LAFF

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

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The LAFFing Parade

Lincoln Chen, formerly of the India office who since leaving the Foundation has had a multitude of assignments, says he finds himself "mostly sitting on planes between the U.S. and China and also commuting weekly between his home in Boston and offices in New York." As reported in a previous issue, his new role is that of director of the China Medical Board, a 93-year old foundation that pioneered modern medicine in China and Asia. His assignment is to take the board (all Rockefeller money) into a new role to advance the health of the peoples of China and neighboring Asian countries. Grant-making has been stopped pending a comprehensive review of the on-the-ground situation in China and exploration of potential future strategies. He has been blessed, he reports, with the advisory support of **Peter Geithner,** LAFF president, and the leadership of board members **Tom Kessinger** and **Tony Saitch,** both Ford alumni. Lincoln is currently director of the Global Equity Center at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and before that executive vice president for strategy of the Rockefeller Foundation.

The China Medical Board was established by the Rockefeller Foundation in 1914 to manage its interests in medicine and medical education in China. In 1915 it bought the Union Medical College in Peking, founded by Protestant missionaries in 1906, and continued to support it until the outbreak of World War II. The college resumed operation after the war until it was nationalized by the Peoples Republic of China in 1951. Unable to operate on the mainland, the board undertook a broadened program of assistance to medical, public health, and nursing schools in many Far Eastern countries.

Much in the news of late is **Ghebre Selassie Mehreteab,** formerly of the Foundation's urban poverty program and now CEO of the NPH Foundation, established by the congressionally chartered National Housing Partnership to address America's

continued on page 2

THE GREEN REVOLUTION: HOW IT BEGAN

WORLD FOOD PRIZE FOUNDATION

Dr. Norman Borlaug crossing varieties in a wheat field in Mexico. Note the envelopes atop each wheat stalk to prevent unwanted pollination.

This is the first of three installments on the history of "The Green Revolution."

by Will Hertz

The last issue of the LAFF newsletter reported the awarding of the U.S. Congressional Medal of Honor to Norman Borlaug, father of "The Green Revolution" and a long-time consultant to the Ford Foundation in international agricultural research. Borlaug is one of the most honored scientists of his time. In addition to the Nobel Peace Prize, he has received the U.S. Presidential Medal of Freedom, National Medal of Science, Public Welfare Medal of the National Academy of Sciences, Pakistan's Hilal-I-Imtiaz (Crescent of Distinction), India's Padma Vibhushan, and honorary degrees from 50 universities in 18 countries. He was even lauded by President Josiah Bartlet on the TV show The West Wing.

Outside of agricultural circles, however, little is known about the four scientists on whose shoulders Borlaug's historic work in wheat breeding rested—namely, a Canadian father-and-sons team, William, Percy and Charles E. Saunders, and a Minnesotan, E.C. Stakman.

The Saunders worked at the Canadian government's experimental farm in Ottawa in the early years of the 20th century. At the time, cities, farms and mining and lumber companies were springing up along the Canadian Pacific Railway, but not enough grain was grown locally to meet their food needs. William, the director of the Canadian experimental farm service, and Percy introduced wheat varieties from Russia, the United States and India, which, when crossed with local wheats, would provide farmers in western Canada an earlier maturing

continued on page 6

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The LAFFing Parade

continued from page 1

affordable housing crisis. In an e-mail he informed us that the Eritrean Development Foundation has named him humanitarian of the year, following in the footsteps of previous honorees, author Thomas Keneally and Olympic Medalist Meb Keflezighi. Proceeds from a black tie dinner in his honor at the Capital Hilton May 16 will be used to support micro-credit programs for business women in Eritrea. The Eritrean foundation currently funds 28 micro-credit programs benefiting 572 women in the Gash Barka and Northern Red Sea zones. Loans, usually less than $200, are made to the women to establish or expand small, self-sustaining businesses.

In recognition of its success in rebuilding New Orleans' affordable housing stock, the NPH Foundation has received a $3 million program-related investment from Ford to aid its three-year recovery program in the Gulf Coast region, currently underway at a cost of $300 million. NHP has 1,400 affordable units under development and another 1,600 units in the pipeline. And in testimony before House of Congress's Financial Services Committee, Gabe said that rebuilding efforts in New Orleans face a significant financing gap, in large part due to the increased cost of construction and insurance premiums. He called upon philanthropic organizations, financial institutions, and corporations to support the rebuilding effort via grants, interest-free loans, and other financing vehicles.

