



## Memories of A 1971 CUSO Volunteer in Malaysia and After

### *Bill Dumont – May 2022*

#### First CUSO Contact

I followed my brother Robert Dumont into CUSO, an engineer who served as a teacher in Nairobi in the early 1970's and a classmate Cliff Kowalsky, another CUSOite who worked in rural Nigeria. I did my CUSO service as a forester after graduating with a five year degree in forest management from the UBC forestry faculty in 1971 where I served as President of the Student Society. There were about 50 fellow foresters in my class and two were headed to CUSO.

I maintain regular contact with Malaysia by subscribing to several media sites there and Sarawak Report <https://www.sarawakreport.org/> -an excellent opinion and fact sheet on local politics and corruption.



My first real exposure to CUSO was at the initial orientation in mid-1971 in Bowmanville Ontario where I was put in charge of organising and maintaining the beer supply for the large group of volunteers heading to all parts of the world - there must have been 50 or more at that orientation. Those of us from BC were amazed to see that Ontario had cases of 24 beer (as opposed to 12 then in BC) which we had never seen before and this helped to reduce the constant return to the beer store for more beer for the thirsty upcoming volunteers and staff. I don't remember what we charged for beer but it was minimal and the volumes were large as it was mid-summer in Ontario and quite hot and humid. As I recall the food was lousy there but the experience was fun and everyone was pumped to leave on a jet plane.



## Mind Games

The CUSO leaders at Bowmanville were fooling around with T groups and psychological mind games to ferret out at an early stage before being shipped out those volunteers with certain personality types who would likely not succeed in their overseas postings. Failed postings were a costly and difficult problem then for CUSO in those days with up to a thousand volunteers overseas. It appeared to be an amateur hour exercise by CUSO's "experts" from my exposure to Psych 101 at UBC. I recall a lot of emotional baggage coming out and freaking quite a few people who thought they were heading to either a religious Hari Krishna type of CUSO experience or something well suited only for do-gooders. The rest who survived that nonsense were raring to head to our postings after getting some great advice on taking care of our health needs and gearing up for our own formal orientation in Borneo - East Malaysia.



## Brutal Flight

Those of us heading to far away SE Asian countries eventually boarded a BOAC 25 hour flight from Montreal to Brussels and then on to Singapore via Karachi and Bangkok. It was a full flight all the way on a Boeing 707 and the toilets weren't working. The civil war between East and West Pakistan was underway. On arrival at the Karachi airport we



observed teams of sari dressed ladies sweeping the shifting sand off the huge runways with bamboo brooms. On pulling up to the terminal the plane got surrounded by what we thought were Gurkha soldiers with old Lee Enfield 303 military rifles to protect it from attack while we refueled. The idea that rebels from what is now Bangladesh would attack a BOAC plane in Karachi a thousand miles away reflected the paranoia of the times-another failure of the British colonial race/religious based decisions during the fall of the British Empire and the breakup of India into two countries- Muslim and others.



## Singapore Slings

We carried on to Bangkok for another refueling and a welcome toilet break and finally landed exhausted in Singapore in the evening where we were met by the Hoffman's in the midst of unholy high tropical heat and humidity. We got put up in the then very rundown Raffles Hotel, the birthplace of the Singapore Sling drink which we willingly imbibed with gusto several times during our stay.



The huge

rooms were heavily carpeted and stunk from cigarettes and the meagre air-conditioning. We first observed the ubiquitous overhead fans constantly whirring above our heads that would be with us for the next few years. Special smells and stink were common features of living in the tropics along with very deep concrete lined ditches to accommodate intense, almost daily tropical rainfalls. We made it to the equator in SE Asia!!



## Oh that Satay Peanut Sauce

Peter told us to be ready to head out to supper in an hour. They took us to a multi-story car park downtown that converted into food stalls each evening. Little kids running around with their



parents food delicacies served us a Dim sum like buffet-an amazing array of everything from chicken and beef satay and that



fabulous peanut sauce, noodles, chicken and rice, Malay curries, Chinese specialties and Indian

delights. It was a mind blowing and wonderful introduction to world class hawker cuisine chased down by huge bottles of cold and tasty Tiger and Anchor beers – another innovation of serving copious amounts of beer in almost 2 litre bottles. Wow we knew this was the right place to be!!

## Chillies from Hell in Miri

After a few days enjoying amazing 1970's Singapore we flew on a MAS B 737 to



Miri where perhaps 20 of us were ensconced in the Fatima Hotel for weeks with a bunch of friendly Malay language teachers who also primed us on Malay culture and local taboos. We spent time going to local food markets and in

the hotel kitchen preparing and learning to cook and serve local foods. To this day I am a fairly accomplished chef and do the occasional catering job that regularly includes Malaysian dishes.



I will never forget that one of my early kitchen assignments was to chop up huge amounts of red and green chillies- an essential staple of all cuisines in

Malaysia. Being a bit overweight and sweating profusely in the non-air coned kitchen I was wiping my sweaty face with my hands after being exposed to the very hot chillies. All of a sudden my face, lips and mouth were on fire and red welts appeared and I thought I probably had 3rd degree burns on my body. A local took me outside right away, found a special tree leaf and had me rub it on the burning areas and amazingly the burns immediately calmed down- a great introduction to

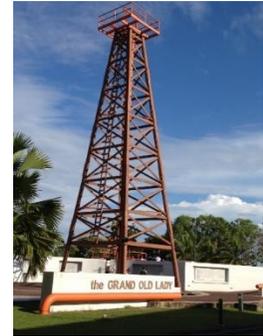


the diverse and useful

phytochemicals in tropical rainforests. A similar trick was used when we were hit by jelly fish while swimming in the South China Sea. We travelled one day to nearby Brunei, a separate country and we witnessed a cock fight on the way home. Miri is also where we saw Shell



Petroleum's number 1 oil well in Sarawak (aka the Grand Old Lady). Oil has provided billions to the Malaysian economy and millions to corrupt politicians. Timber was also a major source of corruption and funding public services in the country.



### Finally at Work in the Jungle

After weeks in Miri and gaining rudimentary ability to speak simple Bahasa Malay we all left to fly away to start our assignments in East and West Malaysia - mine was at the District Forest Office (*Pejabat hutan daerah*) in Tapah, Perak about



160 km north of Kuala Lumpur at the base of the Cameron Highlands. It was then a small town of about 5000 residents. We had a large

district staff and I was to work on reforestation projects in the few remaining lowlands forests there and develop stewardship plans for the hill forests. We worked primarily with Meranti species, the prime tropical hardwood that was the target of loggers, the Sultans and their relatives



and crooked politicians. The main critical environmental issue then, however,



was not logging but hydraulic tin mining and forest conversion for extensive rubber plantations both of which were at that time important economic activities in Malaysia and supported by politicians who were supported by those industries.

For the most part the rape of Malaysia's tropical rainforests and their exceptional biodiversity was pretty much done by the 1970's with only Sabah and Sarawak having large remaining



undisturbed forests then-but not now. The Orang Asli, West Malaysia's indigenous people, had a few rainforest reserves for themselves but Malaysia's once plentiful lowland forests were pretty much done and gone.

