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Fun learning at IRRI

An IRRI Activity Area was launched recently to enhance the Institute's training programs.

The Activity Area, managed by the Training Center, was established to serve as a teambuilding and outdoor learning venue where training participants can develop new skills and confidence, enhance teamship building, and encourage concern for coworkers in a relaxed atmosphere.

Last 20 May, a group of facilitators from different OUs underwent additional training to help their respective units in conducting trainings and workshops. Sylvia Avance (HR), Menchu Bernardo (PBGB), Mary Ann Burac (CSWS), Gigi Caballero (CPS/VIS), Tom Clemeno (ES), Cris Dawinan (SSS), Glenn Enriquez (SSS), Caloy Huelma (SHU), Ruben Lampayan (CSWS), Kathy Lopez (CPS), Jun Madrid (CSWS), Lilian Mendoza (HRS-ER), Arlet Portugal (BBU), Vivay Salazar (EPPD), Kitchie Victoria (HRS-ER), Te-Ann Jingco

(IPMO), Jojo Lapitan (IPMO/TC), and Dennis Gavino and Achu Arboleda (TC) comprised the group.

"Eventually, more and more IRRI colleagues will be trained as understudies so that we can conduct divisional training/workshops of this kind without having to wait for the availability of the other trainers. This will also save the Institute a significant amount of money in hiring outside facilitators," said TC assistant manager Gina Zarsadias.

The Activity Area has the following gadgets/equipment: blind man's trail, trust fall, spider's web, Tarzan and Jane, tire pole, low "V", triangular tension traverse, tension traverse, swinging log, team walk, and team wall. These elements provide for individual, paired, or team activities.

The Training Center is now developing a manual to help facilitators handle their participants with greater confidence. This will be available from the Knowledge Bank

(<http://www.knowledgebank.irri.org>), together with the indoor activities/icebreakers, which everyone can use for training and other facilitating purposes (<http://www.knowledgebank.irri.org:8008/~coursecollateral>), Ms. Zarsadias said.

Lito Cinco, a freelance workshop facilitator, also introduced other indoor activities and formation-setting to workshop participants with foundations for good facilitating. One of such indoor activities was the use of visualization, concentration, and positive thinking in lifting a 45-kg person by using the forefingers of four coparticipants.

Apart from experiencing the activity, the team also tested the durability and safety of the new gadgets/equipment. "To ensure additional safety, these activities were done with a standby nurse or first aider from IRRI," Ms. Zarsadias said.

(See related story on page 2)

Photo by Marie Clebbita



Tom Clemeno (left) leads the pack in the team walk exercise. Another participant carefully balances her way on the swinging log as others cheer.

What they say about the facilitators' training

It was a day of fun, excitement, and camaraderie. I felt happy seeing all our colleagues, although tired, still with smiles on their faces. - **Achu Arboleda, TC**

Team spirit is a constant for all individuals at IRRI. There is always a need to refresh/renew our commitment to being part of the IRRI team, to improve and know ourselves better, and to bond with colleagues. We learned to discover our weaknesses and appreciated our strengths. Above all, we had FUN. - **Sylvia Avance, HR**

I think I would be able to facilitate a team-building workshop in our division after the workshop by using the Activity Area facilities, with the help of the Training Center staff. - **Marichu Bernardo, PBGB**



Photo by Marie Clabita

A hardy participant is shown scaling the team wall.

Its FUN! Its all about leadership, teamship, and communication. It enhanced values to the facilitators who familiarized themselves with the new IRRI facilities. I'd be willing to assist the main facilitators, or be one myself, in future workshops. - **Tom Clemeno, ES**

The Facilitators' Workshop was great! I enjoyed the activities and learned new ideas. I plan to introduce the team and paired events to the members of Emergency Brigade during their refresher courses. I'm sure this will be a new bonding experience for our firefighters. - **Glenn Enriquez, SSS**

Fun, tiring and enjoyable. It was worth the effort finishing it till the end. - **Dennis Gavino, TC**

I have learned so much on how to prepare myself to be a facilitator at IRRI. I am looking forward to my first assignment (with a team) as a certified facilitator and help in the TEAM IRRI program. - **Caloy Huelma, SHU**

It is good to build a pool of trained facilitators within the Institute. The training facilities are really worth the investment. - **Lilian Mendoza, HR-ER**

The Pahiyas Festival in Lucban, Quezon every 15 May continues to draw crowds from around the world. Businesses around the country - Shoemart, Glorietta, and Shangrila Hotel, among many others - cash in on the festival by adorning their establishments with the famous multicolored *kiping* (rice wafers).

So popular is Pahiyas that even the UN Food and Agriculture Organization adorned its headquarters in Rome with *kipings* during the launching of the International Year of Rice early this year. Of course, IRRI's Riceworld Museum and Learning Center and the new *Museo ng Palay* (Palay Museum) of PhilRice in Munoz, Nueva Ecija display *kiping aranyas* (multilayered *kiping* chandeliers) all-year-round.

"Wow" describes the reactions of local and foreign tourists who make an annual "pilgrimage" to Lucban for the Pahiyas Festival, including members of IFSA, AISAS, and other IRRI staff.

Pahiyas wows IRRI staff



Kit Elloran, Lemuel Casten, Sallie Trinidad, Aileen Maunahan, Darlene Sanchez, Charie Louise Lopez, Glenn Dimayuga, and Jill Cairns.



Photo by Glenn Dimayuga

Charie Louise Lopez, Sheila Quillooy, and Sallie Trinidad.

