



Extending Horizons

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Advocacy and Extension

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In March this year APEN President **Jane Fisher** and myself were privileged to be part of the start of a new extension network in the Philippines. APEN and a small grant from AusAID have supported the establishment of the Philippines Extension Network (PEN).

At the "establishment workshop", with participants from academic, project, training and government extension groups, one of the first issues was to get an agreed view of what we were all talking about -

What are the aims of an extension organisation in the Philippines?

After much discussion this was boiled down to:

- Advocacy for the profession and for extension
- Sharing and information exchange
- Developing models for practical change
- Professional identity and professional development

The issue of **advocacy** was seen as very important in a country where extension has been devolved over the last 10 years to local government level, resulting in isolation of officers and a loss of a focus and training at a national or provincial (State) level. It also reflects the bureaucratic and political power in the Philippines that can reach down to the lowest

levels at times.

However these aims of PEN are just as applicable to APEN. While we have tried hard to share knowledge and promote professional development, a sign of our development and maturity as a professional organisation may well be a **greater level of activity to advocate for extension** as an integral element in our own country's development. This advocacy should not only be as an input to a focussed inquiry (such as the recent R&D Corporations project), but proactive and reactive inputs to discussions at various levels.

If we look at the range of physical and biological issues affecting land and water management (and impacts on people), what should we as extension professionals be saying? Do we have any agreed policies/ views on protection of biodiversity, efficiency of water use, catchment (as distinct from individual farm) management, Landcare and group approaches, environmental management systems, etc.

To advocate effectively we need the mechanism (and the information) in place to respond appropriately to relevant issues at national, State and local levels. The CoM, and maybe the upcoming international conference in Queensland should consider extension advocacy.

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Have YOU registered for APEN 2001 yet?

APEN is pleased to acknowledge the support of:



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Horticulture Australia

FROM THE CHAIR

Jane Fisher

APEN President

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2001 has been a very stimulating and progressive year for APEN

I am pleased to share with you the good news that **Horticulture Australia Limited** has agreed to sponsor *ExtensionNet* for \$7000 per year over the next two years, and **DRDC** \$4000 per year. The high regard in which this newsletter is held is a tribute to our editor, **Mark Paine**. Comments like "it is worth paying my membership to receive *ExtensionNet*" have appeared on membership renewal forms.

Mark has been indefatigable, chairing the editorial committee responsible for refereeing the papers for the 2001 Conference in addition to his *ExtensionNet* responsibilities. I would like to thank him very much for the thought, time and effort that he put into this process. Coordinating 70 papers and associated referees is quite a feat.

Our major event for the the year, the APEN 2001 International Conference is being ably organised by **John James** and his conference organising committee (see page 8 for an update).

The refereeing process introduced for the conference has begun a culture of peer review within APEN, giving our members, as authors and reviewers alike, experience in the art of writing for publication. The number of papers submitted indicates that extension-

ists need to share their thoughts and philosophies with a broader audience than mates in the office.

I am proud to have initiated the process of peer review at the 2001 Conference. The CoM believes that this step takes APEN well down the track to being recognised as an organisation committed to professional development and to having extension theory and practice recognised by funders as a science, with rigour and outcomes.

Other news: **John Stantiall** has left the CoM, his departure coinciding with him taking up a new job. John worked hard on the APEN strategic plan (see page 9), and his insight and energy will be missed. **Janet Reid** from Massey University has joined the CoM as the New Zealand representative.

Paul Ainsworth has coordinated production of a new membership brochure, which matches *ExtensionNet* in design. We are developing that all important corporate look.

I am looking forward to meeting many of you in Toowoomba. The 2001 Conference is an important one in the extension calendar. I wish the organising committee good luck with this event.

FROM THE EDITOR

Mark Paine

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A global electronic community – for better or worse!

A recent item on the national news reported that the Code Red virus spread at a rate of 250,000 new computer infections within the first nine hours of its release. We can imagine the disruption and personal distress this type of infection can create. This startling rate of spread also helps us appreciate the extent of connectivity most of us now share through our workstations. We are members of a global electronic community – for better or worse!

