

LAFF

THE LAFF SOCIETY For the men and women engaged in Life After The Ford Foundation

December 2009 / No. 61

Reunion!

November 20, 2-6 p.m.

At The Ford Foundation

320 East 43rd Street, New York City

THE LAFF SOCIETY'S

first all-hands Reunion in six years is now scheduled for Friday, November 20, from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Ford Foundation.

This reunion, the fifth since LAFF was founded in 1991, will be the first at the Ford Foundation building and the first in which current Foundation staff members will participate.

The reunion will:

- ▶ Strengthen the personal, professional and intellectual bonds among and between past and present Foundation staff members.
- ▶ Update LAFF members on the Foundation's new strategies and lines of work.
- ▶ Provide an opportunity for alumni to contribute their insights and talents to the Foundation's current endeavors.
- ▶ Inaugurate our new president.

President Luis Ubiñas and retiring LAFF Society president Peter Geithner will deliver welcoming remarks. From 3 to 4:30 p.m. concurrent breakout subjects on key program issues will be presented by past and present staff members as panelists. The program was arranged by Janice Molnar.

The reunion will conclude with the inauguration of Shepard Forman as the new president of the LAFF Society and a reception from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

KEY PROGRAM ISSUES

Natural Assets (Climate Change)

Moderator: Ray Offenheiser
Foundation staff: Peter Riggs
Panelists: Steve Sanderson, Betsy Capbell, Sharon Alpert

Sexuality and Reproductive Health

Moderator: Joan Dunlop
Foundation staff: Margaret Hempel
Panelists: Adrienne Germain, Joan Kaufman, Margorie Muecke

Human Rights

Moderator: Lynn Huntley
Foundation staff: Sara Rios
Panelists: Larry Cox, Diana Morris, Natalia Kanem

Education and Scholarship

Moderator: Janice Molnar
Foundation staff: Alison Bernstein
Panelists: Greg Farrell, Joe Aguerrebere

A New Logo for Ford: How We Got There and What it Means

Moderator: Aaron Levine
Foundation staff: Marta Tellado

A reception will be held from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

Reminiscences

Moderator: Alan Divack
Commentary: Dick Magat, Mike Lipsky and others

The program will conclude with the inauguration of **Shepard Forman** as the new president of The LAFF Society

The LAFFing Parade

Sanford M. Jaffe, formerly of the Government and Law program, is co-author of “*To End and Prevent Wars between States: Negotiate, Don’t Litigate*” in the journal *Alternatives to the High Cost of Litigation*, published by the International Institute for Conflict Prevention and Resolution. Jaffe and his co-author, Linda Stamato, are co-directors of the Center for Negotiation and Conflict Resolution at Rutgers University.

They cite a conflict between New Jersey and Delaware over a liquefied gas facility. It landed before the Supreme Court. “Its history,” they write, “support a good argument for negotiating, and against engaging in litigation in such cases—here, the modern-day equivalent of going to war over the river.” The authors also cite the contending claims of New York and New Jersey over ownership of Ellis Island, a national landmark.

Instead of “economic sanctions, battle-ship diplomacy, and military action, and direct flights to court,” they propose “a combination of good faith and a conviction to work out equitable and environmentally sound results.”

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WANTED: CONTRIBUTIONS

This newsletter needs a continuous flow of contributions—news, recollections, comments or anything else you think will be of interest to other LAFFers. With the more capacious LAFF Blog now competing for copy, we’re particularly interested in items of one to three pages and without any urgency in timing. Please send copy for the next issue to John LaHoud at jlahoud25@hotmail.com.

The LAFF Society

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Governing Nonprofits

Paul Firstenberg, officer in charge of program-related investments in the 1970 is the author of a new study of governance in the nonprofit sector. Titled “The 21st Century Nonprofit: Managing in the Age of Governance” it was published by the Foundation Center. It explored key concepts—accountability, transparency, and responsibility—at the heart of effective governance and looks at the main challenges facing directors and managers of nonprofit organizations today.

“The study paints a portrait of the leadership of nonprofit organizations at a time when the driving force behind change is the need for sound governance,” says Firstenberg. “It is largely about our evolving expectations of nonprofit management, and the forces driving change.”

The report opens with an examination of the pivotal role played by boards of directors in organizational governance, setting the tone of an organization

as well as its rules. A special chapter is devoted to the strategic issues facing nonprofits during times of recession and severe economic downturn.