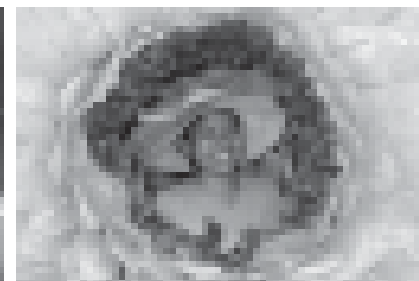


Photo by Sheila Quillooy

Darlene Sanchez "inside" a sunflower replica made of kiping.

Vietnamese donate implements to Riceworld

Three Vietnamese donated traditional farm implements to the Riceworld Museum and Learning Center through a delegation headed by Director Nguyen Van Khang of the Agriculture and Rural Development that visited IRRI on 24 May.

One traditional farm implement called *noc cay lua* (dibble) for transplanting traditional rice was used for more than 75 years, according to its former owner Tran Ngo Nho of Cai Lay District in Tun Giang Province.

Bach Hong Vu, a farmer from Phu Dong Village in Go Cong Dong District, Tien Giang Province, and Nguyen Van Nam from Hamlet 7, Vinh Tuan Tay Village, Vi Thuy District, both donated traditional *vong gat* (harvesting knives).

Deputy Director General for Research Ren Wang, in inviting the delegation to the Institute, said: "It was a great pleasure visiting with you in Tien Giang province. I am pleased to see the valuable partnerships that you and the Vietnamese staff have developed with IRRI scientists. It is through such quality relationships that we can work well together to facilitate new research results to benefit farmers."

Mr. Van Khang and his party called on Dr. Wang and Director General Ron Cantrell, held discussions with Principal Scientist Tom Mew and Deputy EPPD Head K.L.



Photo by Al Benavente

Director General Ron Cantrell is shown receiving one of three traditional farm implements from Director Nguyen Van Khang (fifth from left) of the Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam. The implements will be displayed in the Riceworld Museum and Learning Center.

Heong, and visited Caliraya and Taytay, Rizal with EPPD researcher Bong Villareal.

Mr. Van Khang's party included Minh Hien, Director of Agriculture and Rural Development Department, Cai Lay District; Do Van Van, technical staff/extension worker of Plant Protection Station, Cai Lay District; Troung Van Hanh, farmer in My Thanh Nam Village; Pham Van Chien, Deputy Director, Tien Giang Plant Protection subdepartment; Tran Van Hai, Can Tho University; Pham Van Du, Cuu Long Rice Research Institute; Ho Van Chien, Director, Southern Regional Plant Protection Center; and Nguyen Van Phuong, Deputy Director, Agricultural and Rural Development Department of An Giang Province.

Museums participate in IYR

Some 88 museums from around the Philippines are initiating International Year of Rice (IYR) activities as an offshoot of the celebration of the International Museum Day (IMD) at the Museo De La Salle at Dasmariñas, Cavite on 18 May.

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and the National Committee on Museums (NCOM) held the IMD in celebration of the National Heritage Month. *Museums and intangible heritage* was the IMD theme this year.

During the in-the-van discussions on the way to Cavite, the participants discussed various issues such as intangibles inherent in museums, the integration and preservation of the intangibles embedded in the material culture that are part of the museums' programs, how regional and/or associations can participate in explaining laws, and conventions that impact on intangible heritage.

IRRI cosponsored the event by providing transport for the participants, streamers, lecture kits, publica-

tions, and posters, among others. Riceworld staff Paul Hilario, Harris Tumawis, and Chris Quintana attended the IMD.

The IMD is a worldwide activity, which started in 1977. The event provides a nucleus for museums' creative aspirations, focuses international attention on work done by museums, and provides opportunities for professionals to promote the roles of their respective institutions based on a particular theme.



Riceworld

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Training scientists, others on scientific writing and presentation skills

Scientists, researchers, information managers, academics, and civil society leaders are writers and speakers. “Communication is the doing of science,” says author Scott Montgomery, and public speaking is a vital professional competence.

The IRRI Training Center (TC) believes that “the responsibility of a scientist does not end when their laboratory or field investigations are complete. They must communicate their results to the scientific community, donor organizations, policy makers, and potential users of knowledge generated. Only then can the scientist claim to have made a real contribution to the existing body of scientific knowledge.”

On 17-28 May, TC conducted a Scientific Writing and Presentation Skills Course with 13 participants from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand, and IRRI.

The course focused on the basics of science communication, writing and editing a scientific paper, communicating science to nonscientists, and making an oral presentation.

Mark Bell, Head, TC/International Programs Management Office; Science Editors Kathy Lopez and Tess Rola of Communication and Publications Services, Assistant Manager Gina

Zarsadias, Training Assistant/Computer Trainer Serge Magadia, Training Assistant/Web Developer Eric John Azucena, Training Assistant/English as a second language trainer Achu Arboleda, and Agronomist (training, delivery and impact) Vethaiya Balasubramanian of TC were the resource persons.

The participants were IRRI thesis research scholar Afroza Alam Mousumi, (CSWS), Foyjunessa Shanta, and Mahadi Farhan Sirat, Bangladesh; Tayan Raj, Ministry of Agriculture, Bhutan; Bunna Som, Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute, Cambodia; visiting IRRI Research Fellow Jatinder Kaur, India; Mie Mie Tin, Myanmar Agriculture Service, Myanmar; Hari Krishna Shrestha, Nepal Agricultural Research Council, Nepal; Charisma Love Gado and Chona Mae Suner-Narvadez, Philippine Rice Research Institute, Ernesto Marasigan and Arnel Tenorio, Provincial Agriculture Office, Batangas, and Manuel Rutaquio, Jr., Infanta Integrated Community Development Assistance, Inc., Quezon, Philippines; and Warong Naivinit, Ubon Ratchathani University, Thailand.

