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## Send us your memories

*Ron Harpelle and Bruce Muirhead*

The IDRC History Project receives many calls from interesting people. To date, as the IDRC Historians, we have logged well over 100 interviews. There are many more people who have contributed to the history of the IDRC, and they are scattered around the world. We will never be able to interview everyone, yet we would like to hear from as many people as possible. That is why we are inviting people to tell us about their history with the Centre.

We invite everyone who has participated in IDRC development activities over the years – including staff, recipients or awardees – and who has a story (or stories) to contribute, to send us a short, written contribution. We especially welcome full accounts of the challenges of development and changes you have seen over the years. Please also include a short biography that describes your background, your connection to IDRC, and the years you were affiliated with the Centre.

Note that we will review all material submitted, select some or all of it, edit it and potentially share it with the public by including it in our upcoming book on the history of IDRC (subject to editing). Submissions may also be included in our digital library.

Accordingly, please understand that by sending your contribution to the project you agree that it may be edited and used and shared with the public in these ways.

Send your submissions by email to [agouvea@idrc.ca](mailto:agouvea@idrc.ca) or by post to The IDRC History Project, c/o Adriana Gouvea, 250 Albert Street, Ottawa, ON, Canada K1G 3H9

## Ooops!

Congratulations to all those who noticed the error in the report of the 2006 Reunion (see issue No.13). The event took place, of course, at the Centre's current headquarters on Albert Street, not at its former home on Queen Street! Turns out that I was also a little premature in saying that the 2007 Reunion would be held at the Centre's new HQ. It seems the move now won't take place until October, and the reception facilities won't be available until December. On learning this, your Board decided to advance the date and hold the Reunion on September 28 – one last time at 250 Albert Street. We look forward to seeing many of you there!

*BobS*

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## From the Board...

In the fifth year of IDRC Alumni and beginning to think of the fall Annual General Meeting and Reception. As some of the alumni will have heard, the IDRC will be moving to new premises at 150 Kent Street in October. IDRC will occupy floors 2 to 8. This is for your general information, as we expect to be meeting in the current premises on Albert Street, on the 14<sup>th</sup> floor, as usual. Because the Centre staff will be preparing for the move of premises in late September and October, the proposed date for our AGM and Reunion is Friday, 28 September, earlier than our usual fall date.

If a change of our meeting date is required because of moving arrangements, the meeting date may move forward to Friday, 14 September. We will advise you more precisely once IDRC staff have finalized the move arrangements. We hope members will find the meeting date convenient. I believe we are the last event scheduled in the Albert Street premises

The September meeting will be preceded again by a meeting of interested members with the President and senior staff of IDRC to discuss programme issues. This year there will be a special twist to the discussions, as the authors of the IDRC history, Ron Harpelle and Bruce Muirhead, will be present to discuss their progress with you. As noted on page 1, members are being asked for any anecdotal or other information you may have for possible inclusion in the history. Please take the time to respond with the information you may think relevant, or colourful, or both.

On behalf of Chris Smart, I am happy to advise that our IDRC Alumni website development is progressing well. Ed Brandon, a former IDRC staff member in Information Sciences, and now with the Canadian Public Health Association, has agreed to be our webmaster.

Our membership at time of writing stands at 122, and we hope to exceed last year's membership total by a significant number. With that goal in mind, please take the opportunity to advise any former IDRC staff members you run into, that we would welcome their joining in.

I am pleased to advise you that Jean-Marc Fleury has joined our Board as a Director, In his place as a staff representative, the President of IDRC has designated Cathy Raymond Martin to join Kim Daly as an IDRC representative to the Board.

We look forward to seeing you in September.

**James Pfeifer**  
Chairman

## A 25-year IDRC connection bears fruit



Neill McKee

“At last our new VIPP manual and website are ready,” writes Neill McKee former IDRC Filmmaker and Associate Director of the Communication Division (1975-1989). The manual is titled “Visualisation in Participatory Programmes: How to facilitate and visualise participatory group processes” and was co-authored by McKee, Maria Angelica Salas, Hermann J. Tillmann, and Nuzhat Shahzadi.

VIPP is a people-centred methodology for conducting group events, large and small, derived from years of experience in education and communication programmes. VIPP is unique in providing a creative combination of different visualised approaches emphasizing the importance of participation in solving development problems at the stakeholder and managerial level, rather than just at the community level. It is derived from the empowerment processes of educators like Paulo Freire in Latin America and the more structured processes of Metaplan in Germany.

It all began in the early 1980s when McKee, then still at IDRC, met anthropologists Hermann (Timmi) Tillmann, from Germany, and Maria Angelica (Maruja) Salas, a Peruvian, in the Huanchaco Valley of Peru. Tillmann and Salas were recipients of an IDRC Social Sciences Division grant, using a popular magazine and other methods to strengthen the cultural heritage of the Huacho people. Their work was documented by McKee in the IDRC film, “Footholds”. Later they moved to Germany and began to innovate with Metaplan methods in training Germans who were going overseas to work in rural development.

