

SUMMER-FALL

DIALOGUE
ON DIVERSITY

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE PRESIDENT MA. CRISTINA C. CABALLERO

Our Board and Advisory Committee have been for some weeks in the midst of planning for this year's Awards program, scheduled for the evening of September 28, the final Friday of the month. The work has been shouldered principally by a core group of eight members, who have been meeting at the offices of our newest Board Member, Dr. Cristina Beato, now Deputy Director of the Pan American Health Organization. The PAHO headquarters building, at 23rd Street and Virginia Avenue, greets traffic at the crest of the 23rd St. hill, with its striking circular façade set off against the white rectangles of its offices. The Awards preparations are detailed in later pages.

General Assembly 37: the peripatetic annual convening, each year in a different city of the hemisphere, of the representatives of the O.A.S. countries, in number thirty five less one barred (Cuba), together with the growing contingent of entities, from think tanks to business societies to non-profit organizations of every stamp, which collectively constitute the now much vaunted body of Civil Society credited with underpinning the stability and energies of modern nations. This year's meetings were held, in early June, in Panamá, the site Ciudad de Panamá, the country's capital city, at the Pacific Ocean terminus of the canal. Friends among the Panamanians attending treated me to a tour of the Panamá Canal site, a short jaunt along a fine new highway southeast from the city center, where we enjoyed a lunch at the handsome bistro overlooking the Miraflores Lock, one of the two at this end of the Canal. Marveling at the intricate passage of a massive ship, stacked high with containers, having as it seemed no more than inches to spare on either side, as it was drawn through the lock's basin, subsiding to the level of the Pacific as the waters were released from the chamber. More important than the intricacies of canal operations were the interactions with the civil society organizations and personalities at the assembly milieu. I was pleased to encounter Mr. Luis Viguria, head of the O.A.S. Youth Business Trust, and his staff expert Valerie Lorena. Ms. Lorena subsequently appeared with a report to the Assembly.



Representatives of Panamanian Civil Society Organizations, with the Dialogue's Ma. Cristina Caballero, seen before a giant container-laden ship at the Canal's Miraflores Lock

We were fortunate as well to arrange for her joining us as a speaker in Chicago for the Entrepreneurship Conference at Navy Pier, outlining the breadth of the Trust's activity in seeding the younger generation in Latin America with the skills and spirit of entrepreneurship, and suggesting at once the potential avenues of collaboration with U.S. groups.

The annual Entrepreneurship program, coupling business lore with the word on this year's state of the Information Technology (IT to those in on the "in") revolution, was held July 11th in Chicago. Temperate weather and clear skies displayed the city's lakefront, the Navy Pier complex that was the Symposium site, the "magnificent mile" of Michigan Avenue, and the massive Sears Tower in the background, in their incomparable expanse. Chicago has set great store on architectural distinction from at least the turn of the last century, having spawned such figures as Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright; it has stuck to the tradition into the present century, and the downtown and Near North areas are the scene of immense excavations in which new skyscrapers will have risen a year from now. The skyline never stands still in Chicago. The view from the walk on evenings along Wacker Drive, which follows the bend of the Chicago River, is a display of luminous architectural jewels crowding the field of

vision, each of its own form, and the ensemble rising in an opulence surely not equaled in density and beauty by any city in the country. In such a setting our attending women entrepreneurs did manage, nevertheless, to keep their attention focused on the agenda of technical gurus, supplier diversity sages, and other luminaries (as reported later in this bulletin).

I was very happy to be part recently of a small seminar brought together, as one of a series of periodic discussions, by the Women's Foreign Policy Group in Washington. October's agenda promises a session with Dr. Susan L. Shirk, University of California at San Diego, on her book reviewing the tension between the growing abundance of China's unruly torrent of economic activity, and the country's brittle political and administrative structures, whose fragility might, it is speculated, precipitate disorder imperiling the economic vitality. It may be a stretching of the term to speak of an economic "system", since the agglomeration of enterprises, under a hodge-podge of legal rules, with patchy regulation at best, in the midst of a regime in which a residue of state-owned companies remain in the field, has something of a wild-west character. The interplay of the long-repressed entrepreneurial impulses of a massive population, in its contention with an ossifying political apparatus wishing, perhaps inconsistently, both to unleash and to manage these energies, is being watched with interest and no little apprehension around the globe. We await the contribution of the WFPG to the continuing dialogue.

