
Manila Women's Forum

A Network of Women Professionals

October 2002

Philippine History Comes Alive

By Sandee Leong

The night we were all anticipating finally arrived. Rene Olbes, the author of "The Philippines Then and Now," was our rescheduled speaker for September's MWF. The book is an exquisite collection of turn-of-the-century post cards and pictures of renowned historical structures, streets, and

buildings of the Philippines. Each old photo is contrasted with a recent photo taken from the same exact spot and angle, giving the reader an intriguing glimpse into the past and a new appreciation for the few old structures that do remain.

Rene Olbes is a graphic artist by profession, and a historian and photographer as well. He is a Spanish-Filipino and was educated in both the

Philippines and the United States, and graduated from the Colorado Institute of Art in 1976. You can tell that Rene is indeed passionate about preserving historical places, architecture, and scenes in the Philippines by the way he engaged us that evening, enthusiastically making history come alive. He discussed the scarcity of preservation work in the country and hopes that his book will encourage more efforts to save these historic buildings from the wrecking ball.

But his inspiration for the book was the amazing events of the late 1800s — how José Rizal unintentionally inspired the Philippine Revolution, was executed by the Spanish rulers, and became a "larger than life" martyr

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At the August meeting. (Above photo, left to right) Donna Kelley, Mary Garlicki, Lisa Lumbao, and Cecilia Leung.

(Left photo, left to right) Sandee Leong, Josie Lambert, and Jennifer Gilmore.

Next MWF Meeting

When: Monday, October 21, 2002, 6:30 p.m.

What: Riyaz Moorani, Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer of the www.asia-hotels.com website, will speak about starting and running an Internet business, including security firewalls and virus protection for the business and home user.

Where: Mary Garlicki's house, 1953 Kasoy Avenue, Dasmariñas Village, Makati.

Bring: A contribution to the potluck dinner.

November meeting: Monday November 18, 2002.



Voice of the Chair

By Lisa Kircher Lumbao

An Era of Women Leaders Ends at the U.N.

By Barbara Crossette
WNews correspondent

Initiatives and Activities of Women Worldwide

WOMENSENEWS

The face of power in the United Nations was transformed in the 1990s as women took over leadership of six important agencies and Canadian Louise Frechette was named the organization's first deputy secretary general. But it wasn't just a matter of numbers. These women found common cause in expanding women's rights and, although they were based far apart—in New York, Rome and Geneva—they became close colleagues and friends, setting aside time to meet over a meal when United Nations business brought them together anywhere in the world.

"It was just fabulous," said Catherine Bertini, the American who headed the World Food Program, the largest international food-relief organization. "It was a special group."

That era, if glorious, was also brief. When Mary Robinson stepped down on Wednesday as United Nations high commissioner for human rights, she became the third of those pioneering women to leave the system. Sadako Ogata retired last year as United Nations high commissioner for refugees and Bertini ended her run

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as executive director of the World Food Program this spring. All three have been replaced by men.

Gro Harlem Brundtland, a former prime minister of Norway, said she will not seek a second term as director general of the World Health Organization when her first term ends next year. No successor has been chosen.

So far, only Nafis Sadik, who as the first woman to head a major agency, transformed the United Nations Population Fund from a non-controversial family-planning agency to an organization fighting for women's reproductive rights, was succeeded by another woman when she retired two years ago.

Apart from Brundtland, soon to depart from the World Health Organization, and the population fund's new executive director, Thoraya Obaid, a Saudi Arabian national, there is only one other woman now at the head of a major agency, Carol Bellamy, the executive director of UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. Bellamy, an American, was a former New York City Council president and United States Peace Corps director.

Leaders Helped Women's Rights in Difficult Decade

The 1990s was a disastrous decade for women, marked by vicious civil wars in which 90 percent of the casualties were civilians. Women were killed, forced to flee their homes, starved, brutalized, enslaved and raped, often in the refugee camps that were expected to shelter them. The women who headed United Nations agencies pushed ameliorating measures that were often unpopular with governments, such as making the "morning after" pill available to refugee women.

