



Interfaces

Providing Services to International College Students & Department of State Visitors

GATHERING OF NOTABLE WOMEN III



The Rochester International Council hosted the third annual Gathering of Notable Women. Women from twenty-two countries came to Rochester as part of their program Leadership Development for Women. **Josephine M. Perini**, International Visitor Program Officer, invited distinguished women from many fields in the Rochester area, including members of RIC, to a reception in the City Hall Atrium. In addressing the group, **Mayor Duffy** indicated he recognized the importance of the International Visitor Leadership Program and its contribution to Rochester. It was an exciting evening that allowed for networking between the visitors and the Rochesterians.

ANNUAL AWARDS DINNER – Sunday, May 21, 2006 R I T Inn and Conference Center Silent Auction and Raffle

On Sunday, May 21, RIC's Annual Awards Dinner and Meeting will be held at the RIT Inn & Conference Center at 5257 West Henrietta Road, just past the Thruway entrance, previously known as the Marriott Thruway Hotel.

In addition to presenting awards honoring members for their service to RIC, we will present awards to **Maidstone Mulenga**, former Global Editor of the Democrat and Chronicle, and the West Irondequoit Central School District for their contributions to the International Visitor Leadership Program. Please plan on coming to express our appreciation for the support we have received in our mission to promote international understanding and cultural exchange.

The business of the annual meeting, the election of the board and officers, will not interfere with the festive nature of the event. We expect a flurry of last-minute raffle sales, and friendly competitive bidding on the silent auction. Many items, services, and yummy food offerings prepared by our very gifted members will be auctioned.

Weather permitting, we will hold our social hour on the pool patio of the Inn, so we can savor outdoors that day in between checking back at the silent auction tables to see if anyone has outbid us on our favorite items.

We look forward to seeing you there!

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ROCHESTER SUMMIT ON CITIZEN DIPLOMACY

The first Rochester Summit on Citizen Diplomacy was held on Friday, April 28 at the RIT Inn and Conference Center. Over 100 people attended the event and luncheon. Details on the success of the summit including the welcoming address by **Dr. Paul Burgett** of the University of Rochester and the keynote address by **Harriet Mayor Fulbright** will be reported in the next issue of *Interfaces*.



There are two words that any Board president does not want to hear. The words are “strategic planning”. Why? Strategic planning requires a lot of time, dedication and work on the part of the Board and the Executive Director. Yes, we have begun the process of strategic planning, but why do we need it at this time? The Rochester International Council is at a crossroads in its history.

Our membership and some of our leadership are getting older. Many of us feel the goals and objectives of RIC need to change to reflect the changes taking place with international students on college campuses across the country. Now is the time to pause and determine where we are and where we want to go. Students’ needs have dramatically changed over the last decade. We need to address how we are to change to meet the current needs of Internationals.

“Strategic Plan” Mapping Our Way to the Future

Strategic planning is nothing more than determining goals and developing strategies to get there; identifying activities within the strategies, assigning responsibility for the activities and establishing the timelines. Sound simple? It’s not. But it is exciting.

Thank you to the Board who collaborated outside meetings to prepare their assigned presentations, attended three hour board meetings to present and listen to ideas, attended extra board meetings so we could finish the first phase prior to the new board members coming joining us in June.

All the work the Board has accomplished could not have been done without the very able and professional assistance, direction and facilitation of our dear friend

and member, **Sara Cegalski**. Sara devoted many hours in preparation, attending meetings and facilitating board meetings. I truly believe we would not be where we are in the process (if anywhere) without her. Thank you, Sara, for all your work, patience and sacrifice in time away from your family.

There were five Key Result Areas (KRAs) identified. They are Membership, Programming, Development (Fundraising), Community Awareness and Infrastructure. Each KRA has goals established in order to achieve our desired results. Over the summer the Executive Committee will further refine the information we have to date. I feel this process will only strengthen the RIC, making it more self sufficient and better suited to meeting the needs of international students and our members. In the fall, the membership will be asked for some of their ideas and to work with the board to determine how to implement some of the strategies. Additional information will become available through *Interfaces*, mail and e-mail.



Some of our members are really good at organizing and facilitating activities. Please make yourself available to help us achieve our goals and help the Rochester International Council become an even greater organization in the Rochester area.

The coming year will most likely be my last year on the Board. It would be great if the incoming leadership didn’t have to be concerned with the continued implementation of the strategic plan.

I look forward to serving RIC and its members for another year. I cannot do it alone. Please pitch in and help when opportunities arise. I also hope to see you at the Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet. (Maybe you will be the lucky bidder on something great in the silent auction.)

Hank McLeod

Giving And Receiving: Hosting International Visitors



When my husband, **Peter Oddleifson**, and I became members of the Rochester International Council several years ago and expressed interest in providing hospitality to international visitors, we hoped that as retired professionals who live in the Park/East neighborhood of Rochester we might help put a “friendly face” on our City for folks from countries around the world. From the smiles we have received from our international guests, it seems that our initial goal is being realized. What we did not understand as well then as we do now is that our small gestures of hospitality are reciprocated many-fold by our interesting and appreciative visitors.

