

GREG GULDIN: ON THE BEACH AND THROUGHOUT THE ASIAN WORLD



Max Weber knew what he was talking about when he told us that a key change in the life of an organization comes when the first generation of charismatic leaders gives way to the next generation's stalwart plodders and careful builders. The latter was clearly my role as I picked up the tightly grasped reins from our venerable co-founder, Tom Benson. More the Zhu Rongji type to Benson as Mao Zedong.

Of course, Tom was not alone at the creation. With him as co-godfather of ASIANetwork (then still dubbed Asia Network) was the unflappable and quietly competent David Vikner of the United Board. Still, as the first CEO of the organization, Tom was identified as Mr. ASIANetwork and he ran the organization with flair and a touch of hyperbole. He was masterful at presenting a vision of the future of this organization and what it could do for liberal arts colleges as they came to grips with a globalizing world. Attending the first organizing meeting for such an organization in Benson's backyard in Pinehurst, NC, near his St. Andrews roost in 1992, I was infected by his enthusiasm and dragooned by him and David onto the organizing committee for this fledgling group.

Once ASIANetwork was established, though, and with Tom looking forward to his new duties as President of Green Mountain College in the Yankee heartland of Vermont, he looked for someone to carry the organization through the transition to the more mundane tasks of step-by-step organizational development. A drone was needed and Tom anointed me with an executive's recommendation to our newly constituted Board of Directors. Whatever doubts my colleagues had about my capabilities were muted out of respect for our Founder's will.

So during the summer of 1994, Marianna McJimsey and Tom slowly initiated me into the mysteries of ASIANetwork finances, legal status, organizational structure, and money hunting. You wouldn't believe the fly-by-the-seat-of-our-pants state the organization was in at the time! But that's the hallmark of the charismatic leadership style,

no? The big picture first, and leave the details to others to fill in. I suppose Martin Luther King, Jr. and his caliber of leader acted the same.

The first major task for me as the new chair as of the October 1994 Fall Board Meeting was to organize a national conference. Pity me as I had to fly to St. Petersburg, Florida during that winter to preview the on-the-beach site of Eckerd College, host of the April 1995 annual meeting. I tested the waters for those that were to follow and was treated regally by our Eckerd colleagues led by Molly Ransbury and George Meese. The meeting itself also turned out well as this was the first conference fully devoted to the organization's main function of serving the teaching needs of our member colleges. With chartering and other such organizational tasks behind us, we were free to launch a series of seminars exploring the issue of Orientalism in Asian Studies and invited Tu Wei-ming, noted philosopher of things Chinese, to initiate us into the virtues of his suddenly avant-garde neo-Confucianism. Barbara Metcalf was our other keynoter and her talk on India and the origins of her own involvement in Asian Studies helped tie us to the larger world of Asian Studies; as President of the Association for Asian Studies that year, her presence helped confirm not only our newly-acquired AAS affiliate status, but granted our new organization a much appreciated vote of confidence.

That first year also was notable for Tom's enlisting me to secure a major grant from the Ford Foundation. With our Luce Consultancy Program in full swing that year, we doubled our institutional support with a nearly half-million dollar pledge from the Ford Foundation for an innovative program to support teaching in our member schools. Sprung from the ever-fertile brains and collaborative energies of that dynamic duo of Vikner and Benson, this ASIANetwork Faculty Curricular Development for Asia Program launched our organization to sail directly onto the high seas of innovative tertiary area studies support. Conceived boldly as a way to deal with the unique problems of building liberal arts Asian studies programs-limited funds and limited faculty-the program took faculty from whatever field or disciplinary background and helped prepare them to teach a course or course module which deals substantially with Asian studies content. Philosophers, biologists, education specialists, and theater directors who never had a course on Asia in their lives but who had a passion for learning about Asia and communicating that to their students, were empowered after two years in the program to do just that. With one year set in the United States on the campus of an ASIANetwork host college learning about Asia for three weeks and the second year spent touring Asia also for a fortnight and a half, our organization has created a model which other area studies organizations and foundations might review with interest. By 1999, as the program wrapped up, the efforts of the earliest years of the program were already bearing fruit as new Asian-related curricula blossomed on member campuses.

