

**Matt Minahan's Daily Summaries**

**OD Network Annual Conference, 2001**

**Vancouver, Canada**

**Subject: ODN in Vancouver -- Day 1**

From: Matt Minahan <matt@minahangroup.com> Date: Sat, 10 Nov 2001  
21:48:50 -0500

To all of our odnet lists subscribers --

I'll be posting a few lines each day to fill you in a bit on the highlights of each day's activities here at the ODN Annual Conference in Vancouver. This is biggest gathering of people in our field each year, and some important things happen than others in the field should know about, even if they're not here.

So, if you're a participant here in Vancouver and keeping up with your email, please write in and add your perspectives and thoughts about what's happening here. And if you're not here, please read along if you'd like . . . . hopefully, these messages will give you a bit of a sense of what's happening here, and what you'd be experiencing if you were here. (I've always wanted to my a foreign correspondent! Watch out, Christianne Ammanpour!)

Friday was a sunny, 55 degree day here, in the city "where the mountains meet the sea, and the spirit finds a home." The conference hotel is located about 4 blocks from Burrard Bay, across which is a very close, gorgeous mountain range, on the side of which are homes and above which is winter-season skiing.

There is a pedestrian walk way along the Bay, and over into Stanley Park, which is a 1,000 acre nature preserve with ponds, lakes, hiking trails, and a few roads. Stanley Park is the area of choice near downtown Vancouver for jogging, biking, walking, and just strolling. I'm told that one in four families in Vancouver owns a boat, and many of them are moored along Burrard Bay, near Stanley Park, and out toward English Channel. It's easy to see why people come to Vancouver and never want to leave. (BTW, highrise bayside condos are selling for \$895,000 Canadian, which is about \$500,000 US, and which helps to explain why so many US citizens are buying homes up north here.)

The conference actually starts on Sunday evening, but there are several days of pre-conference workshops which got underway today (Saturday.) There is a program on Becoming a Better Intervener from a Gestalt Perspective, Appreciative Inquiry, a two day human interaction lab (T-group), Starting Your Own Consulting Business, Answering the Call: the OD Practitioner's Journey, and, (my favorite title) How to

Think Like an Artist and Act Like a Capitalist: Make Your Work a Work of Art.

There are about 250 people here for the preconference workshops, which Pat Yankus, the ODN Conference Coordinator said is the largest crowd we've ever had for the preconferences . . .

. with hundreds more arriving Sunday and Monday and Tuesday!

So, we're off to a good start. Wish us well, and stay tuned for news tomorrow!

Matt

**Subject: ODN in Vancouver -- Day 2**

From: Matt Minahan <matt@minahangroup.com> Date: Sun, 11 Nov 2001 22:53:50 -0500

Sunday morning dawned with clouds, and a gorgeous, multicolored sunrise over the hills to the east of Vancouver, foreshadowing a day of colors and textures for the city and for the participants at the ODN Annual Conference.

Today's program featured the continuation of the two day sessions on Gestalt interventions, Appreciative Inquiry, the NTL Human Interaction Lab, etc. There were also sessions for the Godparents (otherwise known affectionately as the "old fogies,") the People of Color sig, Diversity in a Global Organization, a meeting of OD Network regional chapters, and a session on why "Change Management Needs Changing."

I participated in the two day HI lab, which was led very skillfully by Anne Litwin, Steve Jones, and my friend David Glaser, all of whom were WONDERFUL. Obviously, you can't do in two days what would normally occur in a 6 day lab, but for newcomers to the field and old timers who value the refresher, it's a great sampling of what actually goes on in a T group. I find that a lot of people new to the field have never had that experience, and for them, this was a good first exposure to a methodology that is right at the core of our history and so central to the way we understand the world and define our field.

The OD Network's Annual Meeting took place this evening, at which Amy Herman (ED), Bev Scott (chair) and the board presented the annual report, and the results of the member and non member surveys conducted this past spring. Many of you participated in them (thank you!) and the results are driving the priorities and work program for the ODN in the coming months. Practitioner liability insurance is available right now, and possibly other group insurances (health, life, etc) in the future. Amy announced the launch of the Richard Beckard Mentoring Program, which will pair newcomers to the field together with some of the old hands. And, for those of us who knew Dick, this seems like a

fitting tribute to a guy who was so deeply committed to helping others with personal and professional growth and development.

