

We're back! And it took three pages (pages 5-7) just to catch up, more or less, on IRRI's comings, goings, and achievements since our last issue. What does the future hold for *Sandiwa*? That depends on you. Please turn to Which way now? on the back page.

Beefing up employee relations

by Ike Navarro

Maintaining harmonious working relationships is crucial to the success of any enterprise.

So, when IRRI recently reorganized its system of managing human resources, employee relations received special attention.

Among several innovations was the creation of a new position: employee relations manager.

"My job is to render assistance to employees," explained Manuel (Manny) Zaragoza. "I'm impressed at the cooperation I'm getting. This is important, because employee relations is, above all, a collaborative effort."

Mr. Zaragoza's responsibilities include handling administrative cases, resolving employee grievances, organizing such social activities as the sports program, the Christmas party, and Recognition Day, and generally facilitating communication within IRRI.

"We're strengthening our relationship with CIE and lending support to its programs," he said, referring to the Council of IRRI Employees. "And we're ensuring that the grievance process is in place and that due process is practiced at all times. My main concern is to see to it that due process is followed."

The change in human-resources management arose from an audit conducted in July 2000 by the Office of the Internal Audit of the CGIAR. "Top management thought that it was time to look at everything and decide where to go next," recalled Director for Administration and Human Resources (DAHR) Ian Wallace.

Under the old system, responsibility for human resources was shared among several groups. Now all

HR activity is concentrated within the Office of Administration and Human Resources, though the International Programs Management Office sees to the day-to-day management of staff at IRRI's country offices.

"Previously, HR functions were scattered around the institute, but now they are all under one flag," said Mr. Wallace. "Under the new setup, personnel standards, polices, procedures, and practices will be uniform for employees at headquarters and in the country offices."

"Consistency in implementing policies is vital," explained HR-National Staff Manager Fe

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Ang pagpapanatili ng pagkakasundo sa trabaho ay napakahalaga sa tagumpay ng isang organisasyon. Kaya't nang baguhin ng IRRI ang kaniyang sistema sa pamamahala ng human resources kamakailan, nag-ibayo ang atensyon sa employee relations. Kabilang sa mga pagbabago ay ang paglikha ng bagong posisyon: employee relations manager.

"Ang gawain ko ay magbigay ng tulong sa mga empleyado," paliwanag ni Manuel (Manny) Zaragoza.

Kasama sa mga responsibilidad ni G. Zaragoza ang paghawak ng mga kasong administratibo, pagtulong sa paglutas ng mga hinaing ng empleyado, pagsasagawa ng mga aktibidad tulad ng sports program at pagpapadali ng talastasan sa IRRI.

"Pinalalakas namin ang aming pormal at di-pormal na ugnayan sa Council of IRRI Employees (CIE)," ang sabi niya. "Ipinagkakaloob namin ang aming suporta sa

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Aglipay. "Otherwise, we lose credibility and support from our colleagues. Of course, their cooperation hinges on their understanding of the HR function."

Under the HR Services umbrella, NRS concerns are the responsibility of Ms. Aglipay (ext. 417/775), and matters pertaining to IRS, affiliate scientists, project/visiting scientists, collaborative research scientists/fellows, and consultants are coordinated by Selene Ocampo (ext. 254) and Nida Reyes (ext. 213). In addition to his responsibilities noted above, Employee Relations Manager Zaragoza (ext. 233) manages the clinic and ensures the proper maintenance of the canteen, cafeteria, and health club. He also oversees orientation for newly arrived IRS, which is provided by recently hired Orientation Assistant Alma Cedillo (ext. 623).

Other relatively new staff additions to beef up human resources development are HRD specialists Sylvia Avance

(ext. 407), and Gladys Faith Tan (ext. 363), and HRD Assistant Larry Montermoso (ext. 407).

Among the initiatives set in motion in the newly revamped Office of the DAHR are installing an automated integrated-human-resource information system, producing a user-friendly manual detailing updated NRS policies and procedures, improving the complaint/grievance/appeal machinery, timing the delivery of merit-based pay increases in January of each year, implementing a policy on diversity and gender equity, and conducting an annual survey on employee morale.

"I want our employees to look at HR Services not as a cost center but as an integral partner of management, to ensure that IRRRI has the right staff for the right job," concluded Mr. Wallace. "And as a integral partner of employees and their professional organizations, because people are our most important asset." ■

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CIE at sa mga programa nito. At tinitiyak namin na ang grievance process ay nasa lugar at ang due process ay isinasagawa sa lahat ng oras."



HRD's expanded staff.

ay responsibilidad ni Gng. Aglipay (ext. 417/775), at ang mga bagay na may kinalaman sa IRS, affiliate scientists, project/visiting scientists, collaborative research scientists/fellows, at mga consultants ay nasa koordinasyon ni Gng. Selene Ocampo (ext. 254) at Gng. Nida Reyes (ext. 213). Dagdag sa mga

Nagmula ang pagpapanibago sa pamamahala ng human resources batay sa isang audit na isinagawa noong Hulyo 2000 ng Office of the Internal Audit ng CGIAR. "Naisip ng top management na panahon na upang tingnan ang lahat at pagpasiyahan kung saan ang susunod na direksyon," pag-alala ni Director for Administration and Human Resources (DAHR) Ian Wallace.

Sa ilalim ng lumang sistema, ang responsibilidad sa human resources ay nakabahagi sa iba't-ibang grupo. Ngayon, lahat ng mga aktibidad na may kaugnayan sa HR ay tinipon sa Office of Administration and Human Resources, bagama't ginagawa ng International Programs Management Office ang pamamahala sa mga staff na nakatalaga sa mga tanggapan ng IRRRI sa iba't-ibang bansa sa buong Asya.