Corruption of all sorts was rampant in the Pejabat Hutan and in my naivety I had hopes to control or reduce it. Government at the time

even claimed to have recruited *Hantus* to try to scare those who wanted to do bad things- *Hantu* is the Malay word for spirit or ghost. In modern usage it generally means spirits of the dead but has also come to refer to any legendary invisible being, such as demons. Clearly the *Hantus* did not curb widespread corruption. Today Malaysia still ranks as the 57<sup>th</sup> most corrupt country in the world. The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) is a powerful, supposedly independent government arm to root out corruption. Canada is one of the least corrupt countries but we also have many problems with corruption like SNC Lavalin, Quebec construction projects, military procurement, immigration fraud, UI and CERB fraud etc.



## Awesome Tropical Rainforests

The incredibly complex tropical rainforest ecosystems found along the earth's



equator and in Malaysia have more than 8000 flowering plants including up to 2600 tree species and thousands more animals-mammals, birds, snakes and insects. They have been relatively undisturbed for perhaps a million years so they are extremely diverse in plant and animal species. Once disturbed there is usually an explosion of vines and lower vegetation stimulated by light-tropical soils are rather fragile and highly erodible.

In the traditional timber harvesting context the silviculture prescription (ie the plan for forest regeneration) developed by British foresters in Malaya is called the

Malayan Uniform System (MUS). The objective is to selectively harvest the more valuable and larger trees and allow the remnant stand of smaller trees to grow and develop over the next 25 years when another entry to remove more timber would be made. There were less than 10 Meranti trees per acre so it was supposed to be a "thinning" of the Meranti trees. Generally there was a dearth of smaller Meranti saplings after logging so we were doing enrichment planting using wildlings that were collected and brought to a small nursery for tending and fertilization and eventual planting. Vines and climbers were controlled with herbicides. Malaysia has never established a credible annual timber harvest rate (AAC) like most other important forestry countries. Setting and adhering to a sustainable AAC on a reserved and dedicated land base with effective reforestation following logging is fundamental to responsible forestry-almost no tropical countries have ever done that.

### The Road Block Caper

Pejabat Hutan had lorry checking stations all over the place where loaded log trucks had to stop and get logs scaled and pay government fees for the timber. These stations were notorious for Malay staff forcing the Chinese drivers to pay cash bribes to allow the truck and its valuable timber to leave the station with a certified scale slip. We established an anti-corruption team equipped with



a brand new 1970 Australian GM Holden station wagon vehicle and flashing lights (standard departmental vehicle was a traditional Land



rover) with a senior forest ranger and



driver to monitor the corrupt checking stations. Within 6 months we had reports that our own anti-corruption team were actually setting up new roadblocks for all logging trucks that

passed by and forcing the drivers to pay more cash bribes to allow them to carry on!!

### The Loaded Card Deck

Our timber allocation schemes then included using a deck of playing cards to determine successful applicants for securing timber



cutting rights in the valuable coastal Mangrove forests. The mangroves are tidal forests and huge nurseries for many fish and shrimp species as well as protecting



sensitive shorelines in equatorial areas. They are also the source of extremely dense small timber that produces valuable poles and charcoal. The various timber bidders were OK using chance rather than bribes to obtain timber but in one instance we found the deck of cards was manipulated to guarantee the sale to every 3 bidder! One CUSO forester from eastern Canada, Mike Clark, spent his time working in the mangrove forests, mainly on reforestation projects there.



### Destitute Development Workers

We never succeeded in reducing or dealing with this pervasive crime as thievery and corruption was common especially amongst politicians. Senior forest department staff had salaries about 20 times as high as the lower ranks, a hangover from the British colonial forest service. Also senior foresters never went to the forest so it was a novelty for lower ranks to see me actually coming out and working there. CUSOites were paid at about 4 times the lower ranks and as I recall we got some



subsidies from CUSO to survive. I don't remember ever being broke but we always marvelled and relished being invited to Canadian consular functions in KL where there was real Canadian beer and great food-all free for the taking.



It was shocking to observe UN development staff from Canada and elsewhere who had brought over their wrong handed drive vehicles from home along with appliances that required huge transformers to operate on the 220V electric system-all expense paid by the Canadian or Malaysian government or the UN. Just plain stupid stuff to engage foreign experts in development projects!! Meanwhile we CUSOites were getting around on bicycles or motor bikes.

That reminds me of that one dreadful day my colorful sarong caught in my bicycle chain as I was peddling home from the Tapah fresh market. It got tangled up and ripped off to fully expose my thankfully fresh and clean underwear to the bemused locals!

### Rural Fun and Feasts

After a year in Tapah where I lived in the government rest house and then my own small apartment I was transferred to the State forest headquarters in Ipoh. I made many friends amongst the police force, teachers, government bureaucrats and forest workers in Tapah. The best of times were



heading out to the Kampongs for a community, wedding or family celebration on a weekend-we worked 5 1/2 days a week but there was something like 22 stat holidays in Malaysia because of all the different

racers and their celebrations. All the Malaysian cultures are complex and rich. Even though there was a lot of poverty the rural people were exceptionally generous and friendly with huge food feasts and other interesting cultural events and were honoured to be visited by an Orang Puteh from Canada. I hated being called Tuan (Sir) which I always felt was a lasting legacy of white colonialism. The younger people closer to my age of 23 did thankfully not show me the excessive deference older people did who lived through the British colonial period.



### Hot Pots in Cold Highlands

Occasionally I took trips up the very winding and slow road to the nearby Cameron Highlands where you actually had to wear a coat as it was usually cold



and rainy at those high elevations where tea was grown alongside many vegetable farms. The vegetation at this elevation (800 to 1600 metres) was unique in this 700 square kilometre highlands. We maintained a number of exotic

tree plantations in the area as a good excuse to visit there. The photo is a 27 month old Caribbean pine plantation.



The local cuisine was focussed on spectacular table top hot pots to warm you up and make your

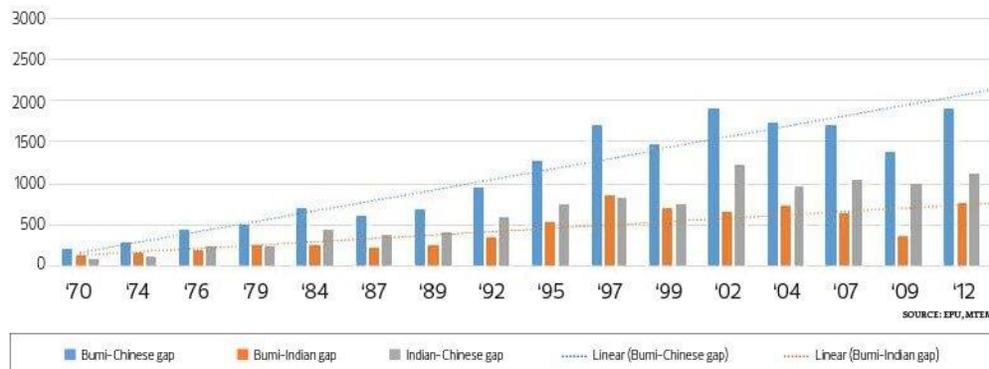


feast an entertaining and very tasty exercise. Just about everywhere in the old British empire across the equator the colonialists built roads into the cooler mountain areas to escape the tropical heat. It was definitely a place where a Canadian could relate better to the local climate!