Ms. Zarsadias, Information Officer Johnny Goloyugo, Community

Relations Manager Chat Ocampo of Visitors and Information Services, Assistant Scientist Joel Janiya of Crop Soils and Water Sciences critiqued their oral presentations.

The participants “graded” the course from “very good” to “excellent” not only for its participatory, interactive, and confidence-building nature, but also for its comprehensiveness and systematic methodology.



Mahadi Farhan Sirat of Bangladesh is shown making her contribution in outlining a scientific paper as fellow trainee Hari Krishna Shrestha (left) of Nepal and resource person Kathy Lopez look on.



Associate science editor Tess Rola (left) critiques the research paper of Chona Narvadez of PhilRice during the session on editing the scientific paper.



Mark Bell and David Shires share valuable pointers in writing for nonscientists and audience analysis as Jatinder Kaur, Hari Krishna Shrestha, Warong Naivinit, and Chona Mae Narvadez listen.



A visit by the participants to the Genetic Resources Center formed part of their orientation tour in IRRI. Photo shows assistant scientist Soccie Almazan (second from right) explaining the process of seed selection.

Photos by Marie Clabita

ACE Philippines focuses on knowledge in 2004 ICW

Knowledge in this age of globalization is *the* resource that dictates the growth of the world economy. Knowledge affects the kind of decisions made, the information that communicators disseminate, and the quality of products and services rendered.

Communicators in the development process must, therefore, manage knowledge carefully in light of new information and communication technologies.

The Association for Communication Excellence in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Life and Human Sciences – Philippines (ACE Philippines) addressed knowledge management and other related issues during its 2004 Interinstitutional Communication Workshop (ICW) on 25 May, which focused on the theme *Effectively managing and marketing knowledge products*.

ACE Philippines members from various agencies, including IRRI and universities attended the 2004 ICW hosted by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCARRD).

The annual ICW, now on its 10th year, provides a forum for exchanging and discussing ideas on current and relevant topics. It also promotes interaction and sharing of information among communication professionals.

In her welcome remarks, Dr. Aida Librero, on behalf of PCARRD Executive Director Patricio S. Faylon, said that “knowledge determines a country’s growth and prosperity. Safeguarding vital information is important for the Research and Development (R&D) sector to benefit its intended beneficiaries.”

Communicators are not only sources of information but also instruments in transforming people’s values, attitudes, and social consciousness.

During the workshop, Serafin Talisayon of the Knowledge Management Association of the Philippines and Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication spoke about *Knowledge management*. Dr.



Talisayon underlined the importance of establishing knowledge networks such as the Knowledge Emporium for small and medium enterprises of the National Economic and Development Authority and the Philippine Sustainable Development Network for information exchange on science and technology of the United Nations Development Programme to effect change in society.

CPS Marketing Manager Albert Borrero (CPS) spoke on *Dealing with digital content: Lessons, experiences, and questions to ask, decisions to make*.

Mr. Borrero stressed the need to track people, the source, and the kind of information that they are trying to access in marketing communication products and services. He said this would enable marketing people to assess product value, make better informed decisions, assess the relative importance of channels to market, provide editorial support, understand what features or products are needed in the market, and plan infrastructure.

Jill Gale de Villa of the Asian Development Bank spoke on intellectual property rights (IPR). In her presentation entitled *Can I copy that?*, she defined copyright as a “form of protection of authorship and ownership provided by international law to both published and unpublished works.”

ACE Philippines also held its second general membership meeting after the workshop, amended some provisions of its constitution, and set its election of officers this month.

ACE Philippines President Roger Barroga of PhilRice presided over the general membership meeting where he reported on the activities of the organization in its first year (July 2003 to May 2004), including the proposed Web site.

Meg Yandoc and Sheila Vergara were also named IRRI and WorldFish Center representatives, respectively, to ACE Philippines. The other representatives come from participating institutions, namely, the Forest Products and Research Development Institute, UPLB, PCARRD, PhilScat, Benguet State University, PhilRice, International Institute for Rural Reconstruction, SEARCA, and the University of Southern Mindanao.

CPS Head Gene Hettel was given a scroll in recognition of his continuing support to ACE Philippines. - *With reporting from Zandra A. Navarez, Zillab A. Geronimo & John Robert Sion, CPS OJT's*



ACE Philippines members led by its president, Roger Barroga (seated, fourth from left) of PhilRice, pose for this photograph at the conclusion of the 10th 2004 ICW at PCARRD, which focused on the theme *Effectively managing and marketing knowledge products*.

Photo by Aileen Del Rosario-Randilla

PAS: A tool for performance improvement and individual growth and development

By Fe Aglipay

For the last four years, IRRI has been implementing its new Performance Appraisal System (PAS). At least once a year, managers and employees have sat down together to appraise the employee's performance over the preceding year and discuss what is expected in the following year. The process includes both employee and manager exploring options for the employee's professional development.

The main objectives of the PAS are to:

1. Link the individual's work plan to the Institute's goals and objectives;
2. Clarify what is expected of employees at work so that the employee can continuously perform at the level expected and take steps to improve his or her performance;
3. Provide a basis for prioritizing staff members' training and development;
4. Differentiate outstanding from poor performers so that human resources can design appropriate intervention programs for them.

