

June Newsletter

What's Inside

GFSC at the IAF conference: Tampa, FL, June 9-11, 2005. Many thanks to IAF for affording us the opportunity to meet old and new friends...

Meet the Board: Introducing the team...

IAF Conference, Tampa, Florida 9-11 June 2005



Keke Quai, Lenny Diamond, Karen Brill, Gil Brenson-Lazan

Many thanks to the IAF for hosting a wonderful conference and thank you to all who stopped by the GFSC booth to look at our map and learn more about what GFSC is doing all over the world. We learned a lot from your questions and hope you learned a lot from our answers!

GFSC is grateful for the opportunity IAF has given us, donating exhibit hall space for our booth and helping to arrange for our social hour and Board meeting. Special thanks to Maureen and Jon for their hospitality. And a very special thank you to Larry and Bego Meeker for "schlepping" and setting up the booth display apparatus. And thank you to Parcia Sansary for helping us set up the booth and our social hour. Also, thank you to Andrea Diamond, graphic designer, who created our new bookmark enclosure (for the IAF tote bags). All of you will always be part of the GFSC family!

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Special Thanks

To Elke Graubmann and Moderatio for their donation of *Visualization Presentation Moderation* by Josef W. Seifert, to the GFSC library

Meet the Board

Gilbert Brenson-Lazan, President



I was born, raised and educated (formally) in the US as a Social Psychologist with an additional postgraduate Clinical Residency in Family Psychotherapy, in spite of a couple of "interludes" to work with

Martin Luther King's SCLC Movement and to work with inner-city street gangs. I took a fling at print and television journalism and documentary production which, in spite of some success, I quickly left during the Nixon years, in disgust with the profession and the President. I came to Colombia, South America to find my path and myself.

I worked in and taught Transactional Analysis and Brief Systemic Psychotherapy in Latin America for twenty years before I began to apply some systemic therapy models to working with community groups, NGOs and even some companies. Then I discovered that the stuff I was doing and thought I had invented was called *facilitation* and so I became a facilitator. I discovered the IAF in 1996 and had several roles there before finishing my term as International VP and starting to work with an outstanding group of people that ended up being GFSC. I am currently Exec. President of Amauta International, LLC and its Latin American branch, Amauta Internacional, Ltda., where I train facilitators, do consulting in crisis and change management and invent new models.

I have five adult men-children and some gorgeous grandchildren. My wife of 25 years died three years ago and I am now in another wonderful relationship with a lovely, brilliant Dominican economist turned facilitator.

Most of all, I feel very fulfilled to be able to work with the likes of all of you.

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Deb Starzynski, Vice President



I live in Whitby, Canada, just outside Toronto. Like many others I've come to facilitation via an indirect route. I studied Linguistics and Social Psych at University then did a temporary left-turn into Interior Design (another form

of internal space). I worked for the phone company for about 20 years first in Operations, Engineering, Network Management, Service Management and as a Business Analyst for systems projects.

My turning point came upon return from a 15 month Maternity Leave when I realized that the meeting we were having was the same as the meetings I participated in before I left! It was a thunderbolt - how can I spend my life working on the same issues without making progress? Surely there was another way to be and contribute to something meaningful. About the same time, the organization was initiating employee participation and Total Quality. This appealed to me and so for a number of years I used a range of facilitation techniques and OD work. Finally I took the 'jump' to my own business in facilitation and OD consulting and have never looked back.

Several years ago I attended a Disaster Intervention Facilitation workshop at the IAF Conference in Toronto, led by Gil & Bego. Not only did I meet many of my current IAF and GFSC friends at this workshop, I also became intrigued with the notion of facilitation as a way to support recovery and growth in the non-corporate arena. I joined the newly formed board of GFSC shortly after that and have continued to part of the organization through our evolution from 'helping hands' philosophy to empowering and supporting others who are better equipped at the local level to provide direct support. I'm looking forward to working with all of you as we put this thinking into practice.

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Lenny Diamond, Treasurer

I live in West Hartford, Connecticut, USA, with my wife (and best friend), B-J. I am currently Treasurer of GFSC, and a past chair of the IAF Community Outreach Strategic Initiative.

