



Rochester International Association

<http://www.ria-minnesota.org>

RIA Newsletter Summer 2006

WORLD FESTIVAL WRAP-UP

Congratulations Rochester International Association for yet another successful World Festival. 2006 marked thirty years of bringing members of different countries, cultures, religions and experiences together with learning the common goal.

As each year the city of Rochester grows and diversifies so does the annual World Festival. The program not only teaches about different people from all over the world, it **teaches tolerance and understanding**. Something as simple as a weekend program at a high school can teach such important lessons. You ask, "What can a multi-cultural dance recital teach?" The performances explain about the thoughts, feelings, complexities, and beauty of people from distant (some not so distant) lands. Anyone who has seen **Julianna** perform a middle-eastern dance will speak of beauty and grace. All of the performers at the 30th annual festival expressed themselves with beauty, grace and pride. With the help of our MC, **Fred Gommels**, they enjoyed teaching the audience about their special dance. In addition, a special thanks to **April Dahl** who again directed the show. Without her expertise the dance recital would never happen.

Learning and fun go hand in hand! Saturday's **cultural displays**, children's activities and demonstrations disguised learning with fun! "It's so much fun", says **Corina Jackson** who has driven from Wisconsin the last two years in order to participate in the festival teaching the children how to make Mexican tissue flowers. Corina is so popular with the kids that her activities table is bustling all day long. Another popular gal this year was **Julianne Schulte**. Julianne, owner of the Hula Hut demonstrated several different types of Polynesian dances and taught a brave group of kids and their parents how to hula. One of the many interactive activities for the kids was the literacy tent sponsored and carried out by Americorps volunteers, **Jim and Margaret Favre**, who spent many hours raising funds and planning for the literacy tent. A number of local organizations donated money to provide age appropriate books for the children, who gave the literacy tent an "A" for its great success and educational benefit!

All the cultural displays were very well thought-out, and incredibly interesting. They were full of colorful artifacts and costumes. Many of the displayers provided video and audio with their tables. **Leonel Rodes** from Guatemala played music as he proudly showed his ancient artifacts.

One could not discuss the World Festival without mentioning the delectable variety of **ethnic food** that was for sale. Perhaps the fact that the line for the food flowed out the cafeteria door and down the hall speaks volumes about how much festival-goers enjoyed it! The selfless individuals who spent part of Friday night and all day Saturday working in the kitchen to ensure quality food should be applauded!

To sum up all aspects, the Rochester International Association's 30th annual World Festival was a complete success. We offer our sincere **thanks to the volunteers** who spent countless hours planning and organizing the festival. We hope you enjoyed the festival and we hope to see all of you -- and many new people next April. Adios! Au Revoir! Sayonara! Good Bye!

--- **Denise Stegall, chairperson of the 30th annual Rochester World Festival.**

NEWS

ria-minnesota.org website now has **email newsletter subscriptions**.

Sign up at <http://ria-minnesota.org/email-subscriptions/> to stay informed with the latest news from RIA.

RIA Board members thank Worldfest sponsors and volunteers. Heidi Chaney, newest member of the RIA board, enjoyed her first World Festival -- the dancing on Friday night, to the parade, booths, and excellent ethnic foods on Saturday. The RIA board would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to the sponsors and contributors who made this festival possible: Mayo Foundation, US Bank, Olmsted County Human Rights Commission, Rochester Community and Technical College, James and Judy Sloan Foundation, Venture Computers and the Intercultural Mutual Assistance Association. Other individuals and organizations also took part and made financial contributions. The Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation, AmeriCorps, Rochester Sunriser Kiwanis, Barnes and Noble, Rochester Art Center, Rochester Area Foundation, and First Steps and Diversity Council all contributed to an outstanding new Children's program under the leadership of AmeriCorps volunteers Margaret and Jim Favre. Cultural displays were set up and staffed by RCTC International students as well as many individuals and ethnic groups and organizations in the Rochester community. **World Festival 30th Anniversary T-shirts** are still available at \$5 each in many sizes for both youth and adults. New RIA members get a free T-shirt to wear this summer. Get yours at the Rochesterfest parade or summer picnic.