"Sa ilalim ng bagong kaayusan, magiging pareho ang pamantayang pang-personnel, pamamaran, at kaugalian, maging sa headquarters man o sa isa sa mga country offices," pagbubuod ni Mr. Wallace.

"Napakahalagang hindi pabago-bago ang implementasyon ng mga policies," paliwanag ni HR-National Staff Manager Fe Aglipay. "Kung pabago-bago, mawawala ang ating kredibilidad at suporta mula sa ating mga kasama."

Sa ilalim ng HR Services, ang mga patungkol sa NRS

nabanggit nang tungkulin, si Employee Relations Manager Zaragoza ay namamahala sa clinic at tumitiyak sa tamang pagpapatakbo ng canteen, cafeteria, at health club. Pinamamahalaan din niya ang oryentasyon sa mga bagong dating na IRS, na ibibinigay ng bagong Orientation Assistant na si Alma Cedillo (ext. 623). Ang iba pang mga bagong napadagdag sa HRD ay sina HRD Specialists Sylvia Avance (ext. 363) at Gladys Faith Tan (ext. 363), at HRD Assistant Larry Montermoso (ext. 407).

Kabilang sa mga pagkukusang isinasagawa ng binagong Office of the DAHR ay ang paglalagay ng automated integrated human resource information system, pagbuo ng katanggap-tanggap na manual na dumidetalye sa mga patakaran at kaparaanan para sa NRS, pagpapabuti sa sistema ng sumbong/reklamo/apela, pagtakda ng bigayan ng taunang dagdag-suweldo batay sa merit tuwing Enero, pagpapatupad ng patakaran sa pagkakaiba at pagkakapantay pangkasarian, at pagsasagawa ng taunang survey ng moral ng mga empleyado.

"Nais kong tingnan ng ating mga empleyado ang HR hindi bilang sentro ng gastos kundi isang mahalagang kabahagi ng pamunuan, upang tiyakin na ang IRRRI ay may tamang tao para sa tamang trabaho," pagwawakas ni G. Wallace. "At bilang mahalagang kabahagi ng mga empleyado at ng kanilang mga organisasyon, sapagka't ang mga tao ang ating pinakamahalagang yaman." ■

IRRI Web sites celebrate fifth anniversary

By Gene Hettel

On 26 June, IRRI will celebrate the fifth anniversary of its presence on the World Wide Web. IRRI was one of the first CG centers to go online, and its original Web site has grown into five separate sites: IRRI home (www.cgiar.org/irri), Riceweb (www.riceweb.org), Riceworld (www.riceworld.org), the Training Center (<http://198.93.230.216/training/>), and the IRRI Library (ricelib.irri.cgiar.org).

The IRRI home site, which serves as the main portal to the other sites, has from the beginning been the most popular among Web surfers visiting CG center sites through the system's mother site (www.cgiar.org). Almost 210,000 visitors logged on to the IRRI sites during 2000. This year to 14 May (when this article was written), an additional 95,000 visitor sessions were recorded.

A million hits

During 2000, users made more than 780,000 hits, or movements, within the sites. Since 1 January, there have been an additional 363,000 hits. The average time of a user session is close to 10 minutes. For the longer period from 1 January 2000 to date, users from 155 countries (at least one user session) spent time at the sites. Forty-three percent of all user sessions still emanate from the United States, but not too long ago the US user share was more than 50%. After the US, the countries rounding out the top 10 are (in descending order) Australia, Japan, Canada, UK, Germany, Netherlands, Singapore, Malaysia, and France.

Over time, we expect more users from developing countries (IRRI's true constituency) to enjoy better access. Thailand, India, and the Philippines are in good positions to gain better access soon. Developing countries in Asia will hopefully have better access to all of the CGIAR sites with the establishment of a mirror site



in Japan hosted by the Asia-Pacific Advanced Network (APAN). APAN organizers are planning to start with the IRRI sites and follow with the rest of the CG sites later. Interestingly, users from such remote locations as Trinidad and Tobago (78 sessions), Iceland (22), Latvia (17), Togo (7), Bosnia and Herzegovina (8), Niger (4), and Antigua and Barbuda (1) are on record as having spent time browsing what IRRI has to offer.

For the period 1 January 2000 through 14 May this year, 303,341 user sessions have resulted in more than 50,000 hours of surfing (based on the 10-minute average) within the IRRI sites! During these many hours online, clients have downloaded more than 100,000 files (often pdf files) of popular information products, such as installments of the discussion paper series, stories from past annual reports, sections of the *International Rice Research Notes* and annual program reports, and IRRI-developed software (there have been more than 3,000 downloads of the IRRISTAT program for statistical analysis).

Most popular downloads

The most popular downloads for the 1 January 2000-14 May 2001 period were IRRISTAT software (3,291 downloads), *Improving the productivity and sustainability of rice-wheat systems of the Indo-Gangetic Plains* (3,099), *Rice production, methane emissions, and global warming* (2,309), the IRRISTAT tutorial (2,014), *Bt rice: research and policy issues* (1,891), the Golden Rice article in 2000 annual report (1,579),

Producing more rice with less water (1,424), and *Defining productivity and yield* (1,166).