AWARDS FOR 2007 PROFILE IN DIVERSITY

GENIUS OF THE AMERICAS: CRAFTING A FUTURE SOCIETY

Dialogue on Diversity for the decade and a half of its activity in both the Washington arena and the national setting has sought to center the attention of our communities on the tasks of fashioning the good society in the context of our irreducible diversity. The annual array of Awards are calculated to throw the spotlight on those achievements, and on the people who create them as exponents of the restless and constructive spirit, or genius, that drives us forward, from decade to decade, in the life of the New World. The attainments of excellence by persons of mettle, in every locale and class, ornament the history of the multiple communities that continue to contend for eminence in a complex society. The excellence displayed in each of our stellar achievers arises from the special matrix of ethnic heritage and culture, that character and style that is defined, honed, and perfected – never, we are thankful, submerged or homogenized -- in the interactions with each other tradition in the common life of the country, the hemisphere, and the world.

Among the honorees in Dialogue on Diversity's complement of Entrepreneurial and International Awards for 2007 are a

Middle Eastern magazine publisher based in Southern California, a lifetime activist in the education of the poor in Haiti, and a young Nigerian opera singer presiding over a foundation engaged in health and educational initiatives and with making micro-loans in villages of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Awards will be presented in ceremonies the evening of Friday, September 28th, once more this year at the Hall of the Americas, Organization of American States, in Washington, D.C. This marks the ninth year in succession that the O.A.S. has very graciously afforded the Dialogue and its honorees the setting, among the finest in the city, of the Hall of the Americas. Among speakers for the ceremonies will be members of the Congress, officials of the Organization of American States, and distinguished representatives of the diplomatic corps. Also on the roster of speakers is Ms. Janet Murguia, now early in her tenure as President of the National Council of la Raza, who is designated as the special honoree receiving the Dialogue's Americas Award.

The Dialogue's Awards Committee, completing deliberations on the nominations submitted for the several Entrepreneurial Excellence categories, has announced its choices. These awards each bring into focus a central concern of the Dialogue's work, that of schooling our diverse populations in the spirit – and skills -- of entrepreneurship, the smart use of technology, and an ethos of economic viability. The growth and vitality of women's entrepreneurship, Ma. Cristina Caballero, the Dialogue's President wrote, is surely one of the historic success stories of the last 75 years. Each year in these Awards we try to afford real visibility to the women – and men – who have stood out as significant contributors to this movement, which is a historical development of many facets -- the diverse supply chains of corporate America, the many selfless mentors who have worked with women aspiring for economic liberation, and the ingenious and tireless women business owners who are the real dynamo of the modern American economy.

The Corporate Award, honoring a large business or civil-society organization advancing the cause of diversity, goes this year to dual honorees, first the venerable League of United Latin American Citizens, now marking its 78th year of labors for the multiple U.S. Latino communities, new and old; The Corporate Award is conferred as well on the Washington Savannah River Company, a Department of Energy contractor, whose state-of-the-art supplier diversity program and workforce diversity practice have been rewarded with favorable national attention. The 2007 Mentorship Award recognizes Abiodun Koya, born in a small town in Nigeria, whose meteoric career as a singer, with distinction in both the classical repertoire and a range of more popular genres, has been a counterpoint to her tireless charitable work as the founder and president -- all while still in her twenties -- of The Elizabeth Foundation, educating villages and, through a sophisticated program of micro-loans, sowing seeds of

entrepreneurship for countless Sub-Saharan household workshops.

The award per excellence in the Entrepreneurial categories is that recognizing Entrepreneurial Achievement itself. It is conferred this year on Wafa Kanan, whose business career began in her late teens in Lebanon, where she founded and swiftly propelled to success a business of her own, only to find it imperiled by the seemingly ceaseless internecine battling that has been practically endemic in the country's politics and civic life during recent decades. The business having been for practical purposes brought to ruin in the cross fire, Ms. Kanan, at age nineteen, left the scene of the debacle and found herself on U.S. shores in 1991. There she set about building a successful specialty graphics company and now, from a base in California, publishes an opulently produced magazine *ALO Hayati*, a voice communicating fashion, culture, and an evocative world-view for a generation of newly adult middle-easterners, those residing in the region and those of many diasporas, all tasting the fresh experience of a sophisticated modernity.