Farewell to RIA's treasurer. Curtis Snelling and his wife Lawanna are moving to Minneapolis. Curtis was RIA's treasurer from May, 2003 to June of 2006. We thank Curtis for his three years on the board. We wish him and Lawanna the best of luck for the future. Ann Lance will serve as RIA's treasurer beginning in July. Our administrative assistant Heidi Chaney is also leaving to return to RCTC classes in July. Heidi has worked part time in the office on Tuesday and Thursday. Anyone interested in volunteering for this position should contact Phyllis Layton at 288-1197. Duties include filing, email, typing newsletters, updating the Y luncheon list.

Volunteer Opportunities. New board members will be elected at the Annual meeting in September. If you are interested in a two-year board position, please call a current board member. The RIA needs many volunteers to help plan and carry out next year's World Festival on the planning committee as well as take parting in the entertainment program, cook ethnic foods, set up cultural displays, teach games and art activities to children. A good time is had when you take part with us in the **Rochesterfest parade**. We encourage international volunteers to walk with us in the parade on June 24, beginning at 6pm. Put on your ethnic dress and carry the flag of your country. Or we will provide you with a World Festival 30th Anniversary T-shirt to wear. To take part, please contact Frank Hawthorne or Phyllis Layton. We will be joined by members of the IMAA and Catholic Charities to celebrate World Refugee Day.

\$500 tuition Scholarships awarded in May to two international students at RCTC. For many years, the RIA has provided two International Scholarships award to returning international students who are continuing their higher education at RCTC. The awards, based on academic record, financial need and community service are presented at RCTC's annual award ceremony in May. This year's recipients are -- **Urath Tonphanith**, who came to Rochester with her parents as refugees from Laos. She will earn her Associate Degree in Administration in Spring 2007 and plans to work as Administrative Assistant to support herself and two young children. Her goal is to eventually earn a Degree in Nursing. **Habiba Abdinur** from Somalia is also studying to become a nurse. She will finish the LPN program and go on to become a registered nurse. We wish both women well and are pleased to help them to achieve their goals.

COMMUNITY EVENTS and INFORMATION

Rochesterfest parade, Friday June 24, beginning at 6PM: We will again sponsor a unit in the parade. IMAA and Catholic Charities will join as we celebrate World Refugee Day. All internationals are welcome to walk with us. RCTC international students will be there. A drummer and musicians would be very welcome. Marcella and Gary Nixon will be in charge of decorating the truck and could use some helpers.

Tom Kadlec Honda will provide the truck that we will decorate before the parade begins at 6. Lee Herold's Flag Shop will bring flags of your country for you to carry if you call him at 288-1165.

RIA's Summer International picnic, Thursday, July 13, 6pm at Silver Lake West shelter (by the fire station) Hosted by Mayor Brede's International Affairs committee and RIA. Newly arrived internationals and students as well as those who have been with us for many years are welcome to attend. No charge. Bring your families and some food from your country to share with everyone. Music will be provided by Rochester's Accordion Band.

RIA's English Conversation Group meets usually the third Friday of every month. American and internationals meet informally in coffee shops or member homes for conversation and friendship. New internationals who want to practice their English are especially welcome. Call Betsy Munroe at 289-3359 for more information.

International Speakers Luncheons at the Y: On the second Wednesday of the month from September through May, we feature ethnic cuisine prepared by Regal Catering and a cultural program from 11:30-1:00 at the Rochester Area Family Y. Volunteers speakers are needed each month. If you would like to speak about your country or show pictures and describe an international trip you have made, please contact Phyllis Layton, 288-1197. We also need volunteers to serve on a committee to help set up and clean up the tables and to help plan the programs.