In recent months, the Web sites have been enhanced with the addition of

- electronic versions of the three 2000 issues of the *International Rice Research Notes* (www.cgiar.org/irri/irrn.htm), the 1999 Program Report (www.cgiar.org/irri/99ProgramReport/99programreport.htm), and recent IRRI conference and workshop proceedings (www.cgiar.org/irri/absidx.htm);
- new sections devoted to rice genomics (www.cgiar.org/irri/genomics/), rice bioinformatics (www.cgiar.org/irri/bioinformatics/), decision support tools (www.cgiar.org/irri/Tropprice/), and software downloads (www.cgiar.org/irri/SoftwareDownloads.htm);
- the Media Hotline page (www.cgiar.org/irri/pa/) managed by the Public Awareness Unit;
- new online courseware materials on the Training Center site, including how to take notes, digital literacy, English for agriculture, and growth stages of the rice plant.

Regarding popularity compared with the other CG center sites each month, when accessed through the CGIAR mother site, the IRRI home site has usually been the most requested site, the top entry and exit site, and the most frequent single-access site. Part of this popularity is certainly tied to the importance of rice—and interest in it—but that the IRRI sites are never static, and there is always something new to see or read, must also be a factor.

Riceweb, which has become very
to next page . . .

Did you know?

Did you know that IRRI will spend 535 million pesos in the Philippines this year? That works out to 1.5 million pesos per day, almost all of it to be spent in and around Los Baños. ■

Sportsfest

Intramural action



Softball is a game of duels, with Unit II's Jessie Banasihan crowding the plate and Unit I's Andy Mendoza winding for the pitch. It's a close call at first base, as Unit II's Roger Cuevas tries to tag out Unit I's Totoy Ortiz. In a basketball game between Unit II and Unit V, the action is close and fast as Unit V's Roland Buresh (#45), Ruben Chavez (#31), Ayong dela Rosa, and Nilo Driz (#20) mix it up with Unit II's Mar Mandilag (#44), Arnold Manza, Celing Villamayor (#4), and Bert Escandor (#3).

Computer Corner

E-learning at IIRI

Computer Services concluded an agreement with ICON Educational Software to begin a trial of electronic training materials for Microsoft Office. These were made available online on the IIRI network to up to 100 users at a time for six months starting on 1 April.

These materials facilitate “at your desk” and “at your own convenience” learning. Got 20 minutes to spare? Why not brush up on your Outlook skills or take a crack at getting an online certification?

NETg, whose materials are used, is one of the world's largest packagers and resellers of online educational materials.

Microsoft uses NETg products to teach its own products to its staff. Courseware available includes beginning, intermediate, and advanced courses in MS Office products—16 courses in total.

As of 24 May, 165 users had signed up.

“The clock is ticking on our license for these materials,” said IT manager Paul O’Nolan. “We have until September. I would like to get 400 people through Outlook and Word at least.” ■

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popular with people wanting to learn about rice, has received recognition from many organizations. For example, Dow Jones, *USA Today*, and *New Scientist* have cited Riceweb to be an outstanding educational site and have cross-linked to it.

More than 61,000 persons have “opened their eyes to rice” at the Riceworld site, which is the virtual version of IIRI’s Riceworld museum. With the retirement of Dr. Gurdev Khush, a very popular feature is the special section there dedicated to him (<http://www.riceworld.org/drkopen.html>).

The IIRI library site continues to improve and update its online information. The most impressive feature is that it allows you to search the library catalog online, no matter where you are in the world—even Iceland or Togo!

Plans for the IIRI Web sites include improving their overall look, providing more external access to some of the D/C/U and program sites that are only internal now, and adding streaming audio and video features (which will include time-delayed “international” broadcasts of selected interviews from *The IIRI Hour* radio program).

Those interested in monitoring the use of the IIRI Web sites can view interesting data provided by Webtrends at <http://webusage.cgnet.com/irri/>. ■

Catching up

New Faces, New Jobs

There have been many changes in personnel since the last issue of *Sandiwa*, especially in April.

David J. Mackill (right) took over as head of the Plant Breeding, Genetics, and Biochemistry Division that month. He replaced Gurdev Khush, who retired at the beginning of this year, after 29 years' service as PBGB head.

Dr. Mackill is a respected research geneticist and adjunct professor from the University of the California, Davis, and most recently worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture–Agricultural Research Service. His range of experience includes a stint as IRRI plant breeder from 1981 to 1992 and as a postdoctoral fellow at ICRISAT. He is currently associate editor of *Crop Science*, a member of the Executive Board of SABRAO, and chair of the Rice Technical Working Group in the U.S. He is in demand as a team leader and member of internal and external program reviews at CG centers.

Also new in PBGB in April were **Ma. Ruby Sallan**, a researcher, and **Danta Adorada**, an assistant scientist.

Thanda Wai joined IRRI as intellectual property specialist in April. Responsible for the activities of the new Intellectual Property Management Unit and IRRI's IP portfolio, Dr. Wai reports directly to Deputy Director General for Partnerships William Padolina.



accountant.

Also in April, **Loriza E. Dagdag** (left), a former IRRI staff member and head of Finance at ICLARM, joined the General Accounting Office in Finance. Other new arrivals in Finance in April were **Cristina Sta. Romana** as accounting supervisor and **Charlene Dalmacio** as an accountant.

Victor Alarcon (right), multimedia developer, joined CPS in April to take the lead in the technical aspects of digital multimedia projects such as publishing CD interactives, convergence of media on the Web, and developing products using new media. As technical new media chief at DPSI, Philippines, he led a team of programmers in developing interactive CD products for various industries. In his previous job at ICLARM, he was responsible for the database Web migration of the Reefbase and Aquanaut Projects.



In the same month, **Cecilia V. Lopez** joined the International Programs Management Office as

administration coordinator, **Myra Collado** joined the Experiment Station as a programmer, and **Ernesto L. Mejia** became an assistant in the IRRI office of the International Livestock Research Institute.