In addition to his service with the Foundation Firstenberg has extensive experience in philanthropy as an executive, trustee, advisor, author, and teacher, including as chancellor for planning and development of Tulane University, financial vice president of Princeton University, and Chief operating officer and trustee of Children’s Television Workshop (Sesame Street). He now lectures at the Baruch College School of Public Affairs. ■

AVE ATQUE VALE

In an age when newspapers and magazines are giving way to a jungle of electronic trolls, a publication that continues to appear after 18 years has something to crow about.

So it is with the LAFF Society Newsletter. And so it is with a bit of pride and nostalgia that I report that this will be my last issue as editor. I have had a lot of fun and very little headache shepherding some dozens of issues to bed. I have had a lot of help—my co-editors. **Will Hertz**, **Bob Tolles**, and **John LaHoud**; the talented graphic designers, **Ruth Neumann** and **Susan Huyser**, and the diligent monitors of finances and logistics, **Mary Camper-Titsingh**, **Dorothy Nixon**, and **Nellie Toma** and, for their patience and encouragement, the various presidents of LAFF, not least the durable **Peter Geithner**. You’re all the best.

Richard Magat

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

The LAFF Reunion promises to be the highlight for LAFF in November. As the lead article indicates, we anticipate an interesting, informative and enjoyable program, thanks to importantly to the efforts of Janet Molinar and her committee. If you have not already done so, please respond to the emailed Evite or to Nellie Toma. If you can be there, please also indicate the breakout session you plan to attend. At last report, acceptances already totaled close to 100.

This issue also includes the farewell note from Dick Magat, a co-founder of

LAFF and our stalwart Newsletter editor for 18 years. It is hard to believe and even harder to accept that we will no longer see his name on forthcoming Newsletters. I know of no one has been more dedicated nor contributed more to this organization than Dick. That he is stepping down only highlights the importance of finding others willing and able to assist as in editing future LAFF’s communications with its members. Volunteers warmly welcomed.

It will be a pleasure to see as many of you as possible on November 20.

Peter F. Geithner

"DOCTOR, MY WHEAT IS SICK"

The last issue of the LAFF Newsletter reported the death of Norman Borlaug, the father of the Green Revolution, who worked closely with the Foundation in India and Pakistan. An agronomist, Borlaug developed the semi-dwarf, high-yield wheat varieties that doubled wheat yields in those countries. Borlaug's death inspired Lowell Hardin, who monitored the Foundation's grants for the Green Revolution from 1965 to 1981 and now directs international agricultural programs at Purdue, to share this memory of a field trip with Borlaug to Pakistan.

By Lowell Hardin

The place was what was then West Pakistan; the time, 1968. Norm and other members of our party were examining the wheat crop, visiting with farmers and talking with public officials. Our concern was that we might find fatal flaws in these new high-yielding varieties. Already in this third year since their introduction they had spread to more than 20 percent of the wheat acreage in the country.

About dusk we arrived at Lahore where we were to spend the night. We were dusty, tired and hungry, so we were less than pleased to be greeted with the message, "My wheat is sick. The Doctor must come." Directions for getting to the farm, which was some 12 kilometers out of town, followed.

Fearful that there was a serious problem we climbed back into our van.

It was almost dark when the young Pakistani farmer who had left the message directed us to his three-hectare wheat field. Gently waving in the lengthening shadows was a magnificent crop of Mexipack 65, the new semi-dwarf transplanted from Mexico. It was still deep green in color and so dense, uniform and sturdy that one could toss his hat onto the flat surface of the plump heads and there it would stay. To me, it looked like a 100 bushel per-acre crop in a country where traditional varieties then averaged less than 20.

Our farmer host walked us along the irrigation ditch to the far corner of the field. "Where is the sick wheat?" Norm demanded.

"There," responded our host pointing to a few plants showing signs of high salinity. But by then we all knew that the crop was well and thriving.

Somewhat grudgingly we reversed our tracks and walked back toward the van at the corner of the field. There a transformation had taken place. Carpets now covered the bare ground. Lanterns had been hung. Chairs had appeared. The neighbors gathered.

"Dr. Borlaug," said our host, "we apologize for bringing you here under false pretenses. But we wanted somehow to thank you for changing our lives. This new wheat will make it possible for me to get married to that beautiful young woman there. We will build a house where we now stand. We knew not how to show our appreciation. So

we asked the women. They went to work and made this."

He turned and two of the women held up a beautiful quilt. Each square had been made by a different family. Collectively the women had pieced the squares together.

"Take this home to Mrs. Borlaug, please," our host requested. "Keep it as a reminder that without the new wheat the better life we see ahead would not have been possible."

