



INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF RHODE ISLAND

...through friendship, a world of understanding

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR - RISA GILPIN

How can it possibly be May already – time flies particularly when engaged in work that feels meaningful and sustaining – our mission to “promote friendship, connection, learning and global understanding by bringing people together from around the world for cross-cultural exchange” seems increasingly relevant during these times of international confusion. We **MUST** pull together and celebrate our diversity of cultural brilliance, and here at International House of Rhode Island that’s exactly what we do.

This year our annual World of Thanks Tribute goes to our incredible Founding Directors (1963) Bili and Gil Mason for their enduring passion and dedication to the mission of International House of Rhode Island – we could write volumes about these two and how their lives have been dedicated to peace and global harmony. Daily we celebrate the difference they have both made in making our world a better place – we offer our everlasting thanks to them for creating this place of beauty and understanding and for keeping us going for 54 years! What an accomplishment. We also honor our dedicated volunteers for their length of service and mentoring achievements in our global community – Dedda DeAngelis, for leading the conversation group in Italian Avanzato; Aida Sahakian, for leading the Salon de Conversation in French, and for years of dedication to the House through her work as Associate Director; and Shirley Schreiber, for her years as a dedicated volunteer; particularly for the International Friendship Program and for organizing contributions for our annual Holiday Bazaar. We had a great outpouring of support for this delightful luncheon – thanks to our Fundraising Committee, particularly to Barbara Seidenath for her attention to all the details, to Mar-



Sofia Boltes, Carlos Boltes, Bili Mason, Gil Mason, & Salome Waire

iarosa Rivera and Felipe Rosario for their beautiful music, and to Los Andes Restaurant for their delicious food. Bravisimo to all!

What could be better than exchanging ideas with folks from around the world – our Socrates Café, that takes place every Thursday afternoon at 2:00 pm (free and open to all), following our weekly potluck lunch at 12:30, is the perfect example of this. We gather around the long table with the checkered tablecloth each week, write down a broadly-based question on a piece of paper, and then vote to see what we’ll discuss for the rest of the afternoon. The group has recently discussed such intriguing topics as “What is imagination, and is it helpful in our lives,” “Should we fear death,” “How do we distinguish between what is considered ‘polite’ vs. ‘impolite’, is this based on culture?,” “What is freedom?,” and so many other important life questions. There are, of course, no single answers to these questions (therefore the Socrates reference) and the variety of thought and response based on Western vs. Eastern approaches or on personal experience makes the afternoon discussions last, as a point of intrigue and reference, for quite a long time. The group changes from week to week (with some who are steadfast members who never

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miss the opportunity to participate and others who drop by occasionally). Please consider joining us one of these Thursday afternoons – we always welcome new voices.

Our events have been amazing and well-attended and included a concert with jazz vocalist Becky Bass, accompanied by Jhonny Keys presenting Caribbean Soul Duo; Joe Scott presenting The Singing Bard; and the Renaissance V Brass Quintet brass band presenting their Spring Awakening concert. Timo Heleinius gave a thought-provoking talk on “The Cultural Birth” and Tina Cane, Rhode Island’s 6th Poet Laureate gave a moving reading in honor of National Poetry month.

Our nationality dinners are always a hit – food brings us all together. Dinner Coordinator and Chef Ann Akroyd, is taking over the reigns (not entirely of course) from the intrepid Gil Mason, with his blessing! Chef Ann has been orchestrating the menus for our dinners this past year, and will continue to oversee this program. Gil, whose tireless efforts on behalf of his “baby” International House, has been an inspiration – he has prepared meals from all over the world, gathered ingredients and recipes, checked out markets for special ingredients and on and on – what a remarkable effort. Now Chef Ann will take on some of these responsibilities and we thank her profusely – our organization runs on volunteer effort, and this particular effort is truly monumental. The recent Ein Gemütlicher Abend (A Cozy Evening) – German/Bavarian Dinner was such a success, assisted by Barbara Seidenath and Carl Henschel, natives of Germany, Chef Ann put together a splendid evening. She even managed to secure all of the bratwurst and knockwurst for the evening from the generous folks at Shaw’s Market in Cranston – this helped us meet our fundraising goals. Chef Ann, WELCOME ABOARD! Thanks to Luke Dimeo, Manager of Shaw’s – proving ONCE AGAIN – it takes a village and an engaged community to make good things happen.



Chef Ann & Luke Dimeo, Manager of Shaw's Market in Cranston

A belated but totally heartfelt thank you to Dotty and Sandy McCulloch for their on-going annual grant of \$25,000 through their McAdams Charitable Foundation – without these folks we would not be able to provide all of the services and programs that their funding supports – we owe them an enormous debt of gratitude – how can we possibly sing their praises enough – we can't but we really are in awe of their model of philanthropy.

We look forward to summertime, (**our summer hours, from June 1-August 31, are Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:00 pm**) attending to House projects, meeting new tenants, and enjoying the light evenings and warm temperatures.

Alumni Ambassadors

We just launched our Alumni Ambassadors program – hoping to reach out to folks who have touched down here at International House during its 54-year history. You can help expand the reach of the program by sharing e-mail addresses of folks you still are in touch with.



Alejandro, David, Rossy, Alisa and Daniel Garcia Gonzalez

Over the years former students do come by to pay us a visit and it is always a delight. On the Tuesday following the Boston Marathon this year, Rossy Gonzalez stopped by with her husband and three children to revisit this place where they found friendship and connection (they are from Mexico and were in the area as Rossy's husband actually ran in the Marathon). Their oldest son was 2 when they lived in Providence (he is now 14) – these are the exciting moments we wish to feature on our Facebook page (we have even created a special Alumni Ambassadors group).