April also saw many new arrivals in the Training Center, including **Ma. Estella Hernandez**, **Reah Benedicta Clavio**, **Ma. Socorro Arboleda**, **Ivan Roy Mallari**, and **Eric John Azucena** as training assistants, and **Jennifer Hernandez** as a secretary. Earlier, **Divina Marinay** joined as administrative coordinator last October, and **Melanie Quinto** joined as a secretary in February.

New staff in Human Resources Development include **Manuel H. Zaragoza**, **Alma C. Cedillo**, **Sylvia P. Avance**, **Gladys Faith Tan**, and **Larry Montermoso** (see page 1).

Peter Fredenburg (right) joined Public Awareness in March as an editor and writer. Before coming to IRRI, he worked as a journalist in East Asia for two decades. In addition to freelancing for an array of international and regional publications, he edited in-flight magazines and, most recently, served on the news desk of the *Asian Wall Street Journal*.



March also saw the arrival of two new female security guards, **Faizah Arobinto Maldo** and **Marcelina F. Garcimo**. Ms. Maldo, who hails from Negros Occidental, was previously a guard at the Ayala Center in Manila. Ms. Garcimo, a native of Iloilo, holds a Bachelor of Science in Criminology from the University of Iloilo. She formerly worked at Cyntronics Inc., a manufacturing company in Laguna, where she was a guard before she joined Safeguard's detachment at IRRI.

Ana Lyn Genil joined the DDG-Research office as a secretary in March, and **Helen Malabrigo** joined the Social Sciences Division as a secretary in February.

Barney P. Caton arrived in January on a three-year affiliate scientist appointment.

Last but not least, management announced an important promotion in April. **Michael Jackson** was named to the newly created management position of director for Program Planning and Coordination, which is responsible for planning and managing IRRI's project development and resource mobilization. The other responsibilities of the new director include organizing and coordinating the timely reporting of projects to donors and submission of IRRI's Medium-Term Plan and assisting in the monitoring and evaluation of IRRI's projects.

Dr. Jackson, who was head of the Genetic Resources Center (GRC) for nearly 10 years, now reports to Ren Wang, deputy director general for research, and is a permanent member of the IRS Management Committee. Following Dr. Jackson's reassignment, **Graham McLaren** was named team leader of Project 1, Germplasm Conservation, Characterization, Documentation, and Exchange, and **Edwin Javier** was named acting GRC head. ■

Catching up

Award winners

IRRI employees and alumni have garnered an array of awards and honors in the past several months. Starting with last month and going back as far as November . . .

Mike Cohen, entomologist, and **Remy Aguda**, assistant scientist, Entomology and Plant Pathology (with E.P. Alcantara of the National Institute of Molecular Biology and Biochemistry UPLB and D. Dean of the Ohio State University Dept. of Biochemistry), won the Philippine Association of Entomologists Best Poster Award during the 32nd Pest Management Council of the Philippines 2001 (PMCP) Conference in Pili, Camarines Sur, in May, for the poster *Bacillus thuringiensis* delta-endotoxin binding to the midgut receptors of rice stem borers.

At the same PMCP conference, **Joel D. Janiya**, assistant scientist, **Martin Mortimer**, weed ecologist, **James E. Hill**, agronomist, and **Carmelo O. Garcia**, researcher, Crop, Soil, and Water Sciences, won the Best Paper Award in Weed Science, given by the Weed Science Society of the Philippines, Inc., co-authored with Collin M. Piggitt, ACIAR.

Gene Hettel, editor and head, Communication and Publications Services, won the Bronze Award for writing (Lao PDR—the “crown jewel” in rice biodiversity project) in a specialized publication (the IRRI Web site) from the U.S.-based Agricultural Communicators in Education (ACE), in May.

Special Award

Gurdev S. Khush, principal plant breeder, Plant Breeding, Genetics, Biochemistry, received a special award for his contributions to rice improvement from the Federation of Crop Science Societies of the Philippines in Manila, in April. Dr. Khush was also a recipient of The China International Scientific and Technological Cooperation Award for 2001. In December, Dr.

Khush received the Gopalan Oration Award and Gold Medal from the Nutrition Society of India.

Julian Lapitan, manager, International Programs Management Office, was given the Honorary Fellow Award by the Crop Science Society of the Philippines, during the Asian Crop Science Congress in April.

Mary Grace A. Rayco, General Accounting, was named Girl Scout of the Philippines National Youth Achiever, at the GSP National Headquarters in Ermita, Manila, in May.

Sant S. Virmani, plant breeder, Plant Breeding, Genetics, and Biochemistry, shared the Third World Network of Scientific Organizations Award in Agriculture, 2001. Dr. Virmani was also one of the recipients of the Research Fellow Award for 2001 given by the Federation of Crop Science Societies of the Philippines (FCSSP), in Manila, in April.

The IRRI Toastmasters Club dominated the Toastmasters International Club Area 74 Speech Contest, held in General Trias, Cavite, in March. The IRRI club’s winners were: *Impromptu Speech*, champion ATM-B **Sylvia Inciong** (an IRRI employee representing the San Pablo City Toastmasters Club); 1st runner-up TM **Gary Jahn**; 2nd runner-up CTM **Jojo Lapitan**; *Speech to Evaluate*, **Sylvia Inciong**; 1st runner-up CTM **Mar Movillon**; *International Speech*, champion CTM **Eppie Serrano**; 1st runner-up **Mar Movillon**.

Ram Kathin Singh, IRRI representative in the IRRI Liaison Office for India, was named India’s National Academy of Agriculture Sciences Fellow in February. **V. L. Chopra**, IRRI’s ex-board trustee, was elected as the academy’s next president.

