

# Oklahoma City International Visitors Council

Editor – Kay Bickham  
Website: [www.ivcokc.org](http://www.ivcokc.org)



*Be thankful for doors of opportunity, and  
for the friends that oil the hinges....*

*A friend is someone who helps you  
bridge the gaps between loneliness and  
fellowship, frustration and confidence,  
despair and hope, setbacks and success.*

**NEXT IVC MEETING**  
**THURSDAY,**  
**February 3, 2005**  
**11:30 – 1:00**  
**International House**  
Oklahoma City University  
Corner of N.W. 27 & Blackwelder  
**297-8973**

## ***February's program...***

Priscilla Harris will join us on February 3 to join our continuing discussion about the possibilities and opportunities of several OKC international organizations working together more closely. (This is the program that was planned for January)

Our January meeting was canceled because of the very bad weather. Some of us were iced out of the city and the rest were iced into their homes.

Melissa sent out emails to those that she had available. If you would like to be notified by email of special events, please send your email to Melissa at: [Melissa.M.Graffigna@FAA.gov](mailto:Melissa.M.Graffigna@FAA.gov) or [kaybickham@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kaybickham@sbcglobal.net)

## **Upcoming events...**

**Global Fusion at the Petroleum Club – Tuesday, February 22.** Special Guests: 24 member Multi-Regional State Department delegation.

**International Films at OCU each Sunday afternoon at 2:00.**

Jan. 30 – Secret Ballot (Iran)

February 13 – The Return (Russia)

March 6 – Happy Times (China)

**Russian Entertainment and Art show at the new downtown library. February 13.** If you missed this exhibit last Fall, be sure and see it now.

The Moscow Nights will be performing at the new Metropolitan Downtown Library, 301 Park Avenue, on Sunday, February 13, 2005 at 2:00 and 3:30 p.m. NO ADMISSION CHARGE.

There will be a reception from 3:00-5:30 with authentic Russian desserts. Also, during the month of February the library will be featuring a selection of professional art from the socialist realism period called "The Faces of Russia" and 118 modern Russian children's paintings. The Russian Consul General has been invited but we do not have his response at this time. The event is sponsored by the Friends of the Library, International Visitors Council, Sister Cities International, Global Fusion and the American-Russian Association.

## **World Neighbors Supports**

### **Relief Efforts for South**

### **Asian Disaster**

Immediately following the tsunamis, World Neighbors partnered with the IDEP Foundation, an Indonesian, non-profit organization to generate funds on behalf of those individuals affected by the tsunami disaster in Indonesia. World Neighbors does maintain program areas in India and Indonesia, and although neither of our program areas, staff or participants were directly affected by the tsunamis, we felt compelled to do what we could to assist with relief efforts.

*World Neighbors currently supports 64 programs that directly affect 300,000 people in 15 countries including seven of the 12 countries identified by the World Bank as accounting for 80 percent of the world's poor (1998 World Development Indicators, The World Bank.) Those countries are India, Indonesia, Kenya, Peru, and Nepal. World Neighbors also currently works in Haiti, Honduras, Guatemala, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Uganda, Tanzania, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru.*

## **International Opportunities**

### **Short-Term US Embassy Policy Specialist Program**

The Short-Term US Embassy Policy Specialist Program (EPS) offers US senior scholars an opportunity to conduct research abroad while serving as experts to a US embassy or consulate. Grantees will serve the embassy or consulate and conduct their own research for approximately one month. This year, EPS is accepting applications in the following fields and countries:

1. Baku, Azerbaijan: economic diversity, religious plu-

ralism, or civic education (specifically as it relates to anti-corruption and election issues)

2. Tashkent, Uzbekistan: media
3. Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan: ethics/anti-corruption or academic honesty
4. Vladivostok, Russia: crime and corruption

Application materials may be downloaded from the EPS website at <http://www.irex.org/programs/eps/> or requested from IREX. For more information on this program, please contact IREX via e-mail at [eps@irex.org](mailto:eps@irex.org), or telephone at 202-628-8188. **Application Deadline: March 1, 2005**

### ***Fulbright Teacher Hosting Opportunity***

The Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program is currently looking for U.S. high schools/districts to host English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers from Morocco for six weeks in March-April 2005.

