

# **IDRC Alumni Newsletter**

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## ***....from the Chairman***

In the spring of 2002 a group of old IDRC "hands" began to meet regularly to discuss the merits of creating an IDRC former-staff organization. Essentially in these informal gatherings we remembered the extraordinary group of people who came together to give purpose and body to IDRC. Increasingly in our discussions we realized that, as David Hopper, the Centre's first president, shaped and directed many of us and the activities that would realize the Centre's goals, we had been privileged to be involved in a continuing adventure that included some strange, humorous, and significant times and events.

Next

**Annual Reception  
&  
Meeting**

At  
**IDRC Conference  
Facility  
14<sup>th</sup> floor  
250 Albert Street**

**October 24, 2003  
5:00 p.m.**



**Board Members**—*Claude Paul Boivin, Jim Pfeifer, Mary Blackwell, Alison Craig, Gerry Bourrier, Angie Anton, and Jean Marc Fleury.*

In polling our IDRC colleagues about a former staff group we encountered an overwhelmingly positive response. We developed a preliminary list of former staff members and organized the inaugural meeting of the group--the September 20, 2002, reception. That evening nearly 100 of us joined the new organization--which we called IDRC ALUMNI [Les Anciens du CRDI]--and, after the shortest corporate meeting in history (a tradition we will maintain), the Members present decided to convert the founding committee into the founding Board, charged with the responsibility of developing a more clearly defined set of activities and a form of corporate structure.

We now have 140 Members. Our plan is to continue to work in the context of an Annual Reception and Meeting. The meeting in 2003 will take place on Friday, October 24, at 5 pm, in the IDRC Conference facility in Ottawa. This year we will include a development seminar for interested Members prior to the Reception and Meeting. Our future meetings will broaden the activities as we hear the Members' preferences.

In closing, I extend my sincere thanks to our colleagues on the Board, **Mary Blackwell** - Secretary, **Gerry Bourrier** - Treasurer, **Alison Craig** - Membership Director, **Claude Paul Boivin** - Director Programs and Activities, and IDRC staff representatives **Angie Anton** and **Jean-Marc Fleury**. Their joint efforts and constant innovations have ensured our development and progress. The Board joins me in thanking **Maureen O'Neil**, President of IDRC, for her continued interest and support. And we thank you all for your flow of suggestions for future activities and for identifying potential new IDRC Alumni Members.

Happy New Year. See you in October.

**James Pfeifer**  
*Chairman*

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## **Ideas for Alumni Program**

### *Tell Us What You Would Like*

Now that the IDRC Alumni Association has been formally established, planning for the coming year's activities has begun, and we are looking for your ideas. Because of the success of the first reunion in September 2002, there will definitely be a second annual reception on Friday, October 24, 2003. That event will again be held at IDRC in Ottawa. The reception will be preceded by a seminar and roundtable discussion on a current development topic.

The Alumni Newsletter team is in place. Anyone with ideas for regular columns, news to pass on, or if you are willing to write for our e-mail publication is invited to contact us. The database of members is now fully functional, and we are always looking for new addresses and updates. Please help us keep the database as up to date as possible.

**Golf anyone?** Last year a few former employees participated in the annual IDRC golf tournament. We are hoping future tournaments will be open to all Alumni members. We are discussing this with the Golf Committee. The tournament is held in late summer, and details will be communicated to you closer to the event..

**All aboard!** One idea that has been put forward would see the Alumni organize a tour of several IDRC projects. If you have any interest in such an activity, we would like to hear from you. Another idea proposed by a member is the establishment of a scholarship fund in support of international development.

Please send us your ideas and views for activities or projects, which will be discussed by the Alumni Board.

***Dust Off Those Winter Blues!!***

Walking is one of life's great pleasures and it costs nothing. Ottawa is a perfect place to take walks, with its many parks, waterways, trails, and closeness to Gatineau Park.

Although we are now in the depths of winter, Spring is not too far off. In eager anticipation of Ottawa's reawakening, when the trees burst into green and the tulips burst into bud, a number of alumni are looking forward to exploring the City's byways and other lesser-known places.

We are wondering whether other like-minded individuals would care to join us on our rambles during the Spring and Summer months. This would not be a fitness contest, but rather, an opportunity to spend time with friends, enjoy the fresh air, and discover parts of Ottawa that perhaps you have yet to explore. As an added bonus, walking is great for your health!

Should any of you be interested in pursuing such an activity, please contact either Mary ([blackme@cyberus.ca](mailto:blackme@cyberus.ca)) or Alison ([alisoncraig@cyberus.ca](mailto:alisoncraig@cyberus.ca)).

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***In Memoriam***



**Anthony "Tony" Price, CM, LLB, DCL**

Tony was born in Quebec City on September 30, 1929, and died at his home on Ile d'Orleans, Quebec, on September 28, 2002, after a two-year battle with cancer. Tony received his education at the old High School of Quebec, Ashbury College (Ottawa), Bishop's University (Lennoxville) and Laval University (Quebec City). He practiced law with Letourneau, Stein, Monast. He also founded the Musée du Fort in Quebec City. He then spent 12 years in Africa for the Canadian International Development Agency and the International Development Research Centre.