The Committee has also announced the Trailblazer laureates for 2007, first Ms. Michèle Duvivier Pierre-Louis of Port au Prince, Haïti, whose lifetime of work for the poor, the ill-educated, the dispossessed, throughout the cities and countrysides of the island, have moved these populations that many steps nearer to a decent and prosperous life. Her concerns, moreover, for the features of Haïti's landscapes and for the integrity of its natural resources have made their very estimable contribution to the island's beauty and its potential riches. Her nomination was submitted by staff at the Embassy of Haïti in Washington, and the Award is to be presented by that country's Ambassador, His Excellency Raymond A. Joseph.

A second Trailblazer Award goes to Dr. Ted Mala, a native Alaskan physician who has pioneered medical service delivery for the native populations of Alaska. His work has brought to its present highly developed state the Alaska Native Medical Center at Anchorage and the related Southcentral Foundation. The training of physicians and other medical personnel is a central goal of the ANMC; the medical repertory contains an array of methods combining the latest of conventional medical science with useful elements of native health regimens. Dr. Mala comes from an interesting family. His father was Ray Mala, famed as the "Eskimo actor" appearing in numerous films in the 1930s and '40s and friend of the Hollywood stars of the time; his mother a scion of the Russian aristocracy, Princess Kropotkina – the family circle itself fine practice in the bridging of cultures for which the young Ted was destined! A note on this Award: up to now the Trailblazer Awards have been conferred only on women. With this year's Awards the oneness is rectified with the recognition of great career

achievement by men as well, here in the award to the very worthy Dr. Mala.

The International Award is conferred on Hon. Bonnie McElveen-Hunter, former Ambassador to Finland, 2001-2003, and now Chair of the American Red Cross. Ambassador McElveen-Hunter perceived the imperative for entrepreneurial skill of a high order in the women she encountered in her stints abroad. She organized conferences of women business leaders, aiming to train women in the techniques and spirit of commerce and the business world, first in Finland, then in Riga, Latvia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, this in the years when the countries of that region were suddenly relieved of the heavy yoke of the then deadening Soviet tutelage over economic life. More recently she has organized similar conferences, attuned to a new set of cultural atmospherics, in Amman, Jordan, for women, budding entrepreneurs, from that country and its neighbors, Iraq among them. If economics has been one side of her endeavors, an ardent concern for children figures with equal importance, seen in her battles against trafficking, her labors to ensure their protection against HIV/AIDS, and efforts for their education. These labors, recognized by the Government of Finland with its highest civil honors, first targeted the children of Eastern Europe and those of Karelia, the place in the frigid far north of Russia, in the cities audaciously built in the Arctic, now hanging precariously onto existence in the inhospitable climate.

The Dialogue's Americas Award, finally, is conferred on Janet Murguia, sometime White House official, more recently the very effective President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Council of La Raza, having taken up duties two and a half years ago as the first woman to serve at the helm of this enormously influential organization of the national Latino community. She serves as well on the Board of Independent Sector, a cross-ethnic, cross-party network of civil society entities -- foundations, NGOs, and business organizations -- that operates to diffuse intelligence on the civic and social dimensions of American society.

Ms. Murguia labored during the decade of the 90s in the often turbulent (but often as well tellingly effective) White House, acting during the final years as senior legislative liaison with the Congress. Returning in 2001 to her native Kansas, she took up duties at the University of Kansas as Vice Chancellor for University Relations, at length leaving to cross the Potomac once more, at a time when such crucial issues as immigration and the civil rights of migrant communities were approaching their moment of truth, returning to head NCLR at its freshly minted offices in Washington.

Among sponsors for the 2007 Awards are Southwest Airlines, PhRMA, Lockheed Martin, Fannie Mae, and American Express. Dialogue on Diversity's Web-site will keep visitors updated on the Awards (www.dialogueondiversity.org).

