

SOME REFLECTIONS ON DECADES OF BORTON CONNECTIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL HOUSE DAVIS

While we don't have exact records, it must have been around 1987 that Ray and Verena first became actively involved with I-House. Judy Wydick contacted us to manage a photo exhibit by Wang Miao, the spouse of a visiting Scholar at UCD. Wang Miao had worked with various organizations in China as a professional photographer and brought with her a sizable collection of large photographic prints that she was eager to share with (and possibly sell to) the Davis community facilitated by I-House. She had some particularly stunning images from her visit to Tibet.

The simple request to organize this effort became an incredibly complex affair, with simultaneous exhibits in multiple locations in Davis and Sacramento. At that time, International House had not been expanded yet and the only space for the exhibit at 10 College Park was what is now the lounge.

After this massive involvement, we decided to formally join I-House as members. Besides attending programs, we soon became actively involved in collaborating to initiate new programs ranging from the I-House Art Committee (with monthly exhibits by local artists), to Ray providing regular flower arrangements for receptions, to organizing a variety of United Nations Association sponsored programs by the Davis chapter (including several installments of a national annual UN High School Essay contest), to annual fundraising for UNICEF, to collecting funds for the 2010 Haiti earthquake and for schools in Kenyan refugee camps, and ultimately to the twice-a-month International Film Series sponsored by UNA from 1997 to 2019.



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At a time when few foreign films were available in Davis theaters, we got approval from Patrick, I-House director at the time and a real movie fan, to offer international films at I-House in a trial run. The program started out modestly in the basement with a big TV set and soon moved upstairs with improved equipment, ending up sharing a total of 448 international films (shown in the original languages with English subtitles) with the general public free of charge and with homemade refreshments. Friday nights at the I-House movies quickly became a favorite community activity, building understanding and many friendships. At various times we were assisted with the Film Series logistics by Vashek and Claudette Cervinka, Guy and Akemi Turner and Koen Van Rompay.

In 2011 we celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary at I-House with a large group of family and friends from far and wide. With international cuisine and music, I-House was the logical place to commemorate the foreign assignments and travels that had filled our lives before permanently settling in Davis in 1977.

The pandemic of course brought many changes, including the end of activities at I-House that had dominated our prior schedules for so many years. Through a new partnership with I-House, the United Nations Association Davis chapter has since late 2023 once again been able to celebrate its annual signature events (International Women's Day in March, United Nations Day in October and Human Rights Day in December) at I-House.

Needless to say, the warm sense of community and the multinational friendships we have experienced for close to 40 years at I-House (and hope to continue experiencing in the coming years), have added immeasurably to our developing deep roots in Davis.

