

RIA Newsletter - Winter 2006-07

Happy New Year from Rochester International Association!

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President's Letter

Greetings to friends of the Rochester International Association. For many of us, this is a time to celebrate Christmas—a much secularized, and often too commercialized, Christian observance of new beginnings—but it also marks the end of yet another year in the Gregorian calendar. For the RIA as an organization, 2006 marked the last year—at least for awhile—that the World Festival will be at Century High School. In April of 2007, we look forward to seeing all of you Festival-goers join us at Mayo High School. We also again urge that you consider joining us as active volunteers to help ensure that such events as the World Festival, the monthly “Y” lunches, and the great meals shared, etc. will continue to take place. On behalf of the Board of the Rochester International Association, I thank all who have contributed time, talent, and money to our activities; and I leave you with a heartfelt wish to: “Have a great holiday season, and the happiest of New Years!” —**Frank Hawthorne, RIA President.**

Technology Update

With our very able technology advisor, Thomas Yung, we keep all membership records online. We know that many of you are online too and have checked RIA's website at www.ria-minnesota.org. This newsletter and current events can be found on the website. You can also join RIA online at the website. We will continue to provide printed newsletters and other announcements of activities. Please send us your e-mail addresses.

News and Announcements

RIA's new treasurer is Ann Lance. As International Personnel Advisor at Mayo, Ann has been involved with RIA for many years and has been a member of the board for the past few years. We thank her for taking on this important position. Curtis Schmelling RIA's treasurer for the past three years has moved to Minneapolis. We thank him for his good service to RIA. Other leadership positions are open

and a nominating committee is seeking interested and willing volunteers.

Join the RIA Board to help plan and carry out programs for the year ahead. We welcome Art Hambrun who rejoined the board at the annual meeting in September. New members can also be appointed throughout the year. Board members meet monthly to make and carry out activities. We especially welcome a diverse membership and invite RIA members from all cultures to join the Board.

Team members for International Y Lunches are needed to plan and carry out the monthly International Lunch program on the 2nd Wed of each month at Rochester Family Y. We also invite you to tell us about your country, an international journey or other experiences at one of the luncheons this year. Call Phyllis at 288-1197 for suggestions or to volunteer.

Thanks to Fred Regal and Mayor Brede, Herta Matteson and the International Affairs Committee for sponsoring the welcoming party for new Internationals at City Hall in October and the annual Thanksgiving Dinner. This traditional American

holiday dinner for new internationals has been prepared and served to new international in Rochester each year since 1986 by Fred Regal in memory of his mother. Fred was honored by Mayor Brede at the City Council meeting on Monday, Dec. 11 for his many years of donating this dinner to the international community in Rochester. We thank too the Congregational Church who once again donated the use of their social hall facilities for this event.

RCTC International Students

Many international students in this community attend Rochester Community and Technical College. Glen Saponari is the advisor to the group and is a member of the RIA Board. Students take an active role in the annual World Festival and other activities and programs. We encourage them to get involved with RIA as volunteers.

Each Spring, the RIA donates two International Scholarship Awards. These annual scholarships are awarded to second-year international students who continue to pursue higher education at RCTC. The award is based on academic record, financial need and participation in the community activities. Urath Tonphanith and Habiba Abdinur are the recipients this year.

IMAA Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association

The IMAA has hosted the RIA in its office for many years and provided RIA's office and storage space, mailing address, phone and computer access. We appreciate this generous service as well as the friendships we have made with their staff. Their growing immigrant staff and clients

need additional office space, so the IMAA is planning a move to new quarters in 2007. They have asked RIA to stay associated with them and continue to use their mailing address. So our new address will be announced in the next newsletter. We are now using their volunteer office with computer access for the 2 new laptop computers that IBM has donated for use by RIA. Storage space for the World Festival supplies has been moved to Herold's Flag Shop on 2nd St. SW. Thanks to board member Lee Herold for this help.

Diversity Council News

The Diversity Council has moved to a new office at the Northgate Shopping Center above the Hunan Garden restaurant. Check their website at diversitycouncil.org for information on upcoming activities on their calendar of community events. They will be holding their Annual Meeting on Jan. 18 at the Radisson Hotel. Events chair, Kristen Mattix is moving with her husband Nathan to Australia. Welcome to the new chair, Courtney Lawson.

World Festival Update

31st RIA's Rochester World Festival "Reaching out to the World", April 20-21, 2007 at Mayo High School

At this annual spring event RIA sponsors with the help of the Mayor's International Affairs Committee, Rochester Community and Technical College, #535 Community Education, the Diversity Council and volunteers from ethnic and cultural groups in the

area. Everyone is invited to take part. Festival activities will include: an evening of dance and musical entertainment, a Parade of Nations, Cultural and Country Displays, Children and Family Activity Center, Ethnic Food Tasting and Demonstrations. A volunteer planning committee is being set up. Additional volunteers are needed. Talented dancers, musicians who would like to perform in the Friday talent show should contact our artistic director, April Dahl, 269-0976. Auditions in early 2007.