Mushed Alam, research scholar, Agricultural Engineering, received the Outstanding Contribution Award from CIGR (International Commission for Agricultural Engineering) at the 14th memorial CIGR World Congress, in Tsukuba City, Japan, in December, for the paper, *Pesticide application techniques of rice farmers in the Philippines and options to improve*

application and protect the environment, coauthored with M.A. Bell, M. Mortimer, R. Bakker, E.C. Castro, Jr., and E.B. Razote.

Rob Bakker, affiliate scientist, Agricultural Engineering, also received the Outstanding Contribution Award from CIGR for the paper, *Improving productivity in direct-seeded rice: the role of mechanization*, coauthored with J. Rickman and M.A. Bell.

Roland J. Buresh, soil scientist, Crop, Soil, and Water Sciences, was named American Society of Agronomy Fellow in November.

James E. Hill, agronomist and head, Crop, Soil, and Water Sciences and program leader, Enhancing productivity and sustainability of favorable environments, was also named American Society of Agronomy Fellow in November.

First academic award

K.L. Heong, entomologist/IPM specialist, Entomology and Plant Pathology, was given the Doctor of Science (D. Sc.) degree by the University of London in November. The degree was the first academic award to an IRRI scientist based on his or her research work at IRRI.

Edwin L. Javier, INGER coordinator, Genetic Resources Center, and **Joseph F. Rickman**, head, Agricultural Engineering and Experiment Station, each received the Officer Award for Collaboration from Prime Minister Hun Sen of Cambodia in November. **Harold J. Nesbitt**, agronomist and team leader, Cambodia-IRRI-Australia Project, received the country’s Distinguished Collaboration Award.

Walfrido C. Mendoza, security supervisor, Safety and Security Office, was awarded a plaque of recognition by the Association of Safety Practitioners of the Philippines (ASPPPI) during the 2nd General Assembly and Convention of Safety Practitioners in Kawit, Cavite, in November.

Congratulations to all (however belatedly to many)! ■

Catching up

Dear departed

Shu-Huang Ou, 89, former head of the Department of Plant Pathology, died of liver cancer on 17 April in Palo Alto, California. He is survived by his two sons, Deng-Ching and Shu-Kong. His wife, Jane, died three years ago.

Joining IRRI as a plant pathologist in 1961 when the institute was established, Dr. Ou became the first head of the Plant Protection Department, the forerunner of today's EPPD. In 1962, the department was split into the separate departments of Plant Pathology and Entomology. Dr. Ou headed the Plant Pathology Department for the next 16 years until his retirement on 30 June 1978.



Dr. Ou (left), a Chinese national from Taiwan, received his PhD from the University of Wisconsin in 1954. He worked with Academia Sinica, JCRR, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) regional office in Bangkok. He authored the classic book *Rice diseases*, published by the Commonwealth Mycological Institute (the forerunner of today's CABI) in the UK. He also wrote the popular *Handbook of rice diseases in the tropics*, first published in 1973.

Burton T. Oñate, a former IRRI chief statistician, died of heart failure on 24 March at the Westmead Private Hospital, Westmead, New South Wales, Australia. His remains were cremated at Pinegrove Memorial Park, Minchinbury, NSW, on 26 March and brought home to Los Baños by his wife, Mrs. Luz Uichanco-Oñate, and son, Daniel Uichanco-Oñate, on 3 April. Laying of the ashes was held on 8 April at the St. Therese Parish Church, Garden of Peace in UP Los Baños.

Exaltacion C. Ramos, 62, a former HRD manager, died of breast cancer on 18 March at the Manila Doctors Hospital. Mrs. Ramos was HRD manager from 15 June 1992 until her resignation on 16 April 1997. She was rehired as consultant (acting HRD manager) from 1 July 1997 to 31 March 1998.

Ernesto General Jacob (right), 67, a former IRRI security officer, died on 21 February. He served the institute for 23 years until his retirement in 1993. He is the father of Wilmer Jacob of the Communications Office.



Marcos R. Vega, 67, a former IRRI deputy director general, died of cardiac arrest on 11 February at the National Kidney and Transplant Institute. He is survived by his wife, Justina, and three children.

Dr. Vega served the institute for 15 years after joining IRRI in December 1971 as assistant director. In 1975, he became director for training. In 1977, he was promoted to deputy director general, the position he kept until his

retirement in December 1986.

The soft-spoken Dr. Vega (right) is best remembered at IRRI for his humility, fairness, focused leadership, and speedy actions. By his own admission, his most fulfilling experience as an IRRI worker was seeing the growth of national research programs through human-resources development.



Feliciano J. Toyhacao, 67, a former senior audiovisual supervisor in CPS, died of a stroke on 12 February. Felicing (left) joined IRRI in July 1962 and served the institute for 30 years.

Timoteo

Aranzaso, 43, a research technician at EPPD, died on 28 January of cardiac arrest. He was pronounced dead on arrival at the Los Baños Doctors' Hospital. Timmy (right), from Pleasant Village, Los Baños, had been an IRRI employee for 20 years. ■



Births



Employee	Baby	Birthdate (2001)
Gigi Caballero	Ann Danielle	9 May
Leo Simpao	Sophia Camella	4 May
Rolando Casumpang	John Rolan	19 Mar
Joie Ramos	Jann Emmanuel	16 Mar
Atanacio Orencia	Kenneth	15 Mar
Arlene Rivera	André Gian Karlo	11 Mar
Bitá Avendano	Karissa Lonise	10 Mar
Delfin Lacandula	Francine	1 Mar
Jose Sibal	Bernadette Ledjien	28 Feb
Pat Borlagdan	Patrick David	11 Feb
Veronica Mangubat	Herbert	9 Feb
Lorenzo Ocampo	Ed Lorenz	2 Feb
Virginia Laluz	Karrell Anne	23 Jan
Julie Carreon	John Philip	11 Jan
Antonio Salamatín	Patrick James	10 Jan
Eleah Lucas	Jan Joseph	5 Jan

Professional Associations

Making a difference

By Kathy Lopez



One of the more dynamic groups on campus is the Society of IRRI Nonresearch Professionals, or SINoP. Barely three years old, this youngest of the four sectoral organizations in the institute has been a visible presence from its beginning.