Recently, Mayor Carlos Arellano of Rancagua, Chile, and Mayor Pablo Zalaquett of La Florida, Chile, joined us and our neighbor friends, **John and Lois Giess** (President of the Rochester City Council), and the effervescent volunteer coordinator of the State Department’s International Visitors Program in Rochester, **Josephine Perini**, for dinner at our home.

Since Pablo speaks English more fluently than Carlos, he took the lead in our conversation about local government and politics and provided interesting information about La Florida, a city of 400,000 near Santiago, the capitol of Chile. Pablo translated as needed for Carlos and us Spanish-challenged Americans. Both Chileans were particularly interested in Lois Giess’ examples of citizen participation in government in Rochester – Mayor Duffy’s “Clean Sweep” program this spring and “ArtWalk” on University Avenue which was designed by neighbors and implemented with assistance from the City. All of us expressed concern for the low-income residents of our communities.



Carlos and Pablo showed more than mild interest in the Finger Lakes Riesling and the dark chocolate “turtles” from our nearby candy store, Stever’s. Carlos complimented us by asking for our recipe for Greek stew. Then, with hugs and exchanges of contact information, we parted company.

In closing, Peter and I would like to encourage others in the Rochester area to open their homes and hearts to international visitors and students. We have made more meaningful friendships with people from around the world at home in Rochester than as international tourists.

Kay Wallace - kwpo@rochester.rr.com

Friendships That Last a Lifetime



Life Size Corner of a Bush Shed
Artist: Merv Muhling
Brisbane, AU

In the late 1970’s, **Betty Saunders** was the RIT Representative for RIFC (as RIC was known at the time). At that time she met **Val and Merv Muhling** and their two children from Australia. The family stayed in the Rochester area for about three years while Merv completed a Master of Fine Arts at Rochester Institute of Technology. Merv returned to Australia where he became a distinguished artist and educator. Muhling was a

multi-skilled artist. He was talented in oil painting, drawing, leatherwork, woodwork, pottery and jewelry, but his deepest interest was sculpture. His sculptures

often reflected pioneer architecture, furniture and objects, and embody memories of his early life in Chinchilla, Australia. During his career he was a senior lecturer at Brisbane College of Advanced Education and was invited to be an artist in residence for a year at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. Mervyn Muhling passed away in 2003.

His wife, Val, who was a member of the Wives’ program, continues to keep in touch with Betty. Since her husband’s death, she has moved to Yarraville, Vic. 3013, Australia, to be near her daughter and her family.

Thank you to Betty Saunders for sharing this information.

RIC Wine Tasting ~ Sweet Success



On Friday, March 31, over sixty guests (RIC members and friends) enjoyed the Eighth Annual Wine Tasting at the Strathallan on East Avenue. This year's wine selections had an international representation thanks to **Phil Adams** of Eber Brothers. Phil took the time to talk about and enlighten all about his choice of wines. He discussed the regions where the grapes were grown and why certain areas grow good wine grapes. **Lorraine Hems**, a lecturer at the RIT School of Hospitality and Service Management, offered an introduction on "How to Wine Taste." Musical entertainment for the evening was provided by RIC member **Al Biles**. The famous Dessert Bar and the special assortment of cheese and crackers made the evening an enjoyable success.

SERVICE WITH A SMILE - GOODS WITH GUSTO

Once again, member services will be part of the auction at the Annual Awards Dinner on May 21. The bidding on these personal items can get intense! Please start thinking about your contribution to the RIC annual service auction. An ideal contribution is something from one of your hobbies. Perhaps you love to bake, but are on a low-carb diet. Or love to garden, but are now in an apartment. And if you are love making pottery, what can you do with all those vases and pitchers? A contribution of professional services is also a great contribution. Perhaps a one hour tax consultation or closet reorganization. Of course, if you are in the process of downsizing your home, we would be delighted to have some of those treasures that can't make the move.

Should you need some ideas to get you started thinking about what you can contribute, these are some of the member contributions the past two years:

All kinds of delicious baked goods
Hand-crocheted baby blanket and hand-knit scarves
A folk-dance workshop
Cross country ski lessons
Hand-painted birdhouses

Collectible dolls
Photo notecards
Peruvian rugs
Artwork
House painting

Other organizations have had the following offerings in their auctions:

Planting a perennial garden
Gourmet dinner for eight at my house
Indian dinner for eight at your house
A weekend at vacation home
A sail on my boat
A basket of international foods

A loaf of home-baked bread once a month
Professional consulting
Chili and all the fixings for a SuperBowl party
One spring raking
Pet-sitting (your house or mine)
Knitting lessons

The donation form is included in this edition of Interfaces. Our goal, of course, is to raise money, so, please be creative!