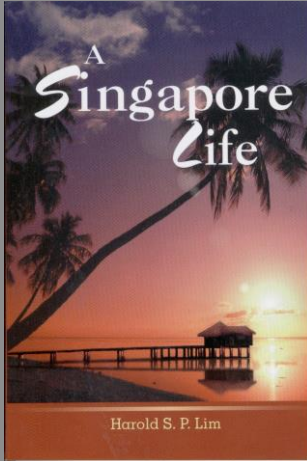
McKee was exposed to their methods in Germany in 1986, and when he began working with UNICEF Bangladesh in 1990 he started to apply these to participatory training and collaborative planning in many child health and development programmes. He invited Tillmann and Salas to Bangladesh to train facilitators on the methods and to co-author the first VIPP manual. Since then hundreds of people have been trained as VIPP facilitators and the method has been applied to planning, training and organizational development processes in many fields throughout the world.

The IDRC connection does not end there, however. Southbound, a publishing company in Penang, Malaysia, headed by Chin Saik Yoon, former IDRC Communication Officer in Singapore, has recently released a new version of the VIPP manual and launched a VIPP website and interactive blogsite, in collaboration with McKee, now running a Johns Hopkins University health communication program in Moscow, Russia (see Alumni Newsletter No.8). They worked with Tillmann and Salas, now based in Germany after years in Southeast Asia, and a UNICEF staff member and facilitator, Nuzhat Shahzadi.

The new manual was written for the trained facilitator of group events. It is designed to reinforce concepts and techniques learned in training of facilitators and trainers in participatory group processes. The contents page and ordering information are available online at:

<http://www.southbound.com.my/vipp>.

## Book review



## Memories of a Singapore childhood

*A Singapore Life* by Harold S.P. Lim. iUniverse. 2006. ISBN-13: 978-0-595-41355-3 or ISBN-10: 0-595-41355-2. Price \$15.

Constance Lim was in charge of the Fellowships and Awards Activity when FAD was placed in SIP (now SID) with the changes of the early 1990s. (Funny how quickly that notation signals ancient history!) Constance was born in Singapore and came to Canada in her teens, with her family, to settle in Vancouver. Her father, Harold, likes to tell stories and she asked him to put them into emails to use as bedtime stories for her two sons. Many of the stories were based on memories of growing up in Singapore. Constance has now edited the stories and published them as *A Singapore Life*.

This book will delight anyone who has visited Singapore — and that must be a good number of IDRC Alumni. I first went to Singapore in the late 1960s when there were no skyscrapers and malls. The main western-style department store was Robinson's, but the real shopping was in Change Alley and the Chinese shop-houses and the best eating was after dark in the Car Park restaurants. Returning in the 1980s was a form of 'culture shock' as I tried to absorb the speed and scale of change. Having a chance with this book to see the "old" Singapore through the eyes of a little boy is a treat.

Proceeds from sales of the book go to the World Wildlife Fund. You can read the preface and the first chapter at [http://www.iuniverse.com/bookstore/book\\_detail.asp?&isbn=0-595-41355-2](http://www.iuniverse.com/bookstore/book_detail.asp?&isbn=0-595-41355-2). You can purchase the book through this website or at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

Chris Smart

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## We'd like to hear from YOU...

...so drop us a line. Let us know what you're doing, where you've been. Got a new job? Published a book? Moved to another country? Just back from another country? Our members like to hear news of their former colleagues — people consistently tell us that they turn to the "Where are they now?" feature first when they receive their newsletter. (It starts on the next page.) It's a great way to stay in touch.

So don't be shy. Whether you send a few paragraphs or a detailed article we'll be happy to publish your contributions. And if you can send a picture as well, so much the better. By email or snail mail will be fine. The addresses are on the front page. Look forward to hearing from you.

## Where Are They Now?

### Carol McPherson

#### IDRC 1970-1975

*A recent recruit to the ranks of the Alumni, Carol writes:*

It was wonderful to read the newsletter and to see the names and photographs of old friends and colleagues. "Alumni" is certainly a good choice of words to describe the nature of the organization's educational impact on me.

After I left IDRC in 1975 I worked in acute care nursing in Edmonton for several years and at one time managed an Art Gallery, and at another, a Day Care Centre. During those years my husband Bill Carmichael and I lived and worked part time on our forested acreage – Coal Creek Stump Farm at Fanny Bay in the South end of the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island).

In 1984 we retired to a cabin on the acreage and in the years that followed, by using a combination of trickle funding and sweat equity, we developed the acreage, and built our home with materials from the acreage.

We became deeply embedded in our small rural community, and in various community service and land use planning organizations. Now, especially after the "wind events" of last December, and as Bill will be 80 this summer, we are thinking about moving to a less complex environment. The Regional District (municipal government for rural areas) is interested in buying the Coal Creek Stump Farm. They propose to use the house for an interpretive centre, and the land for a park.

