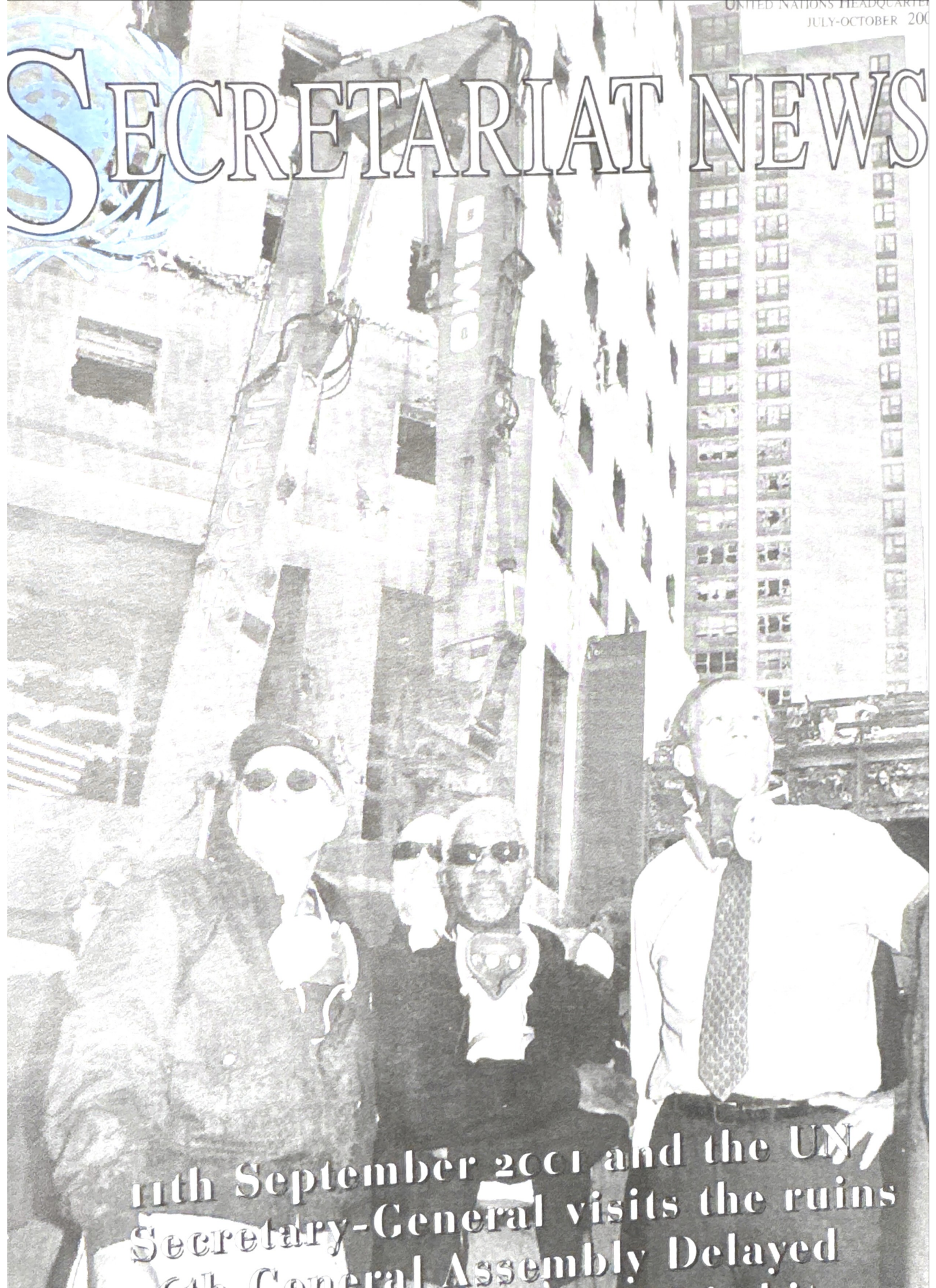


SECRETARIAT NEWS



11th September 2001 and the UN
Secretary-General visits the ruins
of the General Assembly Building

Saddler retires as AFICS chief

By Helen Grefen-Rohts

The New York contingent of the Association of Former International Civil Servants (AFICS (NY)) used to be a rather staid, passive alumni club of UN retirees.

