



IDRC Alumni Newsletter

Number 5

May 2004

INSIDE:

- News from the Board
- Travel diva reminisces
- Update on members
- Not lost in translation
- Literary lions
- Reunion 2004
- Golf anyone?

The *Alumni Newsletter* team:
Bob Stanley, Mary Baker Blackwell,
Alison Craig, Michèle Wilson

Write:
Bob Stanley, 6853 Twin Lakes
Avenue, Greely, ON K4P 1P1
Email: stanleyb@rogers.com

Kofi Annan at IDRC



*Gordon Smith, Chair of the Board of Governors and IDRC President
Maureen O'Neil welcome the Secretary-General.*

On 9 March 2004, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan visited IDRC's Head Office in Ottawa. The occasion was an informal meeting with Canadian civil society and Canadian government representatives. The meeting took place at IDRC at the request of the Minister for International Cooperation, Aileen Carroll, who also attended.

Mr. Annan was accompanied by a small delegation that included his wife, Nane, and UN Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Fréchette.

IDRC's President, Maureen O'Neil, chaired the meeting. There was a frank exchange of views between civil society representatives on the one hand, and the Secretary-General and some of his most senior officials on the other. Civil society representatives urged the Canadian government to take a more pro-active role on development and humanitarian issues,

Continued on next page

Annan visit

and many of those present noted that the lack of interest by Canadian (and other) politicians is linked to the lack of an active civil society constituency pushing development issues onto the agenda. The Millennium Development Goals, gender, and HIV/AIDS formed the broad framework for the discussion.

Though IDRC was not the object of the meeting, a few participants highlighted the work of IDRC. For example, Michel Chaurette, Director of the Centre canadien d'étude et de coopération internationale (CECI), in Montréal, told the Secretary-General about the work of IDRC in the evaluation of policies to alleviate poverty, the overarching objective of the Millennium Development Goals. Mr. Chaurette suggested that the UN System make use of the methodologies developed with IDRC support for the monitoring of poverty. Mr. Annan's staff took note.

From the Board

IDRC Alumni is now mid-way through its second year of life and we can look back on 18 months of accomplishment in establishing the organization. Having said that, the Board continues to welcome members' suggestions for new areas of focus. Of note to members:

- ❑ As reported in your January newsletter, the Board has been increased in size with the addition of Chris Smart and Bob Stanley, and effective our meeting of April 21, Angie Anton, formerly IDRC staff representative to the Board, and now retired from IDRC, becomes our newest director.
- ❑ Bob Stanley has assumed responsibility for putting together the newsletter, and his knowledge and experience have already brought positive changes to both presentation and content.
- ❑ Chris Smart is currently involved in discussions with IDRC about assistance for the development of an IDRC Alumni web page, which may be hosted on the IDRC site. A web page would be an ideal notice board and information centre for our members. More on that later.
- ❑ Discussions are underway with IDRC staff on a possible collaboration between IDRC and IDRC Alumni to present a development seminar or presentation on critical development issues. We are hoping that this can happen in conjunction with our **Annual Meeting and Reunion on Friday, September 24.**

As always we welcome your suggestions for new directions and activities.

Jim Pfeifer, Chairman



IDRC's retiring Travel Diva, Angie Anton reminisces



Still smiling... Angie then and now, with fellow Board members Mary Blackwell, Jim Pfeifer and Gerry Bourrier.

'I simply had a wonderful time'

It does not seem possible that I have now retired from IDRC after 29 years at the Centre. April 7, 2004 was the "kick-off date" for stepping back, but also walking forward to a new stage. My big fat Greek retirement is now here!

The years at IDRC have flown by so quickly but all that time in the Travel Office exposed me to a wonderful cross-section of talented, bright, and interesting men and women here in Ottawa and around the world. I had a wonderful time, as simple as that.

I remember the heady early years at 60 Queen Street where all the laughs started. Then the growing, continuing years at 250 Albert Street, the laughter still there but now mixed with constant changes and upheavals. But still we were able to navigate everything together.



My position in the Travel Office gave me the wonderful opportunity to work with people at all levels in the Centre – administration, senior management, Board of Governors, and program division staff. Travel bookings were made to the four corners of the world, and for someone like myself, who loved the romance of travel, my job was never boring.

The Centre also gave me the chance to travel overseas for Board meetings, and even to be part of a team in 1998 (Jim Pfeifer, Mary Baker Blackwell and Nancy Hutchinson) to work in China for a month while setting up INBAR (the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan).

So many memories to share... jungle lunches at 60 Queen, Christmas revues that started in 1978 (it's good to see that those revues are still being held every year). There are so many memories in common, so many stories to re-live, laughs to share, and hopefully we will do this together when our paths continue to cross through the Alumni reunions and this newsletter.

