



The mission of the IAF is to promote, support, and advance the art and practice of professional facilitation through methods exchange, professional growth, practical research, collegial networking, and support services. This is accomplished through peer-to-peer networking, professional development, and annual conferences which are critical means for fulfilling the mission and reflecting our core values.

Welcome New Members

A very warm welcome to IAF to our newest Canadian members, who have joined (or re-joined) since our last Newsletter in September 2008:

- Emma Bloch-Hansen, Kelowna, BC
- Colleen McGoff Dean, Surrey, BC
- Deborah Fortney, Vernon, BC
- Pamela Heneault, Ottawa, ON
- Mary-Patricia McConnell, Mississauga, ON
- Anne Merritt, Ottawa, ON
- Genevieve Moore, Gloucester, ON
- Jeremy Pearson, Tiverton, ON
- Kimberley Peckford, Halifax, NS
- Lorna Sandberg, Regina, SK
- Kim Stockley, Ingonish, NS
- Katarzyna Tota, Halifax, NS
- Lillian Whitmore, Burnaby, BC

IAF CANADA TOUR 2008

The IAF Canada Tour 2008 touched down in Halifax, Ottawa, and Kitchener for a series of two-day workshops in November. The workshops were led by Dorothy Strachan, a well-known and highly-respected author and facilitator based in Ottawa, and Sandy Schuman, the editor of IAF's various professional practice anthologies, who lives in Albany, New York. From IAF's perspective, the Tour had five main purposes:

- to bring a high-quality professional development event to local IAF members and the wider facilitation communities across eastern Canada;
- to support local networking among the facilitators in the locales where the individual events were held;
- to promote membership in IAF and to raise the profile of the Association;
- to promote registration in the 2009 IAF North America Conference; and,
- to test the feasibility of conducting further local programming in other parts of the country.

The Tour succeeded on all counts. However, registrations were lower than we had hoped (about 80 in total). We learned that much more effort must be put into both general and local promotion. For that, we need a coordinating volunteer and committed teams in each host city. The Tour management firm, Golden Planners of Ottawa, produced an attractive and easy-to-use web

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Information on IAF's annual conferences is available on the IAF global web site (www.iaf-world.org).

North America 2009 (Vancouver, April 20-25)

As you now know, registration is open for the 2009 IAF North America Conference Week in Vancouver on April 20-25. Please go to the IAF North America website (www.iafna.org) for the Conference brochure and registration page. Early Bird pricing ends on December 15. The IAF member access code is: imiafna.

Europe (Groningen, Netherlands, October 2 - 5, 2008)

The 15th IAF Europe Conference was held on the campus of Hanze University of Applied Sciences in the city of Groningen on October 2-5. Crystal Thieringer, an IAF member based in Ottawa, was one of several Canadians who attended the Conference. Here are her impressions.

I was nervous. This was my first IAF conference, and I had already traveled 2 hours by bus, 7 hours by plane and almost 3 hours by train to get here. Not only that, but I'd needed to make an unexpected return to the hotel in order to get my forgotten wallet. I wasn't sure where I was going, who I would meet, or what would be expected of me. And I was late. It wasn't the beginning I had hoped for! I needn't have wor-

ried. The best thing that I did for myself was to register for a pre-conference session. From the start, my pre-conference colleagues were warm and welcoming. We were a small group of 7, and as the days rolled by, several of us commented how wonderful it was to have such a core group. We met later to discuss our various workshops, and most of us attended the session that David Gibson put on. We intended to show support for a pre-conference pal, but in truth, his session was the most energetic and inspiring one of all. He demonstrated some wonderful team-building exercises and showed his sleight-of-hand prowess with a purpose. In one exercise regarding participant energy, David had each person choose a word from a list, and then introduce themselves to others using that word. The next day, several participants were still greeting each other with "Hi, I'm incredible!" and "Hi, I'm fabulous". The effect was amazing; we laughed so much! I do not doubt that I will apply some of his techniques to my next sessions.

I wasn't sure what to expect from the conference, but I was certainly impressed with the friendliness and encouragement that people offered to each other. I had been "introduced" to some by email, and they made a point of welcoming me. I learned a great deal—from experiencing a real-life peer-counseling situation,

IAF CANADA TOUR 2008 (CONTINUED FROM PG 1)

site (which is still up at www.goldenplanners.ca/IAF), and handled registrations and the multitude of other logistical details around the workshops very well. Phil Ecclestone and Robyn Akehurst were a pleasure to work with. The smooth on-site running of the workshops was greatly assisted by our local hosts - Taralee Hammond in Halifax, Ruth Gmehlin in Ottawa, and Mary Shields in Kitchener. Cynthia Cousens, Ruth Gmehlin, Jill Geddes, and Sheri Hord provided early organizational and communications support. Thanks to you all.