More information about the program and the host application form can be found at our website:

<http://www.fulbrightexchanges.org/View/ViewOtherOpps.asp>

### ***Mobility International USA (MIUSA) Sponsors Program to Japan***

Mobility International USA (MIUSA) is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to empower people with disabilities around the world through international exchange. MIUSA is leading a 16-day exchange program to Tokyo, Japan in August 2005 for young U.S. leaders with disabilities ages 18-24. Cost is \$850, but generous scholarships are available to qualified applicants.

Join 11 other participants from the US and MIUSA Exchange staff to strengthen cross-cultural ties and develop leadership skills in an exciting international environment. Participants will take part in workshops on disability rights and leadership, explore Tokyo and the surrounding area, participate in a volunteer service project, and experience Japanese customs, food and culture with members of the local community.

Deadline: March 15, 2005. Late applications considered as space permits. Application available at [www.miusa.org/exchange/](http://www.miusa.org/exchange/) or (541) 343-1284

## **Celebrate the Chinese New Year ...**

The Chinese Lunar New Year is the longest chronological record in history, dating from 2600BC, when the Emperor Huang Ti introduced the first cycle of the zodiac. Like the Western calendar, The Chinese Lunar Calendar is a yearly one, with the start of the lunar year being based on the cycles of the moon. Therefore, because of this cyclical dating, the beginning of the year can fall anywhere between late January and the middle of February. This year it falls on February 9th. A complete cycle takes 60 years and is made up of five cycles of 12 years each.

The Chinese Lunar Calendar names each of the twelve years after an animal. Legend has it that the Lord Buddha summoned all the animals to come to him before he departed from earth. Only twelve came to bid him farewell and as a reward he named a year after each one in the order they arrived. The Chinese believe the animal ruling the year in which a person is born has a profound influence on personality, saying: "This is the animal that hides in your heart."

"Chinese New Year starts with the New Moon on the first day of the new year and ends on the full moon 15 days later. The 15th day of the new year is called the Lantern Festival, which is celebrated at night with lantern displays and children carrying lanterns in a parade.

The Chinese calendar is based on a combination of lunar and solar movements. The lunar cycle is about 29.5 days. In order to "catch up" with the solar calendar the Chinese insert an extra month once every few years (seven years out of a 19-year cycle). This is the same as adding an extra day on leap year. This is why, according to the solar calendar, the Chinese New Year falls on a different date each year.

New Year's Eve and New Year's Day are celebrated as a family affair, a time of reunion and thanksgiving. The celebration was traditionally highlighted with a religious ceremony given in honor of Heaven and Earth, the gods of the household and the family ancestors.

The sacrifice to the ancestors, the most vital of all the rituals, united the living members with those who had passed away. Departed relatives are remembered with great respect because they were responsible for laying the foundations for the fortune and glory of the family.

The presence of the ancestors is acknowledged on New Year's Eve with a dinner arranged for them at the family banquet table. The spirits of the ancestors, together with the living, celebrate the onset of the New Year as one great community. The communal feast called "surrounding the stove" or weilu. It symbolizes family unity and honors the past and present generations.

### ***House Cleaning***

The entire house should be cleaned before New Year's Day. On New Year's Eve, all brooms, brushes, dusters, dust pans and other cleaning equipment are put away. Sweeping or dusting should not be done on New Year's Day for fear that good fortune will be swept away. After New Year's Day, the floors may be swept. Beginning at the door, the dust and rubbish are swept to the middle of the parlor, then placed in the corners and not taken or thrown out until the fifth day. At no time should the rubbish in the corners be trampled upon. In sweeping, there is a superstition that if you sweep the dirt out over the threshold, you will sweep one of the family away. Also, to sweep the dust and dirt out of your house by the front entrance is to sweep away the good fortune of the family; it must always be swept inwards and then carried out, then no harm will follow. All dirt and rubbish must be taken out the back door.