I am now moving down the Rideau to Jones Falls. Sand Lake and my garden awaits...

Angie

Update on Members

Gerry Toomey IDRC 1980-1989

Since leaving IDRC's Communications Division, Gerry has been a freelance science writer and editor for the past decade. After leaving IDRC he spent four years with the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) in The Hague where he was head of publications.

His recent writing assignments have been mainly about tropical agriculture and the environment in Africa and Latin America. Working from his home in Chelsea, Quebec, Gerry is currently an associate of Green Ink Publishing Services, a small firm based in the UK (www.greenink.co.uk).

John Poirier IDRC 1978-1982

After leaving the Centre, John spent some years in Cairo, Egypt, where he represented KPMG (U.S.) on a major USAID project. Returning to Canada in 1991, John set up his own public accounting practice in Ottawa. His areas of practice include international tax as well as tax and financial planning.

Line Bédard IDRC 1971-1997

I still live in Gatineau. I consider myself semi-retired as I give second language tests as a freelancer in three Crown Corporations, IDRC being one of them.

I am also very active at the Ottawa Meditation Centre as a member of the Shambhala Learning Committee where, among other things, I practise meditation, coordinate programs and provide training to assistants.

What motivates me and makes me happy is to live fully the present moment, to appreciate its richness and beauty, and to make myself available to others.

Jacqueline Bustos IDRC 1971-1986

I joined IDRC in August 1971 as a secretary in the Social Sciences and Human Resources Division. At the time, the whole Centre occupied two floors of the Pebb Building, at Billings Bridge. These were exciting days, indeed, for the Centre was just starting. Later, I became Assistant for Conferences and Seminars. I was Awards Officer in the Fellowships and Awards Division when I left the Centre in June 1986 to accompany my husband who had been posted to Lisbon as Commercial Counsellor to the Canadian Embassy for a period of four years.

Continued on next page



At home in Lisbon

In Lisbon, I took advantage of my free time to study Architecture and Interior Design at the Fundação Ricardo Espírito Santo e Silva. I graduated just before returning to Canada.

I was writing my last exams when the movers were busy packing our personal effects at home. My husband was later posted to Brazil which allowed me to further improve my Portuguese, albeit with a different pronunciation.

In Brazil, I regularly bought salmon imported from Chile. Thus, I was particularly proud of witnessing the success of one of the Centre's Pearson Fellowships. As some of my ex-colleagues may remember, the introduction of salmon in southern Chile was the subject of a Pearson Fellowship granted to two Chilean researchers. Chilean salmon is now exported throughout Latin America and it is excellent!

Our last posting was Toronto. We returned to Ottawa in the fall of 1997 where we are now fully retired and we enjoy every day. I occasionally help my husband with his translation work, but I also spend time renovating and decorating our home, practicing Japanese painting and calligraphy, designing and making Portuguese rugs (Arraiolos), and I am an avid player of mah-jong and bridge.

2004 REUNION and AGM

We want to hear from you...

The date is set for IDRC Alumni's third annual reunion, which will once again be combined with a brief and efficient Annual General Meeting: Friday, September 24 at IDRC's Ottawa HQ on Albert Street. There's a possibility of combining this with an IDRC seminar on development the same day (see "From the Board" on page 2).

At the April meeting of the Board, newest director Angie Anton bravely agreed to take on the job of coordinating this year's Reunion/AGM. There was also considerable discussion about what form future events should take. Should it remain primarily a social gathering? What about adding some entertainment, and if so, what? Is the location at IDRC appropriate? The real question is: What do the members want? The Board needs to hear from you with your ideas for the future of this, the main event of the Alumni calendar. By email or snail mail (address on the front page) let us know what you think. Meanwhile be sure you've marked September 24 on your calendar!

Where Are They Now?

Claude Paul Boivin catches up with Michèle Wilson

(NOT) LOST IN TRANSLATION

Many of you will remember sending English language documents to the IDRC translation services and receiving, shortly thereafter, a French text that was often a better read than the original. A great deal of the credit for those quality translations must go to Michèle Wilson.

For 13 years, starting in 1982, Michèle worked in the Centre's translation unit, and was its Head for most of that period. With a genuine love of languages, she was committed to producing professional, precise and graceful translations. Michèle meticulously researched terminology and never hesitated to take the time to contact the writer of the original document to ensure that the intended message was well understood.

Michèle found other ways of serving her colleagues. She was active on the IDRC Staff Association, and was elected as its President for two years. More recently, as a member of the IDRC Alumni, she accepted the responsibility of translating all of the Alumni newsletters into French. Her availability for that role is greatly appreciated by the Alumni Board, especially given that communication with Alumni members is its top priority.