SINoP belongs to the Council of IRRI Employees (CIE), an umbrella organization that represents the interests of more than 800 nationally recruited institute employees. The other three groups in the CIE are the IRRI Filipino Scientists Association (IFSA), the Association of IRRI Secretaries and Administrative Staff (AISAS), and the Association of IRRI Research Support Staff (AIRESS).

The restructuring of the Council of IRRI Employees and Management (CIEM) into CIE in late 1998 paved the way for creating a formal organization that would take care of the interests of the professional nonresearch sector at IRRI. SINoP was established to promote the welfare and address the concerns of members of this sector. Adjie Bernardo led the convenors' group that spearheaded the organization of SINoP.

Although established in 1998, the organization was formally born on 24 March 1999, with the election of the first set of officers and board members. The organization has 21 charter members representing various offices and organizational units at the institute. Six of the charter members sit on the current board.

In Filipino, *sinop* means "prudence" or "shrewd management of resources," implying careful preparation for the future. As Charter President Mon Oliveros said, the organization "commits itself to the pursuit of the professional well-being of its members but, more importantly, supports IRRI's goals and mission through the excellent practice of our profession."

Major goals

Thus, among the major goals of the organization are: promoting the professional well-being of its members through learning interventions and professional, social, civic, and cultural affairs; fostering active fellowship and camaraderie, and enhancing community participation, development, and cooperation; and supporting IRRI's goal through outstanding performance in the workplace.

SINoP's membership cuts across the various administrative units and some research programs. It represents a diversity of nonresearch specializations: technically skilled administrators, communications



The IRRI children's Christmas party, which SINoP coordinates.

specialists, administrative managers and coordinators, and computer experts.

Sustaining active membership, however, is a problem. Ninety-six members are currently listed in its roster, with eight new ones inducted in May. Some members also belong to AISAS or IFSA, which have been around far longer than SINoP.

Commitment and responsibility

IRRI veterans Ella Castro and Eves Reyes, charter members who were also in the convenors' group that drafted SINoP's constitution and by-laws, give this advice to old and new members alike: "Commitment is an important part of joining an organization. Without it the organization will cease to function. SINoP members should thus have the commitment and responsibility to support the organization and its activities." Currently, the organization is attracting new members and providing them opportunities for further development.

In its first two years, SINoP launched special activities for fund-raising, social interaction, and community service. A bingo get-together was organized as an initial activity to bring members together in a social environment and kick off a fundraiser for the association. SINoP held a Christmas bazaar to generate funds to support the IRRI children's Christmas party. In the past two years, this Christmas party, coordinated by SINoP, brought Christmas joy not only to children of IRRI employees, but also to orphaned and abandoned kids from Kibo Children's House and Pinagpala Children's Home. Last year, SINoP organized more fund-raising activities, including a singing contest that culminated in the presentation of singing talents during the institute's Christmas party.

For this year, the organization is focusing on improving membership not just in terms of numbers but in quality—by enhancing members' professional growth, promoting community service through humanitarian projects, and helping the organization raise financial resources to fund its projects. These thrusts are reflected in some of SINoP's projects for the year, which include a seminar series, community service projects, special fund-raising enterprises, and sociocultural activities.

In May, the long-gestating monthly seminar series was finally launched. This seminar series is open to all institute

staff. It features speakers from the organization and the institute who discuss relevant and interesting topics, including intellectual property rights, better communications, organizational management, and biotechnology. The seminar series intends to provide members of SINO P and other sectoral organizations with an additional avenue for learning. It also hopes to give speakers and participants the opportunity to interact professionally outside of their jobs on topics of mutual interest.

Although the organization is not a service association, it carries out special community-oriented projects that include a scholarship program for 70 grade-school students and the upgrading of school facilities in Bagong Silang, a depressed upland community on Mt. Makiling; a collection drive for second-hand books and uniforms for public schools; an information campaign on solid-waste management in conjunction with IIRRI's community outreach project and a local Rotary Club; and the adopt-an-orphan project for Christmas. SINO P hopes to make a difference in the lives of the not-so-fortunate members of the community, and in IIRRI and its outlying communities.

Other projects include fund-raising activities, such as sales and bazaars that aim to generate funds for the organization's various activities, including the scholarship program. Sociocultural activities planned for the year include a mini concert that will showcase the various talents of institute staff and a sports competition.

SINO P's main task is to represent its members in the CIE. Every year, three members sit on the council, where they serve as officers or members of standing committees. The society serves as a channel of communication between the nonresearch sector and the CIE or management,

forwarding members' recommendations on matters that concern the sector's professional interests and development.

SINO P has not been around for long, but its current officers and board believe that the organization can help make a difference in promoting the interests of the professional nonresearch sector at the institute. This can happen only if communication lines between the organization's members, CIE, and management are kept open, and if the officers remain vigilant

about keeping the interests of the sector in sight at all times.

When William Padolina, deputy director general for partnerships, spoke at the induction of new members on 3 May, he said it was important that members establish a culture of learning. He stressed that SINO P can help management by giving feedback about how IIRRI can further hone employees' work skills and capacities. SINO P hopes to attain its goals by actively pursuing projects that will help members attain further personal, social, and professional growth and development through continuous learning and reinvention, and by becoming an effective voice of its constituents. Only in this way can it make a difference in the community and the organizational culture at IIRRI.