WOMEN IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS, ACCORDING TO AMB.
SWANEE HUNT: THE CORRECTIVE INFLUENCE

Ambassador Swanee Hunt, Director of the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard's Kennedy School – also, we note, recipient of the Dialogue's International Award in 2003 – is the author of a recent book on her own adventure filled family life and career, and the source of provocative articles on the essential questions of women's special roles in public life and in the comity of nations, a cause doubtless in need of all the help it can get. In a recent publication she cites a compilation of facts tabulated across societies and political systems from a striking variety of studies – all tending to exhibit the virtues of women as political operatives in an age in which the machinations of the gentlemen in the international crowd have brought us to a pretty pass. Nevertheless, by reason of intimidation directed against them by the ruling men-only (or almost only) systems of statecraft around the globe, and by their own distaste for the unrelieved bellicosity of the political game, women have gravitated to leadership posts in NGOs, from which they clearly influence policy, but less directly than they might have done from seats of power in public posts. Nevertheless, with experience honed to a great acuity in the NGOs, the world of "civil society" organizations, where a consummate subtlety, a resourcefulness in argument, and an exceeding persistence have been the currency of a brisk commerce in ideas and policy advocacy, they are in these latter days eminently well equipped to advance to positions of authority in the public realm, bringing onto the historical stage a new style of politics and public governance.

ROAD-MAP FOR ENTREPRENEURIAL
SUCCESS: DIALOGUE'S CHICAGO DEBUT

DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY, in a Chicago debut, presented its 2007 IT/Entrepreneurship Symposium on the theme: *Tools, Technology, and the New Road Map: Your Drive for Entrepreneurial Success*. It was a day of transforming ideas on cutting-edge technology and on the new departures in marketing and management for small and mid-size business enterprises that vie for the entrepreneur's attention and adoption. The Symposium was staged Wednesday, July 11 at the spectacular Navy Pier complex on Chicago's downtown lakefront. The program was held alongside the week-long national convention of LULAC, a preeminent Latino civic organization.

Among featured Symposium speakers were Dr. Juan Andrade, President, U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute, greeting attendees at the introductory session, Manuel Rosales, former S.B.A. Assistant Administrator for International Trade, now President of Caribbean-Central American Action, a private-sector institute exploring the potential for trade among the many independent entities in the Caribbean and Central American tropics and the U.S., and fomenting commercial



Cristina C. Caballero and James Calzaretta, Deloitte Tax LLP

relationships where these can be forged. Featured speakers were Christine Liu, Chief Information Officer for the U.S. Small Business Administration in Washington, and Theresa Alviljar-Speake, head of Supplier Diversity programs for the U.S. Department of Energy. Nuria Fernandez, civil engineer and builder extraordinaire in both public and private sectors, now Chicago's Aviation Commissioner managing the two busy Chicago airports, spoke to the Symposium's lunch session.

The program was pitched chiefly to an audience of some 100 women entrepreneurs, both aspiring and experienced, owners of businesses ranging from micro-enterprise and home-based businesses to established multi-employee firms. The Symposium agenda offered valuable clues for introducing cutting-edge IT software, hardware, and telecommunications tools for attendees' kaleidoscopic variety of enterprises, discussions by financial professionals of optimum strategies for capital access and for choice of business form (corporation, LLC, partnership, etc., and the pertinent tax angles for each), and tips on the best sources for technical assistance on accounting, marketing, and other management tasks. The lead seminar took up the all-important question for the ambitious entrepreneur: how to gain a place in corporate and government agencies' Supply Chains – what are the State-of-the-Art techniques for marketing your products or services, how to harvest the essential information from the internet on purchasing needs and vendor development programs of leading corporations and of a broad range of federal and



IHCC's Marlene Rodriguez-Vick

municipal agencies. Attending entrepreneurs had a chance to meet not only fellow entrepreneurs, but accounting and financial professionals, supplier diversity executives, experts on management, marketing, and the all important IT toolbox.