Since retiring in 1995, Michèle has been doing freelance translation work. Her hobbies are gardening, pottery, knitting and swimming. The latter, she seems to do seriously, as she was always at the pool when we called for an update on her current interests.

On behalf of all IDRC Alumni Members, the Alumni Board expresses its gratitude to Michèle for her continuing dedication to her IDRC colleagues by translating the Alumni newsletters into French – merci beaucoup, Michèle.



The Meadows
GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB

Alumni Welcome at IDRC's Annual Golf Day

An invitation has been issued again this year to all Alumni members to play in IDRC's staff golf tournament. This is not a day for serious golf. The format is scramble (best ball) and the object is to have fun, so you don't have to be a scratch golfer. In fact, it may be better if you're not!

Wednesday, August 25, starting at noon. Meadows Golf and Country Club (same as last year) 4335 Hawthorne Road. \$70 includes green fees, electric cart and dinner.

To register or for more information, contact Linda MacWillie at IDRC (236-6163 ext. 2134), lmacwillie@idrc.ca.



Isabel Huggan: wins
\$25,000 prize.

IDRC ALUMNI'S LITERARY LIONS

Isabel Huggan, wife of Bob Huggan, has won the 2004 Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-Fiction for her new book, *Belonging: Home Away from Home*. A total of 182 submissions were considered for the prize – which includes \$25,000 and professional promotion of the winner's book. In addition to the award, copies of the book will be placed in all Canadian high school libraries.

Isabel has travelled extensively as she and Bob pursued their careers on various continents (see *Alumni Newsletter No.3*). Her new book has its roots in many of her travels, but particularly in the arrival of Isabel and Bob at the farmhouse home they adopted, and where they now live, in the Cevennes region in France.

Unfortunately Bob was unable to accompany Isabel to Toronto to receive her award in April as he is recovering from injuries (not life threatening) suffered in a car accident in France earlier this year. Bob is a member of the IDRC Alumni, and has been a continuing source of advice and direction for the establishment of our association.

You can find more details of Isabel's award on the Internet at www.cbc.ca/arts/stories/hugganCTwin20040419.

JP

Mention one book and of course you learn of others...

IDRC Alumni will want to know about other books from the pens of former colleagues...

Paul Vitta. "Dry water". Protea Publishing. You can learn more about this one at www.Proteapublishing.com

Osita Ogbu. "The Moon Also Sets". East African Educational Trust (Peak Library).

Clayton Bailey. "The Expedition". Great Plains Publications. Clayton shared the first prize for the Amazon.ca/Books in Canada First Novel Award.

We would love to hear about other books written by former IDRC staff – fiction or non-fiction. We'll pass on the news and you watch the sales soar!

CS

In Memoriam

Eleanor Shaughnessy

On December 20, 2003, Eleanor Shaughnessy passed away at the age of 91. Eleanor worked at IDRC as the Conference Coordinator in the early days, from 1975 to 1977. She is best remembered by those who worked with her for her hearty laugh and terrific sense of humor.

Eleanor is survived by one brother and fondly remembered by many nieces and nephews. A Mass in Memory of Eleanor was held December 23 at St. Elisabeth Church in Ottawa.

Bernice Holst

On November 18, 2003, Bernice Holst passed away at the age of 79. Bernice worked at the Centre from 1981 to 1989. She held positions as receptionist in the President's office and as secretary in the Social Sciences Division.

Bernice is survived by Patricia, Linda, Kathryn and Stephen and was the proud and devoted Gran of seven grandchildren. Funeral services were held November 22 at St. Augustines Church in Ottawa.



**Cecilia Blanco
de Mendoza**

Cecilia Blanco de Mendoza passed away peacefully in Barranquilla, Colombia, April 30, following a lengthy battle with cancer. Cecilia is survived by her mother, daughters Cecilia and Marguerita, and her grandchildren in Colombia.

Cecilia was one of IDRC's original employees joining the staff when the Latin America Regional Office (LARO) was established in Bogota in 1972. As the Administrative Officer she faced the many challenges encountered when a new office is created, in her competent, calm, totally organized manner. Cecilia worked closely with colleagues in Ottawa, as well as the other regional offices. Her professionalism and efficiency was quickly recognized and appreciated. Following her departure from IDRC Cecilia pursued her love of cooking and attended Le Cordon Bleu culinary school in Europe. She continued to host culinary classes in Bogota until recently.

Cecilia joined the IDRC Alumni when it was formed in 2002 and had hoped to attend the reception this year. She said her years with IDRC were among the best years of her life. Condolences can be sent to her family by email to luiferg10@hotmail.com.