Like a stalk of rice, IRRI is com-

posed of many parts, each performing its own specific role but contributing to the growth and development of the whole. The PAS allows individual staff to see how he or she contributes to an Organizational Unit (OU), and how the OU contributes to IRRI. This way, employees can better appreciate their work and be motivated by the knowledge that they play a critical role in helping IRRI thrive and grow.

The PAS tells us what sort of results we are expected to deliver in terms of quantity, quality, and timeliness. If we fall short of the performance standard, then the PAS lets us know how we can improve.

Assessing individuals allows management to make decisions on matters such as training and development, pay increases based on merit, and in some cases, career progression. Identifying staff members' strengths and weaknesses helps management decide how to make best use of IRRI's comprehensive range of training and development programs and courses. This win-win situation sees staff further their careers boosts organizational unit.

Over the last three years, our Human Resource group has reviewed PAS assessments. While the number of employees in the Institute has dropped, the percentage of those rated "superior" has increased. Analysis of completed PAS forms also shows that staff members conducting the appraisal tend to recognize positive things that the staff they are rating have done for the unit. Appraisers also highlight areas for improvement, which are usually related to attendance and punctuality, writing skills—especially scientific or technical writing—and computer skills.

Human Resources Services – National Staff (HRS-NS) is continuously trying to find ways to improve the PAS, based on feedback from users. As such, we welcome your ideas and suggestions as to how we can make the system better.

If you would like to comment, please respond by answering these two survey questions:

1. How can we further improve our Performance Appraisal System?
2. What features of our Performance Appraisal System do you appreciate most?

Please e-mail your response to:

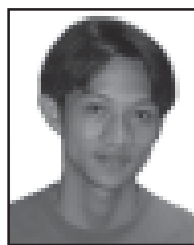
f.aglipay@cgiar.org

IRRI on-the-job trainee in focus

IRRI continues to produce well-rounded individuals among its employees and trainees. Proof of this is Aaron Kevin A. Rivera, an Information Technology senior from the University of Perpetual Help-Rizal Las Piñas. He is one of the on-the-job trainees (OJT) of IRRI and is assigned at the Communication and Publications Services under the supervision of Gina Santos. Aaron is the son of former CPS secretary, Arlene Rivera.

His school chose him to be its representative to the Leadership Training Seminar at Subic Adventure Park, Olongapo City last 14-16 May. The seminar was sponsored by the Philippine Computer Society (PCS), one of the country's premier information technology (IT) organizations. He was chosen by their school coordinator because of his on-the-job training experience in an international organization such as IRRI.

The Philippine Computer Society is composed of different professionals with training on computer and information technology. It aims to bring awareness on technology develop-



A. Rivera

ment among its members. Under the PCS is its junior counterpart — the Junior PCS. Its members are college students from different schools and universities who are enrolled in computer-related courses.

According to Aaron, the leadership training was a teambuilding activity for students. He said that the PCS wants to help students foster camaraderie and develop leadership skills through different activities. Aaron added that he learned to interact well with different kinds of people, the same thing he learned at IRRI where he also deal with people of different nationalities and levels.

In the said seminar, an election of officers was held and Aaron was elected vice president for 2004-2005. He will be one of those responsible for planning the society's projects in the coming term. - *By John Robert Sion, Interview by Zillab Germino, CPS OJT's.*

IRRI counseling service helps staff and their families

By Adam Barclay

When you have problems at work or at home, or you're just feeling down about things, it can be hard to know where to turn — which is why IRRI is providing a free, confidential counseling service for its employees and their families.

One day each month, professional psychologist Myrna Sanchez spends a day at IRRI, helping staff members and their families work through anything that might be troubling them. Myrna, who also works at Ateneo de Manila University's Center for Family Ministries and teaches psychology at St. Scholastica's College, says people can feel comfortable talking to her about any problem, no matter how big or small.

"People talk to me about difficulties in relationships, with fellow workers or family members," she explains. "Some people talk about personal issues like low self-esteem, depression and the like." Employees usually start by booking a regular session, which lasts around 50

minutes, for themselves or a family member. If it turns out that group counseling will help, longer family sessions can be arranged. Myrna also points out that different people have a range of counseling needs, with some requiring only one or two sessions while others may want several. "In my practice, I have some clients who have been seeing me for 2 or 3 years," she added.

Myrna also says that perhaps the most valuable aspect of the counseling is that, while the sessions themselves may not solve everything, they give people the tools to more effectively deal with their problems.

"The goal of counseling is not to make people dependent on the counselor," she explains, "but to allow them to resolve their own issues.

"Simply talking about your problems is often help in itself. It makes people feel lighter, and more able to think through things clearly. And sometimes it's easier to confide in strangers

— just getting the problem out can help you see it more objectively."

Counseling offers a win-win deal, too. Several studies have shown that people with good personal relationships outside of work are generally more effective in their job and less likely to burn out. Myrna also recommends seminars and workshops that may help, and can refer people on to extra professional help if necessary.

"It fulfills you to see people helped," Myrna adds, explaining that the counseling process helps her as well. "We all deal with the same sort of human issues."

So, if something's troubling you, no matter how serious it might seem, think about booking a session with Myrna. It's free, and absolutely confidential — whatever you talk about stays between you and your counselor.

To book a free, confidential counseling session with Ms. Sanchez, call Kitchie Victoria on 2623.