## Race is King!

Malaysia was (and still is!!) a very racialized and race sensitive country at that time with the Chinese merchant class being the wealthiest, the poorest being the Tamil labourers from Ceylon and the Bumiputera - *the children of the earth* - the

Household income gap (mean value) between ethnic groups (RM)

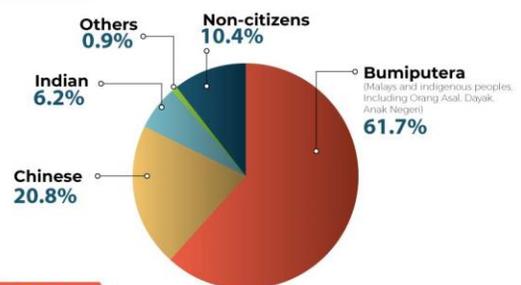


Malays who held political power but were mostly poor (except the politicians and elites of course!!)

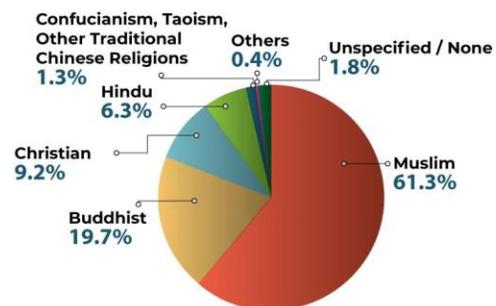
and were ruled by the various state Sultans who lived in absolute luxury thanks to government, taxpayers, corruption and tradition. Bumiputera was supposed to include the Orang Asli and other aboriginals but they were treated very poorly by the Malay politicians and their lands plundered of resources both in East and West Malaysia. East Indians filled out the educated class with many being teachers, doctors, bureaucrats and a few entrepreneurs. Interestingly there was about 1/3 of each of the main ethnic groups that made up West Malaysia at that time. In some ways this racial mix kept politicians sensitive to each racial needs but there had been serious race riots in KL prior to my arrival in 1971 where many were killed and maimed. There were still a few Brits around in the 1970's working for the miners and plantations. There were starting to be many Indonesians coming in as labourers on the plantations-they were

### MALAYSIA'S ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS COMPOSITION

#### Ethnicity



#### Religions



treated the worst of all. The chart above shows almost no improvement in income disparity between races over the past 40 years in Malaysia in spite of affirmative action by successive governments. But by 2020 the percent of Chinese locally has fallen significantly as shown in the chart above due to outward migration.

### Radicalization of Muslims

In the 1970's while Islam was the Malay religion it was not pervasive or as fundamental as it would later become after Malaysia's politicians and senior Muslims imported many radical mullahs from Saudi Arabia to inculcate and dominate its Malay masses. A few became radicalized and some of these were



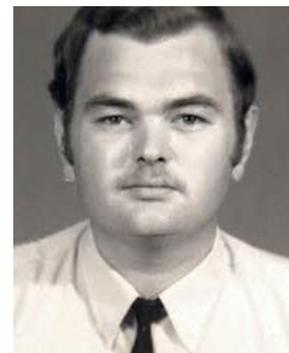
part of the crew behind the attack on the US on 9/11 in 2001. Hijabs were rare on the beautiful Malay women then but are now standard uniform in the country when I returned again in 2002 to work in Sarawak for the State government. The race card played by politicians was always to portray Malays as subjugated or held back by other races.

### A Hot Sendoff

One of our senior District Forest Managers at the time, Mr. Lingam, an East Indian, died of natural causes and the family invited me to his funeral at his home. His body lay in state for several days in the house with much incense and perfume applied and then a big funeral pyre of very dry wood was set up in the back of his house outside. His body



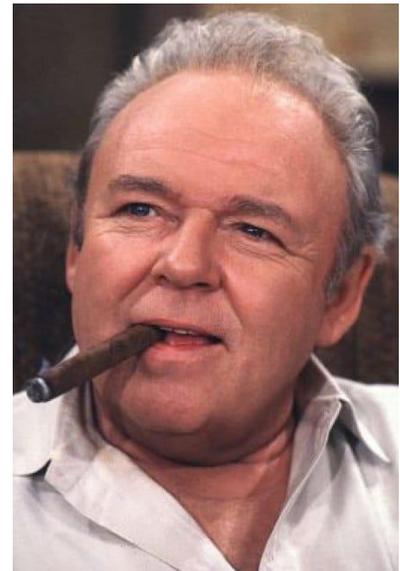
was laid out in a white sheet and his oldest son went round and round the funeral pyre pouring gallons of ghee (clarified butter) on his body and the pile of wood. It was then lit and the wailing of the wife and family began with the wife physically restrained from jumping into the fire as apparently did happen occasionally. The butter laden human flesh heated by



the dried wood burned fiercely and fast-one could not avoid inhaling the smoke and the scent was strong which reminded me of roast pork. After the fire there was a big life celebration for the departed with lots of excellent food and drink. What a dramatic sendoff to witness!!

### **Archie Bunker and Homesickness**

After a long time from home in a foreign but very friendly country many CUSOites got homesick-me included. I am from a family of 12 kids and missed my parents, siblings and close friends. I tried only once to call home by phone but it was a total horror show and incredibly expensive. One solution was to watch old TV series from North America which there were lots of on the local boob tube. One of the most popular shows in Malaysia at the time was *All in the Family* with Malay subtitles. The bigoted and racist Archie Bunker was popular in a country where politicians and others used the race card to their advantage. In some ways it appeared to me many locals thought it reasonable to be bigoted and racist because the Yanks clearly were too and perhaps they had a point even though Meathead and others on the show like Lionel Jefferson made fun of and mocked Archie's racist behaviour. Anyway I would lose myself in that and other western TV shows when homesick. Also the



occasional get together organised by CUSO at a nice beach resort or the Orang Asli hospital center in KL where there were quite a few CUSO types stationed were a big hit but usually followed by a good hangover. Letters and newspapers from home were always eagerly awaited. I helped to start the CUSO Malaysia newsletter *Apa Khabar* and kept busy writing some stories and news for it. I found a great

graphics guy to design the masthead for the newsletter.

My younger sister Cathie and her new husband Art visited me in Tapah on their honeymoon in 1972. I took some time off and we visited a west coast beach resort and explored rural peninsular Malaysia together. Lots of fun.



### **Kleptocracy and Wealth in Malaysia**

One of our CUSO group got married to a very beautiful local East Indian girl whose parents were quite rich and put on a lavish wedding for the couple. It included both a western and Indian version of the nuptials in full costume dress no less for each version right down to the patent leather shoes, tux and incredible sari and



shoes. Most of us attended this wedding which I believe was in KL at the bride's parent's home and featured over the top decorations, many complicated elements and lots of drinks and fabulous food. These special events were a great opportunity for Canadians to observe and participate in life events in a much different context from home. I recall being overwhelmed by this event and its opulence that was never repeated again until I returned 30 years later to

work for the Sarawak forestry department and was invited to the Chief Ministers house for an engagement ceremony that included the bride's conversion from Christianity to Islam. By that time Taib was close to being a billionaire with many of his real estate assets hidden in Canada to this day. These assets include a golf course in Chilliwack and office buildings in eastern Canada that are leased by our own federal government. Taib's house in Kuching had gold fixtures and taps in the bathroom along with gold bars on display in the living room. Taib was enriched primarily from the carnage in the forests of Sarawak and its oil wealth. After years as Chief Minister Taib had himself appointed to be the current Governor of the almost 3 million population state. Today the indigenous and other residents of Sarawak remain impoverished due to the theft of their natural resources by corrupt politicians and kleptocrats like Taib. Canada has some of the laxest laws globally for hiding foreign assets as even the Russians have discovered.