Mention of **Waldemar Nielsen** (see page 7) recalls a long-forgotten incident in the unwritten history of the Ford Foundation. The time was Fidel Castro's triumphant visit to New York after his successful overthrow of the Batista regime in Cuba. Castro was then regarded as a hero. Nielsen had somehow arranged to invite him to lunch at the Foundation, then located at 477 Madison Avenue, nicknamed the Lamson Building after the store on the ground floor. Several staff members gathered on the setback to the 10th floor to watch for Castro's motorcade. They followed his progress through the city by radio—the Teressa Hotel in Harlem, Columbia University, but by this time it began to dawn that he would never reach the Foundation. He didn't but the staff got to eat the special steak lunches that were waiting for him and his entourage.

Alice O'Connor is scheduled to be a featured speaker at the Russell Sage Foundation's Centennial Symposium April 19 at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel on Park Avenue in New York. Her topic: "Social Science for What? Philanthropy and the Social Question in a World Turn Right Side Up." Russell Sage, a close ally of the Foundation in various funding ventures, including a series of U.S. Census studies, is devoted exclusively to research in the social sciences. It is one of the oldest U.S. foundations, founded in 1907 with a grant of $15 million by Margaret Olivia Sage for the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States. ■

CHAPTER NEWS

New York

Barry Gaberman, recently retired Foundation senior vice president, spoke to some 38 members (listed on the following page) of LAFF's New York Chapter on February 27, describing the changes he has observed in the substance, style, and structure of the Foundation over 35 years. He gave his talk at the historic Public Theater on Lafayette Street in downtown New York, arranged through the good offices of **Mara Manus,** a program officer in community and economic development in the late '90s and now the theater's executive director.

Tracing his career, he said he began with the Foundation in 1971 straight out of graduate school, was sent to the Indonesia office for a few years, returned to New York in 1976 to work in the Asia/Pacific office, and then, after the arrival of Frank Thomas in 1979, found himself running the Program Related Investments office, "something I had absolutely no background for." Then in 1982, "in the smartest career move I've ever made" he was selected by Susan Berresford, who was named by Frank to be vice president of the U.S. and International Affairs Program, to be her deputy. For the next 25 years he "rode Susan's coattails," becoming deputy of the program division in 1990 and senior vice president when Susan succeeded Frank as president. He added he had the unusual privilege of doing "double-duty" by

continued on page 3

A Nobelist's Second Thoughts

The Winter issue of the LAFF newsletter carried two exuberant tributes to Muhammad Yunus, the Bangladeshi entrepreneur who won the Nobel Peace Prize for founding the Grameen Bank. Yunus was helped along the way by grants and program-related investments from the Ford Foundation. But Yunus recently raised doubts about the role of philanthropy in advancing micro-finance for Third World poor. In an interview in the Nov. 17 *Business Week,* he suggested that the Grameen Bank could have been successful and independent sooner than it was if philanthropy hadn't been involved. "Earlier when donors wanted to give us money, we always swayed and took the money," he said. "If donors hadn't given us the money, we could have discovered earlier" that we could support ourselves. He cautioned other micro-finance organizations, increasingly popular with philanthropists, to stay away from philanthropy's sway: "If it's a business, it should be running as a business." Yunus's caution was echoed by one of the field's principal funders, eBay co-founder Pierre Omidyar. He was quoted in *The New Yorker* as saying that philanthropy's "undemanding capital"—which is provided with nothing expected in return—allows recipients to pursue uncompetitive and unsustainable efforts. The article explores the growing tension between for-profit and nonprofit approaches to micro-finance, reporting that for-profit efforts are less willing to branch out into new, harder-to-serve rural areas. ■

temporarily taking over leaderless program offices and, in the process, obtaining an overview of issues facing the Foundation.

Referring to the period of 1979-81, Barry recalled that Frank Thomas was given three mandates by the board: to put the structure of the Foundation "in sync" with its resources; balance the budget; and tear down the silos that separated the program divisions. Referring to this last point, he said of the old days, "we didn't engage one another very much. You won't find that today."

Among other changes: the shift, especially overseas, where the emphasis had been working with governments and universities on "the hard stuff of development" to working today with non-governmental institutions on "softer" issues such as human rights and reproductive health. "By the turn of the century, the Foundation's track record on human rights was one of its leading funding chapters."

The Foundation also became more aware of gender with the realization that much of rural work overseas was done by women. "Putting a gender lens" on issues became a "powerful" influence, he said. The Foundation also began to define diversity more broadly, not only in terms of gender and race, but in terms of ethnicity and nationality. And Berresford, in talking with scores of people as she prepared for the presidency, noted the importance of belief systems in peoples' lives. This resulted in the initiation of a religion program focused on black churches in the South.

The Foundation did away with any notion of program staff tenure, instituting the five-year rule (since extended to six years) in which staff were expected to move on. This innovation, he said, served "to bring a fresh set of eyes" to issues but inevitably increased staff time devoted to recruiting new talent. The corporate presence on the board also became more prominent.

Gaberman noted that when he came to the Foundation, there were 850 staff members (a quarter of all the paid foundation positions worldwide at the time) distributing 100 hundred million dollars a year. Today, with the explosion of technology, there are 500 people putting out $600 million a year.