ITAC reconstitutes membership

IRRI is redefining the role of the Information Technology Advisory Committee (ITAC) to keep up with advances in information and communication technology as they apply to the current and future research and other activities of the Institute.

ITAC aims to serve as a forum to review the needs of information technology (IT) users throughout the Institute, the IT operational and strategic plans, and to provide advice, establish policies, adopt standards, and recommend practices to ensure accessibility, security, and reliability of information and IT resources.

The Deputy Director General for Partnerships, William G. Padolina, heads ITAC with Deputy Director General for Research Ren Wang as co-



W. Padolina

chair. The members are ITS Head Paul O'Nolan, Management Information System Coordinator Eric Clutario, Central Registry Services Head Emy Ballesfin, Biometrics Specialist Richard Bruskiwich, GIS Specialist Suan Pheng Kam, Communication and Publications Services Head Gene Hettel, Library and Documentation Services Head Mila Ramos, Database Administrator Arlett Portugal, Multimedia Developer/Programmer Victor Alarcon, and Training Center Assistant Manager Gina Zarsadias.

Rotary editors

Four IRRI staff are joining the editorial board of *The Governor's Monthly Letter*, the official publication of Rotary International District 3820, for Rotary Year 2004 – 2005.

They are Kathy Lopez of CPS and Johnny F. Goloyugo of VIS as associate editors, Dennis Gavino of Training Center as managing editor, and Gina Santos as layout editor.

Sylvia Inciong, formerly of VIS and now working as National Information Officer at the United Nations Information Center in Manila, is the editor-in-chief.

Rotary International is the first sociocultural civic organization in the world. It is celebrating its 100th year in 2004-2005.

Community Relations

A little office with a big heart

“Dream. Believe. Survive.”

This popular phrase from a new craze in the country today has also become the motto among the 13 participants of the Introductory Course for Potential Leaders sponsored by IRRI’s Community Relations Office (CRO). The activity was held last 14 April at IRRI Asia Room, Chandler Hall.

The leadership course covers very basic lessons for community members who are 18-30 years old with leadership potential but with little understanding of the concept and practice of leadership. It defines leadership, describes its qualities and styles, and discusses how to start to lead for community development.

“We are very interested to work with you because of the roles that you, as young people have in your own districts or barangays. Good leadership gets the benefits while those that are less good gets the lesser benefit. Through that, we get to work with good teams and efficient groups of people,” VIS Head Duncan Macintosh said.

This course begins a series of leadership seminars and training to equip the youth with proper knowledge, skills, and values that will lead the community forward through concerted and team effort. This is an activity designed to meet partly the objectives of the CRO for the youth of communities around IRRI.

The youth representatives from the two municipalities of Laguna participated in the activity: nine from Bay and four from Los Baños. IRRI’s VIS Information and Events Coordinator and CRO-OIC Ike Navarro, and CRO Assistant Lito Platon were the resource persons of the activity who

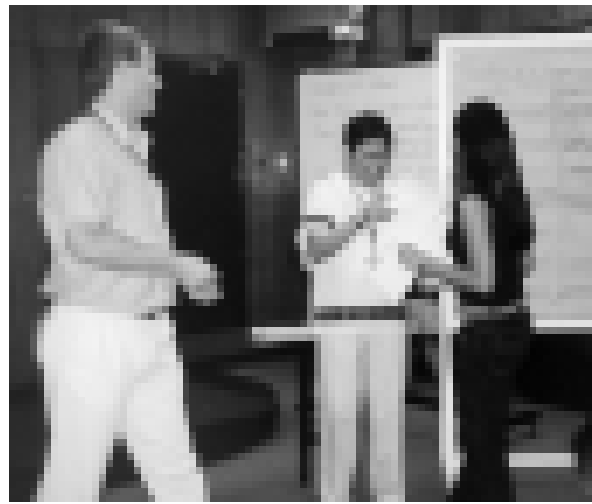
said that CRO is “a little office with a big heart.” The participants concurred with the statement because despite there being only two CRO staff members, CRO is able to provide help to the neighboring communities of IRRI. The two resource persons

are also the only ones running the office, thus making it a “little one.”

After enjoying a bountiful lunch, the participants then listened to Mr. Navarro as he spoke about leadership. Suddenly, the lights went off. It continued that way for about five minutes or so. The youth participants inside the room never stopped listening to the talk. They have just learned that “a good leader is a good listener.”

One of the exercises was writing a vision-mission-values statement. Participants were divided into three groups: those from Paciano Rizal, those from Bay, and those from Los Baños and were asked to organize their own groups. The groups proposed names for their organizations: the Rizalian Youth in Action (RYA), Youth Environmental Society (YES) Bay Chapter, and the Los Baños Youth Movement (LBYM). These were the dreams that they started to build together with CRO.

The RYA and YES are focused on environmental issues while the LBYM will address drug abuse prevention. All the groups decided to engage in mobilizing the youth in their own places through seminars, training, information dissemination and concrete activities such as tree planting, garbage



IRRI is training barangay youths in Los Baños and Bay, Laguna on leadership as part of its community projects being implemented by Community Relations Office of VIS.

segregation, recycling, and others.

Mr. Navarro said that for the participants to realize their dreams, they will also be taught on how to make proposals for the funding of the organizations that they have just formed. In addition, other leadership seminars and training will also be conducted to enable them to help their communities.

