

NEWSLETTER ... 2008

Oklahoma City International Visitors Council

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Real difficulties can be overcome; it is only the imaginary ones that are unconquerable.

Failures are more commonly caused by having made no decision than by making a wrong decision.

NEXT IVC MEETING THURSDAY, July 3, 2008

11:00 – 12:30
Ann Lacy Bldg.
Oklahoma City University
Corner of N.W. 24 & Blackwelder
2501 N. Blackwelder

Call 341-3169
for information

What's the latest on Immigration

Larry Davis, Immigration Attorney and long-time member of IVC will be our speaker at the July 3 meeting. Bring your questions and experiences to share.

Larry Davis is a private practice immigration attorney who has been practicing immigration and nationality law exclusively since he moved to Oklahoma City in 1983. He attended Loyola University in New Orleans where he received his bachelor's degree in accounting and SMU in Dallas where he received his Juris Doctor. He is a CPA and has his own immigration law practice in Oklahoma City. He has been a member of IVC since 1985 and is also a member of North Oklahoma City Rotary. He and his wife own Cafe do Brasil restaurant and Bossa Nova Bar in midtown Oklahoma City. He will be speaking about the status of the immigration laws and prospects for the future.

2008 NCIV Southern Regional Meeting scheduled to take place August 6 - 8 in Atlanta, Georgia,

The meeting will feature engaging speakers, valuable training opportunities, and an opening reception at the Carter Presidential Center. Working with the Georgia IVC and their host committee, the Regional Meeting will offer numerous highlights.

- An opening reception at the Carter Presidential Center. Participants will enjoy the opportunity to mingle with colleagues while enjoying a skyline view of Atlanta and exploring the Carter Presidential Center.
- Concurrent and plenary sessions that will provide excellent opportunities to deepen your knowledge of U.S. public diplomacy and the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program, develop understanding of current U.S. foreign policy and its impact on local communities, and strengthen the programming skills of NCIV members, their public sector partners, and other leaders in the field of international exchanges.
- Dinner hospitality in the homes of volunteers in Atlanta, an excellent opportunity to strengthen relationships with colleagues and make new friends.
- An assortment of optional activities in and around Atlanta including an evening reception at the Johnnetta B. Cole Global Diversity and Inclusion Institute or a Saturday visit to the Georgia Aquarium.

If anyone is interested in attending, please call Kay Bickham ASAP. There is some travel money available. 341-3169

This event is funded in large part through NCIV's cooperative agreement with the Office of International Visitors, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

Citizen Diplomats - A Different Kind of Patriot

As Americans prepare to celebrate the Fourth of July, we plan parades, picnics, concerts and fireworks to honor the patriotic spirit of our Nation's Founders. The recent HBO series "John Adams" (based on David McCullough's best-selling novel) reminds us of the risks taken by courageous individuals to launch this experiment called American democracy. The Fourth of July also is an appropriate time to recognize a modern day group of patriots – citizen diplomats who volunteer their time and expertise to strengthen relationships between the United States and other countries "one handshake at a time."

Lots of examples of "citizen diplomats" are found right here in Central Oklahoma....

Meet Mr. Jeff Harjo, Executive Director of the Native American Journalism Association. On June 2, he met with a IVLP visitor from Indonesia – a Lecturer in the International Law Department at University Hassanudin

Mr. Judha was fascinated, and had more questions than time allowed. Mr. Harjo is an incredible presenter. He is very highly educated, but at the same time has chosen to remain intimately involved in the affairs of his home town, and is even a member of the tribal council. It was tremendously valuable to be able to talk with someone who is so articulate and globally aware, and is at the same time so locally knowledgeable and committed. His knowledge and communication skills are an invaluable resource. This was probably the best appointment in OKC.

This is just one local example of citizen diplomacy at work. All across the United States members of the National Council for International Visitors (NCIV) are building international friendships – so needed at this pivotal time in our nation's history. Through NCIV, tens of thousands of Americans – each of them a citizen diplomat – volunteer their time and talents to arrange professional meetings, cultural activities, and home visits for foreign leaders and other visitors. By opening their homes, offices, and schools to participants in the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program and other exchanges, NCIV members foster international understanding and cooperation, constructive economic connections, and peaceful interaction. There is a strong and growing wave of patriotism for the 21st century.

So as we honor our founding fathers this Independence Day, let us also take a moment to celebrate the contributions of citizen diplomats, and make an effort to recruit more volunteers to this critically important work.

On a sad note, As many of you may already know, at approximately 9:30am (2:30am EST) on

Wednesday morning (June 25) a bomb ripped through a municipal meeting hall in Sadr City, Iraq killing Captain Steve Farley (a Guthrie native) and three other Americans. Steve Farley was in Iraq as a volunteer. For the last year, both under the DOD and then Dept of State, he has been working directly with the District Council in Sadr City, a 1.3 million suburb of Baghdad. Sadr City is the worst and most critically strategic area in Iraq and is the headquarters and staging ground for the insurgent forces of Iranian-backed cleric Muqtad al Sadr.

In February of 2008, he escorted a group of 12 elected officials from Sadr City on a IV tour in the US. Oklahoma City hosted these men for 6 days. They met with OKC officials and ACOG and the Department of Commerce to witness self-government and the fruits of freedom firsthand.

He wanted them to see what they were working toward and help them cast a vision of freedom for their people. Returning to Iraq, he and the councilmen set about the task of implementing what they had learned along with taking advantage of critical US funds to rebuild their communities and restore pride and confidence in the Iraqi people.

Steve Farley's son Brett worked with the OKC IVC in planning the trip and making arrangements for the visit.

According to Brett, Steve Farley was always a patriot-warrior at heart. "He was at his happiest when in the field serving a mission greater than himself. Just last week, despite learning that al Sadr's insurgency had placed a \$1 million price-tag on his head and amid regular sniper shots at his vehicle, my father was optimistic and elated about the prospects that these new developments promised. He believed that helping achieve freedom for the Iraqi people--the freedom we so often take for granted here at home--was something these people deserved. "

Dialogues for Peace

On a Wing and a Prayer: An American Muslim Learns to Fly follows Monem Salam as he enrolls in an open-minded flying school, where he soon draws the attention of the FBI - confirming his family's fears. Monem is a portfolio manager and the son of a Pakistani commercial pilot. His wife Iman's family is Palestinian and although initially dubious about the marriage, now accepts the cultural differences. These modern-day Americans cast off stereotypes and refuse to succumb to victimhood despite being denied privileges afforded most other Americans. This film follows Monem as he works towards his goal, engaging his wife, family, and community in the process.

On a Wing and a Prayer is being used across the country in an initiative to bring people together in small group discussions. To sign up for a dialogue and bring

this film to your home or community go to
www.dialoguesforpeace.org.