SINO P officers

President: *Katherine Lopez*; Vice president: *Sylvia Arellano*; Secretary: *Tess Rola*; Treasurer: *Melba Aquino*; Auditor: *Gigi Caballero*; Public Information Officer: *Eves Reyes*; CIE representatives: *Tony Gapas, Bert Adviento, and Katherine Lopez*; Board members: *Sylvia Inciong, Eloise Revilla, Emy Ballesfin, and Mon Oliveros* (ex officio).

Committees

Membership: *Tess Rola*; Finance: *Melba Aquino*; Professional Growth and General Welfare: *Sylvia Arellano*; Awards and Recognition: *Eloise Revilla*; Publications Committee: *Eves Reyes*; Disciplinary and Grievance: *Emy Ballesfin*. ■



AISAS Tree-Planting Program

In observance of Secretaries' Week, the Association of IIRRI Secretaries and Administrative Staff (AISAS) invited internationally recruited staff and their spouses to participate in a tree planting activity on 25 April.

This activity was AISAS's way of addressing the growing concerns over environmental protection. The event took place along a stretch of ISA Avenue on the IIRRI experimental farm. ■



IIRRI in history



The Philippine Postal and Postage office released the first IIRRI commemorative stamp on 5 June 1985, to mark the institute's 25th anniversary.

HRDevelopments

HMO survey results are positive

The contract under which PHILAMCARE is IRRI's HMO service provider for nationally recruited staff will expire at the end of this month. In April, the Council of IRRI Employees (CIE) conducted a survey to determine the level of satisfaction with PHILAMCARE, to guide the decision on whether to renew and, if so, on what terms. Although the survey attempted to reach all IRRI staff concerned, only 409 responded, representing less than half of those covered.

When asked about the low response rate, Jun Madrid, chairman of the Benefits and Welfare Committee of CIE, reported that

follow up calls were made. Based on the response to these calls, he concluded, "This is not a case of an apparent lack of interest, but an indication that, thankfully, most of IRRI staff did not need it. A case of 'out of sight, out of mind' ...until you need it!"

The survey results indicated that 80% of staff regarded the service and reliability levels of PHILAMCARE to be at least satisfactory. Seventy percent categorically said yes to the retention of PHILAMCARE as our HMO provider.

Also asked was a question on 'staff members' willingness to pay a higher premium to cover possible additional costs for increased medical benefits. Seventy-six percent of the respondents signified willingness to pay more for more benefits.

"This is a very positive indication," commented Chelo Abrenilla, president of the Association of IRRI Secretaries and Administrative Staff (AISAS). "The survey has shown the maturity of the IRRI staff, when it comes to providing for the welfare of the family."

HR-NRS Manager Fe Aglipay agreed with this assessment, but explained that, while this argues for renewal of the contract with PHILAMCARE, there are other factors to consider. The intention to renew must also be shared by PHILAMCARE itself, on the basis of its experience as HMO provider for IRRI over the past three years. "Everybody will be informed of developments," Ms. Aglipay said. ■

Resulta ng HMO survey positibo

Matatapos sa katapusan ng buwan ang kontrata ng PHILAMCARE bilang health maintenance organization (HMO) provider ng nationally recruited staff (NRS) ng IRRI.



Kaugnay nito, nagsagawa ng survey ang Council of IRRI Employees (CIE) noong Abril upang alamin ang antas ng kasiyahan ng mga empleyado sa serbisyong ibinibigay ng PHILAMCARE. Ang kalalabasan ng survey ang siyang magiging batayan ng desisyon kung itutuloy pa o hindi ang naturang kontrata at sa anong mga kondisyon.

May 409 ang sumagot sa survey, o halos kalahati ng kabuuang bilang ng mga empleyado na pinadalahan ng CIE ng survey form.

Ayon sa survey, 80% sa mga empleyado ang nasisiyahan sa serbisyo at pagiging maaasahan ng PHILAMCARE; 70% ang sumangayon sa pagpapanatili ng PHILAMCARE bilang HMO provider; at 76% naman ang pumayag na magdagdag ng bayad para sa mas-maraming benepisyo.

Ayon kay Jun Madrid, taga-pangulo ng Benefits and Welfare Committee ng CIE, ang mababang bilang ng mga empleyadong tumugon sa survey ay nagpatunay lamang sa di kawalan ng interes kundi hindi nila kinakailangan ang serbisyo ng PHILAMCARE sa kasalukuyan. Sa wikang Ingles, ito ay isang "out of sight, out of mind" o hanggang sa panahon lamang na kakailanganin nila ito.

Ipinahayag ni Chelo Abrenilla, pangulo ng Association of IRRI Secretaries and Administrative Staff (AISAS), na "ito ay isang positibong indikasyon ng kahustuhan ng isip ng mga taga-IRRI hinggil sa pagbibigay-daan sa mga bagay na makapagpapasulong sa kapakanan ng kani-kanilang pamilya."

Kinatigan ni Fe Aglipay, HR-NRS manager, ang obserbasyong ito subali't binanggit niya na bagama't ito ay nagpapahiwatig ng pagpapatuloy ng kontrata sa PHILAMCARE, marami pa ring mga bagay-bagay ang dapat isaalang-alang. Kasama na rito ang pagpapatuloy ng kontrata na dapat sang-ayunan ng PHILAMCARE base sa naging karanasan nito sa IRRI sa nagdaang tatlong taon.

"Ang lahat ay makakaalam ng anumang kalalabasan ng mga pag-uusap," ayon kay Gng. Aglipay. ■

Driver Safety: Hey! Where did you learn to drive?