New Members

We welcome the following new members of RIC:

Gerald and Mary Charipar
Mary Delaney Hale
Bettie Lindley
John Mould, Jr. and Ann McMican
Jean Sikora



It was a pleasure to meet some of these new members at the Rochester Summit on Citizen Diplomacy. Please greet them at our Annual Awards Dinner and share your experiences as a Friendship Volunteer or home hospitality host.

DONATION OF SERVICES TO THE AUCTION FOR THE ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

Service

1. Nature of service (e.g., meal, professional service, gardening)

2. Description of service

-- for whom (e.g., age level, number of people)

-- where (e.g., your house or mine)

-- when (any date or time constraints)

-- for how long (number of hours)

3. Any special features that will make this service more attractive (e.g., experience of service-provider, extra attractions)

4. Approximate value of service _____ 5. Minimum acceptable bid _____

6. Are you willing to offer this service more than once (e.g., two cakes instead of one)?

Donor (Name & Phone Number)

P.S. Contributions of goods to RIC are tax-deductible.

Completed form must be received by Rochester International Council by May 17, 2006. Either mail form to RIC, 229 Morey Hall, University of Rochester, Rochester 14627, fax to (585) 756-8086, or email information to jw@rifc.org.

See Following Page

DONATION OF GOODS TO THE AUCTION FOR THE ROCHESTER INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL

Goods

1. Kind of goods (e.g., basket of writing supplies, painting, vase)

2. Description of goods (e.g., size, color, style, shape, age, components of basket)

3. Name of manufacturer/artist/designer

4. Unusual or special features

5. Approximate value of item _____ 6. Minimum acceptable bid _____

7. I can contact the following business (es) regarding contribution of goods or gift certificates or the following notable individual for a contribution of goods or services

BUT WILL NOT DO SO UNTIL NOTIFIED BY RIC THAT NO ONE ELSE IS MAKING THIS CONTACT:

Donor (Name & Phone Number)

Completed form must be received by Rochester International Council by May 17, 2006. Either mail form to RIC, 229 Morey Hall, University of Rochester, Rochester 14627, fax to (585) 756-8086, or email information to jw@rifc.org.

Smethursts Entertain Syrian Psychiatric Nurses

On what seemed to be the hottest evening of this past summer, we received three psychiatric nurses from Syria and their vivacious Palestinian interpreter to our home for dinner. Icy, fresh squeezed lemonade accompanied home made hummus and stuffed vine leaves and was followed by grilled chicken, red and orange grilled peppers, tabouli and stuffed eggplant with tzatziki. Although our guests had arrived saying they weren't too hungry, we all managed to polish off our lovely dinner.



Asked what impressions they would take back with them to Syria, they all stated how amazed they were at the kindness and friendliness of the American people. They had expected rudeness and hostility but had found none. Apparently their press has a negative slant on the United States!!

As my field is mental health, I was interested to know how patients with a mental illness are treated in Syria. First, there is no such thing as the one-on-one therapy we know here and certainly never couples or family therapy. The nurses work in a huge 350-bed mental health hospital where patients stay for up to and sometimes longer than a year. There are 50 patients in a ward and one psychiatric nurse per ward. The hospital shares 4 psychiatrists with another huge facility. Treatment is mostly medication – Haldol being used very widely.

The patients clean their own space, change their bed linens. They are helped with bathing weekly and are fed three times a day. Treatment as such is that the men watch television a great deal and the women do handicrafts. Games and exercise are very limited because the nurses said that they might become violent. It was a very sad picture painted by these hard working nurses. Mental health carries a great stigma attached not only to the patient but to the patients' families and also carries over to the nurses and doctors who work with them and their families.

Patients receive free medication in hospital – mostly Haldol - but when they leave they are often not able to afford meds, or are non-compliant so the nurses told me they see a revolving door of the same patients year after year.

There is little or no drug or alcohol problem in Syria but abuse of prescription drugs by some individuals is becoming a big problem and a new wing is being added to the hospital.

Our guests had learned and seen so much during their stay and I wondered how much change they could effect when their culture stigmatizes mental health patients to such an extent.

An interesting aspect to the evening was when the Palestinian interpreter pointed out how **Philip Smethurst**, a male, had helped prepare the food, cleared the table, poured lemonade, etc. She suggested to the two male Syrians that they needed to take this image back to Syria and replicate this good behavior saying that Philip was an excellent role model for them.

Our guests finished the evening with fruit salad and ice cream and it was time to take their leave. They were excited about their last day in upstate New York as they were going to Niagara Falls and the Outlet Malls the following day. Shopping seems to be the great unifier of nations.

Doreen Smethurst



In Memoriam

Ruth Estes – January 16, 2006

John Brush, Jr. – February 6, 2006

J. Wilson Stewart – April 16, 2006

Memorial Day - May 29, 2006

Waterloo, New York was recognized by President Lyndon Johnson and both houses of Congress, as the birthplace of Memorial Day because the town decorated the graves of Civil War veterans as early as May 5, 1866.



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