Bertini said that when she arrived at the World Food Program in 1992 and asked why there were so few women in professional grades, she was told, "Well, we do logistics things—we do things with trucks and trains and planes, and these aren't women's things." She more than doubled the number of high-ranking women in the agency, then turned to the poor women who were its beneficiaries.

"We really had a sea change of policy to direct food aid to women," she said.

Bertini now teaches at the

The women who headed United Nations agencies pushed ameliorating measures that were often unpopular with governments, such as making the "morning after" pill available to refugee women.

University of Michigan and serves as UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's roving envoy on humanitarian issues.

"If we're going to have food and it's for ending hunger, then get it to the people who cook." Village women were also entrusted with allocating supplies. Programs were introduced that gave free food to families who sent their girls to school.

Bertini stood down the Taliban, demanding that women be allowed to work in bakery projects in Afghanistan or there would be no bakeries. She was surprisingly successful.

At UNICEF, Bellamy began to explore the darker recesses of a child's world into areas of sexual abuse and family violence. She would argue that women as well as girls were her concern, since no child could develop freely if a mother suffered and had no status or rights.

Sadik, a Pakistani physician, ran the watershed 1994 Cairo conference on

The Manila Women's Forum

The Manila Women's Forum (MWF) is a cross-cultural network for women. It provides opportunities to build friendships, to talk to women of various cultures, and to share information about resources. Our meetings are intended to provide intellectual stimulation and lead to personal and professional development. All women are welcome to join. The current officers are **Lisa Lumbao**, Chair, Programs, Treasurer, and Newsletter. **Penny Poole**, Programs, Newsletter. **Beaulah P. Taguiwalo**, Newsletter.

Cost of membership is P300 per year. Members receive a copy of the current mailing list in addition to the newsletter, which is also sent to non-members. A contribution is collected at each monthly meeting: P20 for members, and P40 for non-members. Please contact Lisa Lumbao at Tel. 818-2887 or 813-0168, or at lumbao@mozcom.com for more information about MWF.

Voice... (continued from page 2)
population and development, fending off foes from the American anti-abortion lobby and the Vatican to conservative Islamic governments.

The meeting ended with a bold call for the right of women to decide how their bodies are used.

At the World Health Organization, Brundtland, a public health specialist, led a worldwide campaign against smoking and oversaw a global fund to fight AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

Robinson, a human rights lawyer and former president of Ireland, had the stormiest tenure. When she became High Commissioner for Human Rights, she said that she wanted to listen to the concerns of people in developing nations, who often accused Western human rights organizations of finding fault only with poor countries.

Human rights advocates respected her, though, for strong stands she took for justice for the East Timorese brutalized by pro-Indonesian militias in 1999 and for more human rights protection in China. But she angered

the Bush administration for what Washington called her failure to curb outbursts of anti-Semitism at the 2001 UN World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, and for her criticisms of American limitations on civil rights after the Sept. 11 attacks. Israel, also outraged by the Durban conference, blocked her attempt to lead a human rights monitoring mission into occupied Palestinian territories earlier this year.

There were also some criticisms from women. Robinson took a very low-key initial approach to Afghanistan under the Taliban, saying she needed to learn more about Islamic law. And in the spring of 2001, at a meeting in Teheran, Iran, to frame part of the agenda for the UN conference on racism, Robinson acquiesced to the government's demand that all women be covered from head to toe. It was an international gathering and many women were outraged.

"I would not equate the wearing of the veil with a repression of women as such," she told a BBC interviewer

later that year, saying that she too had to cover her head and didn't like it. "I wouldn't do it if it was a custom, but it was part of the law and out of respect as high commissioner, I abide by laws," she said.

But by the end of her tenure, Robinson, who served a four-year term with a one-year extension, had become an outspoken critic of trafficking in girls and women. In a visit to Cambodia in August, she told the national parliament that something needed to be done about the 200,000 victims of traffickers in Southeast Asia alone.

"The women and children who are subjected to this inhumane cruelty are not foreign to us," she said. "They are our sisters and daughters; they are our children." ■

*Barbara Crossette was
The New York Times UN Bureau
Chief from 1994 to 2001.*

*For more information:
<http://www.womensenews.org>
September 12, 2002
IWTC Women's Globalnet*

New Rules of the Office

*Will be effective
immediately...*

From the e-mail circuit

Dress Code: It is advised that you come to work dressed according to your salary, if we see you wearing \$350 Prada sneakers & carrying a \$600 Gucci bag, we assume you are doing well financially and therefore you do not need a raise.