Within the next few months, some 400 of us will be able to say: "I learned the fine points of driving at IRRI."

"We intend to provide a defensive-driving workshop to all authorized drivers in the institute," said Lito Vergara, senior manager of the Transport Office. "This is a joint project of the Transport Office and the Security and Safety Office, under the direction of the DAHR. We envision it to be a yearly activity."

The Transport and Safety offices will begin offering the one-day workshops this month. The course aims to increase awareness of defensive driving and road safety, while developing participants' ability to recognize road hazards and how to avoid them. It will also refresh drivers on the basics of road courtesy and discipline, update them on IRRI transport and safety regulations, and enhance their vehicle handling skills.

Each session will have about 20 participants, who will view video clips showing what to do and what not to do in various road situations.

There are also tentative plans to invite a lecturer from the Philippine government's Land Transportation Office. But this won't be just a day in the classroom.

"The program of instruction is 70% practical," Mr. Vergara said. "We will place participants behind the wheel to practice backing up, in-between parking, circle-8 handling techniques, pump braking, and obstacle driving."

Mr. Vergara didn't say if obstacle driving includes slamming on the brakes, skidding and squealing 180 degrees, and roaring back down the road the way you came.

Workshop dates are June 5, 7, 13, 14, 19, 21, 26, and 28; July 3, 5, 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, and 26; August 2, 7, 9, and 14. ■



Lito Vergara



Driver's license renewal

Driver's license renewal this month is on Friday, 22 June, for drivers with licenses that expire between 22 June and 20



Lito Cabral

July, 2001: Abuyo, Isaias C.; Atienza, Jaime D.; Barrion, Daniel A.; Caraquel, Luisito L.; Malbataan, Mario M.; Pua, Eduardo L.; Siopongco, Joel C.; and Sosa, Noel L. Renewal forms are available in the

IRRI Forms folder in Microsoft Outlook or from your coordinator.

Please submit completed forms to the Motor Pool at least a

few days before 22 June and leave driver's licenses at the Motor Pool before 9 am on that day. Departure from the Motor Pool is at 3 pm on 22 June. Please direct any questions to Lito Cabral, ext. 230. ■

HR Services (National Staff) Training Plan

Date	Objectives	Training Workshop Title	Target Participants
6-7 Jun	Personal Effectiveness	Values Enhancement	25 NRS in job levels 1, 2, and 3
13-14 Jun	Skill Enhancement	Accounting for Non-Accountants	Secretaries and Admin. Coordinators
16-17, 19-20, 24-25 Jul	Service Excellence	Customer Relations Effectiveness Workshop	75 NRS in job levels 1, 2, and 3
22-24 Aug	People Management	Supervisory Effectiveness Program	25 NRS in job levels 4 and 5
27-30 Aug	Planning	Training Needs Analysis for 2002	All NRS
19-21 Sep	Communications	Effective Presentation Workshop	25 NRS in job levels 4, 5, 6, and 7
27 Sep	Service Excellence	Orientation Program	New hires
17-18 Oct (tentative)	People Management	Leadership Enhancement and Development Workshop	25 NRS in job level 7
13-14, 15-16, 20-21 Nov (tentative)	Communications	Effective Business Writing	75 NRS

Open House at EPPD

The Entomology and Plant Pathology Division held an open house on 7 May to promote its research activities in the new Medium Term Plan and to highlight activities of the Division Management Committee, chaired in 2001 by Menchu Bernardo.



DG Ron Cantrell and DDG-R Ren Wang cut the ribbon during the opening ceremony. In his welcoming remarks, Tom Mew, EPPD head, emphasized that the division's aim is to be always "one step ahead," particularly in terms of solving problems caused by insect pests and diseases. DDG-P Willy Padolina led more than 245 guests from various organizational units at IRRI, ISLB, and UPLB. ■

The DMC organized poster exhibits in the EPPD lobby and corridors, as well as tours and demonstrations in seven lab stations. Souvenir items—bookmarks showing pictures of insect pests or diseased rice plants—were given to the first 50 guests.



Which way now?

Sandiwa aims to facilitate communication within IRRI. In this way, we hope to help IRRI achieve its goal of improving the well-being of present and future generations of rice farmers and consumers. We also hope to make IRRI a better and more satisfying place to work. *Sandiwa* should therefore deliver news and information not just from management to staff, but also from staff to management, within and between professional associations, and between staff members. In short, we want contributions from you.

In the July issue, we plan to launch a Community Bulletin Board for announcements and classified advertisements submitted by D/C/Us, professional associations, and individual staff members (submission deadline 20 June). We also hope to relaunch the Literary Corner (submission deadline 14 June). What about cartoons? What interesting possibilities haven't even occurred to us?

Please tell us. Send your questions, suggestions, comments, and contributions to Sandiwa@irri.cgiar.org or contact Johnny Goloyugo (ext. 6824) or Peter Fredenburg (ext. 401).

IRRI medical consultation

IRRI provided free medical-consultation services last month to 60 residents of the barangays Paciano Rizal, Putho-Tuntungin, Puypuy, Masaya, Tranca, and Dila as part of its long-term integrated community-development program, in cooperation with barangay officials in Los Baños and Bay. In the top photo, barangay health worker Tess de la Cruz is shown testing a resident's blood pressure. In the bottom photo, Duncan Macintosh, head of the Public Awareness—Visitors, Exhibition and Conference Services Unit, explains to residents that IRRI's use of pesticides on its experimental farms is in strict compliance with Philippine biosafety regulations. Bio-intensive gardening, solid-waste management and farmers' education are the other components of the IRRI program. ■