After the course, the participants did an evaluation. The overall impression was very good. Majority agreed that the objectives of the activity were met and that the techniques used by the facilitator were effective. They said that they would also like to recommend this leadership course to others because they have learned a lot from it and that they would be glad to share it with other youths in their barangays. They also see the course and the formation of youth organizations as a great help to their communities.

CRO establishes ties with the youth in local communities, hoping that the rope that binds them will endure in the future. CRO hopes that those who attended the training will become future leaders and councilors of their barangays. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam!* - Roselle O. Olear, VIS OJT

IRRI stirs community residents to raise capital for small businesses

IRRI's Community Relations Office has been encouraging community residents to implement a savings program in their barangays, which can help finance small home-based businesses and earn dividends for the participating residents.

Two years ago, Community Relations Assistant Lito Platon introduced to the residents of Paciano Rizal the concept of a savings and loan association. Seven women became interested and attended a seminar on how to establish such an association, which would require members to periodically contribute money to a common fund that could be lent to any of the association's members at a very low interest rate.

The seven women headed by Marivic Briones formed the Rizalian Multi-Purpose Cooperative and contributed P25 pesos every fifteen days or P50 monthly to the association's fund. When the fund grew to four thousand pesos, the group decided to lend a maximum of P1,000 to any interested member at an interest rate of 2% per annum. The members continued their contribution to the gen-



Photo by Roselle Ojaer

Willie Papa (seated), head of the Rizalian Multi-Purpose Cooperative, updates Community Relations Assistant Lito Platon on their savings and loan programs in the presence of coop officers Evelyn Tingle and Malou Carandang.

eral fund, which grew to finance many other entrepreneurial endeavors of the members.

Soon after, several other residents were inspired to join the association and membership grew to 33. "Now, our savings and loan association has a total fund of P268,493 and we can lend up to P10,000.00 to our members," says Briones. "Last year, we were able to declare dividends and the members were able to receive an average of P800 as share dividend.

Willy Papa heads the cooperative. The other officers of the association are Asuncion Bantasan, Vice-President; Evelyn Tingle, Secretary, and Marivic Briones, Treasurer.

"What is good about having their own savings and loan association is that the residents are motivated to save money which they themselves manage and which earn for them cash or share dividends," Platon said.

"Moreover, the association's members also have the opportunity to borrow money to finance their businesses."

Briones added that some of the members now have dependable sources of income because of the loans extended by the association. "We have a member who opened a sari-sari store with money borrowed from the association and is now able to support her family with the income from the store. Another member opened a beauty parlor. Still, there were those who ventured into selling ornamental plants. The association is really able to provide opportunities for members to be productive and at the same time earn extra cash," Briones said.

The snowball effect of the success of the said program continued when young residents of Paciano Rizal expressed their desire to start a rapid savings program for the youth. IRRI's Community Relations Office committed to provide them assistance. Indeed, beyond rice and rice research, IRRI continues to play a key role in improving the lives of barangay residents.

1. In 1966, a provincial governor enrolled in the rice Production Training Course. Name him.
2. What country gave the first grant to IRRI outside of the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations?
3. _____ are geographic mapping units developed by the FAO based on climatic conditions and land forms that determine homogeneous crop growing environments.
4. In the applications of biotechnology techniques to rice improvement, what is known as the identification of genetic variation in pests and pathogens?

IRRI Trivia

5. _____ is second in importance to CO₂ as a greenhouse gas.
6. In Nepal, _____ are narrow band of plains adjacent to the Himalayas.
7. What is the theme of the 2004 International Year of Rice?
8. If Toyota means "beautiful ricefield" in Japanese terms, what is Honda?
9. In Thailand, rice was considered to be the gift of the fruitful of what goddess?
10. "To have an iron rice" means to have a steady job in what country?

Please email answers to Kitchie Victoria of HRS-ER and claim your prize.

The winner of the May IRRI trivia contest is Asst. Scientist Rey Rodriguez of CSWS.

Answers to the IRRI Trivia contest in the May issue of *Sandiwa*:

1. Ferdinand E. Marcos
2. Sir John Crawford (Australia)
3. Marcos gets miracle rice
4. Philippine Commission for Agricultural Productivity
5. Teotimo Alorro
6. Sterling Wortman
7. Rice Genetics and Cytogenetics
8. Bao Rong Lu
9. Spikelets
10. Momi

Shuttlestruck: the newest sporting craze to hit IRRI

Badminton, the racket sport played at family gatherings and which suggests quiet summer afternoons in the park or in backyards, is the latest sporting mania. For years we have looked at it as more of a leisure staple with very few available courts. But nowadays, as a health and fun sport, it is truly gaining ground.

Badminton is one of the well-known games in the world with more than a billion people watching the Olympic competition on television. With badminton courts mushrooming, badminton is truly the sport of the moment. The badminton craze is spreading everywhere and IRRI is not exempt to this. "I also wonder why badminton is so popular. When I came to IRRI in 1999, few people played the sport. Now, the badminton courts are crowded. You have to line up," said Bin Liu of the Entomology and Plant Pathology Division (EPPD). Mr. Liu, a regular visitor of the IRRI badminton courts, has been playing badminton for 10 years even before he came to IRRI.

The badminton boom on this side of the earth is evidenced by the increasing number of employees and scholars lining up to get their turn on the courts everyday between 5 and 9 pm (except Sundays) and the addition of two more badminton courts in the IRRI service building (from five to seven). With the badminton craze and with new venues mushrooming all over, it is not a surprise that more and more employees are getting hooked on this game. For those who are wondering what makes badminton a

popular sport, here are some of the answers.