I actually learned about facilitation in 1989 when I worked in a large American corporation. A group of executives (I was one of them), attended a week long meeting which was mostly a one-directional, "talk at" week – until the last day when we went out in the woods and played games with each other; then spent the afternoon talking about how we played together, how our effectiveness as leaders depended on how we "played the game" in the office, etc. I think you can guess the rest of the story – a career switch in 1991, starting a small consulting company, attending my first IAF conference in Tulsa



and realizing that what I really wanted was to excel at the facilitation part of my work, rather than telling clients what I thought about their situation. The most rewarding part of joining this profession is having the opportunity to meet, learn from, collaborate and share with some of the most wonderful, caring human beings.

My facilitation work takes me to many exciting and interesting places around the world. For the past 3 years our clients have mostly been organizations born through mergers, acquisitions or joint ventures, where there is "a lot of water in the boat" and it is sinking, or has lost its course. We assist organizations in creating the type of culture which respects the past and focuses on the future. You know that this is easier said than done, and the facilitation challenges have helped me grow professionally and personally.

I like music – I play a little piano and guitar. I follow just about any kind of sport. And I love being outdoors in any season. Our newest favorite activity is playing with our 10-month-old granddaughter.

Being involved in GFSC allows me to give something back after many years of being on the receiving end of the equation. I truly feel blessed and honored to be on this adventure with all of you and look forward to crossing paths as our journey unfolds.

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B-J Diamond, Secretary

I am the only member of the GFSC Board who is not an experienced facilitator—I thought we needed at least one! I have a Masters degree in teaching and except for a stint as an urban planner (specializing in land use and housing), I have taught a variety of age groups and subjects, including elementary school, needlework and other crafts (knitting, needlepoint and crocheting), customer service training and basic computer skills. I am a free-lance writer, proofreader and editor. Most of my current writing is devoted to instructional design and courses for adult learners as well as writing and editing newsletters and web sites.

As you can probably guess, Lenny (the Treasurer) is my husband (36 years and it does seem like only yesterday that we walked down that aisle). We always dreamed that we would work together doing something meaningful. We are proud to be a part of GFSC from its very beginnings and hope we can help it grow and contribute to strengthening communities around the

world while increasing respect and understanding among all people.

I enjoy hearing from all of you, even if it is just "please sign me up to receive your newsletter."

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Karen Brill, Member-at-Large



I have been a member of the IAF since the Toronto conference – and before IAF would join and quit a professional organization every year or so. I have found IAF membership to be consistently motivating and always find that the conference learning sessions enhance my own practice in facilitation.

During the Texas conference, I met BJ & Lenny Diamond (formerly the 'outreach guy') and heard about the outpouring of wanting to do something from IAF members in the wake of 9/11. I attended the Disaster Intervention Workshop and was hooked! I am currently "member at large" on the GFSC board and work on our evolving processes, strategic plans and Board Development

My facilitation career spans 20-ish years. My first career was in mental health where I learned about the power of groups in the context of addiction self-help. I graduated from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education with a Masters in adult learning and launched a career in learning and development. In contrast to stand-up training, my facilitation skills (blended with content) became my brand and I believe the secret of my success.

I am currently with a small consulting firm and we are known for developing and facilitating deep-drill simulations. We partner with clients who are launching major change initiatives and need to align their workforce faster in order to achieve results sooner – and that's where experiential learning comes in. This year we were on 5 continents and in 8 languages.

I happily live in Toronto with my musician-entrepreneur husband of 19 years and two sons, ages 13 and 18. I am thrilled to be part of this talented and committed group of people.

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Tim Karpoff, Member-at-large



I live in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. This is the "desert Southwest" in the States, and is known for stunning landscapes, with clear, distinct colors of sky, forest and plains; great food, particularly great chile, red or green; and being a crossroads, throughout history, of several groups of people--Pueblo, Navajo, Apache, Spanish, & "American" immigrants from Europe, Asia and Africa It's a land of great contrasts: Last weekend, I was hiking in snow above 3000 meters; this week I was working in towns where the temperature was 40 degrees (Centigrade). My wife and I (married 28 years) both love living here.

I have been facilitating group capacity building for 30 years, first with the Institute of Cultural Affairs in the USA and Southeast Asia, and as an independent consultant for the past 14 years.

My facilitation practice focuses on a couple areas. One is a variety of community and organizational planning applications. Another is using "lean" principles to help improve project delivery systems on construction projects. Also, I work on public resource planning and dispute resolution--for example, how to assure water quantity and quality is a big issue in this part of the world.