### Stuart Brown

#### IDRC 1976-1986

*Stuart Brown was the Regional Programme Officer for the Social Sciences Division, based in Dakar with his wife Margaret and four children —Kevin, Timothy, Moira and Fiona. Now Stuart and Margaret are back in Africa where he is the Professor of Philosophy and Religious Studies at Abti University in Adamawa State, Nigeria. Stuart writes of campus life, West Africa style:*

There was a short break in classes for our Founder's Day. Then the exam schedule was incredibly rushed and as soon as it was over we were into the holiday season. First, we got to play grandparents, as my former colleague came from Jos with his family. We had attended the wedding of Hassan and Hadija Jaa'e in April 2002, so we were not surprised to see them come with Abba Yakubu, a friendly, confident lad of 42 months, fluent in Fulfulde, Hausa and English, and Dassa Maryama, a winsome lass of 13 months who paid us the honour of taking her first steps across our living room ...





Stuart Brown

... Our Internet was down, and as the manager was on vacation in Russia we could neither send nor receive messages. By the time Viktor returned we were into the new semester. I have been scrambling to stay ahead of my classes ever since. I am repeating the introduction to Islam and Christianity I taught in the autumn, and I am inventing a course on Middle East history. As the textbook did not arrive, I would have recommended several library books for reserve, but that brings me to another sub-theme. Over the vacation, both Margaret and I changed our place of work. For me it was a real improvement, from an improvised office in a dormitory (that has now resumed its original vocation) I moved into a real office in the brand-new Arts and Sciences building.

The Library [where Margaret works] also moved, but at first it only half moved. Reference and administration moved from the converted warehouse that had served well as a temporary library to very cramped quarters in a series of classrooms and offices in what is supposed to be the university admin building. Gradually, the Library Director has negotiated for more and more of these offices, so last week all the stacks finally made the 2 km trip to their new temporary site. The whole situation does give Margaret and me more opportunities to have lunch together, usually in the student cafeteria.

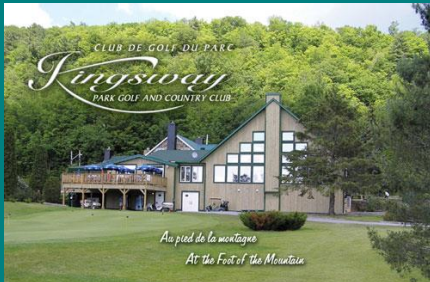
Some time ago, NIFCON, the Anglican Communion's Network for Interfaith Concerns had asked me to attend one of its meetings, which was to be held in Kaduna during the first week of February. I got a Nigerian friend primed to put me on the bus, Adamawa Sunshine, at dawn and I was to contact the archdeacon when I arrived in Kaduna park so someone could fetch me. Uneasy with the idea of the ageing professor riding on public transport, the dean persuaded the Academic VP that I should be provided a vehicle and driver for the journey. As soon as [the Librarian] heard that, she commissioned Margaret to visit the bookshops of Kaduna for the Library.

The driver, Donald, used to drive big buses on the same route, so all the drivers would wave and greet him as we drove along. The journey takes 11 hours, so we had to leave at the crack of dawn in order to arrive before sunset. We stayed at the Catholic Social Centre, where I had been before, and the staff did their best for us: there was no water and electricity was absent half the time, but we got a huge barrel of water every morning.

Saturday Margaret left for Jos and Kaduna, this time as part of a student recruitment tour with the Director of Admissions, our friend and neighbour. It is spring break and I could have gone, but I stayed to get ahead on lectures, to draft a research proposal, to prepare a list of courses for a minor in religious studies and another in history, and to answer at least the October and November email inbox.

# From the Centre

## An Invitation to golf



The IDRC golf committee has decided to change the venue for the Centre's annual tournament this year — across the Ottawa River to the Kingsway Park Golf and Country Club in Aylmer. Alumni members who are going to be in the area at the end of August are once again invited to participate in this fun event and share a glass or two with old colleagues at dinner after the game. Here are the details:

- Tournament takes place on Wednesday, August 29 with a split tee start at noon.
- Location: 1461, Chemin de la Montagne, Gatineau (Secteur Aylmer).
- Cost: \$77.00, which includes golf, cart and a steak dinner.

Linda MacWillie, who is coordinating the tournament, says "We're looking forward to a good turnout this year and are happy to include the Alumni in this event." To book your place in the tournament, contact Linda at [Imacwillie@idrc.ca](mailto:Imacwillie@idrc.ca) or 613-236-6163, ext.2134

## IDRC to have limited use of the Alumni membership list

The Communications Division of IDRC recently asked the Alumni Executive if it might have access to the Alumni membership list. After receiving clarification on how they proposed to make use of the list, your Executive concluded that this would be a potential benefit to members, and agreed to the request on the following conditions:

- The list will be used exclusively by the IDRC Communications Division to promote and publicize activities connected with IDRC's programmes for international development. This will include speakers and public events sponsored by IDRC, as well as books and other media published or co-published by IDRC.
- The list will not be shared with any other individual or organization.
- The list will not be used for open-ended solicitation.

The Executive has informed IDRC that it will be alerting members to this access. Members can have their names removed from IDRC's copy of the list simply by letting IDRC know the first time they receive an email from the Communication Division that they do not wish to receive any future mailings.