We would like to take the Tour to western Canada in the fall of 2009. If you are a member in one of the Prairie Provinces or British Columbia, and would like to become involved in organizing and promoting the Tour, please let me know (613-725-2280,

or jbutcher@magma.ca). We cannot go forward without your active support!

In closing, I would like to extend thanks to Terry Palmer at Wiley Canada for providing the two books used in the workshops - Dorothy's *Making Questions Work* and Sandy's *IAF Handbook of Group Facilitation* - at such generous discounts.

And, most importantly, I would like to thank Dorothy and Sandy themselves for the many hours they contributed, not only in presenting the actual workshops, but also in providing ideas for the structure of the Tour and material for use on the web site. Without their generosity and commitment, the Tour would not have taken place and would not have been such a success.

CONFERENCE UPDATES

to watching some interesting uses of flip charts and sticky walls, to learning a change-management methodology that I can apply right now to my personal life. I saw many things that I will adapt to my own work, as well as a few that I will avoid. All in all, it was an amazing five days. My head is still spinning!

Or is that the jet lag?

Australia/New Zealand (Bathurst, New South Wales, November 26-28, 2008)

One of the many things that our Australian and New Zealand colleagues pride themselves on is their ability to combine a great Conference with a great party. The annual Australasian Facilitators Network/International Association of Facilitators (AFN/IAF) Conference has just wrapped up in Bathurst, New South Wales, Australia. Tom Schwarz, IAF's Regional Representative, sent this report.

This year's Conference invited participants and workshop leaders to explore the possibilities of facilitation beyond our current perceived boundaries, to model practical action for a planet-conscious, people-friendly event, and to connect Conference delegates with the community around them. This was indeed a bold experiment, and we think it was a winner.

We were an intimate group of 125 - drawn to this rural setting from Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Dubai, the Philippines, and Saudi Arabia. Charles Sturt University was a fabulous location, combining generous sponsorship with a rural, open setting that complemented nicely our green approach to the event. The structure of the Conference provided rich choices from among multiple sessions, graded according to experience. We also had lots of spur-of-the-moment workshops, repeats of especially popular ones, "birds-of-a-feather" opportunities for sharing, and much more that made this Conference another chance for us to continue the tradition of breaking boundaries, both societal and geographic. The professional certification event had six candidates - all of them successful. (There are now some 20 IAF Certified Professional Facilitators in the ANZ Region.)

Workshops were highly experiential - a hallmark of all of our Conferences. During the

opening plenary, groups self-formed on the basis of their diversity: geographic, experience, journey to 'be here'. The groups named themselves, then engaged in ongoing reflection and sharing over the course of the Conference. Our time together was creative and generative, with an extraordinarily high degree of inclusion and acknowledgement of diversities. There was open and generous sharing and continuous interactivity that enabled everyone to challenge personal boundaries in a supportive framework. Attention to, and care for, the health and wellbeing of participants was a priority, with massages, local tours of interest, coupons for real coffee, a focus on healthy food, and transport for the physically challenged.

There was also significant local community outreach, including an indigenous local Auntie who opened the Conference with acknowledgement of country, a regional engagement evening and show, bush-dancing, and an auction of the works of the Conference cartoonist (with proceeds back to the Bathurst region). The Conference closed with greetings in Maori and an invitation to attend the 2009 Conference in Nelson Bay, New Zealand. It too will be a magical event!

North America 2010 (Chicago, April 18-25)

For those of you who really like to plan ahead, the 2010 North America Conference will take place at the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place in Chicago during the week of April 18. Planning for that Conference is already proceeding. If you would like to become involved, please contact the 2010 Conference Chair, Jan Means, at jan@resourceadvantageinc.com.

Member in the News

Jen Hunter, an IAF member based in Ottawa and a workshop leader at our upcoming 2009 Conference, was a candidate for the Green Party of Canada in the riding of Ottawa Centre in the federal election held on October 14. Congratulations to Jen on a strong showing. It is hard to imagine anything more intense and challenging than running as a candidate for public office.