Rona Fourté, Moderator, Emmett Vaughn of Exelon, and Joe Andreu of Computer Sciences Corporation

Introduced by moderator Rona Fourté, Director of Chicago's Minority Business Opportunity Council, Joe Andreu of the Los Angeles offices of Computer Sciences Corporation, and Emmett Vaughn of the Chicago-based utility giant Exelon, offered well-honed counsel in an illuminating dialogue with Ms. Fourté, bringing into sharp focus the essential tasks facing the small/midsize entrepreneur, the enterprises of ethnic women in particular, as they seek to outfit themselves for prime slots in the supply chains of American corporations.



Judith Roussel, SBA

Judith Roussel, Chicago Regional Director for S.B.A., reviewed the very systematic programs of her agency in surveying, certifying and connecting, as scores of small enterprises are launched on the public sector marketing seas. She was joined by Theresa Alvillar-Speake, Director for OSDDBU [Office of Small Disadvantaged Business Utilization] programs at the U.S. Department of Energy in Washington, who offered a meticulously detailed, tip-filled

explanation of the minority supplier practice on the public sector contracting front.

Elaine Coorens and Alisa Starr, experts in the design of small business information technology systems, led an hour-long segment on the latest enterprise-oriented IT applications. Both Ms. Starr and Ms. Coorens have grown up professionally with the advent of IT and its burgeoning significance as a business tool -- which is far from having run its course as technologies leapfrog technologies in the headlong course of development. It is a snapshot of the state of that development in mid-2007 that was imparted to the Symposium audience. Their task is to mediate to the immense



Alisa Starr of Microsoft on business-related software applications

variety of entrepreneurs and their enterprises the technologies that are the source of this revolution in the American economy, shepherding entrepreneurs in the choices of IT installations -- a choice requiring an acute faculty of judgment in both technical and business matters -- and in getting the prescribed outfits effectively up and running, updated at chosen intervals, and maintained going forward for maximum practical utility to the subject firms. Ms. Coorens larded her advice to entrepreneurs with such pointed admonitions as "write it down" -- a hugely helpful expedient, both as an aid to orderly administration of your business and also, more important yet, as an exercise in the indispensable task of testing and clarifying one's own best ideas. Alongside an expertise in the realm of technology and business, Ms. Coorens, it must be mentioned, is a distinguished local historian, having recently published the definitive, and characteristically iconoclastic, history of the remarkable Wicker Park district of near west side Chicago -- a compact neighborhood displaying the strata of successive ethnic migrations (one can encounter street signs with legends in Polish, English, and Spanish) and in latter days a magnet for the region's artists, creative restaurateurs, and the sellers of clothing, furniture, and other articles of distinguished design. When Ms. Coorens arrived in Wicker Park in the 1970s (an "immigrant", as she puts it, from neighboring Lincoln Park, lying to the east, near the Lake) the place was a decaying district, sunk in an advanced condition of dilapidation, with footpads lurking in every recess and wild dogs roaming the streets, the elegant old houses fallen into disrepair and bearing the grotesque marks of crude patching and repatching. With her efforts, along with those of a handful of similarly inspired residents, the neighborhood was little by little turned around, while the reforming band grew to a potent corps of citizens restoring the architecture house by house, installing the fine shops block by block, until Wicker Park has come to be a showcase of urban dwelling in the style of the 21st Century. The very noticeable rumble of the elevated trains above Milwaukee Avenue, which runs through the center of the neighborhood, is the signature of its integral rootedness in Chicago.



The all important small business basics/productivity seminar was moderated by the Ms. Freida Curry (seen at left) of the Center for Urban Business at the University of Illinois, Chicago. With the title *Raising Business Productivity: The Available Resources*, panelists laid out the basic how-to data on forming and launching a growth-

destined enterprise. Lead speaker on Ms. Curry's panel of experts was Jonathan Thrasher, Citibank's point man for SBA loan transactions, developing the key go-ahead conditions in these three-cornered (bank plus small minority entrepreneur plus the SBA as guarantor) financing arrangements.

In a further CUB role Joseph DeLaGarza, Associate Director of the Center, dealt with business plans, a conceptual and practical essential for business launch, for any successful quest for needed capital, and for management benchmarks in the operating concern. Within the CUB structure Mr. DeLaGarza manages the Small Business Development Center, working shoulder to shoulder with beginning entrepreneurs as they wrestle with the gritty details of money, material, leases, suppliers, and the myriad of concerns faced by those in the trenches. He has had many years of experience in these tasks, seen from the perspective of earlier years of work with mega firms in the corporate sector.