At a National level the recent, long time Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak orchestrated the theft of an eye popping several **BILLION US \$ from an investment fund** called **IMDB** and is finally facing jail time but corruption is still pervasive in Malaysia. There are now many incredibly rich Malaysians, mostly Chinese, who garnered their wealth much like the Russian Oligarchs by teaming up with Malay politicians and looting the country's natural resources.



### **Gassed at the Movies**

I also enjoyed what we CUSOites then referred to as Chinese “*sword flicks*”. Thankfully local theatres were air-conditioned and offered a nice respite from the tropical heat and humidity. One Saturday afternoon in Tapah I was absorbed in a great sword flick with English subtitles in the local theatre next to the Batang Padang River that flowed through the town. Suddenly people in the audience of



about 100 started coughing and then my eyes started burning-bringing back memories of the Miri Hotel chilli chopping incident. Apparently a local farmer had really run amok (another Malay word that has slipped into the English lexicon) and had holed himself up in a small house near the theatre. The

local police tried to extricate the mad man flailing wildly at them with a parang (machete) and finally used tear gas on him. The tear gas got into the theatre air-conditioning intake and we all poured out coughing with burning eyes. The mad man escaped by jumping in the river and swimming away. Thankfully that was my first and only life experience with tear gas and it was quite nasty. Notably we didn't even get a refund coupon to see the show end or for another movie at the theatre!!

## Almost in Love

The Malay women are very attractive and one in particular, a senior clerk in the Tapah office was enticing and I believe that feeling was mutual between us. We had been warned at the CUSO orientation and in the local press the legal consequences of ever meeting or dating an unmarried Muslim Malay woman alone so was pleased when her



parents invited me to their home in a rural area outside of Tapah. We had an excellent meal and went for a walk in the kampong escorted of course by her younger brother plus lots of kids. Nothing too serious ever developed but I shared my feelings with Abang Johari, my boss and he eventually ended up marrying her after I returned to Canada!! She later mailed me some typed up Malay food recipes that I still use today when I can find that essential galangal root for that tasty Rendang daging (curried coconut beef).

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## The Royal Slot Machines

I once got an invitation to attend the birthday celebrations for the Perak Sultan (except for Sabah and Sarawak there are royal heads of state in West Malaysia which rotate being the King). He lived in a huge mansion in another town and I hitched a ride with a friend. As we arrived the long drive entrance to the mansion was lined on each side with hundreds of old style slot machines. There were no casinos in Malaysia at that time except in the Genting Highlands. I



thought wow what a great idea to pay for a big birthday bash. The slot machines were being fed by poor Malays and the occasional CUSO volunteer hoping to supplement his meagre income with a big slot win. The castle was nothing less than opulent and every one of the hundreds present were dressed in their finery and treated to an amazing feast and we actually sang Happy Birthday to the Sultan in English no less!! After the event I upgraded my formal attire for future similar events. The Sultans birthday was also the time he sold, granted and gave out honorific titles to friends and donors. You could easily buy a Tan Sri, Datuk or Datuk Sri or other honorific just like the Brits did and still do in the UK.

### **Always about Saving Face**

In Ipoh I lived with my Malay boss, Abang Johari, a recent graduate from an Australian forestry school and then the State Silviculturist in a small rented house. He owned a very neat Alpha Romeo coupe which he let me drive regularly - it had right hand drive of course and I always recall the high anxiety as I entered a traffic roundabout which were common on Malaysian roads and we had none in Canada until



recently. Anyway we travelled extensively on the weekends with several memorable trips to the holiday spots at Penang

and Pulau Langkawi. Penang in particular had fabulous eateries, tourist sites and beautiful beaches, massage parlours and all manner of exciting things for a couple of young men. Also it seemed okay to participate in debauchery In Malaysia generally as long as you were not in your home town. That was also my experience with Chinese teacher friends in Tapah when we went to Ipoh for a night of fun-anything goes as long as the wife or family doesn't find out! It was all about face!!

### **Health**

Cuso did a great job in supporting volunteer's health needs. We had lots of good meds including *Aralen* as a Malaria prophylactic. This is the infamous chloroquine

that Trump recently promoted as a COVID cure. Of course, it's also the base of the iconic Gin and Tonic drink. It caused very weird dreams and diarrhea and I did get a touch of Malaria once. Other than a broken toe stubbed on the edge of the pedestal toilet and some other minor maladies thankfully I kept good health in spite of challenging public hygiene in restaurants and other public infrastructure.

### **Meranti Seed Appears and Quick Thinking Forestry Staff and Hiring**



The notoriously unreliable natural Meranti seed production would appear on mature trees in the jungle without much notice. When this occurred immediate action to collect the already germinating seed needed to be done. The seeds then had to be quickly planted in

tabongs or black perforated plastic bags with soil to grow into a small seedling. All of a sudden we needed to hire over a hundred labourers to help deal with the huge seed quantity available and dramatically expand our nurseries so we could produce trees for planting.



I had learned the hard way that asking staff for more labourers would invariably result in their family members joining the work party regardless if they were physically or mentally capable. The ranger staff would also extort part of the labourers pay as a kickback for giving them a job. Since the work was fairly rigorous and physical we decided to organise a race of the more than 500 job applicants up to the top of a small mountain where they received a ticket and then the first 100 that arrived back at the start line would be hired. Little did I know that some of the senior ranger staff had distributed a

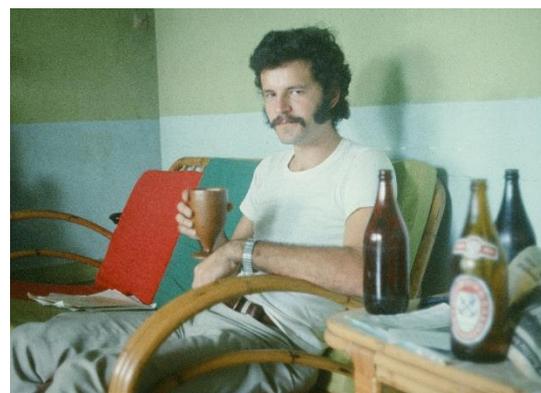
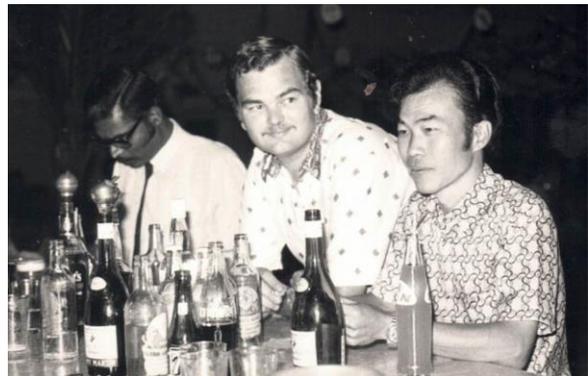


number of counterfeit tickets to their family members BEFORE the race started so my attempts to thwart nepotism failed miserably again.

I went back to focussing on some interesting research trials using fast growing species such as teak and acacia from Thailand, Burma and Vietnam. Teak is not a tropical species but rather subtropical but when it is transplanted to the tropics continuous and very impressive growth occurs on this valuable hardwood. Tropical hardwoods do not have any growth rings generally as growth is continuous so it is very difficult to tell the age of a tropical tree.