IAF CANADA MONOGRAPH SERIES

After what I think were four very good issues, our IAF Canada Monograph series seems to have (temporarily, I hope) stalled. The series is something that I would very much like to continue, but need contributions. I see this as an opportunity for us to share both practice issues and more theoretical ideas, and to give members an outlet for your thoughts and experiences. So, if you have an issue in facilitation that you feel might be of interest to other members (and if it interests you, let's assume that it will appeal to others as well), and can prepare a 5 – 9 page article, I would love to hear from you. I shall handle the editing, so don't worry if you feel that your writing style is not polished enough or if the article is not quite in final form when you submit it. If you have lost track of earlier monographs in the series, and would like to receive them, please let me know (jbutcher@magma.ca). My only threat is that if no one else comes forward, I might be forced to use another of my own articles. And none of us wants that.



Congratulations To...

The thirteen current IAF Canada members who have been selected to lead workshops at the 2009 North America Conference in Vancouver in April:

- Kimberly Bain, Kingston, Ontario
- Jen Hunter, Ottawa, Ontario
- Myriam Laberge, Delta, British Columbia
- Paul Mackey, Ottawa, Ontario
- Lucille Michaud, Kenora, Ontario
- John Miller, Toronto, Ontario
- Jerry Mings, Oakville, Ontario
- Tony Nash, Kanata, Ontario
- Jo Nelson, Toronto, Ontario
- Marian Pitters, Toronto, Ontario
- Diana Smith, Victoria, British Columbia
- Dorothy Strachan, Ottawa, Ontario
- David Wilson, Markham, Ontario

BELOW THE WATERLINE: NEWS FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

December 2008

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IAF Canada Newsletter

This is a feature in most IAF Canada Newsletters to update members on some of the recent discussions and initiatives of the IAF Board of Directors.

..... Our most recent Board conference call was held on November 10-11. (It did not take two days, but does include participants from across the International Date Line.) Among the issues covered were the 2009 budget and strategic priorities, affiliations (the Board approved affiliation agreements with the Serbian Facilitators Network and with IAF Germany – The German Association of Facilitators), and a range of operational issues confronting the Board collectively, and its members individually, around workload and organizational support. The Board agreed to increase its meeting schedule from quarterly to bi-monthly, beginning in April 2009, to adjust for the increasing demands. The Board also welcomed its newest member, Martin Gilbraith, who is based in Manchester, England, and who has recently signed on as Europe Regional Representative.

..... In his message to the membership on November 13, Gary Rush, Chair of IAF, outlined the major goals guiding the work of the Association, and the strategic initiatives underway to achieve those goals. These include developing partnerships with related organizations, growing the membership through both increased recruitment and retention, expanding the IAF Certified Professional Facilitator program, generating new revenue sources that will help to further stabilize the organization and allow it to branch into other areas, and completing the re-

structuring of the Association to achieve greater role clarity and effectiveness. All of this is going on at the same time as we continue to “run the business”.

..... IAF’s Professional Development portfolio, headed by Michael Spivey, who is based in North Carolina, is perhaps the single busiest and most demanding file that any Board member carries. In 2008, eight certification events were held around the world, in the Netherlands, South Africa, Canada, Malaysia, the United States, Australia, and Switzerland. Over 100 candidates challenged the certification, and almost all succeeded. This success rate speaks to the careful screening of candidates, and the preparatory work done by the Assessors and Process Managers leading the individual events. Assisting Michael in overseeing the certification program - and the person responsible for ensuring that each event’s logistics are all in place - is another hard-working volunteer, Lindsay Wilson, our Director of Certification, who lives in the United Kingdom. But the certification program is only part of Michael’s involvement. He is also working on the proposed re-certification program, continually updating the procedures manual and other documentation as new issues and best practices come to light, tracking budgets and expenses, creating communications vehicles, and much else, as well as contributing to the Board’s consideration of issues outside his portfolio. Michael’s is an almost impossibly big job - almost all of it “below the waterline” - and one that he does while still engaged in his own busy consulting practice.

... And Finally

It cannot have escaped the notice of past readers of this Newsletter how much better this issue looks than previous ones. That is 100% due to the generous intervention of Beth Ann Kenny, a member based in Beaverton, Ontario. Beth Ann took pity on this Editor’s stumbling efforts and volunteered to work on the graphic design. The results, as you can see, are a huge improvement in the “look and feel” of the Newsletter. Thank you very much indeed, Beth Ann

If you have articles, ideas for articles, or opinions on articles, please be in touch.