The four seminars were: Japan Seminar: held under the leadership of Steven Nussbaum at Earlham College (Richmond, IN) and in Japan. China Seminar: held under

the leadership of Dick Bodman at St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN) and in the People's Republic of China. Southeast Asia Seminar: held under the collective leadership of Rita Kipp of Kenyon College (Gambier, OH) and Leedom Lefferts of Drew University (Madison, NJ) and conducted at Kenyon College and in Vietnam and Thailand. South Asia Seminar: held under the leadership of Job Thomas of Davidson College (Davidson, NC).

A not-inconsequential side effect of that Ford grant was that it helped ensure the continued financial--and thus organizational--health of ASIANetwork.

My tenure as chair of this august organization concluded with our second meeting at Hickory Ridge in the spring of 1996. Three major keynoters spoke again to our pan-Asia coverage and our increasing visibility in the field of Asian Studies. The venerable Asianist and former AAS president Rhodes Murphey spoke to us of the continuing importance of Asian studies, while Richard Wood told of his work in promoting Japanese-American understanding. Most stimulating was Evelyn Hu-DeHart's challenge to all Asianists to overcome the Orientalism-nay, racism-which still exists in our field.

Throughout that year and a half at the helm my

greatest pleasure was my intense interaction with a bevy of talented scholar-administrators. In a league of her own was the skilled, personable, and immensely appreciated Marianna McJimsey. So too I learned of the good work supporting Asian education (culturally appropriate and respectful of national sovereignties) undertaken by the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia under the leadership of the always diplomatic and shrewdly intelligent David Vikner. Van Symons, apart from the high quality of his scholarship and volunteerism, was most appreciated as a friend and opponent on the racquetball court.

When time came for me to relinquish Board leadership at the end of that Hickory Ridge conference's annual business meeting in April of 1996, new grants, new members and new membership categories (affiliate status) were all in the offing. Now a very competent and personable new Board chair would put her own stamp on the no longer fledgling organization. When Madeline Chu took the helm leading the ASIANetwork towards new vistas, we all took the continued existence and success of the organization for granted, a desirable outcome of the bureaucratization process.

MADELINE CHU: A PIECE OF HISTORY--HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ASIANetwork



April 1996 to April 1997 was a very exciting year for ASIANetwork and I am so honored and happy that I was in the middle of all the excitement. The most significant thing to me in being the Board Chair of ASIANetwork during this period of time was the privilege to know and to work with a wonderful group of people. Thanks to the trust of colleagues of the ASIANetwork and its Board of Directors, my tenure as a Board member, and particularly Board Chair, became an important part of my life. Special thanks go to Rita Kipp and Steve Nussbaum for their constant guidance and support and for being my role models.

Between two extremely interesting conferences,

starting with one in Lisle, Illinois and concluding with one in Manchester Village, Vermont, the year 1996-97 was highlighted by a number of major landmarks for the organization. During that year, ASIANetwork launched the Ford Foundation supported ground-breaking program of Faculty Curricular Development, established the Council of Advisors, and acquired the now widely-known one-million-dollar Freeman Grant for research and study-abroad initiatives.

Three most impressive guest speakers graced the 1996 ASIANetwork Conference. We had two presidents--Richard Wood, President of Earlham College and Rhoads Murphey, former President of the Association for Asian Studies--and the ever-so-graceful Evelyn Hu-DeHart. In the process of preparing my introductory notes, I learned a great deal about Dr. Murphey's rich life experiences and outstanding academic achievements. But, more important to me was the opportunity to know him personally. His quick wit and great sense of humor were most admirable. Among the array of thought-provoking panels at the conference was the plenary session on teaching Asian languages at liberal arts colleges. For the first time the ASIANetwork conference paid tribute to the importance of language instruction and learning. I became acquainted with Kathie Carpenter, instructor of Southeast Asian languages, and Manindra Verma, instructor of South Asian languages, in addition to my good colleague and friend Rose Bundy, instructor of Japanese, and learned about their diligent work in sustaining programs in Asian languages and promoting Asian cultures. Of course, I will always remember the theatrical novelties orchestrated by Charles Hill, in which almost all the conference attend-