### **Everybody Loves a Party**

I have always involved myself in any community that I lived in. In Tapah I teamed up with a bunch of local young adults and we decided to organise a dance party complete with an imported band and decorated the local Tapah community hall for the big event. The large hall had a very tall ceiling and to increase intimacy and atmosphere we brought in several hundred palm fronds that we placed on a bed of strings about



8 feet above the floor. We added hurricane candles to all the tables and decorated the hall most festively. It was a sold out event that everyone in town raved about as the hall had been mainly used for religious or kids events previously. Lots of fun and no, the palm fronds did not catch fire!!

Robert Wellwood, a new CUSOite in 1972 and fellow forester from UBC visited during my final year in Malaysia. His dad had been one of my forestry professors. He liked the big Malaysian beer bottles too!!

### **Vietnam and North to Bangkok**

The Vietnam War was well underway 2500 kilometers to the north east and thankfully the Malaysian government banned US soldiers from having R&R in the



country. That was certainly not the case in neighbouring Thailand and the antics and extensive drug use and debauchery by young American soldiers was mind boggling, especially in centers like Bangkok and Changmai. Eight of us CUSO Malaysia volunteers plus some German and VSO Brit volunteers decided to take a holiday in Thailand to investigate and possibly partake in all manner of bad behaviour. We took

the fast train from KL to Bangkok, a distance of about 1200 km which took around 30 hours with a train change at the Thai border. We stayed in some awful Bangkok hotels where the parties never ended but we wanted to see this amazing city so spent a lot of time away from the hotels.

### Wild and Amazing Bangkok

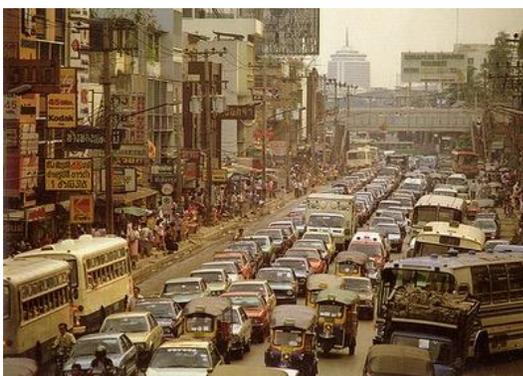


Bangkok is a unique city like Venice with many kilometres of waterways and

much of the commerce was conducted along these canals. We had a ball exploring the impressive Buddhist temples and floating markets. We chartered a long boat to



travel the canals for the day and it was probably one of the most memorable tourist days for me ever. Thai culture was and is extremely different from that in Malaysia but shared the same friendliness to strangers and visitors. The main roads in Bangkok in 1970's were chaotic and jammed with traffic and pollution. Thai cuisine is also a hit and I am so grateful that even in Duncan BC today



where I live we have several great Thai restaurants. I took a cooking class in Phuket several years ago that was excellent and honed my Thai cooking skills. I

can create a great roast duck and prawn Pad Thai! The Thai people are gentle and welcoming and the few days spent in Bangkok were amazing and memorable.

### **Changmai Beauties**

After a wild time in Bangkok with even wilder traffic and smoke belching two cycle scooters (eventually the government destroyed the scooter factory) everywhere we took the train again for a 12 hour ride north to Changmai which was reputed to have the most beautiful girls in the world. Two of our group of 8 found girlfriends right away and we never saw them for a week and one claimed he planned to marry his new girlfriend and bring her back to Malaysia (but couldn't and didn't).



Chiang Mai is a rich cultural area inside what was then called the "Golden Triangle" a major source of opium, heroin and other drugs feeding the global markets. The bars and brothels in that town were mind boggling and wild 24 hours a day with huge numbers of drunken and drugged US servicemen on leave from Vietnam shepherded by US military MPs. Chiang Mai is also a lot cooler and more temperate than Bangkok or Malaysia. They have a fabulous night market and many cultural sites and excellent restaurants. It is a beautiful city and worth visiting.

### **Shopping Bags Full of Ganja**

One day several of us decided to head out into the jungle to visit an aboriginal village of Hill tribe people-the Karen and Lahu. We hired a taxi in Chiang Mai for the day (I think it cost US\$20) and we were brought to a small town of several hundred people at the end of a very poor rough road. On arrival right in front of us was a house covered with drying ganja-marijuana and the smell was potent. Our German friend bought a Safeway shopping bag full of it for \$5 and we later used lined 3 holed loose-leaf paper the teachers had to roll and smoke giant cigar sized joints of the rather mellow ganja.



## The Five Dollar Obstetrical Experience

In that rural village there was one old lady sewing on her front porch on a foot



pedaled Singer sewing machine. As we passed by she yelled at us in broken English "wanna see exciting girl for 5 dollah?" All our wallets came out immediately and we were ushered into a small room where there was much moaning and a very young girl was in the midst of childbirth assisted by an older woman. The about-to-be mother was smoking a small opium pipe as delivery began. Then and there I witnessed my one and only delivery of a baby (other than my

own birth which I don't recall!). We left the new baby a sizeable cash gift to start her new life. After a very leisurely and light headed trip back to our hotel in Chiang Mai we went to a show lounge that evening featuring all Ladyboy aka *Kathoey* entertainers. These two spirit Thai people were amazing dancers and singers and most attractive physically.

## Being a Movie Star

Neill McKee phoned me one day and asked if he could visit and wanted me to



help him with a CUSO recruiting film they were making about forestry in Malaysia and the role that CUSO was playing in resource management. We had a fun visit and I was most impressed with Neill's skills and work when I finally saw the results after I arrived back in Canada. Here is Neill filming at a coffin factory with my boss and senior rangers. Neill's film included a number of volunteers and other foresters in our group and produced a pretty accurate portrayal of what

was happening in forestry in the country at that time. It is available on U Tube for

viewing here- [CUSO in Forestry \(Malaysia, 1971\) - YouTube](#)

## Got More Out than Put In

I kept working on several projects into the end of 1973 including using computers for the first time to do detailed regeneration surveys in logged over areas to determine the need for planting to maintain forest value. I extended an additional 6 months after my initial posting to finish a number of important projects.

I made many new friends include Chris Johnson, a CUSO teacher from Ontario who taught science and math in KL in the early 1970's. He later visited me on the west coast in 1986 during Expo86 and we had a fun picture taken at the PNE to celebrate his visit. Chris passed away many years ago.

I also enjoyed meeting Eppie (a nurse at the Orang Asli hospital) and her husband, Ron Burrell, a fellow forester from UNB who worked in the KL Forestry HQ. As well Paul Sears, another forester from Eastern Canada also joined us in the early 1970's. Both Ron and Paul ended up working in BC for much of their career after CUSO and we crossed paths many times.



Overall my CUSO experience was very rewarding and like most volunteers I got more out of it than I could ever put in as a contribution to the host country. If I



had had more experience rather than being a fresh graduate I feel I could have made more significant achievements. CUSO gave me a taste for travel and cultures and now I have a company that conducts tours to various global destinations focussed on gardens

and culture in Europe, New Zealand and South Africa. A specialty, pre-Covid, included tours of Haida Gwaii on BC's north coast where I lived and worked for

many years. I have a two week tour of Ireland and Scotland sights and gardens scheduled for May 2023.

## Back Home

On my return to Canada in early 1974 via a visit with my sister and her young family in England I worked for CUSO as a recruiter for 4 months out of the Ottawa HQ visiting various forestry schools across Canada.