The RIA needs many volunteers for the 31st Annual World Festival. April 20-21, 2007 at Mayo High School. We are reaching out to the world community here in Rochester to help plan and take part in this annual event. Planning meetings will be a major part of the RIA Board meetings on the second Tuesday evening of each month in the new year. We invite you to take part in the entertainment program, plan and/or cook ethnic foods that you can sell at the Festival, set up cultural displays, help organize or teach games, dances and art activities for children and their families. Check the United Way Volunteer website or call volunteer coordinator, Phyllis Layton 288-1197.

Upcoming Events

We hope that many of you enjoyed the many fall events--including the Mayor's welcome reception at City Hall, the Thanksgiving Dinner prepared and donated by Fred Regal, and the International Lunches with speakers from Colombia and Cambodia. We look forward to additional events throughout the

coming year. We are also happy to publish upcoming events of your ethnic and cultural groups. Please keep us informed on your group's coming events.

The traditional Hmong New Year was celebrated by Rochester's Hmong families--from great-grandmothers to small children in an all-day festival at the 4H Building on Dec. 2. Sticky rice was cooked in the kitchen by the women and then pounded while it was hot in a wooden tub by the men, then formed into cakes by the women and then taken into the kitchen to be fried in oil (or just eaten in the hand). Dressed in their colorful traditional dress, young people competed in the ball tossing contests, displayed their beautiful clothing and enjoyed each other with a meal together.

RIA's English Conversation Group will continue to meet each month usually on the third Friday morning at 10:00AM. Americans and internationals meet informally in homes or coffee shops for friendship, snacks and of course conversation. New internationals who wish to practice their English are especially welcome to join. Call Betsy 289-3359 for information. We will miss one of our members Sheri Vazari, who is moving to Edmonton, Canada with her husband.

RIA International Speakers Luncheons at Rochester Family Y
On the second Wednesday of each month, everyone is welcome to come to the Rochester Area Family Y for ethnic cuisine and a cultural program from 11:30-1:00 PM in Balfour Hall. Fred Regal prepares the ethnic lunches and volunteer speakers are

invited to share their stories, travel pictures or talk on an international theme. Cost for luncheon is now \$8 for members of RIA or the Family Y. Visitors are welcome for \$9 or may join RIA at the luncheon. Speakers have a free lunch. Reservations are needed by Monday before each lunch. Call Betsy Munroe 289-3359 or Joyce Gossman 282-1676 for a reservation.

Volunteer helpers are needed to set up and help with cleanup. Volunteer speakers for the coming programs in 2007 can contact Phyllis Layton 288-1197. People from many countries came to Fred Regal's Austrian lunch on December 12 to share holiday traditions.

With major reconstruction work in progress at the Y, we have decided to cancel the January meeting and plan the next luncheon for February 14, Valentines Day. On March 14 our lunch speaker will be Henry Kliever who will show pictures of recent historical tour of Turkey and the Holy Land.

RIA Memberships

Many thanks to all of you who have sent membership checks to the RIA office. For those of you who have not taken this opportunity yet, please send your membership checks to Rochester International Association, 300 NW 11th Ave. Rochester MN 55901.

We have made no changes in member dues since the RIA began in 1982. We would like to include all of our readers on our membership list. If your ethnic group is active in the community, please join as an

organization. We would like to support you while you support us. A membership application is included in this newsletter or on our website at <http://ria-minnesota.org>. Mail your application or join on line.

There are many services available to you when you join the RIA. The first service is a quarterly published newsletter that provides news and information about RIA programs and multicultural events and activities in the community. Our mission is to help new internationals get acquainted with us and with our community, its members and resources. RIA members also receive discounts on Ethnic Dinner and RIA Events. These are available to all RIA members who make reservations or purchase advance-sale tickets to RIA-sponsored events.

Credits

President: Frank Hawthorne
Vice President: Addie Borja
Secretary: Sue Shockey
Treasurer: Ann Lance
Volunteer Coordinator: Phyllis Layton
Memberships: Thomas Yung
Website & Technology: Thomas Yung
Newsletter Editors: Phyllis Layton, Thomas Yung
Board Members: Art Hambrugen, Phyllis Layton, George Margellos, Luna Mukherjee, Dottie Hawthorne, Marcella Nixon, Glen Saponari, Lee Herold, Heidi Chaney, Thomas Yung, Nathan Lee.

Mail this membership form to RIA's office at: 300 11th Ave. N.W. Suite 110, Rochester, MN 55901.

Phone Number: (507) 289-5960, Website: <http://ria-minnesota.org>

RIA board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the board room.

RIA membership is open to all. Please join today! RIA's mission: Celebrating cultural diversity and providing opportunities for multicultural education and exchange. Membership is important and your way to help RIA put on the annual World Festival and other programs for international students and the community.

Annual Membership dues:

Individual \$20 [] Student/Senior \$15 [] Family \$30 (\$48 for 2 years) [] Organization \$30 [] Business \$50 []

Name or Names:

Address:

Phone:

Email (*indicate if you d like to receive future newsletters in your email instead of mailed out to you*):

Country/Heritage:

Interests/talents you can share:

Rochester International Association

Newsletter Winter 2006-07

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