The official opening of the conference is underway as I write here. Several of the elders of the First Nations tribe are leading us all in an Aboriginal Tribal healing ceremony. So far, this includes a series of tribal rituals to create a sacred space where feelings and concerns over the loss of a safe world can be shared, to enhance our own ability to deal with anger, sadness, and fear, to create a sense of community through shared songs and ceremonies, and to transform and renew the energy of a sad and angry world. FYI, they're members of the First Nations tribe are dressed very much like everyone else at the conference -- casual dress, etc -- but each has a native-made drum or feather or some type of totem, and they are performing these rites that have centuries of tradition and history with deep reverence. A very moving ceremony, and deeply touching for all.

Tomorrow, Linda Ackerman and Randall Robinson lead the opening plenary at 8:00. (YIKES, who schedules these things!)

More tomorrow. And, I hope that Robin Reid and Paul Cadario and some of the other folks who are here and reading email would post a few lines about how you're experiencing things here . . .

Matt

**Subject: ODN in Vancouver -- Day Three**

From: Matt Minahan <matt@minahangroup.com> Date: Mon, 12 Nov 2001 23:15:07 -0500

It was a cloudy, drizzly morning outside here in Vancouver, with a similar feel inside the Hyatt here, as we learned the news about the airplane crash in NYC . . . hearts and prayers were with the victims and, of course, the rescue workers and residents of the area . . .

Despite the bad news, we had tons to celebrate today. The OD Network awarded two Lifetime Achievement awards, to Kathie Dannemiller who was warmly introduced by Billie Alban, and to Edie Seashore, who was elegantly introduced by Fred Miller. Bob Marshak was also on hand to pick up his award, originally announced at last year's conference in Atlanta while Bob was overseas. And the Outstanding Regional Chapter award was presented to the Chesapeake Bay OD Network, which was accepted by Sharon Newman, the current president.

We then had two keynote speakers: Linda Ackerman Anderson, from Being First, who challenged us as individuals and as a field to be stronger and more effective. She asked us: what far-reaching impact does your work produce? Are you consciously designing your work to trigger greater impact than what you personally provide?

Does the result of your work last and spread, with or without you being on site?

Then Randall Robinson, who founded TransAfrica in 1977 to advocate for the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa and to influence US policies in Africa and the Caribbean challenged us to expand our consciousness beyond the narrow, US or North American frame in which most of us live. He said that democracy is rooted in an enlightened, educated citizenry, and that totalitarianism is rooted in narrowness and ignorance, and called for a major overhaul of the education system in the US. In response to a question about recent laws which expand police powers in defense of terrorism, he said "We need to be careful not to wrap ourselves up in our flag so tightly that we smother the freedoms that we wish to protect."

That, and the followup work that we did in table groups took up most of the morning, and then the afternoon was devoted to 15 concurrent session. In the early afternoon, the Gay-Lesbian-Bisexual-Transgender affinity group met, as did the Men in OD affinity group, which John Parton and I convened. We launched the session by listening to Loudon Wainright III's song "Men," and then had a WONDERFUL conversation with 14 men, from college age to almost 70, some of us having attended 20 ODN conferences, one of us with more than 30, and many attending their first.

Finally, today was holiday in Canada, celebrating Remembrance Day, which is similar to the Veteran's Day which we celebrate in the US. But the news stories and radio commentary about Remembrance Day feels different here. Rather than honoring the brave and proud accomplishments of the men and women who died fighting our wars, as is the theme and tone in the US, here the tone seems to be reflective, honoring those who died, but also wondering if the sacrifice of human life in war is ever just . . .

. Even the grizzled, decorated war heroes honored here in Canada seem to stand opposed to the same kinds of conflicts in which they and their friends fought and died together.

A good day here for a Monday. In fact, a very, very good Monday indeed. With sadness about the plane accident and all of its implications, and pride for our field and our future.

More tomorrow. Matt

**Subject: ODN in Vancouver -- Day 4**

From: Matt Minahan <matt@minahangroup.com> Date: Wed, 14 Nov 2001 00:34:57 -0500

Among the 600-plus people here have been a large number of odnet subscribers . . . Among the people here you might know who are here are Allon Shevat, Jonathon Ross, Paul Cadario, Diana Lilla, Bev Scott,

Warren Hoffman, Karen Davis, Steve Cady, Jane Hascall, Robin Reid, Randy Webb, Chris Kloth, Victor Woodell (odnet), Jason Wolf, Matt Griffin, and Katie Dannemiller (odnet-nplg), Amy Daly-Donovan and Jackie Eder-Van Hook (odnet-coach), Greg Woods (odnet-global), Mila Baker (odnet-internals), Marti Kaplan and Denny Gallagher (godparents), and John Parton and Linda Smith (regionals).