This growth has been accompanied by an expansion of the field as a whole. Today some 70,000 foundations have assets totaling 500 billion dollars and in the next 20 years this total will probably exceed a trillion dollars. This scale has made foundations more politically vulnerable, he stated. "Congress and others are not going to sit by quietly and look at a trillion dollars outside of any sort of direction and control."

During his time at the Foundation, Gaberman also said he witnessed the professionalization of philanthropy in which the Foundation hired more and more specialists in substantive areas. In earlier years the Foundation was primarily run by bright generalists who cared about the sustainability of institutions. "As we hired more and more specialists, we began to lose a concern for this broader approach. Today you need a specialty appropriate for the job and also another in something called the craft of granting," which, he added, can be learned on the job.

He noted that Ford and other foundations have come under increasing pressure from the right, as evidenced by an article on the Gates Foundation in the *Wall Street Journal* which ended with the sentence that "the greatest fear of Gates Foundation was not to become like the Ford Foundation." Mystified by the comment, he asked whether it was something the Gates people really believed or a reporter merely "wanting to stir up controversy?"

But foundations need to be aware, he added, of the mistrust and to take steps to reaffirm philanthropy's special strengths— "to take risks, to stick with something for the long term, to take on sensitive things government would never support."

He concluded with a defense of foundations' mission to strengthen the bonds of civil society. Like the Supreme Court Justice's definition of pornography, he argued "you know civil societies when you see them—institutions that are alive, that provide services to the most marginalized citizens, that do policy analysis, and give voice to public discourse."

Responding to questions, Gaberman said that he expected the Foundation would continue to maintain a substantial overseas presence, that it has become more outspoken in responding to public criticism, and that he anticipated there will be greater acceptance of LAFF as a bridge between the Foundation and its alumni. As to the qualifications of the next president, he said he hoped it would be someone with significant overseas experience, that it not be someone from the education or congressional communities, and that he or she would strengthen the program side of the foundation.

Attending the New York gathering were: Agnes Barolo, Ellen Brown, Mary Camper-Titsingh, Lincoln Chen, Victoria Dawson, Peter de Janosi, Dianne DeMaria with Meivita Budihasana, FF representative in Indonesia, Dorriss Fennell, Shepard and Leona Forman, Peter Geithner, Sheila Gordon, Kara Heffernan, Margaret Hampel, Sandy Jaffe, Michele Kahane, Natalia Kanem, Felicia Khan, Nathalie Kravtchenko, Richard Lacey, Felice Levin, Thea Lurie, Richard Magat, Mara Manus, Janice Maughan and John Sutter, Ruth Mayleas, Lisa Mensah, Janice Molnar, Susan Newman, Chris Page, Henry Saltzman, Frank Sutton, Andrea Taylor, Robert Tolles, Nellie Toma, Jim Trowbridge, Toby Volkman, Melisssa Wavelet, and Mary Zurbuchen.

CHAPTER NEWS

Washington

Twenty-two former Ford staffers (listed below) showed up for the second meeting of 'LAFF in Washington' on February 21 to hear **Gary Horlick**'s engaging account of starting out as a young staffer of the Foundation in Santiago, Chile. Gary, a partner at the WilmerHale law firm specializing in international trade, and the former head of the US Department of Commerce Import Administration, recounted his adventures in taking the job just out of law school, arriving on post in 1973 in the very week that the Allende government was overthrown by the Chilean military. Among other duties, he helped implement Foundation efforts to support the Chilean intelligentsia by establishing a variety of new social science institutions in which they could operate outside the established university system from which they had been banned.

Following the talk the attendees, almost all of whom had served the Foundation in field offices and before 1990, reviewed and offered comments on the role of the Foundation in Chile and other South American countries in preserving or creating critical civil society institutions in the face of authoritarian developments.

Peter Geithner, president of LAFF, opened the meeting with a status report on the organization. Among suggestions to come out of the meeting: 1) be sure to invite spouses or significant others to attend such events; 2) arrange for those interested to have dinner afterwards; and 3) alert members receiving LAFF notices by email of their dues status.

Attending were Bruce Carlson, John Cool, Ben Fisher, Bryant George, Carl and Pamela Green, Dave and Nina Gwatkin, Bill and Inez Ireland, Werner Kiene, Peter Knight, Tony and Carol Measham, Michael Lipsky, Jeff Puryear, Steve Riskin, Jane Thery, and Lee Travers. Making available the gracious facilities of the Cosmos Club was Gabe Mehreteab who hosted the event. We are grateful to Michael Lipsky for forwarding the above account of the gathering.