The Planning Committee/Advisory Group

This group continues to meet under the able guidance of Deborah Langstaff, non-profit consultant. Members of the group include Board Members Bili Mason and Henry Majewski (recently joined by Thierry Gustave, Julia Ma, and Jason Preciphs), community members Shontay Delalue, Nadia Jensen, Dotty McCulloch, along with myself, and John Walker from the staff. This group provides oversight of our strategic 3-5 year plan. It is really crucial to be constantly reviewing goals and objectives to insure success for this organization. As a result of the groups recommendation we have hired a Volunteer Coordinator, Gregory Waksmulski, who has been a steady volunteer himself here at the House – Gregory is reaching out to all of our colleges and universities to build awareness of our programs, and to offer volunteer opportunities to interested students.

Internship

We have had the good fortune to be working with 4 interns this year – Querida Balandran continues her work here, evaluating our robust teaching program of English for Speakers of Other Languages. Querida is a junior at the Met School.

Sherab Dorji, a sophomore at Brown University, has helped to launch our Alumni Ambassador program – his technology skills and great attitude are a constant source of gratitude from us.

Yaxi (“Summer”) Liu and Ruoci (“Echo”) Lu both here through the Roosevelt International Academy and seniors at Bay View Academy, contributed their skills – Summer as photographer for our events and Echo as talented artist creating original images for our programming.



It's wonderful to have young folks involved and engaged in the work we do – our future depends on their energy and enthusiasms.

House Updates

We are working steadily on code updates for our building. Jensen Hughes, fire protection and engineering consultants, orchestrated a major evaluation of what is needed, and we are working with architect Christian J. Ladds, of LLB Architects and Nicholas Winn of Site Specific to execute the needed updates. These folks have been extremely generous with their time and expertise – we owe them our sincere thanks for helping to move this project forward. Don't forget that we have established a fund specifically for projects regarding our House – donations are, of course, always welcomed!

Planned Giving

Please be in touch with us to discuss a possible bequest/planned giving contribution to our House. Please call John Walker here, or send him an e-mail at john@ihouser.org - thanks for considering International House of Rhode Island as a recipient of your bequest.

Upcoming Programs

Monday, May 1, 2017, 7:00 pm - French Club - speaker **Antoine Jonquais**, will speak to the group (in French) about his native province in France, the very beautiful Normandy - its history, beautiful cities and beaches. Antoine works for Hasbro, and his wife is a civil engineer. He attended the University of Le Havre in France, and spent a year at URI where he met his wife. All levels of French speakers are welcome.

Saturday, May 6, 2017, 1:00-3:00 pm - a WORLD OF THANKS Tribute to Bili and Gil Mason, Founding Directors of International House of Rhode Island and to Dedda DeAngelis; Aida Sahakian; and Shirley Schreiber, for their volunteering.

MEMBERSHIP AND CLASSES

Help us to spread the word about our International House and its programs and classes. Membership is open to anyone interested in other countries and cultures. Call today and join our global family – 401-421-7181. Please become a member: \$30.00 individual; \$45.00 family. Join now and save on our events. Our ESL classes; foreign language classes and clubs welcome new students at any time in the semester. We offer sessions for Beginners, Intermediate, and Advanced conversation groups. Visit our website at www.ihouser.org

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Wednesday, May 17, 2017, 5:30 pm – Let's Go Fly a Kite, poems about spring and summer and kites, kite traditions around the world, presented by Christine Rose. Christine Rose was educated in Australia by the natural world, gained a BA Hons in English at the School of English and American Studies, at Sussex University UK. She also holds a post graduate teaching certificate. However, most recently she has been educated by like-minded people in the USA. Bring poems (your own, or favorites) to share with the group – Let's definitely go fly a kite SOON!

Friday, June 2, 2017, 12:00 noon – Our annual Volunteer Appreciation party to celebrate the amazing efforts of all of the folks who volunteer their time and energy in support of our House.

Friday, June 9, 2017, 6:00-8:00 pm – Midsummer Festival – a Scandanvian fest - a variety of Scandinavian midsummer foods – including shrimp, gravlax, herring, ham, potatoes, agurksalat (cucumber salad), tomatoes, cheese, vegetable tart with puff pastry, knäckebröd; saft (black currant drink) and

beer; dessert - strawberries/whipped cream. Presentation about the tradition of the midsummer festival. Tickets are \$25.00 for members/\$35.00 for non-members/\$15.00 students. Call for reservations.

Friday, August 25, 2017 - luncheon – Brown international Graduate student orientation luncheon.



Dotty McCulloch, Bili Mason, Aida Sahakian, & Santosh Paul

This photo from the 1980's was recently brought to us by Aida Sahakian. If you have any photos in your own collections of International House, we would love to have a scanned copy for our archives.

Welcome to our new members!

Irene Barnett
Betty Bernal
Christina Bevilacqua
Bonita Daly
Francisco Fernandez &
Alizah Holstein
Marianne Larned
Paul A. Lietar

Stephen & Loredana
Lister
Bonni Lynn
Jinan Maksad
Mr. & Mrs. Manuel
Medieros
Erik Rapp
Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Roche

STAFF: 401-421-7181

Risa Gilpin, Executive Director
risa@ihouser.org

John Walker, Development & Finacial Manager
john@ihouser.org

Linda Breslin,
Administrative Coordinator
linda@ihouser.org

MAY - AUGUST 2017



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8 Stimson Avenue, Providence RI 02906
www.internationalhouseofri.org 401-421-7181