I then found a good job in Port Alice on northern Vancouver Island as Resident Forester for Rayonier Canada-later Western Forest Products. The company had invented rayon from cellulose fibre during WWII as a replacement for cotton. During my 6 years in Port Alice I ran for and was elected an Alderman on the village council and in Regional Government-an interesting experience in local politics. Work was focussed on timber cruising, reforestation, environmental protection and silviculture programs.



A few friends and I decided we would enter a team from Jeune Landing in the Fraser River raft race in May 1977 going from the Mission Bridge to Maple Ridge. We had lots of fun building our log raft and entering the horror show of a race with over 25 entries. The shop built us a stainless steel cannon powered by blasting caps and beer. We came in at a respectful 10<sup>th</sup> place. The tidal influence was so strong upriver that day we



had to row downriver most of the way and it was a wild ride.

I later transferred to the company's Queen Charlotte Islands operations (now *Haida Gwaii*) in 1979 during the battle to create South Moresby national park reserve (now *Gwaii Haanas*) over much of the southern portion of

Haida Gwaii. We had two forestry operations there and the one at Lyell Island



was shut down and became part of the park reserve. I participated in some multi-interest planning exercises that focussed on new parks and protected areas. There was international attention on the area including Prince Phillip wanting to see the area as a National Park. I made many lifelong Haida friends during that period. The Haida have an extremely rich culture and history.

I love salmon fishing and that led me to become very involved in the federal DFO Salmon Enhancement Program with

community volunteers. I helped develop 7 volunteer salmon hatcheries on Haida Gwaii and northern Vancouver Island. These produced more than 10



million salmon fry for many rivers during the time I was active in the various groups. I was recognized by Canada's Governor General and received the Canada Recreational Fisheries Award in the

1990's for my work with volunteers on these community projects. I also helped to design and establish a number of popular recreation sites on Haida Gwaii and northern Vancouver Island.

After a couple years I moved to Port McNeill on northern Vancouver Island as Forestry Manager and lived there almost 10 years. We were managing over one million hectares of coastal rainforests and very large forestry operations providing timber to several large pulpmills and numerous sawmills along the BC coast.



My main responsibilities focussed on planning prior to and after timber harvesting and reforestation involving millions of trees annually. Over my career I oversaw the planting of more than 100 million trees in tropical and temperate rainforests. Much of my time was spent dealing with public demands for more parks and conservation in BC as well as working with many First Nations who wanted economic development for their impoverished communities. It was a big relief to be back to a jurisdiction with a sustainable timber harvest and strong environmental regulation and concerns. My peers awarded me Distinguished Professional Forester in 1992.

I was elected President of BC's Professional Foresters during that time and eventually got promoted to WFP's Chief Forester which I spent mostly in Vancouver and Campbell River for a period of 10 years. My main responsibilities were preparing sustainable timber harvests, reforestation and overall forest management. Much of my time was spent resolving conflicts over land use- primarily new parks and protected areas. I had more than 50 foresters working with me. There are now more than 5000 forest professionals working in BC's forest sector.

I also got married to Brenda Burch in 1996 in Maui but we split up in 2011 when we lived in Cobble Hill on Vancouver Island. We had many exciting and happy times together including cruises, holidays in Kihei Maui and a short stint in beautiful Kuching Sarawak.



### **China Forestry Trip**



In October 1985 I had the opportunity to participate in a 3 week forestry tour of China that included Beijing, Xian and Guangzhou for me. The group of 30 BC foresters split into 3 groups and visited various forestry regions of China during a period of immense reforestation of their previously pillaged forests. We visited isolated areas of this country that had never seen Caucasians. We witnessed alarming propaganda blared from community loudspeakers promoting family planning and blind

adherence to the Chinese Communist Party. Things then were still quite primitive even in Beijing but that dramatically changed in the following decades. Their forestry programs were crude and ideologically rather than ecologically driven. At that time Russia was and still is a major forest products supplier to China although New Zealand exotic pine has replaced a lot of Russian wood in China and BC is now a regular supplier of forest products to China as well. The Ukraine war will dramatically change world forest products markets, mostly away from Russia and Belarus. Don't expect the price of 2x4s to drop soon!



### Cordon Bleu School



One of my more memorable holidays was a visit to Paris and southern France in June 1991. I decided to upgrade my cooking skills and attended the Cordon Bleu cooking school in Paris for a couple of weeks studying French Regional cuisine. It was an exciting course led by skilled chefs and I learned many new culinary skills to add to those that my German grandmother taught me and I have practised throughout my life.

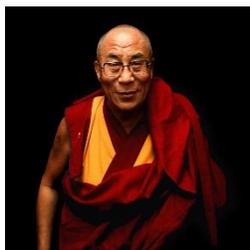


Cooking gives lots of opportunities for creativity.

### Earth Summit in Rio De Janiero



Another great experience was attending the World Environment Conference in Rio De Janiero in 1992. I represented the BC forest sector and rural communities in a booth at the NGO Global Forum at Flamingo Beach. Our display about BC forestry was wedged between the Dalai Lama's peace organisation and the World electrical grid group. They wanted to hook all the electric wires in the world together to share the electrical grid and reduce impacts



of more and more generation facilities worldwide. It was an honour to meet the Dalai Lama-a very congenial and peaceful leader during the event.

A major output from the summit was the Statement on Forest Principles which led to forest certification and the Convention on Biological Diversity-both significant environmental improvement developments with lasting impacts globally.



An outtake of Rio was the establishment of independent Forest Certification based on many principles and practices to try and use market forces to reform forestry practices mainly targeting tropical rainforests. It has



been embraced by mostly northern countries and Canada



and BC now have more certified sustainable forests than anywhere on earth. Unfortunately certification has had minimal effect on improving tropical forest management. I am proud to have been involved in this important validation of sustainable forestry globally.

## Return to Malaysia



International  
**Model Forest**  
Network

At the invitation of the Canadian and Malaysian governments I returned to Malaysia in June 1995 to review several potential Model Forests there. These special

designated forest areas were first established in Canada to bring a diverse partnership of individuals and groups (especially Indigenous) together to achieve a common vision of sustainable development in a large landscape. Canada established many of these in the 1990's and there remains about 60 worldwide. It was an outtake of the Rio Environment conference in 1992 but sadly Malaysia

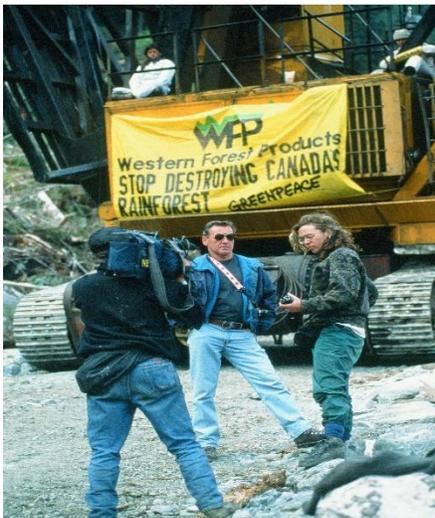
did not pursue the offer and their forestry today remains an outlier in sustainability with a few exceptions. Another missed opportunity due to corruption in Malaysia.