MEMORIES JIM IVY

Before he died on May of last year in Santa Rosa, California, LAFF was in correspondence with Jim about his early experiences with the Foundation in Pasadena, California, which he joined in 1953, and the years he spent in China before that. Jim wrote a long e-mail describing both episodes, the Pasadena part of which was summarized in a previous issue. The China part, dealing with the period immediately after the end of World War II, follows. It should be noted that Jim, along with Elizabeth Paschal who died in February, 2006, at age 103 in Menlo Park, California, were the last surviving members (as far as we know) of that small start-up band of talented individuals who gathered in Pasadena to establish a national and international program of philanthropy for the Foundation.

Jim begins by describing the formation of a high-level commission by the Department of State, called the Foreign Liquidation Commission (FLC), whose task was to restore and replenish the military capacity and installations of our World War II allies that had been largely destroyed during the war. FLC was to shore up their defenses by giving them surplus military equipment. He reports he had just returned from a tour of duty in Iceland where he was commanding officer of a materiel squadron serving the huge air base in that country. Assigned to an air base in Tampa where he had little to do, he approached a close friend, a reserve colonel assigned to the FLC, about joining that operation. Three days later he received a telephone call from his friend telling him the War Department had issued orders transferring him to Washington and seconding him to the FLC. He goes on:

Several months after my arrival in Washington, the FLC decided to establish two field offices–one in North Africa and the other in the Philippines. I was sent to Manila to assist in setting up operations there. Such military equipment still around was turned over to the Philippine government under the terms then being worked out for its eventual independence from the United States. The "big fish" in the Pacific region was, of course, China.

After nine months in the Philippines, I was ordered to return to Washington where preparations were under way for a trip to China. I was included as an aide-de-camp to Mr. McCabe (of the Scott Paper Company, who headed FLC). We traveled in the latest military passenger plane, a DC-4. The flight from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor took 14 hours, and then three days to reach our destination of Shanghai. The negotiations were carried on with Prime Minister T.V. Song (then reported to be the richest man in the world).

"Ray Moyer and I believed that a small comprehensive aid program focusing on basic infrastructure and rural programs would provide the Nationalists with the courage to withstand the Communists."

The discussions took about two weeks. The agreement specified that the military equipment and installations on the Pacific islands be turned over to China on a "where is, as is basis." Everything was to be shipped in Chinese bottoms (ships). An engineering firm in Boise, Idaho, was engaged to help repair military hardware. Supervision and labor were the responsibility of the Chinese with periodic inspection by the Shanghai office of the FLC. Although the war was over, the civil war in China was becoming more active, and the underlying objective of the FLC and related organizations was to assist the Nationalist (KMT) Government resist a Communist takeover.

On the commission's return home, word was received while in Manila that some minor problems had arisen in the Shanghai office, and I was asked to return for about a month to see if I could be of any help. That one month lasted five years. Since problems seemed to plague the Shanghai office, it was agreed I should remain on a full time basis as deputy. At about this time, President Truman sent General George C. Marshall to China in the hope that he could arrange some sort of reconciliation between the Nationalist Government and the Chinese Communists. We briefed the general on several occasions on the FLC's operations. Since the general finally concluded that there was no possibility of arranging any sort of peace agreement between the two parties, he returned to the United States, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and appointed Secretary of State.

About this time, I exchanged my lieutenant colonel's uniform for civilian clothes, official appointment as a Department of State foreign service reserve officer, a passport, and a small increase in salary but no change in assignment.

FLC began to wind down after about two years. Most of the Shanghai staff were sent home, the FLC "dollar-a-year men" returned to their respective positions, and a major general was designated head of the Washington office. In the meantime, Congress approved and funded a full-scale aid mission to China, together with a sister organization known as the Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction. JCRR provided for five members—three to be appointed by the President of China and two by the President of the United States. Dr. Raymond Moyer was the senior member on the U.S. side.*

The Chief of Mission office was to be located in Shanghai with two field offices—one in Canton in South China and the other in Tientsin in North China. At that time, Tientsin was China's largest city and the hub of an industrial complex. I was appointed to head the North China office. I set up shop in the National City Bank (now Citigroup), which had pulled out a year earlier. At that point we were shipping in raw materials by the ton to keep the factories operating—raw cotton being the main product.

The Communist army was moving from north to south and had already taken control of Harbin. It was another year before the Chinese army reached the outskirts of Tientsin and another three days of intensive shelling before they overran the city. Most of us including the local staff spent three days in the bank's vault. After a day-long parade, there was a loud banging on the front doors. Army troops demanded they be

**Editor's note: Do any of our readers have knowledge of Dr. Raymond Moyer and what his role was in the early history of the Foundation, which he later joined in Pasadena?*

billeted there. I explained through my trusted interpreter that this was not a bank but the property of a foreign government and to allow troops to enter would be against international law. At first, they did not accept my argument but finally gave up so we did not have any troops sharing our office and living quarters (the bank's apartments). I kept the American flag flying on top of the building the whole time we were there.

