

NEWSLETTER ... June 2004

Oklahoma City International Visitors Council

Editor – Kay Bickham



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

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

Many thanks to our May

speaker Mr. Tim Schroeder who has just returned from Afghanistan where he spent time in Kabul to assess the training needs of their Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism.

He was able to give us an insight into what life is like in Kabul today.

June Program

FOCUS on OKC. Update on MAPS. At press time the June speaker is pending.... Hope you will come and be surprised!!! It will be good

Thank you's to everyone who assisted with programs in May.

Deanna Bradley hosted and transported a Chinese Government official from Beijing.

When asked at this end of his official trip to the United States: "What was your impression of your first visit to America?" – his answer was the kindness of the people. Also thanks to Professor Bing Li from UCO.

The Department of Pharmacy, the Oklahoma Health Care Authority and several private bio-tech businesses met with a Health Care Minister from Korea who was sponsored by the Department of State.

June visitors expected

Bosnia – May 30 – June 2

Rule of Law project for Bosnia. This group of 6 visitors include a prosecutor, several Department chiefs from the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Director of Police, an attorney and an engineer for Cryptology Protection.

Thank you to Cheryl and Kent Wilkinson who will provide home hospitality on Memorial Day.

They will also be hosted by the OKC Police Department and the Sheriff's Dept. and participate in a police ride-along one night.

African Regional Project – June 17 – 22

This is a group of 10 from several **French-speaking** African countries. Their program is focused on Small business and Entrepreneurship.

In Oklahoma City, they will focus on the Role of Government: Regulations and Incentives for Business, Business Incubators: Nurturing Entrepreneurs and Rural Economic Development /Native Americans They would like home hospitality.

Multi-Regional – Anti-terrorism group

June 28 – July 1.

A large group of 25 participants from the following countries: Albania, Argentina, Bosnia, Botswana, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, New Zealand, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and the Ukraine.

If anyone is interested in helping with these groups, please call Kay Bickham at 341-3169.

FAA participants projected

For May include students from Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Korea, Lithuanian, Netherlands Antilles, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, and Taiwan. In addition, the center is expecting official visitors from China in June and July.

Melissa Graffigna and the FAA also hosted a State Dept. visitor from Trinidad-Tabago.

Alliance Francais

The May program spotlighted the International Visitors Council (IVC). Several members of this group have hosted our visitors from France. They are always ready to welcome French residents and/or anyone interested in speaking French to their monthly meetings. Plans are underway for their annual Bastille Day celebration in July.

UCO establishes a Globalization Task Force

The campus is excited as a new project gets underway. One country will be chosen each school year and the entire university will plan programs and on-campus festivals. The kick off date is September 16-18 and will feature food booths, entertainment and vendors. For the 2004-2005 school year, the focus will be on **ITALY**. A 30-member campus wide planning group has been established which also includes members of the Edmond community. The year will culminate with a 2 week tour to Italy.

For more information, contact the International Office at UCO – 974-2000.

News from Washington

NCIV is pleased to support SR-313 Senate Resolution 313, entitled the "People-to-People Engagement in World Affairs Resolution". Its premise supports the work that our members so actively support each day. It is our belief that resolutions such as these will bring greater visibility and value to our work, not only in the U.S. Congress but also on a national level.

The resolution encourages Americans to engage with people and issues beyond our borders by participating in activities such as professional or cultural exchanges, studying or volunteering abroad, working with an immigrant or refugee group, hosting a foreign student or professional, participating in a sister-city program, or learning a foreign language. Secondly, the resolution urges the Secretary of State to coordinate with implementing partners in creating an online database of international exchange programs that would provide information on how Americans can take advantage of such opportunities.

Start planning: August 5-7 Southern Regional Meeting (Dallas, TX) Anyone who is interested in going, please call Kay at 341-3169

World Neighbors reports

We are pleased to report that BBC Worldwide Service is doing a multi-part radio special on the dangerous effects of pesticides in the Andes. Steve Sherwood, World Neighbors' Andean area advisor, was interviewed for the story. He conducted important research and wrote about it for a chapter in a soon-to-be published book, "Waiting for Spring: Life After Harmful Pesticides."

You can access the BBC audio for the first segment of the "Dying to Make a Living" series by visiting our Web site at www.wn.org and clicking on the "as heard on" link on the home page. The next segment of "Dying to Make a Living" will air beginning June 9, 2004.

As you will hear in the radio story, the use of toxic

pesticides can have a devastating impact for farmers in Ecuador and around the world. However, something can be done about it. World Neighbors supports Farmer Field Schools in Ecuador and other developing regions that teach farmers how to decrease dependency on agrochemicals while, at the same time, increase productivity through better use of ecological methods, such as natural pests, crop rotations and other means.

Melanie Macdonald President and CEO of World Neighbors will be the September speaker for IVC.

OKLAHOMA Legislator selected to oversee elections in Macedonia.

The seeds of democracy planted in southeastern Europe in a formerly Communist country are taking root, and an Oklahoma legislator was on hand recently to bear witness to the progress.

Rep. Dennis Adkins, R-Tulsa, was one of 16 foreign observers of the April 28 presidential election in Macedonia, a former Yugoslav republic.

Yugoslavia was headed by Marshal Tito from the end of World War II in 1945 until his death from cancer in 1980. Afterward, the country disintegrated into factionalism.

On April 28, Macedonian voters picked their country's third national leader since Macedonia proclaimed its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991. Boris Trajkovski had been the second President of Macedonia for slightly over four years when he was killed in an airplane crash Feb. 26.

A little over half of the nation's voters turned out April 28 to elect a successor, and picked liberal Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski, 41, over conservative candidate Sasko Kedev, 42, a U.S.-educated heart surgeon with little background in politics.

The observers visited 15 polling sites during the day, Adkins recalled. Each observer was supplied with a vehicle, a driver and an interpreter, he said. "Mine was a recent graduate of medical school who spoke great English."

"Macedonians cast their ballots in privacy, in makeshift cardboard stalls; voters circled the name of the presidential candidate they favored.

In addition, representatives of the two competing political parties were present at each polling location to observe the ballot counting. "They have as many checks-and-balances as possible."

Did you know...

The economic impact of international student in the Oklahoma City Region is \$92,461,900.

The economic impact of the Department of State International Visitor Program in OKC last year was \$79,935.