I think that GFSC has enormous potential, and a real gift to offer the world. I was very impressed when I participated in the Disaster Intervention Facilitation workshop with Gil and Bego and Lenny a few years back at the IAF conference, because there was real clarity about how to think about and apply facilitation skills in new ways. This sense has grown over the years, and in addition to the workshops, local volunteer networks, and mentored pathways program, I think that we can change the whole way development assistance is planned and delivered, by moving from "transferring technology" from one place to another, to "exchange of technologies" between places. I am proud to be on the GFSC board to help make this idea a reality.

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GFSC in Europe and Africa

In October, GFSC will be attending the 2005 IAF European Conference in Germany. Gil and Tim will facilitate a workshop for conference attendees as well as be available for sharing more information about GFSC.

GFSC has also been invited to attend the 2005 IAF African Conference in South Africa. Gil and Lenny, together with conference planners, are developing a workshop to address specific needs of facilitators and NGO's working on the HIV/AIDS crisis on that continent. We need your financial support for this project. If you would like to contribute, please go to the GFSC website and click on the donation button.

Francisco Fernandez, Liaison to IAF

I am a Quality Management Manager at the largest bank in Colombia. In the past I have been a Process Assessor and a Quality Control Manager. I teach post-graduate courses in facilitation at the University. I have taken several crisis/disaster intervention workshops with Gilberto and with Bego Rodas Meeker.

I have been directly involved in facilitation since 1987 when the company for which I worked faced a joint venture and decided to go through the cultural side of this challenge via outdoor experiential facilitation. I was part of the facilitation team. After that I attend the first Latin American IAF Conference in Quito in 1998, where I met Gil Brenson, Bego Rodas_Meeker, Lenny Diamond, B-J Diamond, and made a lot of other friends. Since then I have considered facilitation as my way of living. I have been part of IAF ACT, since 2000, first as co-Chair for the Community Outreach Taskforce, and now as the coordinator for the Community Outreach Strategic Initiative of IAF, and Liaison with GFSC.

I am proud to have been at the "birth" of GFSC at the IAF conference in Dallas, when a small group of 5 people decided that our next step was to incorporate and begin the process of becoming a real organization. I have been with GFSC ever since.

I consider GFSC one of the best ways to serve communities around the world using my facilitator competence. GFSC provides a way for me to give back to the world and life because I am grateful for the many gifts that I have received. Being part of this organization is, for me, a huge privilege.

We welcome your comments and ideas. Please write to us at gfsc@amauta.org and write "Attention Editor" on the subject line.

Marieann Shovlin, Member-at-Large

My journey in facilitation began when I discovered, as a manager in a high technology company, that my management methods were really facilitative. Shortly afterwards, I joined the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) and started to learn formal facilitation methods. While most of my professional life has been as a high tech organization manager, my career began in teaching and health care. More recently, I decided to devote time to helping organizations work together to improve their processes and systems and founded Peak Process, a consulting and training practice using participative methods and facilitation. Peak Process is dedicated to optimizing organizational performance through collaboratively developing processes, implementing quality systems, and achieving continuous improvement goals. As a Technology of Participation trainer, I use those methods with my clients and teach them in public courses. With my roots in teaching, I have developed and delivered training programs in quality management systems, customer satisfaction, technology job search methods, and continuous process improvement for both industry and non-profits.

Part of what seems to be an ever-growing amount of time in volunteer activities has been spent as Treasurer and Chair of the International Association of Facilitators, board membership on the ASQ (American Society for Quality, Silicon Valley Section), my church and now GFSC. While part of the IAF board, I supported the effort to establish GFSC because it focused on community outreach using facilitation. As part of my personal mission, I see community outreach extending not only to developing countries but also to many communities in the United States, particularly in my state of California, where the population is primarily immigrant and education, jobs and hunger are significant issues. I see GFSC's mission of local enablement as a key factor in community development—and hope to help it grow.

Watch for our new newsletter feature:

Volunteer Highlights: We have many interested and interesting volunteers on our volunteer database and in our Mentored Pathways program. I hope to share some of their experiences with all our newsletter subscribers. This new section will feature interesting examples of volunteer work all over the world. If you have a volunteer story to share, please send it to [BJ](mailto:BJ@gfsc.org) at gfsc@amauta.org. Write "Volunteer Story" on the subject line and we'll try to include it in a future newsletter.