The Chief of Mission gave me a letter, drafted in Washington, which I was to present to the Communists in the event of a take-over. The letter stated that the U.S. Government was prepared to continue economic assistance on the same basis as the agreement with the Nationalist Government. I went to the Communist headquarters to present the letter but was kept waiting three hours while the authorities decided whether to accept the letter. Apparently everything was decided in long drawn-out committee meetings. They finally agreed to accept the letter. Shortly thereafter, Washington reversed its position.

On the whole, the Chinese population was in a state of confusion, thoroughly fed up with the corruption and ineptitude of the KMT and fearful of the Communist motives. Rumors were rife. Children were reporting on their parents, and it seemed nobody could be trusted. In this situation, I got a phone call from Bob McCan, a long-time prominent American businessman who told me that an American wearing a trench coat was arrested as a spy (and released later). Since Bob knew I still had my uniform, he advised me to get rid of it. (A few years later, Bob was arrested as a spy, given a life sentence, and died of cancer after 30 years in prison.) One evening when nobody was around, including the servants, I wrapped the uniform in newspaper, took it downstairs to the furnace, and was about to throw it into the fire when I said to myself this was a good and respected American uniform and I'll be damned if I'm going to destroy it. I returned it to the closet, and when we finally were issued exit visas, I shipped all my personal effects to the States, only to lose the uniform some years later in moving from one house to another in Pasadena.

After frequent visits to police HQ, I was finally told that exit visas had been approved for my two American colleagues, Durant Wilder and Donald Moore, and myself. We lost no time in reporting to customs to have our baggage inspected, and with careful sleight of hand between the three of us, I was able to get all of our essential records out with personal effects. After tearful good-byes to our Chinese staff, we boarded a lighter for the trip down the HiHo River to where a beautiful but little British ship awaited us. Next stop was Inchong, Korea. We boarded a Northwest airliner for Shanghai (Northwest being the only airline in an out of Shanghai once a week). Peking had already been taken by the Communists and they were close to Nanking, the Nationalist capital not far from Shanghai. The mission and embassy made considerable news of our release, as I was the first American government employee to be released from Communist China. A press conference was attended by a large number of foreign correspondents in Shanghai waiting to witness the takeover.

During our three and one-half months under the Communists, we were not particularly bothered personally. We could not drive our cars, all theaters were closed, all social and cultural organizations were shut down, although schools and the major university remained open. Industry was pretty much at a standstill and farming discouraged, resulting in a shortage of certain food items.

From Shanghai, I was sent to Canton to help make arrangements for mission personnel who had not already been returned to the States. It was then decided to try to save a part of China, so I was sent to set up an office in Chungtu in Schewan Province for a group of agricultural specialists, including the well-known land reform expert, Wolf Ladejinsky. Schewan has always been the bread-basket of China. After four or five months there, it was considered unsafe to remain longer as the Communists were closing in. I requested two aircraft to evacuate our staff but when the aircraft got near Chungtu, the Nationalist Army commandeered them. Eventually, the aircraft became available, and all were evacuated safely to Formosa via Hong Kong.

With my assignment coming to an end, I thought I should get on with the Sears proposal (Jim had been offered a job by H. Wendell Endicott of Sears, Roebuck, a member of the FLC), yet I knew I had a front row seat on the biggest revolution of our time and I wanted to see as much of it as I could. The Communist revolution was moving with great speed, and the conventional wisdom among the remaining staff on Formosa was that the island could not last more than three months. Ray Moyer and I felt differently–we believed that a small comprehensive aid program focusing on basic infrastructure and rural programs would provide the Nationalists with the courage and strength of will to withstand the Communists. Their backs were against the wall, and it was do or die for them.

The discussions among us were not if but when. During a meeting of this group, someone suggested that each of us write on a slip of paper how long before the Communists would take over, put the slips in a hat, and then take an average. Except for Ray's and my votes, the average still turned out to be three or four months.

Notwithstanding this pessimistic attitude, Ray Moyer with my assistance as deputy continued efforts to produce a small $12 million aid package. When completed, Ray flew to Washington, and to our great surprise, it was approved. The Korean War was heating up, and to avoid any further military action in the area, the President ordered the Seventh Fleet to patrol the Straights of Formosa, thus effectively ensuring the Communists would not attempt to take over Formosa.

After the aid package was approved, I submitted my resignation from the government, and was assigned to three months of temporary duty in Washington to assist in the formation of a protocol for all U.S. activities in the region, except the military. The individual in charge of the AID organization for the Far East was responsible for this task and because I had field experience I was asked to help. On several occasions we visited with Dean Rusk, assistant secretary for Asia, later to become secretary of state.