For non-aficionados, badminton has this amateur-friendly and nonthreatening image. Unlike other sports, at a noncompetitive level, it is easy to do and learn according to fitness expert and Philippine Daily Inquirer columnist Tina Juan. Mr. Mon Oliveros, who works at the Office of the DDGP, agrees with this. "I also play other sports like basketball, bowling, volleyball, and softball, but I was encouraged to play badminton because it is easy to learn and expensive equipment is optional," he said. He also pointed out that since it is not a team sport, badminton is attractive to individual players who can come alone even without teammates and meet other people on the courts.

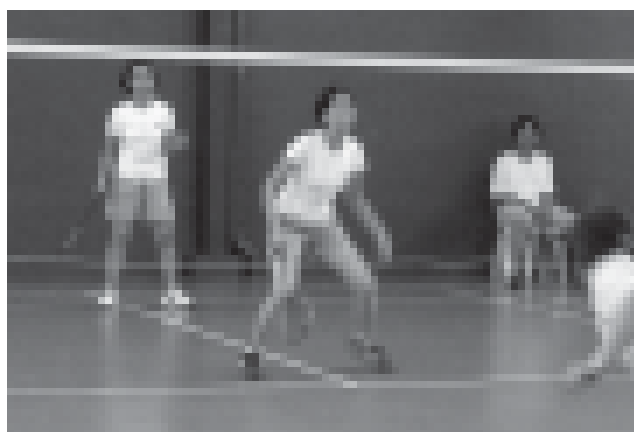
Badminton has the makings of a true sport for all because as a recreational sport it has no age, gender, and height limitations. Men and women, young or old, adept or novice players can play it. It is in fact one of the few sports where size and strength gives no particular advantage. Thus, a woman can play in equal terms with a man. On the average, more than 30 players play in the IRRI badminton courts everyday, and it is not an unusual sight to see men competing against women. And to top that it is a social activity that can be played by the family or *barkada* and it wouldn't matter if the fitness level differs.

Some people who have seen the game either on television or on the streets with imaginary nets and courts have immediately

concluded that it is an unbearably boring and slow game that lacks intensity and action. But they couldn't be more wrong. The game involves a lot of muscles in the body. In fact, badminton also has its challenging aspects. It is not our ordinary children's game which lacks the intensity of other popular sports like basketball because even scientific experts agree that it is one of the finest conditioning exercises. Perhaps this explains why some people look at badminton as a good way of losing weight. Many IRRI employees enjoy the sport because it is a "full exercise."

Another surprising fact about this two thousand year-old game, which got its name from the Badminton House in the England Home of the Duke of Beaufort, is that it is the world's fastest racket sport. Even the shuttlecock is one of the most amazing artifacts invented because it can leave a racket at a speed of over 200 miles per hour (which is faster than the fastest tennis serve). In just one match, a badminton player can cover more than a couple of kilometers. With this fast action the body is provided with a vigorous cardiovascular activity. Consequently, this game is good for the human body.

With all of these advantages, we shouldn't be wondering why there is a huge upsurge in the popularity of the game. Note too that as a social activity, it is a wonderful way to meet new people because of the camaraderie, sportsmanship, and friendship that evolve around the sport. - by Len Perilla, CPS OJT



Badminton enthusiasts from IRRI and the Collaborators Center (top left), Lorie Villena (foreground) and Jing Carlos, and (top right) Skit Rius and Nina Garilao, show their winning form during the May 23 Countersmash All-Women Badminton Tournament held in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

CRs at IRRI: an inside look

By Ian Wallace

Not so long ago, an eminent visitor came to IRRI and, before beginning his tour of the Institute, requested to be shown to the nearest comfort room or CR, which happened to be in Harrar Hall. Several moments later, the distinguished visitor emerged from the CR and announced that a tour of IRRI buildings would not be necessary. "I have seen one of your washrooms," said the VIP, "and in my experience the state of these facilities is usually a pretty accurate indication as to the state of an organization's infrastructure. Your washroom is excellent and I am sure the same can be said of all your buildings and laboratories, so no need for a general tour."

As this story indicates, CRs are an important, if unheralded, part of IRRI's infrastructure and they contribute in no small way to the quality of life at the Institute. Most staff are likely familiar with their own "local CR" and perhaps a few others. Few probably know that IRRI maintains a vast network of CRs and that this enterprise requires efforts by many individuals: janitors, engineers, and MMS purchasing staff.

How many CRs are there at IRRI?

On the research campus, staff and visitors have a choice of no fewer than 128 CRs, featuring a grand total of 259 toilets, 132 urinals, and 362 sinks. Who can deny that these are impressive numbers?

But, there is more. We need to remember that there are a further 30 CRs at the Guesthouse, all maintained by FHS staff, as well as 101 in IRRI houses and apartments. And, let's not forget the IRRI residences where scholars and trainees appreciate the 98 CRs available for their use.

If any IRRI employee is planning a grand tour of all Institute CRs, the list will not be complete if he or she missed the most remote of all IRRI CRs, which also happens to be the one located highest off the ground. Where might this CR be located? In the Makati Office, of course, on the 10th floor.

By now, readers of this article must be eager for a few statistics, that is assuming that they have not grown weary of this story and gone off on a CR break. Anyway, every month, IRRI staff go through 232 liters of liquid soap, 1320 packs of paper towels, and 4704 rolls of toilet paper. The total yearly cost in 2002-2003 was PhP2,351,845.