Tony is survived by his wife of 45 years Muffy, his children Evan (Dominique), Eric, and Lucy (Michael), as well as five grandchildren. He was predeceased by his

daughter, Virginia. A funeral service was held in Quebec City on October 1 followed by a memorial service October 12, also in Quebec City.

Tony joined IDRC in 1972 and relocated to Dakar to act as Regional Director in the Centre's first Regional Office in Africa, which was established early 1973. In 1975 the Centre's relocated again to Nairobi and Tony was instrumental in setting up the Centre's Regional Office in East Africa. He served as Regional Director in Nairobi until 1979. On his return to Canada he undertook negotiation and mediation roles in several of Canada's major Aboriginal land claims cases. He also strengthened awareness of Quebec's historic and cultural heritage through his involvement in many of the city's restoration projects.

In a telephone conversation in August, Tony expressed his enthusiasm for the proposed establishment of an IDRC Alumni Association. Muffy and Tony were looking forward to attending the reception held on September 22 for former IDRC employees. Unfortunately, they were unable to attend but Tony did send a letter that was shared with the group at the reception. In that letter he said "*our time with IDRC was the best years of our life. The management tried to pick good people, it trusted them to work professionally and to behave with integrity, it encouraged them to get on with the job with a minimum of bureaucratic interference and frustration, and all of this created an exciting and fulfilling work place for everybody. On our behalf, say "hello" to everybody and, most sincerely from us, thank them for their friendship and the good times we have enjoyed together. Tony and Muffy*"

## **Jean M. Steckle, PhD**

Jean died peacefully, at her Heritage Farm home, on Friday, January 17, 2003, after a long struggle with cancer. She is survived by a brother as well as several nieces, nephews and cousins. Funeral services were held at Trinity United Church in Kitchener on January 22.

Jean was a graduate of the University of Guelph, Cornell University and the University of Reading. She had a long career in nutrition, serving the United Nations in Africa and Rome, the International Development Research Centre, and Health Canada. Jean was employed by IDRC from 1970 to 1976 as an Associate Director-Nutrition, first in Ottawa and at the Regional Office in Dakar beginning in 1973.

Her retirement years were devoted to establishing the J. Steckle Heritage Homestead, where she developed programs related to agriculture, food and nutrition for youth, families and various community groups. Her Agriventure farm camp and the programs of the Homestead have been a delight to thousands of local youth in recent years. Further information on Jean's great contribution and accomplishments can be found on [www.web.net/~jsteckle](http://www.web.net/~jsteckle).

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# *Where Are They Now?*

## **KARL A. SMITH**

Those who were lucky enough to count themselves among Karl's colleagues will well remember the quiet, courteous and modest man who finished his career at IDRC as Director General of the Health Sciences Division in 1992.

With degrees in medicine (MB. ChB and MD) from Aberdeen, and Public Health (MPH and DrPH) from Yale University, Karl's interests gradually leaned toward teaching and field research, resulting in his appointment as Vice-Dean (Clinical) in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of the West Indies.

Karl's first contacts with the Centre were in the early 1970s, when he was retained as a consultant on various projects for the Health Sciences Division. During this time he maintained his position at the University of the West Indies, and also accepted a two-year visiting professorship in Health Care and Epidemiology at the University of British Columbia.

In 1977, IDRC was fortunate to recruit Karl to its staff, and his 15-year career with the Centre included increasingly responsible positions within the Health Sciences Division, as well as postings to both WARO in Dakar and EARO in Nairobi.

Since retiring from the Centre in 1992, Karl has continued his commitment to international development, by acting as a consultant in both Africa (The Gambia) and South America (Guyana), as well as serving for several years as Advisory Editor for the prestigious Journal *Social Science and Medicine*.

Karl also gives of his time to his community, participating in church affairs and volunteering with various local groups and organizations. He was recently elected President of the Royal Commonwealth Society, Ottawa Branch. This appointment also affords him an opportunity to maintain links with other former IDRC colleagues who are members of the Society.

Karl makes his home in Ottawa with his wife, Patsy, as well as keeping up with other members of his extended family in the United States and the Caribbean.

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## **PILAR BASILIO-BHATIA**

Pilar joined IDRC in 1973, shortly after immigrating to Canada from the Philippines. During her 9 years at the Centre she undertook many challenging assignments in administration. While at IDRC she married a fellow colleague, Ramesh Bhatia.

In 1982 Ramesh accepted an assignment with the Asian Development Bank and Pilar and their two young children left Ottawa to explore new horizons and to enjoy a warmer climate in the Philippines. Pilar was unable to work while they were in the Philippines



and became a full time Mom and later a time a student at the Asian Institute of Management (AIM), a renowned regional center for business management in Asia. Many new challenges faced Pilar as she juggled her family responsibilities as well as the pressures and responsibilities of being a full time student. After 18 months, she graduated and completed her masters degree and a comprehensive thesis on a corporate strategy for a Philippine garment export company. Following completion of her MBA, Pilar became involved in small cottage industry business and other profit-making small ventures.