After a weekend with Mr. Endicott at his estate, I met with Sears officials in New York and was given a position as management trainee, to report for duty in two months. In the meantime, Ray Moyer was invited by Paul Hoffman to join the Ford Foundation in Pasadena. Ray and several others suggested I consider joining the Ford Foundation. Fortunately, very fortunately, I was accepted.

I think it can be fairly stated that the meager $12 million U.S. aid program was the spark that ignited the "Taiwan Miracle." By extension, I believe it can also be fairly stated that the "Taiwan Miracle" has had a positive effect on changing economic and political conditions in Communist China. As Napoleon put it, "when China awakes, the world will tremble."■

The Green Revolution

continued from page 1

wheat to escape the early fall frost.

To increase the yields and durability of the locally available wheats, William then appointed Charles, a chemist by training, full-time "cerealist" at the Canadian service's central farm. Charles applied what he called his "chewing test." He selected heads from 18 wheat varieties, chewed them to determine the amount of gluten, and selected two strains that seemed the toughest and earliest ripening. He followed this up with baking tests to pick the varieties giving the larger loaf volume. Then through crossbreeding, he combined the best samples with other varieties to assure consistency, developing what became known as Marquis wheat.

The introduction of Marquis in 1908 not only increased yields but also allowed farmers to grow the crop further north, where the summer season was shorter. This doubled the amount of arable land on the prairies. Furthermore, Marquis, with its higher durability, became the standard spring wheat not only in Canada but also in the Upper Midwest of the U.S.

But the wheat farmers of the Midwest U.S. and Canada had another problem—the prevalence of destructive wheat stem rust. Wheat was then their only significant cash crop, and crop failure meant economic ruin. The situation reached a crisis point in 1916 when a catastrophic rust epidemic imperiled the cereal production needed to sustain World War I production efforts.

Enter E. (Elvin) C. (Charles) Stakman, who became interested in the wheat rust problem while still a graduate student at the University of Minnesota. In 1915, Stakman identified six races of stem rust, each with an idiosyncratic ability to infect particular wheat varieties—a key step in developing wheats resistant to the rusts found in specific localities. Then, through Stakman's urging, the U.S. Department of Agriculture established at Minnesota a Cereal Rust Laboratory—later expanded to cover other cereal grains—to develop such varieties through cross-breeding.

When I arrived in Minnesota in 1948 to work as a reporter on the *Minneapolis Tribune,* "Stake" was the revered head of the university's department of plant pathology. He was included in a listing of famous Minnesotans, and, with business and agriculture as my beat, I interviewed him to tell our readers why.

Stakman died in 1979, but his work in developing new rust-resistant varieties of wheat continues to this day at Minnesota and other locations since new species of rust are constantly evolving. Further, his laboratory became a permanent national and international center of research and training in cereal rust fungi. Over a period of several generations, several of "Stake's" students became important scientists in their own right, including J. George Harrar (about whom later) and Norman Borlaug.

Borlaug was born in 1914 on his grandfather's farm in northeast Iowa. He attended a one-room elementary school and high school in nearby Cresco, and then, encouraged by his grandfather, applied to the University of Minnesota. He failed the entrance exam, and was admitted into the general college. After two years, he transferred to the university to study forestry, his initial field of interest, distinguishing himself as a student and as a varsity wrestler. (His honors now include membership in the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.)

After receiving his B.S. degree in 1937, Borlaug worked for the U.S. Forestry Service in Massachusetts and on Idaho's Salmon River. But he kept thinking about a talk he had heard at Minnesota by Stakman on plant disease rust under the title, "These Shifty Little Enemies that Destroy Our Food Crops." He asked Stakman whether he might go into forest pathology, but Stakman advised him to focus on plant pathology instead.

Borlaug subsequently returned to Minnesota to study plant pathology under Stakman.

He received his Ph. D. degree in plant pathology in 1942. At the dedication of Borlaug hall at the university years later, Borlaug recalled: "Stake had a reputation for instilling commitment. That man lit the skies for me. He made me reach for things I thought were beyond my grasp."

But Borlaug first went to work for DuPont with a career interest in developing plant bacteriocides, fungicides and preservatives. With the U.S. entry into World War II, DuPont shifted him to research for the armed forces—for example, developing a glue that could withstand the warm saltwater of the South Pacific for use on boxes of food supplies delivered by speedboat to troops on Guadalcanal.

Meanwhile, in 1940 a new presidential administration had taken office in Mexico with a goal of increasing the nation's agricultural production as part of its economic growth. With the intervention of Henry Wallace, FDR's Secretary of Agriculture and now his running mate, the Mexican government approached the Rockefeller Foundation for assistance. The following year, Rockefeller appointed a team of three specialists, with Stakman as chair, to study Mexico's needs and propose next steps.