As the moon came out and a tear rolled down my dusty cheek, I concluded that yes, successful development does have a human face. ■

The Thaw at the Roof of the World

By Orville Schell

New York Times, Sept. 26, 2009

China is beginning to realize that it has a lot to lose from the carbon dioxide that the world so blithely emits into the earth's atmosphere.

Not long ago I found myself on a platform 14,000 feet above sea level, surrounded by throngs of Chinese tourists. A chairlift had brought us that much closer to the jagged peaks of Jade Dragon Snow Mountain and the glacier that cascades down its flank. People cheerfully snapped photos of the icy mass, seemingly unaware of the disaster unfolding before them.

The roughly 1.7-mile-long Baishui Glacier No. 1 could well be one of the first major glacial systems on the Tibetan Plateau to disappear after thousands of years. The glacier has receded 830 feet over the last two decades. Its decline is an early warning of what may ultimately befall the approximately 18,000 higher-altitude glaciers in the Greater Himalayas as the planet continues to warm.

The Tibetan Plateau and its environs shelter the largest perennial ice mass on the planet after the Arctic and Antarctica. Its snowfields and glaciers feed almost every major river system of Asia during hot, dry seasons when the monsoons cease, and their melt waters supply rivers from the Indus in the west to the Yellow in the east, with the Ganges, Brahmaputra, Irrawaddy, Salween,

Mekong and Yangtze in between.

Scientists speak about the reactive behavior of these glaciers as if they were almost human. Now, a growing number of glaciers are losing their equilibrium, or their capacity to build up enough snow and ice at high altitudes to compensate for the rate of melting at lower ones. Given present trends, almost two-thirds of the plateau's glaciers could well disappear within the next 40 years.

Moreover, temperatures on the Tibetan plateau are rising much faster than the global average. A good portion of the area's existing ice fields has been lost over the past four decades, and the rate of retreat has increased in recent years.

The slow-motion demise of Baishui Glacier No. 1 will have far-reaching consequences. In the short run, there will, of course, be an abundance of water. But in the long run there will be deficits. These will have national security consequences as countries compete for ever scarcer water resources supplied by transnational rivers with as many as two billion users.

China can't solve this problem alone. After all, the ice fields in the arc of peaks from China to Afghanistan are melting in large part because of greenhouse gases emitted thousands of miles away. ■

Orville Schell, a training associate in the Foundation's Jakarta office in the 1960s, is the director of the Asia Society's Center on United States-China Relations.

The LAFFing Parade

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They report that negotiations have produced resolutions of such cross-border issues as highway location, rail-freight operations, watershed protection and restoration, port development, and power-generating plants.

Glenn Hubbard, who spent two decades in Africa with the Ford Foundation and other aid agencies, is co-author with William Duggan of an article, "Why Africa Needs a Marshall Plan" in the FT.com of the *Financial Times*. "The original Marshall Plan was less a grand aid program than a targeted effort to restore the power of business as a growth engine," they write. "A real Marshall plan for Africa would stand apart from the aid system of governments and non-governmental organizations."

Starry Kreuger has won the 2009 William French Award for her work at the Rural Development Leadership Network. The award is given by the Rural Community Assistance Corporation. It was presented at a reception in Sacramento, California. ■

PATH ANNIVERSARY

A novel organization founded by three Ford Foundation staff members is observing its 30th anniversary. Known as PATH, the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health, it operates in 70 countries. It formed to bridge public health agencies and private industry to make sure couples around the world had access to condoms, birth public pills, intrauterine devices, and other modern forms of pregnancy prevention. The founders, **Gordon Duncan**, **Rich Mahoney**, and **Gordon Perkin** saw an urgent need for ensuring that newly developed contraceptives could reach people who needed them. In China, for example, decades of isolation due to the cultural revolution left the country's reproductive health technology lagging behind Western manufacturing and pharmaceutical methods.

No one from the private sector was tak-

ing contraceptive technology from the private-sector pipeline and bringing them into developing-country health programs. "It was like the third person in the relay race was missing," says Perkins, recalling the void in reproductive health that he and the other founders aimed to fill.

The organization settled in Seattle with \$92,000 in seed money from the Ford Foundation. It also received support from the Battelle Institute's Population Study Center.

PATH has an international board of directors. Its first large-scale international project was assisting China with modernizing its contraceptive factories and boosting production to keep up with the country's burgeoning population. It now runs programs in Manila, Indonesia, and Thailand. It employs hundred of people throughout the world and touches on every major global health issue. ■

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