Business taxation expert James Calzaretta of Deloitte Tax, LLP (photo on page 4), outlined the variety of forms of legally cognizable business entities and summarized the tax incidents of each, along with the special advantages and drawbacks of each from the point of view of launching, management, breaking up, selling, etc. Partnerships, LLCs (Limited Liability Companies, a relatively new form of organization, with its own set of legal incidents, recognized by most states over the last twenty years) and S-corporations are "flow through" forms of business organization. In these the tax incidents of the business's operation are felt directly by the owners, while the business itself is not a taxpaying entity. That is, the profits, if any, are deemed income of the owner, taxable in the year the firm racks them up. An ordinary, "C" corporation, on the other hand, pays its own taxes and the owners (the shareholders) from time to time get some portion of the after-tax income (dividends) and in turn pay taxes at their own rates on these dividends. This double taxation is acceptable when the size or the number of shareholders makes the flow through form unwieldy. and when a great measure of financial flexibility is needed. Again, some forms of winding up or transferring your business incur tax on your gain, while other methods permit the gain to be taxed only later, when a successor business is in turn sold or ended. Mr. Calzaretta remarked that this aspect of business planning is some- times

ignored by entrepreneurs who opine that a sale is not going to be in the cards during their tenure. Sometimes however, the unexpected happens – someone may offer two, four, seven times the estimated net worth of the business. Then the magnitude of your good fortune may depend on the thoroughness of the tax planning you took care to do when you set out on the entrepreneurial journey.



Jonathan Thrasher, Citibank

Valerie Lorena of Young Americas Business Trust outlined the goals and programs of this O.A.S. sponsored institute, with emphasis on young women's enterprise in the Americas, a topic on which a few weeks earlier she had reported to the O.A.S. 37th General Assembly in Panama City.



The concluding segment, the Diversity Roundtable, was moderated by Zenobia Johnson-Black,

Valerie Lorena, YABT

the charismatic Chicago Housing Authority executive whose stock in trade is the mobilizing of business, community, and foundation energies in a never ending campaign to bring self-sufficiency to the economically disadvantaged of the city. In this key segment of the day's agenda, in which discussants of diverse ethnicities, having diverse relationships to the entrepreneurship phenomenon, analyzed the promise of Diversity in America, Dr. Harvette Grey of DePaul University, on the psychological resilience of the successful entrepreneur, and Yvonne Barton of Abbott Laboratories, on her career as legislative liaison in the Southwest, were featured. George Mui, Executive Director of the Asian American Alliance, which brings together entrepreneurs from Chinese and other Asian small-business communities, related the experience of these entrepreneurs, with reference especially to their niche skills in managing import and export transactions with Asia. Nicol Turner-Lee, holder of a doctorate in sociology from Northwestern University, has given over the last decade to working with poor households, especially those of the African American and Hispanic populations of Chicago and other locales in the Midwest, to advance the use of the internet and the other instruments of information technology by these very numerous, but often highly marginalized, pockets of society – a host of children, parents, old persons, all of whom can profitably utilize the educational, employment, health-care, and other information awaiting them by internet.

NEW DEPUTY DIRECTOR AT PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION HEADLINES DIALOGUE ON DIVERSITY'S SEVENTH ANNUAL HEALTH CARE SYMPOSIUM

Dialogue on Diversity presented its seventh annual Health Care Symposium May 15, 2007 at the National Education Association auditorium in sixteenth street in Washington.



Dr. Cristina V. Beato, PAHO

The Symposium's midday-session featured remarks by Dr. Cristina V. Beato, newly inaugurated Deputy Director of the Pan American Health Organization, the prime western-hemisphere affiliate of the World Health Organization and an organ of the Organization of American States. The Symposium title, *High Tech Medicine, Stone-Age Delivery: A Fatal Disconnect?*, reflects the chief theme of the Symposium: the quest for a

practicable scheme of funding and administration, a workable institutional apparatus to bring to the now ill-covered swaths of the U.S. – and hemispheric -- populations the cutting-edge goods of medical science and technique. If such a scheme may be found, what it is and how can it be fashioned starting from where we are? How can one deliver the benefits of the swiftly advancing techniques, hardware, medications, and other treatment modalities being churned out by a world-class scientific and technology establishment? Definitive answers cannot be articulated in a single symposium or in the nation's political discourse of six months or a string of years. But the play of ideas and the rigors of discussion can be set in motion with the expectation that an accretion of wisdom and ingenuity will at length converge to a tolerably sound and humane conclusion.