Sick Days: We will no longer accept a doctor statement as proof of sickness. If you are able to go to the doctor, you are able to come to work.

Surgery: Operations are now banned. As long as you are an employee here, you need all your organs. You should not consider removing anything. We hired you intact. To have something removed constitutes a breach of employment.

Personal Days: Each employee will receive 104 personal days a year. They are called Saturday and Sunday.

Vacation Days: All employees will take their vacation at the same time every year. The vacation days are as follows: Jan. 1, July 4 & Dec. 25.

Bereavement Leave: This is no excuse for missing work. There is nothing you can do for dead friends, relatives or coworkers. Every effort should be made to have non-employees attend to the arrangements. In rare cases where employee involvement is necessary, the funeral should be scheduled in the late afternoon. We will be glad to allow you to work through your lunch hour and subsequently leave one hour early, provided your share of the work is done enough.

Out From Your Own Death: This will be accepted as an excuse. However, we require at least two weeks notice as it is your duty to train your own replacement.

Restroom Use: Entirely too much time is being spent in the restroom. In the

future, we will follow the practice of going in alphabetical order. For instance, all employees whose names begin with 'A' will go from 8 to 8:20, employees whose names begin with 'B' will go from 8:20 to 8:40 and so on. If you're unable to go at your allotted time, it will be necessary to wait until the next day when your turn comes again. In extreme emergencies employees may swap their time with a coworker. Both employees' supervisors in writing must approve this exchange.

Lunch Break: Skinny people get an hour for lunch as they need to eat more so that they can look healthy, normal size people get 30 minutes for lunch to get a balanced meal to maintain their average figure. Fat people get 5 minutes for lunch because that's all the time needed to drink a Slim Fast & take a diet pill.

Thank you for your loyalty to our company. We are here to provide a positive employment experience. Have a nice week.

History... (From page 1) and national hero. Rene described Rizal as a renaissance man who was an optometrist, novelist, poet, biologist, linguist, and much more. Having lived in Spain and Germany and traveled to the United States, he became well versed in several languages including Spanish, French, German, English, and Chinese. At a petite height of 5 feet 2 inches, one would never have guessed that he could have achieved so much: he fought for equality for Filipinos and his death at the tender age of 34 transformed the nation forever.

Thousands of Filipinos who were

outraged that Mother Spain unleashed a firing squad against such a remarkable man stood up to fight against the tyranny they had lived with for generations. Rene's respect for these people who gave their lives for freedom is what pushed him to create his book. By showcasing and remembering what the country looked like during their time, he strives to honor their memory.

There are surprisingly very few historical buildings left in the Philippines, and Rene attributed this to the heavy bombings that the nation suffered during World War II. Manila was almost completely flattened — it

was the second-most damaged city in the world after the war. What remained unscathed was Vigan in Ilocos Norte and Iloilo in Negros. Both cities are must see places in the Philippines. Conserving the historical landmarks that do remain is a very difficult task. Economic need (and greed) have caused most old buildings to be demolished rather than renovated and preserved, despite the efforts of a few dedicated groups. Rene's book serves as a beautiful reminder of the country's past and an inspiration to those who are working to preserve and remember that past and its heroes. ■

kaWOMENan

Selected and Edited by Beaulah P. Taguiwalo

Women and history...

If Jane Austen were alive today, she'd be happy to see how things have changed!

"History...tells me nothing that does not either vex or weary me. The quarrels of popes and kings, with wars and pestilences in every page; the men all so good for nothing, and hardly any women at all - it is very tiresome."

— Jane Austen (1775-1817)

Youth is, after all, just a moment, but it is the moment, the spark that you always carry in your heart. — Raisa Gorbachev



Women's Voices, Women's Faces

1 OCTOBER 2002

MWF Newsletter
 c/o Lisa Kircher Lumbao
 3B Cordova Condominium
 138 Valero Street, Salcedo Village
 Makati City, Metro Manila