Alas, there is a dark side to this otherwise happy CR story and that concerns the "disappearance" of a wide variety of items to be found in any CR. Toilet paper and paper towels are the items most frequently "lost," but there are others: door latches and handles, toilet seats and covers, even mirrors. Needless to say, these "losses" cost IRRI dearly, in addition to being a source of irritation to CR clients who greatly appreciate a supply of toilet paper and a latch on the door.

As you read this, PPS is actively working to improve the quality of CRs, by making small repairs, improving water pressure, replacing old tiles, and painting exposed and rusted surfaces. You can help by alerting PPS, preferably by e-mail, if you feel repairs are needed in any CR.

How good (or bad) are IRRI CRs? True connoisseurs would probably prefer the CRs of Buckingham Palace in London or the Peninsula Hotel in Makati. Others, having experienced CR conditions elsewhere during their travels in the Philippines and other countries, would probably conclude that our IRRI CRs meet a fairly high standard.

SINoP college scholar

Girl scout Mary Cris Eres dreams of pursuing a college education, be a professional someday, have a nice job, help her brother and sister finish their studies, give back the good things that her parents gave her, and be a role model in her community and to the next generation.

Mary Cris, of Barangay Masaya in Bay, graduated from the Los Baños National High School this year with a general average of 85.88. She is the first SINoP college scholarship grantee selected from among three other applicants. Her parents are Elizalde Eres, a tricycle driver and Shirley Eres.

"I know that the journey will never be easy, but I will do my best to succeed. Reaching my goal is more than an achievement. With God's grace, this scholarship is a great help," Mary Cris told SINoP.



SINoP Pres. Eves Reyes hands to Mary Cris her scholarship check in the presence of her parents and other SINoP officer

Next attraction: *Dugo Mo, Buhay Ko*

The next attraction” on 29 June at the Safety Services training room starting at 8:00 AM is *Dugo Mo, Buhay Ko* (Your Blood, My Life), a bloody true-to-life story starring kind-hearted IRRI staff and other public service-oriented individuals.

The annual “show” is 10 years old, up and running, according to “producer” and occupational health and safety nurse Cris Dawinan of Safety Services. Its “co-producer” is the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC), Laguna chapter, in cooperation with the Rotary Club of West Bay and the Philippine Institute of Certified Public Accountants (PICPA), IRRI-UPLB chapter.

Only brave-hearted “actors” between 18 to 60 years old, weighing at least 50 kg, with body temperature not exceeding 37.5 degrees celsius, and hemoglobin level not less than 125 g/100 ml will be allowed inside the room.

“Director” Licinius Gonzales, who will sport a stethoscope at showtime, will determine if the “actor’s” blood

pressure fluctuates beyond the normal to qualify him/her to be a part of *Dugo Mo, Buhay Ko*. By the way, the acceptable pulse rate is strictly between 48 to 100 per minute!

As *Dugo Mo, Buhay Ko* is always an SRO (standing room only), “wanna be actors” with pulmonary, cardiovascular, kidney ailments, sexually transmitted, and long-standing skin diseases, pregnant women, and those who underwent surgical operations or recipients of blood/plasma transfusion within the last six months will have the biggest disappointment in their lives.

Macho crane, power machinery, and train operators and other persons with hazardous occupations may join *Dugo Mo, Buhay Ko*, provided they do not resume their jobs for at least five hours after bloodletting.

Successful “actors” will be served free snacks. They will leave the room with stimulated bone marrow and blood-forming organs functioning actively and effectively, with take home T-shirts and blood donor cards to boot.

IRRI supports RMAN IYR media campaign

IRRI is supporting the media campaign and other activities of the Rice Media Advocacy Network Philippines, Inc. (RMAN) as the country celebrates the 2004 International Year of Rice (IYR).

RMAN created a task force during its meeting at the United Nations Information Center in Makati City on 28 April to carry out an all-out information campaign on IYR through the media.

The Philippine Star columnist Rudy Fernandez was chosen as task force chair and Information Officer Johnny Goloyugo of VIS as secretary.

RMAN will also elect its new officers shortly following the death of its founder, the late farmer-journalist/editor Joe Burgos, last year.

Mr. Goloyugo and former Public Awareness manager Sylvia Inciong were among 17 signatories of the RMAN certificate of incorporation issued by the Securities and Exchange Commission on 29 September 1999.



Edith Burgos (third from right), wife of the late Joe Burgos, turns over RMAN documents to task force chair Rudy Fernandez. From left are Norma Llemit (PCARRD), Jenny Jara-Rabara (PhilRice), Sylvia Inciong (UNIC), Karian Mei (FAO Manila representative), Jun Cardenas (ARF), Roger Cuyno (ARF), Karen Barroga (PhilRice), and Johnny Goloyugo (IRRI).

RMAN aims to encourage substantive and strategic media coverage on rice, strengthen information exchange, promote better understanding, and foster closer professional relationships among media professionals involved in rice reporting and broadcasting in the Philippines and other Asian countries, among others.

The media network was an offshoot of the formation of the Asian Rice Media Advocacy Network in Bangkok in 1998 initiated by the Asia

Rice Foundation (ARF). Since then, similar organizations were established in Bangladesh, Indonesia, India, and Thailand.

Among RMAN’s early projects were the rice awareness program that focused on the theme *Rice is Life* in 1999, working tours in La Union province, PhilRice/CLSU, Ifugao and Kiangnan rice terraces in 2002, Rice Expo 2000 at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City, and the publication of *Ricematch*.