



INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF RHODE ISLAND

...through friendship, a world of understanding

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR – RISA GILPIN

A new year a time for reflection and good cheer – here at International House of Rhode Island we feel confident that our work is meaningful and important and that the chance to build good community through friendship and understanding will never fail us. We are attracting lots of international visitors and in 2016 we welcomed over 6,000 participants to our programs, and volunteers logged in 1,800 hours of service (we rely on our wonderful volunteers to assist us in carrying out our particularly important mission to “promote friendship, connection, learning and global understanding by bringing people together from around the world for cross-cultural exchange”). Thanks to our members and friends for supporting our efforts and keeping the notion of building a community of international friends alive!

At a recent Board retreat we discussed how difficult it was to put our finger on describing exactly what the work that we do here really is. We’re not just a community center, not just a social gathering place with ethnic dinners and potluck luncheons, not just a safe haven for lively conversation and connection, but we ARE all these things and also we exist to welcome differences and find similarities. We provide a passport for understanding cultural connections where we can all travel without airfare – creating a village of world citizens – just the ticket in the pursuit of world harmony.

We have worked on and completed a 3-5 year strategic plan for the organization – thanks to Deborah Langstaff, consultant, for leading us through this important process. Special thanks to the members of the Committee – Shontay Delalue, Nadia Jensen, Henry Majewski, Bili Mason, Dorothy



Kate Richardson, Risa Gilpin, & Barbara Seidenath

McCulloch and John Walker – this group will continue to meet to always keep the process current.

The Fundraising Committee was working in overdrive this year – our needs have increased due to code updates that are needed for the building’s fire alarm/safety system – this group, chaired by Kate Richardson and including Julia Ma, Paul Mooney, Charley Otto, Ruth Otto, Barbara Seidenath, Bill Shuey, and John Walker, created the SAVE OUR BUILDING event on November 10, 2016 – we raised \$14,000 (!!!) through this effort and all funds donated will be used solely for the purpose of costs associated with preserving our outstanding 1899 building designed by prominent Rhode Island architect Edward Nickerson. Speakers at the event enlightened members of the audience about how critical it is to take care of these precious structures – thanks to Matt Dempsey, from Site Specific Design Build Restoration; Christian Ladds from Lerner Ladds Bartels, Architects; and Barbara Seidenath, RISD for their remarks about preservation and contemporary update requirements. Special thanks also go to restaurants and individuals who donated the delicious international food for the evening – we encourage our members to patronize these restaurants who generously offered tasty treats – Bee’s Thai Cuisine,

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF RHODE ISLAND

Rasoi Restaurant, Oasis Market & Grill, Shogun Hibachi and Asian Garden (given through Board member Julia Ma), and homemade boaboa by International House student Kunchong Shi from China.

Our annual Holiday Bazaar, taking place the first weekend of December, was another roaring success – we raised over \$6,000 and everyone found special treasures here, per usual! We would like to thank everyone who volunteered before, during, and after the Bazaar, and especially give thanks to Shirley Schreiber, for making the calls that elicited so many great contributions. Also, every year Ilda and Jean Franco, along with Dotty McCulloch, work really hard to insure the success of this fun event. We love the fact that everyone looks forward to this search for unique holiday gifts, while supporting the efforts of International House of Rhode Island.

Another tradition (we hope!) started this year on December 14th (the week BEFORE Winter Solstice) was our well-attended Winter Solstice poetry reading with talented poets Marguerite K. Flanders and Mary Mueller (who organizes our poetry events) and contributions from audience members.

Planned Giving –

To discuss a possible bequest/planned giving to our House, please call John Walker here, or send him an e-mail at john@ihouser.org



Mike Laureanno & Marguerite K. Flanders

Alumni Ambassadors

As part of our outreach efforts we are in the process of forming an Alumni Ambassadors group here at the House, hoping to reconnect with past friends and associates around the world. A goal of this outreach program is to share stories (testimonials) and photographs about experiences of community and

friendship related to our House and we would greatly appreciate your help in finding contact information for some of these wonderful folks – if you're still in touch with international folks who you met through our House, please compile a contact list (email important) and send it to us – risa@ihouser.org Also, if you might be interested in volunteering to help with this effort please let us know as well. We're excited to reconnect with the special folks who have passed through our doors and now that we have the advantage of having a Facebook page, we know that our dreams of reconnection CAN be fulfilled. Thanks for your help/advice – much appreciated.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS – be sure to check our website or call 401-421-7181 to be sure these programs are still on – a lot can happen between planning and executing (as we all know!)...



Mai Donohue & Dorothy McCulloch

also, per usual, we will send e-mail reminders – if you are not receiving these, and you are members, please alert us so we can add you that list!

Friday, January 27, 2017 – 6:00-8:00 pm – Burns Night Supper – the annual celebration in honor of Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759-1796), “the Bard of Caledonia” – with Pipe Major Deborah Kane, Master of Ceremonies and presenter of “The Immortal Memory,” Joseph Scott, scotch tasting by Campus Fine Wines – dinner includes the traditional haggis (along with a vegetarian version); Scotch broth; salmon, neeps n’ tatties (potatoes and turnips); salad and shortbread by Sheila Steiner (from her Scottish mother’s recipe). Tickets are \$25.00 for members; \$35.00 non-members; \$15.00 students. Call 401-421-7181 for reservations.

