the Articles).

Understandings that meet those two types of conditions constitute decisions and need not be converted into formal decisions. Conversely, understandings that have no legal effect, or do not meet the conditions of the Articles, do not constitute decisions but may be converted into formal decisions once the conditions for a valid decision are met.

All of this with the added burden that many are not working in their mother tongue, although their command of English Fund language is often splendid.

So, should we give up hope before the race starts? I suggest not. But beware! There may lie much frustration and pain as we tread along this path. The public finds it hard to digest what we write. Our search for nuance has left many readers with just nausea. Our attempts at clarity leave many with colic. So, let us strive to give our writing more punch and hope that we have the stomach for the fight. ◆

Dennis Jones

The *Guide to Clearer Writing* is available on EXR's website (http://www-int.imf.org/depts/exr/exrsite/p_guide.htm).