A second focus in the 2007 program was the imperative for "cultural competence", the supple tailoring of health care delivery – the approaches of patient to provider, the design of treatment schemas, and the practice of persistent follow-up – fitted to the specific ethnic and cultural contours of each community of newcomers to American society, and to the poor, the elderly, and the geographically marginalized in the larger national community.

Finally the spotlight rests on the role of those preventive measures – lifestyle practices, diagnostics, and screening regimes -- that promise to save longer-run medical treatment



Paul N. Van de Water

carefully designed and monitored dietary practice, and the cultivation of a self discipline to make it all work, something that is radically vitiated by the addiction to passive television viewing in the very young. The cost is minimal, the effects on the social level immense, and the party responsible for success or failure is as close as a glance at the mirror.

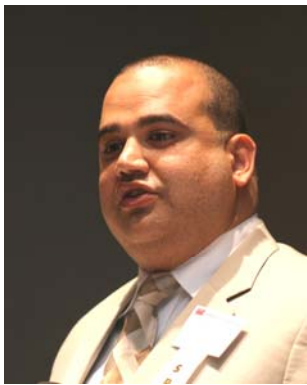
Rep. Mike Honda of California's Bay Area-Silicon Valley, now established as one of the foremost spokesmen in the Congress on a range of first-rank social concerns, appeared at the Symposium's midday session, describing the often cruel inequities in the provision of health care in America and signaling the issue of universal health care as a must-do for the Congress just then getting underway.



He was joined by Del. Donna M. Christensen of the Virgin Islands, a physician by profession, who detailed the often anguishing challenges faced by the island population, for whom highly specialized care is difficult of access, often dictating emergency airplane trips to more amply equipped facilities at San Juan or Miami.

The roster of Symposium speakers included Paul N. Van de Water of the National Academy of Social Insurance, continuing a discussion begun in the March Public Policy Forum of the safety net programs that undergird the contemporary "social contract", outlining here the special factors, in both funding and administration -- present and prospective -- defining the American health care system, now a patchwork of unevenly funded segments. The Social Security system presents funding problems, but these are problems with a relatively long fuse, in that the crunch comes gradually, and after a long run up period during which design

of the rules and the gathering of political acceptability can be effected. At that, the cure can come through rather modest adjustments in taxing levels and benefit amounts, age triggers, and the like. The problems affecting Medicare, on the other hand, especially if it is expanded into a general health care system, reaching the middle range of age cohorts of society (those that are hit by the underinsurance epidemic) are both *now* in their incidence and are *massive* in their impact. The most alarming feature of the medical care picture is the extraordinarily rapid rise in medical cost, whether seen per person, per sickness, per any unit of care, or in its aggregate for the society. As the costs creep upward relatively to individual income levels or as a portion of national income, the sheer volume of the costs, if borne largely by public funding (as in Medicare), necessarily dictates a perceptibly higher tax burden – something that the populace and their elected representatives do not take kindly to. Even if the society were resigned to raise the aggregate tax revenues, the question of where the brunt of the tax burden should be placed – who, that is, gets principally stuck with the costs – would occupy the political space for some time to come. The problem is one that must be wrestled with, but the solutions are not at this point entirely clear.



Henry Acosta of the New Jersey Mental Health Institute brought an update on the issues of mental health in minority populations, a range of problems he has worked with at ground level for much of his career. Again, a problem of cultural competence is of vast importance both in

Henry Acosta to admit the possibility of mental sickness, and in getting them and their families to take the much resisted step of seeking treatment. From the side of the mental health professionals, in their science and in their long settled insights in identifying and classifying mental disorders, a recasting of fixed ideas is sometimes indicated – what behaviors are simply cultural baggage and which morbid symptoms. There are relatively few professionals coming from the minority communities themselves; an increase in their numbers would pro tanto reduce the dimensions of the culture problem.