Juneteenth Celebration: June 20 at Mayo park. Celebrating the final freeing of the last slaves in the United States. Activities, food, live music from Noon-6PM behind Mayo Civic Center. Everyone is welcome! Event is organized by the Rochester chapter of the NAACP.

Peace Lantern Floating Ceremony: August 6 at Silver Lake East Shelter. To commemorate the Hiroshima atomic bombing of World War II on August 6, 1945. Join us for this annual memorial and Japanese peace ceremony event. Come and make a lantern to place in the lake at dusk. For more information, call Junko Maruta at 282-0139.

Diversity Council will bid farewell to Kristen Mattix. A informal farewell party is being planned for late July or early August to thank Kristen for six years at the Diversity Council as the Associate Director. She and her husband Nathan will be going to Australia to live and to work. Check their website diversitycouncil.org for their calendar of multicultural community events.

TIME TO UPDATE YOUR RIA MEMBERSHIP

If you share RIA's goals, become a member and support the organization with your donation and time and talent. Let us know too how you would like to be involved. June 30th ends RIA's fiscal and membership year. Thank you to those who have already renewed. We count on paid memberships to meet expenses for maintaining our organization, printing and mailing our newsletter and continuing the annual World Festival and our other community activities. Membership forms are included on the back of the newsletter and also on our website: ria-minnesota.org. You will also find the newsletter and announcements of activities on this site. If you receive this newsletter and are not a current member, please join now. If your ethnic group is active in the community, please join RIA and let us know about your programs. We will support you and your activities as you support us. You may mail the application to RIA, 300 11th Ave. N.W., Suite 110, Rochester, MN 55901

Services are available to you when you join the RIA. The quarterly published newsletter keeps you informed about RIA programs. Our mission is to celebrate diversity at our annual World Festival each April and to help new internationals get acquainted with the community and its resources. Members receive discounts on all RIA events when they make reservations or purchase advance-sale tickets. In October, there is an annual welcoming party with drinks and entertainment for new international residents and students, provided by the Mayor and the International Affairs Committee. On Thanksgiving, RIA holds an Annual Thanksgiving dinner. This is a traditional American holiday dinner for internationals away from home, donated and served since 1986 by Fred Regal in memory of his mother.

Rochester International Association
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Website Producer: Thomas Yung

Newsletter Editors: Phyllis Layton,

Heidi Chaney, Thomas Yung

Board Members: Denise Stegall, Phyllis Layton, George Margellos, Luna Mukherjee, Dottie Hawthorne, Marcella Nixon, Glen Saponari, Lee Herold, Heidy Chaney, Thomas Yung

RIA's Office is at IMAA, 300 11th Ave. N.W. Suite 110, Rochester, MN 55901. 289-5960, Ext. 16

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

Website:

www.ria-minnesota.org

Membership...

The Rochester International Association needs YOUR MEMBERSHIP.

RIA's membership year begins each July. We thank those who renewed this summer. New memberships are welcome at any time of the year.

You may also send an e-mail or call any of the board members. If you receive this newsletter and are not a member, please join now.

We hope you will become an active member of the RIA and volunteer for the upcoming World Festival.

RIA MEMBERSHIP IS OPEN TO ALL PLEASE JOIN TODAY!

RIA's office is at IMAA, 300 11th Ave. N.W. Suite 110, Rochester, MN 55901. RIA board meets on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM in the board room. RIA's phone number is 289-5960. Leave a voice mail message.

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 community.

Annual membership dues: Individual \$20 _____
Student/Senior \$15 _____ Family \$30 (\$48 for 2 years) _____
Organization \$30 _____ Business \$50 _____

Name or Names: _____

Address: _____

phone: e-mail: _____

country/heritage: _____

Interest/talents you can share: _____

Mail to: RIA, 300 11th Ave. N.W., Suite 110, Rochester, MN 55901