After two months and 2,000 miles of travel in Mexico, the team recommended the creation of a new entity, the Cooperative Mexican Agricultural Program, as part of the Mexican government but co-directed and financed by Rockefeller. The program would be staffed by both U.S. and Mexican scientists and focus on soil improvement, corn and wheat production, and plant pathology. Stakman recommended his former student, "Dutch" Harrar, to head the overall program, and Borlaug to lead the wheat research.

When Borlaug arrived in Mexico in 1944, wheat was the country's second most important food source, but half of it was being imported. Average yields were 11 bushels to the acre, about one-half the U.S. level, and subject to enormous fluctuations caused by wheat rust epidemics.

Borlaug and his team began by making crosses among five established Mexican varieties and a dozen imported ones to increase both rust resistance and yields. By the late 1940s, four new varieties were released to Mexico's farmers, resulting in notable increases in production.

In 1953 came another breakthrough. The wheat that Borlaug and his team were working with had tall, thin stalks—better to compete for sunlight but tending to collapse under the weight of the extra grain induced by nitrogen fertilizer. This problem was known as "lodging." Borlaug acquired a Japanese dwarf variety with thick stems and as little as one-half the height of standard varieties, and was thus resistant to lodging.

By introducing the Japanese variety into his breeding program, Borlaug was able to produce semi-dwarf disease-resistant varieties that changed the potential yield of spring wheat dramatically. By 1963, 95 percent of Mexico's wheat producers used Borlaug's semi-dwarf varieties, and the harvest was six times larger than in 1944.

Meanwhile, in 1959, Borlaug joined a team assembled by the Food and Agricultural Organization of the UN to advise on its wheat work in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. Borlaug was confronted with the world's persistent hunger and an appalling shortage of trained agriculturalists to deal

continued on page 8

IN MEMORIAM

Lillian Trager

Too late for publication in the last issue was the following from Dick Amman, a close friend of Lillian Trager, whose death was reported in that issue. Currently archivist at the Racine Heritage Museum in Wisconsin, Dick served with Lillian in Nigeria where he taught at Lagos State University while she was assistant representative and program officer from 1985 to 1987. She died of pancreatic cancer at home in Racine in November.

Her responsibilities in that office, Amman reports, included developing grants in the areas of income and employment generation, health and population, and women in development. "I traveled lots with Lillian around Nigeria. We got lost together in the Kano market and ended up in the middle of a religious riot in Zaria." They would also take walking tours through the old parts of Lagos on Sunday mornings when the city was quiet gathering material that became a book "Walking Tours of Lagos."

"Lillian's biologist father joked that at age 11 she had been imprinted to Nigeria when the family spent six months there in 1958. Cultural anthropology became her life-long passion , particularly the roles of women in Yoruba culture and the art of southwestern Nigeria. She returned to Nigeria in the early 1970s for her doctoral fieldwork. For the last 20 years she returned for research, vacations, to lead student tours, or to teach.

"While doing her dissertation fieldwork, the market women Lillian was studying nicknamed her "Abeke," which in Yoruba means someone to be petted and cared for. Lillian has nurtured and assisted countless anthropology and international students at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside where she taught for 30 years, as well as colleagues, students, and friends in Nigeria and worldwide.

"Lillian has been described as a gentle person, very approachable by students, maintaining a 150% work pace, and above all as having a deep love of life. Her academic work was her vocation, enriched by Cape Cod summers with family and friends and a quiet beach. Lillian's devotion to her students, family, colleagues, and international network of friends, as well as her international cross-cultural emphases in research and education will be remembered and prized."

Wally Nielsen

Frank Sutton (who is soon to observe his 90th birthday) was asked by New York's Century Club a while ago to write a memorial to Wally (Waldemar A.) Nielsen, a fellow member of the club whose death was reported several issues ago. Readers will recall that Nielsen was one of the original staff members of the Foundation who went on to become through his writings a persistent and outspoken critic of private foundations. Sutton writes in part:

"The big American foundations have sought to do good deeds and sometimes do. But their own prose and the writings about them have too often been less than spritely. Wally Nielsen knew these big foundations very well, serving them from the inside and outside, and then writing about them with verve and style not matched since Dwight Macdonald dissected the Ford Foundation for *The New Yorker* in the 1950s.

"Wally came out of college in Missouri with a Rhodes scholarship that he couldn't take up because of the outbreak of World War II. He went to Washington instead for early exposure to the styles of conviction and advocacy familiar in that city, leaving soon in naval uniform for extended service in the Pacific. World War II had kept him from Oxford but the repair from it took him to Paris in 1948 as deputy to Centurion Roscoe Drummond, director of information for the Marshall Plan, whom he later succeeded. When we celebrated Wally's life at the Century in December, 2005, his wife of 62 years, Marcia, said that these were among his happiest years, matched only by the much later ones in Aspen, Colorado.