In 1986 the family began thinking long term about the education of their children and returned to North America, this time to Washington where Pilar was offered a consultancy at the World Bank in Washington. This consultancy lead to other interesting assignments and for several years those assignments also allowed her to enjoy many opportunities to travel and to learn a great deal about the culture and people in South Asia from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal. Pilar continues to work at the World Bank and is presently a Senior Resource Manager of the Operations Evaluations Vice-Presidency, which is the independent evaluation arm of the Bank, small, structured, challenging but manageable. During her time at the World Bank Pilar has also completed two Bank-sponsored executive training development programs at Harvard.

Both of Pilar and Ramesh's children returned to Canada to do their undergraduate degrees at Queens University. Amar has just completed his MA English at UK's Sussex University and is now at Osgoode Law School at York University. Maya is completing her MS in environmental biology and glaciology at the University of Alberta. Both claim they prefer to work and live in Canada, and as a result Canada is high on Pilar's list of places to return to when she retires. In preparation for retirement, she is developing her new-found artistic inclination and is presently studying Chinese brush painting.

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## **“As Though We Had Never Left”**

### **The First IDRC Alumni Reception a “Big Hit”**

The first **IDRC Alumni** reception held last fall was indeed quite a special celebration – a big hit with more than 125 friends and former colleagues present. The room was filled with memories, laughter and, yes, the inevitable talk of development. In some ways, it was as though we had never left. The collegiality and the camaraderie were intact in spite of years of absence. All were happy to be there to relive, if only for a few moments, the excitement and pride that working for IDRC had brought us all.



*Maria (Herrera) Williams, Reg MacIntyre,  
Pilar Basilio- Bhatia, Denis Rey*

*Gerry Bourrier, Claude Paul Boivin*

Among the very first to arrive was the one person who can genuinely be referred to as the patriarch of the Centre. Dr. David Hopper generated a buzz in the room and he received a rousing round of applause when he was formally introduced. By his very presence, the man who had laid the foundation upon which the IDRC character and style were built made many reflect on the Centre's origins and on what, collectively, had been achieved over the years.



*Rose Wood, Brenda Nichols, Jean Marc Fleury*

*Michel Seguin, Pierre Zaya, Jean Paul Joly*

The conversations and reminiscing went on all evening. To help Alumni members recall the past, the walls of the 14<sup>th</sup> floor IDRC reception room had been covered with photographs of thirty years of IDRC life. That generated much attention, amusement and several fashion commentaries. A short business meeting was held to officially establish the IDRC Alumni, which was approved unanimously and enthusiastically. Officers for the Alumni were elected, with Jim Pfeifer as the first President of the new organization of former "IDRCers".



*Claude Paul Boivin, Chantal Roddy, Maria (Herrera) Williams*



*Nihal Kappagoda, Henrique Tono, Marina Tono, Ruth (Zagorin) Hopper, David Hopper*



*Serge Dube, Rachel Desrosiers, Pierre Zaya-*



*Judy Cray, Arthur Vespry, Alan Meltzer*



*Doug Daniels, Kathy Kealey, Joe Chouinard*



*Inder Bhoi, Robert Auger, Carol Sissons*





*Ruth (Zagorin) Hopper, Nihal Kappagoda*



*Jim Pfeifer, Ramesh Bhatia*



*Andrew Ker, Gerry Bourrier*

*David Hopper, Louis Berlinguet*

Everyone thought that the reception was a success. The people, the conversations, the photos, the memories and the good food made the evening a memorable event. Next year's reunion should be just as exciting. See you then!

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## **The Tanzania Essential Health Interventions Project (TEHIP) in *The Economist***

*The Economist* featured the IDRC project TEHIP in an editorial and a three-page special report in its August 17 - 23, 2002, issue.

TEHIP is a research and development project supported by IDRC in partnership with Tanzania's Ministry of Health. Don De Savigny, who was a program officer with the former Health Sciences Division of IDRC, has played a key role in the success of the project.



The idea behind TEHIP is to improve health by planning spending more efficiently, according to where the needs are greatest. Since 1997 this idea has been tested in two rural Tanzanian districts. TEHIP researchers have developed tools to help the districts collect and analyze information. These tools provide the ‘evidence’ that enables the district health teams to set priorities and allocate resources, rather than merely implementing plans imposed from above.

*The Economist* called TEHIP's results “stunning,” adding that the project “has shown that a small health budget can go a long way, provided that the money is spent with care. The results are so striking that they are worth examining in detail.” To read the full article, please go to [www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story\\_id=1280587](http://www.economist.com/displaystory.cfm?story_id=1280587)

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### **Credits**

The Board members thank **Michèle Wilson** for translating the Newsletter, and **Reg MacIntyre** for editorial assistance.