And, big thanks to Diana Lilla, Paul Cadario, and Robin Reid who've also posted notes about the conference to our various lists. It's great to see the range of experiences and perspectives of different people all attending the same event!

Today, we had about 20 sessions, including a Herb Shepard memorial session with Jonno Hanafin, Alan Fitz, Denny Gallagher, Sherm Grinnel, and Rad Wilson. Billie Alban and Barbara Bunker did a session on Designing Global Meetings: Using OD Process for Positive Global Impact. Chris Kloth and John Parton led a session called "Non Profit Sector Organizations: Pioneers of the New Economy." And, the session that I attended was Body Awareness as Process Awareness: Broadening Use of Self." Rose Gowdey had us literally a-moving and a-shaking!

The AU/NTL students and alumni had a mid day lunch and a bit of a business meeting. Then this afternoon, Drew Turner convened the session for Internal Consultants, Bev Scott and Jane Hascall led "Transitions and Partnerships: The Tao of Internal and External Consulting," and David Glaser led a wonderful session on "Grief and Loss: The Healing Potential of 'Debriefing.' "

At the gala dinner this evening -- which was fabulous with salmon and chicken and vegetables and great desserts -- a video was shown, which pulled together clips of people and faces which had been recorded from throughout the conference. Then afterward, there was quiet piano music in the 34th floor area, with a stunning view of the nighttime Vancouver skyline. And downstairs, there was a great DJ and some great dancing. Among the hundreds of dancers were Amy Herman and John Parton doing a great re-interpretation of the dancing in Saturday Night Fever. And, to Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean," Mirlande Parker and Keneth Jones resurrected the Electric Slide, which was great fun to watch. And of course, there was the obligatory "YMCA" by the Village People, and Mustang Sally, and Twist and Shout, and some Shania Twain.

**Subject: ODN in Vancouver -- The End**

From: Matt Minahan <matt@minahangroup.com> Date: Wed, 14 Nov 2001 22:07:20 -0500

So, how do you end a 5 day gathering for 600 of your closest friends? That was the challenge for today's closing of the ODN Annual conference . . . and it was met exactly as it should have been -- with a return to our core values as a field.

Bob Marshak explained that our field has its roots in social psychology and humanism, which value the growth and development of the

individual, and he contrasted that with the principles of business and economics, which value the acquisition of wealth, and how we need to remain in conversation across the boundaries of our fields. Rita Aloni from Israel explained how life in Israel has shifted to include listening to the news and checking for casualties with neighbors and relatives, after which life goes on as "normal," and she offered that as one way for a society to cope with proximate danger and fear of terrorism. She also described the recent IODA meeting, which was held in Dresden, Germany just after the 9/11 tragedies, and how effectively it brought people together across countries and cultures. Brenda Jones challenged us to stay deeply in touch with ourselves and our values, and she showed a film clip from "The Legend of Bagger Vance," in which Will Smith advises Matt Damon to "see the whole field" of the golf course, with soft eyes, being open to the visible and not visible elements at play. Arnold Minors, who chaired the closing panel, invited table groups to converse about our own specific values, for ourselves and our field, and said, "Now, write those values down on your hand . . . preferably using indelible ink . . . so that we can revisit them when we meet again in Montreal in October, 2002."

Extra special thanks are due to the 2001 Conference Planning Committee, who screened all of the proposals, selected the presenters and topics, and handled much of the planning and logistics. They included Laura Christenson, Jim Crummel, Denny Gallagher, John Gavares, Kerry Kuenzi, Marilu Mayuga, Jean-Luc Moreau, Deborah Pagel, Greg Woods, and Chrissa Merron.

In addition, the local host committee did a wonderful job of supporting the work done by the planners, and they included Phaedra VanderMeer, Bob Aldcorn, Brian Tucker, Carrie Okano, Debra Lindsay, Ed Eduljee, Peter Goodman, Lisa Ryan, Suzan Guest, Sylvia Porter, Mitch Romanchook.

One last note of thanks to all of the ODN staff who did such a tremendous job of working to pull this event off, including Maggie, Beverly, Kathy, Pat, Mirlande, and of course, Amy Herman, the Executive Director of the ODN.

In conclusion, I can safely say the proverbial "good time was had by all."

And, it will be great to see you all in Montreal in October, 2002!

Your humble scribe, Matt