Monday, February 6, 2017 – 7:00 pm - French Club – takes place the first Monday of each month – guest speakers deliver a talk, in French, to audience members (all level of French speakers are welcome!). Please bring refreshments/wine to share.



Mary Mueller & Ethel Fraga

Beginning on Tuesday, February 7, 2017, and taking place every Tuesday thereafter from 2:00-3:30 pm - French class for Beginners with Mahdia Bouirane and Mereym Mentak (both graduate students at JWU, from Morocco). Please call to let us know if you are interested in joining this group - \$12.00.

Sunday, February 12, 2017 – 3:00 pm – Concert with jazz vocalist, steel pannist, award-winning recording artist (“My Love is Real”) Becky Bass and her Caribbean Soul Duo. Hailing from St. Croix, Virgin Islands, Ms. Bass comes from a long-line of Caribbean musical artists – Ella Fitzgerald is also one of her inspirations. Tickets are \$10.00 for members/students; \$15.00 non-members – call for reservations.

Beginning on Wednesday, March 1, 2017, 5:30-7:00 pm – English for Speakers of Other Languages – Intermediate Level – every Wednesday thereafter, with instructor John “Jack” Schleyer. Please call to let us know if you are interested in joining this group for evening English class.

Wednesday, March 8, 2017 – 5:30 pm – International Women’s Day – learn about the origins of this day and how it is celebrated across the globe – with guest speaker Catarina Sama, Professor of Italian at URI, specializing in Italian dramatic cinema from Neorealism to the present; genocide in Italian literature and film; and Venetian women writers, including Veronica Franco (1546-91), Moderata Fonte (1555-92), Luisa Bergalli Gozzi (1703-1779), Elisabetta Caminer Turra (1751-96) and artist Rosalba Carriera (1673-1757).

Sunday, April 2, 2017, 3:00 pm – Joseph Scott – The Singing Bard. There are many good stories in narrative poetic form. Can

such stories be told in song? The inspiration for this program comes from the example of “pub singers” of Great Britain – they sing unaccompanied with perhaps one prop: a pint of ale. Join us for a pint in this internationally flavored program, including The Irish Funeral, Nova Scotia’s Waves, and Horatius (or some such combination).

Friday, April 7, 2017, 6:00-8:00 pm – German dinner (Abendbrot) – menu to be announced. Tickets are \$25.00 for members; \$35.00 non-members; \$15.00 students. Call 401-421-7181 for reservations.

Wednesday, April 12, 2017 Timo Helenius presents “The Cultural Birth” – focusing on his recent publication “Ricoeur, Culture, and Recognition: a Hermeneutic of Cultural Subjectivity.” How do we learn about the process of attaining a sense of being a human? – incorporating insights from philosophers and scholars Mr. Helenius presents a cultural theory that focuses on cherishing the positive richness of cultural variety and diversity that ultimately bespeaks of cultural unity – there is no a-cultural human being. Timo Helenius, a native of Finland who received his doctorate in philosophy from Boston College, currently serves as a Visiting Scholar at Brown U. – his texts have been published in Europe, Australia, and the US.

Wednesday, April 26, 2017, 5:30 pm – April is National Poetry Month – Join us in celebration with a reading by Tina Cane, Rhode Island’s new Poet Laureate. Cane is founder and director of Writers-in-the-Schools RI, an educational program that places professional writers in public schools to support students as they explore the writing process. Cane has taught English, French and creative writing in New York City and Rhode Island.

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.InternationalHouseofRI.org

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF RHODE ISLAND

Don't forget our weekly programs including English classes; foreign language conversation groups (French/Italian); - check our website for details, and the following free offerings:

Thursdays:

8:00 am - Classical Indian Dance with Nithya Ramesh (\$10 per class or \$30 per month)

12:30 pm - Potluck lunch - bring a dish to share

2:00 pm - Socrates Café - lively discussion group



Beginning / Intermediate English Class

Fridays:

10:00 am - noon - Knitting group - all levels welcomed by Tatiana Savchenko

10:00 am - Chinese Classical Dance - with Julia Ma - call if interested

12:00 noon - Yoga - gentle instruction for all ages - with Maja Stojkov, call if interested

We are sad to note the passing of some of our long-time members who volunteered here at International House - condolences to the families and friends of Mrs. Thomas C. (Isabelle) Kee, Albert Graham Lee IV, and Walter Schroeder.

WISH LIST - some of our immediate needs:

Donor database

Historic preservation of our building - on-going

Handicap accessibility

New projector/video recorder

Window washing

Entertainment fund/sponsorships for cross-cultural programs

Welcome to our new members!

Zach Mason Cohen
Anna Colaiace
Theodore Fraser
Stephen B. Johns
Joan Lusk

Vera Leon
Kevin McKay
Paula Sigal
Donald Sockol
Jeanne Spira

STAFF: 401-421-7181

Risa Gilpin, Executive Director
risa@ihouserri.org

John Walker, Development & Financial Manager
john@ihouserri.org

Linda Breslin,
Administrative Coordinator
linda@ihouserri.org

JANUARY - APRIL 2017



INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF RHODE ISLAND

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