Technological advances in medium like the internet can at times divert our attention for the subtleties of human interaction that are the primary concern of extension workers. These new technologies can be treated like a panacea if we attribute more features to a medium than that of an information conduit. Perhaps more importantly, extension needs to ensure it is considered more than an information conduit – something that can be readily displaced through advanced technologies.

The articles in this issue of *ExtensionNet* discuss some projects that are contributing to a profession that is using new approaches to work with people in the field. **Ruth Beilin's** discussion of photo-elicitation provides a useful review of the method while also illustrating the approach using a catchment study. **Kate Roberts** outlines the diverse evaluation studies undertaken by her group to indicate the role and contribution of evaluation to extension projects.

The past few months have been very busy for the editorial committee with the refereeing of papers submitted to the APEN 2001 International Conference. An impressive range of projects and achievements are reported in these papers. I strongly recommend people make the effort to attend the conference to engage with these authors and learn more about the work operating in this country and overseas.

The Editorial Committee is seeking feedback and suggestions for improvement, so please send me any comments, no matter how brief, and indicate whether you want your comments published. If you have any articles for publishing please contact me.

Using Participatory Approaches in Extension Research

This article describes a photo-elicitation method adapted from within a visual sociology tradition for use in a land conservation study. Visual sociology, based on an ethnographic foundation, encourages the integration of photograph and commentary. This process of qualitative interview and narrative explanation is called 'photo elicitation' (Collier, 1967; Harper, 1987). The photograph, and not a researcher's question, becomes the focus of the discussion (Harper, 1986). The responses of the informants extends the possibility that the researcher can build on proffered answers to approach a more meaningful understanding of the areas under discussion. The act of collaborative research is strengthened through the listener's participation (Forester, 1989). The narrator of the photographic 'story' is encouraged by the images to explore previously 'taken for granted' understandings, which can be quite confronting for the subject as well as the researcher (Harper, 1994).

The study referred to here

The study referred to here, mainly involved dairy farms, and particularly Landcare farmers. The larger question underlying the study was how farmers interpret and manage their landscapes for conservation. Governments are necessarily anxious to know whether programs, like Landcare, lead to changes in farm management. Researchers often struggle to find appropriate and reasonable ways of understanding the effect of government policies at a local level. The method described here offers just such an insight into the decision-making process at the individual farm landscape level. In analysing their images of Landcare, participating farmers discussed the decision making process and their management strategies.

Landscape studies have commonly used photography as a tool for explaining research, analysing management changes, and to encourage public participation in validating particular landscapes for preservation or creation (Emmelin, 1996; O'Riordan, et al., 1993; Whitmore, et al., 1995). Brandenburg and Caroll (1995) use landscape photographs to review citizen responses to resource manage-

The Case for Photo Elicitation

ment issues. Moore (1997) uses farmers' photographs to 'provide immediate and efficient access to place'. The examples describe the visual reality of seeing. Ethnographers and anthropologists have yearned to unlock that which is not seen, but implied; that which is evoked in memory and symbolised by that same physical representation.

MacDougall (1994:265) is concerned with 'signs of absence'. We look at photographs for an indication of what is no longer there or what used to be. MacDougall (ibid) links photographs to memory, both at a personal and community level. He suggests that at a representational level, this is a social narrative. 'The photographer's gaze' say Lutz and Collins (1994:363), in a study of photographs from America's *National Geographic*, turns the landscape and the photograph into objects. They explored the power of the photographer's position through a consideration of the ways in which it allowed readers as outsiders to look in on 'the foreign'. Modell and Brodsky (1994) used existing photographs from historical archives and personal family albums to elicit oral histories. In pursuing photographs and informants suggested by other photographs and informants, they created a web of interconnectedness. Their process mirrored the integration of larger social and economic issues inherent in the politics of a mill town at a macro level, and with the personal histories of its citizens at a micro level.

Ways to analyse the photographs

There are several ways to analyse the photographs. Usually these involve some type of content analysis. Content analysis is defined as the quantification of the various elements seen in photographs. Questions are developed based on what stands out to the evaluator as being significant about those photos after the quantification of elements (Collier & Collier, 1986). Examples might be: Who is in the photo?

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