Dinah Wiley of the National Immigration Law Center took up the range of issues bearing on the health care needs of the newcomers and agricultural migrants present within the borders of the U.S. The moving characteristics of some of these populations makes any historical dimension in diagnosis or treatment problematic, while the existence of immigration law irregularities deter still more from seeking treatment.



Patricia Montoya

Patricia Montoya of the New Mexico Medical Review Association, and a past Secretary of Health in that State, defines the ills of the health care system and describes the use of information technology, among other expedients, in setting some of the disarray to rights. The system, such as it is, aims not at health, through a rational preventive orientation, but waits until sickness supervenes and there-

upon sets the patient on a chase through a mysterious labyrinth of insurance desks, clinics, waiting rooms, and a dizzying round of physicians and nurses, in which medical histories are obscured and tests thus repeated, allergies unnoticed to be discovered when they hit, and treatment a blind man's buff in which your life and limb are the stakes. Reconstruction of this system – which would be costly -- through a salutary infusion of IT resources for infrastructure, record keeping, and other aspects of health care delivery, would speed diagnosis and treatment and refine their accuracy. Privacy concerns instantly arise when computers are mentioned, but banks generally manage this species of security with no untoward effects, and the techniques must be presumed to be transferable to the health care world. Again, the abysmal state of health care for the poor is the corner of the problem where real people stand most acutely in need of a helping hand of policy and of private sector health initiatives.

Maria Gomez and Dr. Janet Phoenix



Maria Gomez, founder and director of Mary's Center, along with Dr. Janet Phoenix, National Research Center for Women and Families, offered a detailed account of both the needs and the means for attaining some semblance of "cultural competency" in the delivery of health care in America – a task that is both a science and an art, one to which all too little attention has been paid in the education of medical professionals and in the structure of bureaucratic and service-providing institutions.



Monique Cuffee, AKF

Raul Damas, Senior Manager for Public Affairs with Pfizer, the preeminent U.S. pharmaceutical producer, discussed the science, the economics, and the related policy questions surrounding the crucial work of the pharmaceutical industry, whose economics is necessarily characterized by

inconceivably high-stakes risk in the design and development of new drugs, recounting as well the industry's own efforts in designing plans to alleviate the cost burdens that bear on the less affluent -- and at best marginally insured -- classes in the American population.

In conjunction with the Symposium the American Kidney Fund (for the third year running) offered screening tests at no cost for interested attendees, checking for hypertension, diabetes, and kidney function. Symposium guests, along with a delegation from the EOFULA Spanish Senior Center in Washington's Adams Morgan neighborhood, were among those availing themselves of these diagnostic screening procedures. Anecdotal evidence, as the expression goes, indicates that these tests, clearly having great potential for benefit, in fact have alerted several among our attendees over the last three years to dangerous medical conditions -- prompt treatment followed and productive lives have been rescued. Monique Cuffee of AKF has organized the Fund's testing services for the 2007 Symposium. Plentiful thanks are due to her and the American Kidney Fund.

Kathleen Kelly of the Parkinson's Foundation reviewed the state of treatment for this puzzling malady, one whose cause remains unclear and for which a variety of treatments, inclusive of such new departures as "deep brain stimulation" have been essayed. In parallel to the direct medical treatment of the condition a strenuous effort has to be undertaken by both patient and family to make the train of symptoms manageable in their social and psychological dimensions. Among the typical symptoms are a growing rigidity of the facial musculature, so that the patient no longer displays those subtle movements that family and fiends are accustomed to and await as signs of affection, interest, humor, and other emotions. The voice comes to be flat and "expressionless" -- all of which conspire to devastate what were lively friendships and an enjoyable sociability. The enviroing circle of other persons have to be educated to these bleak facts and must translate the signs of their friend's plight into marks of a still existing friendship.



EOFULA residents fill forms for AKF screenings tests



The 2007 program was presented with no fee to attendees, by courtesy of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers Association (PhRMA), Southwest Airlines, and other generous sponsors.



Xihnomara Velazquez reads winning card drawn from bowl for door prize (SW Airlines ticket for travel within U.S.)

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