They depended on it to protect their pensions and maintain their health-care premiums at a reasonable level. Its main attraction though was the luncheon laid out for members twice a year, which provided a familiar venue for exchange of views and news with former colleagues they would not have otherwise had occasion to see.

In the past six years, however, the character of AFICS (NY) changed dramatically. It became a vibrant link with the UN and its affiliates, an active non-governmental organization, and a direct participant in UN-issue-based information and entertainment, pro-

grammes.

The man largely responsible for this transformation is no novice in international affairs; he had years of experience in administration, management, finance, personnel, diplomacy and negotiation.

He was a senior adviser to a host of international programmes, was recognized for distinguished service as a member of the United States mission to the UN and held a host of high-level posts at the UN, (including ASG), and at UNSECO and UNDP.

He is George F. Saddler, who resigned as AFICS president on 20 July. O. Richard Nottidge has taken over.

Saddler revitalized the association. The thrust was to involve the members in activities to further UN-supported objectives.

To that end, he introduced a

database providing information about the members and the financial situation of AFICS, successfully negotiated its participation in the Conference of NGOs, and fought tirelessly to uphold the prestige of the association and respect for retirees at a crucial moment of history, sometimes referred to as the era of longevity.

His leadership brought the UN retirees into the 21st century. They now have their own web site in the UN network and hold conferences, seminars, workshops and special events. On his initiative, AFICS sponsors annual concerts to UN heroes. It has already honored Ralph Bunche and is planning a Dag Hammarskjöld celebration.

Saddler's work was notable not only in the host country, but he also created and supported AFICS affiliates abroad. New

branches are emerging in Brazil, Ethiopia, Mali, Thailand and eight other countries.

He has also represented AFICS on the UN Pension Board and played a role in NGO activities and pre-retirement seminars or serving staff. Like that of a number of members inspired by his example, Saddler's work was entirely voluntary.



George F. Saddler

East Timorese vote for assembly

EAST TIMOR from p. 7 of the vote, or 43 seats in the Assembly, and 12 of the 13 Districts seats. The other 15 parties are evenly represented. Among the new delegates are 23 women, who occupy 27% of the seats. Women failed to achieve the 33% they had fought for.

The SRSRG Sergio Vieira de Mello, UNTAET administrator, congratulated the women, saying: "This is not bad at all compared with many parliaments in (other) democratic countries."

The voters in the huge and

vote. But for the East Timorese it was a challenge. Memories were still fresh on the second anniversary of 30 August 1999, when the Timorese people defied threats by anti-democratic forces and voted in a Referendum on Independence.

Many had come from remote mountain locales, where they had been hiding for years, to register. On 30 August 1999, almost 100% of the eligible voters left their refuge despite a campaign of violent intimidation by the Indonesian military and local militias, which was condemned by the Security

withdrew after 450 years of colonialism, Indonesia took control. For the next 24 years, East Timor was part of Indonesia (an archipelago of more than 13,000 islands). But the people wanted freedom.

They would not talk about it when they came to register in Lospalos. Shy and reticent, inhabitants of small villages hardly discussed their beliefs with UNTAET officers. Most didn't even know why they were registering. Many thought they would vote for president. UNTAET officers taught them.

The post-30 August 1999 violence had left a deep trauma. UNTAET provided heavy security in every polling place and on the roads. People felt reassured. One of them was overwhelmed by emotion – Jose Alexandre Gusmao, called Xanana, is expected to be elected president next year. Said Xanana: "This ballot shows the maturity of our people, their willingness to go through the democratic system and to avoid violence".

As soon as the results were