## Great Bear Rainforest

WFP's predecessors were involved in forestry in BC's central coast as early as 1915 when work began on a large pulp and sawmill operation along the Inside Passage at Swanson Bay. A unique black bear with a recessive gene (we did DNA analysis on these bears) that produces a white coat in a small percentage of the population is resident in the central coast area. The white version of this black bear are called



*Kermode* Bears and only these white coloured bears are fully protected. The company had not been active for



decades in the area because of its relatively

scattered timber values but we started work in the early 1990's which sparked BC's always active environmentalists to protest our planned forestry operations. A global campaign for saving the "Great Bear Rainforest" from forestry and logging and other resource development began in earnest including pressure on our pulp and lumber customers in Europe. The area is huge with more than 6.4 million ha and about 7% of BC's total area.



I made numerous trips to Europe to protect our forest products markets and worked very hard with all interests to resolve this decade long, complex environmental conflict. We had teams of professional foresters and other

specialists create solutions that resulted in some lands remaining for sustainable forestry and many huge new conservation and protected areas being established. There are more than 20 First Nations residing in this region and they had a major role in developing and implementing the new conservation plan. BC received positive international recognition for its Great Bear Conservation plan. BC has now preserved more old forest than anywhere else in the world. In fact about half of all the old forests in BC that were here at European contact are still on the landscapes across the province. In spite of that pressures are always on governments to do more. BC has almost 20% of its lands now in protected status.

### Back to Malaysia Again



**SARAWAK  
FORESTRY  
CORPORATION**

In 2002 I was approached by the Sarawak State government by their State Secretary who was at Whistler with his family to be the COO of a new crown corporation to take over the management of National (State) Parks, Wildlife and

the Sarawak forest department. I left my previous employer after 28 years and accepted the job offer, rented out our home in North Vancouver and Brenda and I



headed east to Kuching, Sarawak via Hong Kong. It was good to be back in Malaysia but the reality of my task and the continuing corruption in the forest and government sector in Borneo added to the challenges of addressing a bloated government department with several thousand employees. The dwindling timber harvest from past



overcutting and lack of concern for sustainability and minimal plantation investments were deplorable for a forested nation. Even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Sarawak still had no definable or credible sustainable timber harvest determination or a truly committed forested land base-both key requirements.



We had a beautiful house in Kenny Hill and hosted several staff parties there in our beautiful tropical garden. We are both avid gardeners and it was thrilling to create an amazing tropical landscape at our rented home. We had several mango trees that produced hundreds of delicious fruits to go along with my favourite – the stinky *Durian*-I am a member of the worldwide *Durian Lovers Conglomerate*.

I spent a little over a year in Kuching and actually accomplished the transformation and transition of the bulk of the more than a thousand government employees into a modern corporation with performance indicators, new logo and accountability along with a new governance model, new corporate headquarters in downtown Kuching and board of directors. But the politics and corruption were pervasive and extremely challenging to overcome and address in the context of creating a sustainable permanent forest in that state. There was little State interest in sustainable

forestry. Oil palm farming was and is king and basically destroys the incredibly diverse tropical rainforest in favour of a chemically dependent high nutrient demand monoculture crop.



Eventually several years after I left SFC the Sarawak government removed the forestry segment from the new corporation and returned it to direct government control again confirming the lack of State interest in sustainability of its natural tropical forests-a real tragedy.

We had a couple of great holiday trips to KK and KL during my brief stay there as well as to eastern Australia. Several friends visited from Canada and we made new Malaysian friends. I was struck and saddened by the cultural changes to Malaysia with much nastier politics than in the 1970s and more fundamental Islamic behaviour amongst the Malays. True democracy in Malaysia is non-existent. In East Malaysia there are many Christians, Chinese and indigenous groups who were blatantly discriminated against under the Malay/Bumiputera banner. Race and high level corruption continues to be a significant detriment to development and many non-Malays have migrated to more tolerant countries like Canada, New Zealand and Australia – also the destination for a lot of stolen Malaysian cash and corrupt politicians and bad Sarawak forestry companies. Most of the local media is now owned by the kleptocrats and is now as contrived and controlled as the Chinese and Russian media. A free press and social media is essential to good governance and democracy but it doesn't guarantee it.



### **Back Again to BC**

On my return to BC we decided to move from North Vancouver to Vancouver Island and Cobble Hill, one of BC's developing wine regions and the major Dairy producing area of the island. Cobble Hill is about an hour's drive north of Victoria. The climate is Mediterranean and a great area for gardens with generally mild winters and quite warm summers. I established a successful forestry consulting business and began a tourism enterprise. The BC government hired me to a two person team that consulted all interests and looked at BC's log export policies and developed options for future changes. I also became a senior negotiator for the BC government for interim treaty agreements with First Nations. Government assigned me some of the tougher, more complex



negotiations but it was a great experience dealing with many diverse and mostly impoverished native Bands. We concluded over 20 major agreements.

During the next decade I took on many BC and international projects including several trips back to Sabah and East Kalimantan to advise on development projects including a plantation scheme to support a large Kraft pulpmill. It was nice to be able to practice my Bahasa again on those projects. I also worked with a number of First Nations in BC to get them established in the forestry business by serving as a director on their development corporations. I also served for 6 years on BC's forestry watchdog-the globally unique Forest Practices Board which deals with public complaints and audits.



Throughout my career I was very fortunate to have bright and energetic staff and supportive superiors that enabled me to perform at a high level. Both in Malaysia and in BC there are very competent foresters and other specialists who contribute significantly to good forestry and environmental practices in a professional manner. There were only two females in my UBC forestry class of 50 graduates in 1971. Now women are in the majority in the Forestry Faculty. My profession is blessed with many bright women who bring a much needed perspective to natural resource management in BC and elsewhere.

### **A Special Pilgrimage to Western Europe**



Another special memory is a two week trip I took in 2005 with a WWII veteran and his two sons to Europe. We followed the route that Stan Maher had taken from his landing on Juno Beach right through Belgium to Holland. Stan was an intelligence officer who almost drowned in a tank during the Juno landing. He was with the Fort Garry Horse regiment and they were part of the team that liberated France, Belgium and Holland. It was an incredible trip to

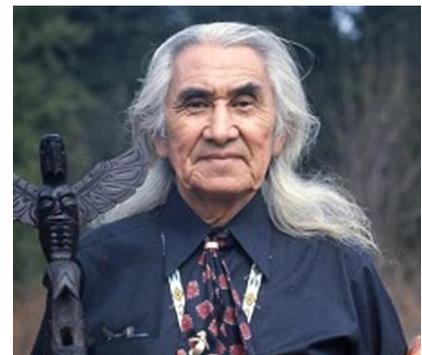
relive Stan's amazing post D Day travel through northern Europe under heavy Nazi attack and bombardment. A very moving stop along the way was at Canada's amazing WWI Vimy Memorial-every Canadian should make a pilgrimage to this special site in France that honours the Allied and Canadian



efforts to stop the German advance. The absolute carnage there was appalling to witness even 90 years later. With Putin's recent unwarranted vicious war on Ukraine the memories of those terrible World Wars come back into focus again for this generation.

### **Work and Relations with First Nations**

Other than fake Hollywood portrayals and National Geographic coverage my earliest memory of an indigenous aboriginal was Ann George, daughter of Chief Dan George, an elected and hereditary Salish chief and accomplished actor. My mom hired her to help take care of me and my 11 siblings. She lived



with us for several years and we liked her a lot. Chief Dan was a humble and friendly guy and was a guest of honour at several family events. We were probably aware of Indian residential schools because we were Catholics but had no knowledge of the horrors that went on in those awful places for more than a century with lasting negative legacies in many aboriginal communities.