"In 1952, Rowan Gaither, who had led the study group that planned the Ford Foundation, recruited Wally to devise a population program for this new foundation, This was not an easy task in a time when contraception and population control were still delicate and controversial subjects, and there was nervousness about the sensibilities of the chairman, Henry Ford II, and his Catholic wife. Nielsen nonetheless succeeded in starting a cautious program that would later blossom boldly into one of Ford's major international efforts.

"When, in 1953, Henry Ford dismissed Paul Hoffman and brought in Rowan Gaither as the Foundation president, Nielsen became Gaither's assistant. This high perch in the Foundation that was then much the largest in the world was not comfortable or easy. These were the times of loyalty checks and McCarthyism. The Ford Foundation was suspected of excessive liberalism, internationalism, and perhaps even promoting socialism. There were two Congressional investigations and strident criticism of the Ford Foundation in the press and from Ford Motor Company dealers. Neither board nor president responded with the courage and faith in their convictions Wally thought appropriate, instead putting out a burst of grants to colleges and hospitals across the country and seeking to make the Foundation "better and more favorably known."

"Wally was happier when he joined the Foundation's International Affairs staff in 1956 with Centurions Shepard Stone and Joseph Slater as colleagues. This was a part of the Foundation directed to large subjects like European unity, the Atlantic Alliance, and the Cold War. It had particular responsibility for the Foundation's work in Europe, which brought Wally back to settings of his Marshall Plan years and to planning the future with Europeans like Niels Bohr and Jean Monnet. Another Centurian, John J. McCloy, whom Richard Rovere famously identified as Chairman of the American Liberal Establishment, was then chairman of the Foundation's board and sponsor of Nielsen and his colleagues in their ambitious ventures. All this was done very much in the liberal spirit of the times. Still Wally was not quite comfortable or happy. Looking back a few years later, he deplored the second-handedness and merely financial and facilitating roles of foundation officials as compared with those directly engaged in research or the building of nations and economies.

"A strong sympathy with liberation movements and new nations led Wally toward Africa in his years at Ford. He wrote books on Africa and became president of the African-American Institute in the late 1960s. At our Century memorial gathering, a long-time colleague extolled the vigor and inspiration Wally brought to the institute. It was not a long step from an institute that had been close to foundations to a new period after

continued on page 8

In Memoriam

continued from page 7

1970 of consulting with foundations, writing about them, and joining with his old colleagues, Slater and Stone, in the work of the Aspen Institute. These were the years when, as H.W. Brand has written, the Vietnam War was bringing about the "strange death of the liberal establishment." They were times of critical reflection on American society and its institutions.

"Wally's book, *The Big Foundations* (1972), promised "plain, honest talk" in place of tiresome self-congratulation or ill-informed screeds of criticism. He wanted to be serious, to assess the place of foundations in American society, and to display that they needed self-reform and self-renewal. His book became a university press best-seller and he later added another, *The Golden Donors* (1985). A fellow Centurion reviewer and Ford Foundation veteran, Champion Ward, declared that Nielsen had managed to be both normative and informative, and had brought the foundations their gadfly, as Robert Hutchins had been for higher education and Ralph Nader for corporations. There was certainly unflattering plain talk in these books, sharp remarks about notables, and scoldings distributed freely for failures to take risks and pursue opportunities for change as boldly as they should have. These lively, readable, seriously researched books hold the field to the present day as accounts of the major American foundations.

Wally Nielsen served the nation and the world in many ways, in our government and armed forces, as foundation officer and trustee, as advisor to foundations and corporations, an expert on Africa and international affairs, as writer and publicist. He was a man of liberal convictions who demanded much of himself and didn't hesitate to press others to rise to their responsibilities. He rather enjoyed being a gadfly or censor of foundations that he thought had too long evaded informed inspection. But he managed to do so with the thoughtfulness and modest ways that gave him a loving family, and devoted colleagues and friends, here at the club and throughout the country and the world. There is now a Waldemar A. Nielsen chair in philanthropy at the Georgetown University Public Policy Institute in fitting continuation of his distinction in this field. Wally would be pleased, as he should be, that it is now filled by a fellow Centurion.■

The Green Revolution

continued from page 6

with that overwhelming problem. He concluded that duplication of Mexico's wheat experience required breakthroughs in technology and the creation of a new generation of research-oriented agricultural scientists.

On Borlaug's recommendations, the FAO approved a two-pronged approach to be implemented under his overall guidance and direction:

- an extensive training program in Mexico and other training centers for agricultural researchers from the developing world.
- a constellation of yield trials of the new wheat varieties in the wheat-growing developing countries. In the first year the effort involved the dissemination of 25 breeding lines of wheat to as many locations. Eventually this grew to the dissemination of 125 lines to 150 locations worldwide.

In 1965, the fountainhead in Mexico with its outreach to the developing world became the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), a partnership of the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations and the Mexican government.■

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