Indigenous history and culture was not taught in any of my school classes except obscure references to which tribes supported or not the early colonial settlers in Canada and the US. Most indigenous people were portrayed as losers and uneducated and lacking culture and the Tonto/Lone Ranger stories. As my forestry career progressed I learned and improved my understanding of aboriginal

people and gained much respect for these ancient cultures far older than my own European heritage.

Arriving in West Malaysia in the 1970's I became aware of the longest inhabitants of the land as CUSO was staffing their hospital and medical centre in KL.



The Orang Asli (original people) of West Malaysia were terribly discriminated against by most politicians and badly treated by the forest department and forest industry and seen as an impediment to unbridled logging. Road blockages to protect their interests were met with violence and legal intimidation from authorities. Even though there were a few large land reserves for them they



were not respected. Yet no other group of people had a better understanding or respect for forests and all the life in them.



As I returned to BC and began working as a forester here my awareness of First Nations improved and initially the relations were focused on developing agreements for land exchanges and

rights of way through their reserves. I found their leaders to be responsible and very decent people whose interests were focused on the well-being of fellow band members.

Court decisions in Canada began to affirm aboriginal rights and title throughout my career and these legal precedents started to significantly affect forestry operations in the

absence of treaties.

Governments were

always trying to catch up with court rulings. I hired one of the first Aboriginal Affairs managers for a major BC forest



**Mowachaht / Muchalaht  
First Nation**

company in the 1990's and we started working on joint ventures and identifying opportunities to work with first nations in whose traditional territories we were operating in. During my tenure as WFP's Chief Forester we had operations in 27 separate First Nations territories and worked to establish positive relations with all of them. The disastrous effects of residential schools are pervasive in many Canadian aboriginal communities. We participated in many projects to re-establish Big Houses and rebuild damaged cultures and improve impoverished communities.



On my return to Malaysia in 2003 to create the Sarawak Forestry Corp I became more aware of the diverse indigenous people of Borneo including Dayaks, the Iban, the Bidayuh, and Orang Ulu. Their cultures are very rich and complex with the Iban being 30% of the State's population. The Bidayuh are shown here during the harvest

festival in their traditional regalia. Many indigenous people were employees of the new corporation at all levels. Most had strong ties to their ancestral homes and I enjoyed several interesting visits to the rural Longhouses along with amazing tales about head hunting and the Japanese occupation during WWII. Because they are so significant population wise the indigenous people were well represented in the State legislature and in politics. In spite of their representation their native rights are subjugated significantly by the State, its bureaucrats and politicians.

As much as 20 percent of state land in Sarawak is classified as Native Customary Rights Land, but only two percent of this land is surveyed and titled. These specific areas are similar to the First Nations reserves in Canada but to a larger extent. The Sarawak State Government estimated that there exist some 15,000 square kilometres of native customary rights (NCR) land in the state (total area is 124,000 km<sup>2</sup>) or about 12% but it has taken action over the past few decades to whittle away at the lands that





will be titled to the specific aboriginal groups. As a result the more accessible NCR lands have been heavily logged with little or no economic return to the native owners. Blockades to prevent logging on NCR are common and usually lead to arrests of the blockaders and trampling of their legal rights. Recent court actions in Sarawak have

recognized the significance of Canadian law in respect of aboriginal rights and title. As in BC the State government has lost some significant legal cases in favour of NCR and aboriginal rights.



economic development corporations as a Director. I also provided support and advice for many years as they built successful forestry and other business enterprises several with

After I returned home from Sarawak several large First Nations invited me to join their



WESTCOAST RESORTS



forestry companies that were working on their traditional territories.

annual sales in excess of \$100 million. Many have expanded their initial timber allocations from government by buying out major



HEILTSUK DEVCO



Governments have started to share revenue from resource development and private forestry and resource companies are now required to consult and accommodate aboriginal interests for all their operations. Getting into the resource business is tough but most BC major forestry companies have taken a very proactive role in working with First Nations in their traditional territories and building solid

businesses and joint ventures. There are now more than 200 aboriginal forestry businesses in BC and many FN professional foresters. The same pressures about the environment and forests that exist in non-aboriginal communities are also present in native



communities so there are always tensions over development issues and forestry. Now that many First Nations are achieving degrees of economic independence changes are coming with respect to aboriginal support for resource development. Many are now providing contract and other services for large developments and that is a major and positive step to reconciliation.

The biggest forestry problem in BC is the lack of a dedicated land base for forestry. Politicians can and regularly remove on a whim, due to green or other pressures, some of Canada's finest forest lands from BC's working forests at huge costs to workers, communities and the economy. Until there is a working forest secure land base in BC sustainable forestry is at very high risk just like Sarawak.

### Big And Little Towns

While I was born in Vancouver (population of 600,000 in the 1960's) at St. Paul's most of my life has been spent in smaller communities including : Tapah (5000 population in 1970), Ipoh (250,000), Jeune Landing (a suburb of Port Alice- 150), Sewell Inlet (225), Port McNeill (2500), North Vancouver Deep Cove (50,000), Campbell River (30,000), Kuching (500,000 ), Cobble Hill ( 5000 population in 2020). My preference is for small towns but not too small. High speed internet, cell phones and satellite TV, all developed during my tenure, have made rural living extremely viable from a communications point of view.

### Gardening

Gardening is great for the soul and a calming influence in my life. My ex Brenda is a dedicated and knowledgeable gardener and stimulated my skills in that area during our time





together. We hosted charity and other garden tours of hundreds of people to share our garden. My current garden in Cobble Hill - the *Rose Tree Garden*- is 1.5 acres and was first established in 2014 and has about 400 rhododendrons (*Rose tree* is the English translation of *rhododendron*) and 600 other plants, especially iris as I am currently the Secretary-Treasurer of the BC Iris Society. Here are the links to a Utube video [\(2\) The Rose Tree Garden 2020 Tour - YouTube](#) and still photos of the garden at [Photos – Dumont Events & Tours](#). I also prepare and sell flower arrangements daily from the roadside kiosk at my garden and my property was recently given farm classification.



I am currently blessed with two very friendly and smart dogs- Sadie, a 3 year old Chocolate Labrador retriever and Iris a 28 week old German shorthaired pointer. They drag me around on several walks each day and sessions with all their friends at the Cobble Hill Dog Park. Iris is attending school weekly and is particularly attentive and very food motivated making her education rather easy.

## Family



transformed to the DuMont family and later became involved with perfume manufacture (still for sale today as **4711 eau de cologne**) and tobacco sales.

The Dumont family is full of interesting history and my brother, Father Mark, a Benedictine monk has researched the family back to the late 1400's when we moved from Spain into France and Belgium. The de la Montes (hence the large mountain in our family crest)



My paternal grandfather was one of 11 children and although my dad was a singleton he had 12 children who created over 30 nieces and nephews for me to spoil and be impressed with over the past few decades. These folks have now produced an additional special 30 kids.



## Finally



In 2014 I was in Istanbul working for the Haida logging company-Taan Forest - selling their forest products at a major building supply conference focussed on the Middle East markets. There was a great opportunity underground near the Grand Blue Mosque and its water storage site to get a nice picture of myself dressed as a Sultan and soothsayer. I am not good at predictions but I can say with certainty I have had a great life and was glad to have been part of CUSO and as a forester contributing to international and particularly First Nations development.

Bill Dumont – May 2022 – [wedumont@hotmail.com](mailto:wedumont@hotmail.com)