



CROSSROADS INTERNATIONAL

The Newsletter of the
International Institute of Metropolitan St. Louis

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March 1987

“Silk Sarongs and City Streets” Premieres

The eagerly awaited video documentary about the St. Louis Lao Dance and Music Troupe, “Silk Sarongs and City Streets,” premiered on December 10, 1986.

Nearly 200 people gathered at the Winifred Moore Auditorium at Webster University to see the video and a live performance by the troupe.

The 30-minute video introduces the viewer to a culture rich in traditions and beauty — a culture which these Laotians long to re-experience. Instead, they can only “go home again” through dance and music. Scenes from the everyday lives of the performers are featured as well as the hard work involved in their seemingly effortless performances.

The video documentary was sponsored and produced by the Institute. It was funded by gifts from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Catherine Manley Gaylord Foundation, Citicorp Person-to-Person, the Committee for Access and Local Origination Programming, the Missouri Arts Council, the Regional Cultural and Performing Arts Development Commission, the L.J. and Mary C. Skaggs Foundation, and private donors.

The Lao Dance and Music Troupe was recently selected to appear through the performing arts program of the Missouri Cultural Heritage Program. Groups wishing to hire the troupe after July 1 can receive subsidization.

The video is available for rental and/or purchase by contacting Ann Rynearson at 773-9090. Short-term loans to groups unable to pay rental fees can be arranged.



Members of the Lao Dance and Music Troupe perform at video debut; (from left) Dam Ponevilai, Boun Lorkeomanivong, Somneuk Souvannarath, and Thongsay Hanouman.

Crossroads International is a semi-annual publication of the International Institute of Metropolitan St. Louis, 3800 Park Ave., St. Louis, MO 63110-2514. Questions or comments can be addressed to: Anna Peterson, Editor. Photographs, unless otherwise specified, by Wayne Crosslin.

Immigration Reform Slated

Last Fall, Congress passed landmark immigration legislation.

Legalization

Starting May 5, 1987, persons who have resided illegally in the U.S. continuously since January 1, 1982, can apply for legalization.

Documents to prove residency will be required. Fees, in addition to INS filing fees, may be charged for application preparation assistance.

"Aliens and the community at large should realize that Congress has not legislated a general amnesty program," said Anna Peterson, Institute Executive Director.

"Instead, they have provided a mechanism by which only certain aliens with roots in the U.S. can legitimize their status," she added.

Experts estimate the local eligible population at about 1,000 in St. Louis, Missouri, and about 5,000 in East St. Louis and southern Illinois. Nationwide, over 3,000,000 people are expected to apply.

Temporary resident status may also be granted to agricultural workers who prove that they worked at least 90 man-days in agriculture during one or both years from May 1, 1984, to May 1, 1986.

Institute staff are contacting migrant farm labor councils and others in rural Missouri and Illinois to ascertain the need for and magnitude of such a program.

Employer Sanctions

All employers must verify the legal status of every new employee hired after November 6, 1986.

The Justice Department will provide forms on which an employer, using a list of approved documents, can certify that proper verifications have been made. Noncompliance can result in fines.

Employers knowingly hiring undocumented workers will be subject to civil penalties ranging from \$250 to \$10,000 fines per unauthorized alien.

Institute staff are organizing orientation sessions for employers anxious to comply with the new law.

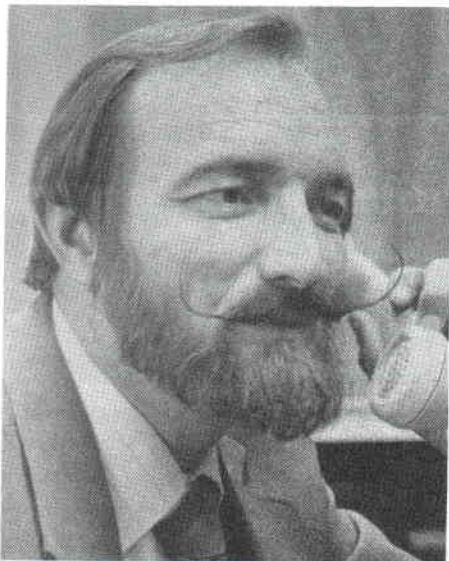
Citizenship Classes Being Offered

Aliens must demonstrate ability to speak simple English and have a basic knowledge of U.S. history and government or be enrolled in a recognized class in order to adjust to permanent residence.

Therefore, Citizenship and English (See REFORM on page 3.)



Hung Nguyen, Assoc. Dept. Director, fingerprints a permanent residence applicant.



Norm Schnegelberger, Department Director, also serves as a trainer for the INS Outreach Center.

Institute Represents Many Deportation Cases

The Institute's Immigration Counseling Department is presently representing 41% of the St. Louis alien population facing deportation hearings.

These 27 cases are being handled by Norm Schnegelberger, Department Director. He is the only paralegal in Missouri accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals to practice before it and the Immigration Service.

In addition, Schnegelberger represents 22 other cases being handled outside the deportation process.

The total caseload includes clients from 21 countries. Seventeen members of the caseload are political asylum applicants.

Last year, Schnegelberger moved 26 cases through the hearing process. He successfully argued 18 cases, 4 cases were transferred to different INS jurisdictions, and 4 clients moved from the area.

The International Institute is the only agency in St. Louis which provides professional immigration counseling and representation to low income or indigent aliens.

"With the passage of the Immigration and Control Act, the demand for immigration counseling and representation will increase dramatically," said Schnegelberger. "Our challenge will be to maintain the quality of service as we expand the quantity."

Immigration Reform

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classes have been organized at the Institute, Monday through Thursday evenings, from 7 to 9:30 p.m.

There is no charge for the classes, which have beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels of learning.

Liaison Activities

Institute staff conducted a legalization information meeting on January 20. About 25 people from both sides of the river attended. Another meeting has been planned for March 20 to make local coordination plans.

A mailing list of people interested in the program is being developed at the Institute. Names can be added by contacting Tamra Hale at 773-9090.

Application Assistance

Institute staff are organizing a program to help potentially eligible aliens prepare and submit legalization applications.

"This service will be vital to the safety of many aliens," said Norm Schnegelberger, Institute Immigration Counseling Director. "Once an application is filed with the Immigration Service, the whereabouts and circumstances of the alien are revealed," he explained.

"We will have a responsibility to advise

certain clients with weak or questionable applications about potential filing risks," said Peterson.

Volunteers will be needed. Phone Mr. Hung at 773-9090 for information.

New Board Members Elected

At the annual meeting of the membership on February 19, the following officers were elected for one year.

President — Jim Tullmann. His third term as President. Tullman is Vice President at Epirotiki Lines, the world's largest cruise line. He served as State Chairman for United Nations Day in 1986.

Vice President — Joe Balcer. His second term as VP. Balcer is Vice President at Love Real Estate Company and former assistant to Mayor Conway.

Secretary — Anne Tao. Mrs. Tao serves as Treasurer at William Tao & Associates, her husband's engineering firm. Her third year on the Board.

Treasurer — Virgil Bouras. Bouras, a Greek American, is Vice President at Bouras Mop Company, where he has employed Institute clients. His fifth year on the Board.

In Memoriam

We extend our condolences to the family of Nancy Painter, who passed away in the Fall. She was completing a second term as an Institute Board member. She will be truly missed.

Three new members of the Board were elected for 3-year terms each.

Juanita Hinshaw, Asst. Treasurer at Monsanto Company.

Noel (Bud) Robyn, Vice President at Ralston Purina, Intl.

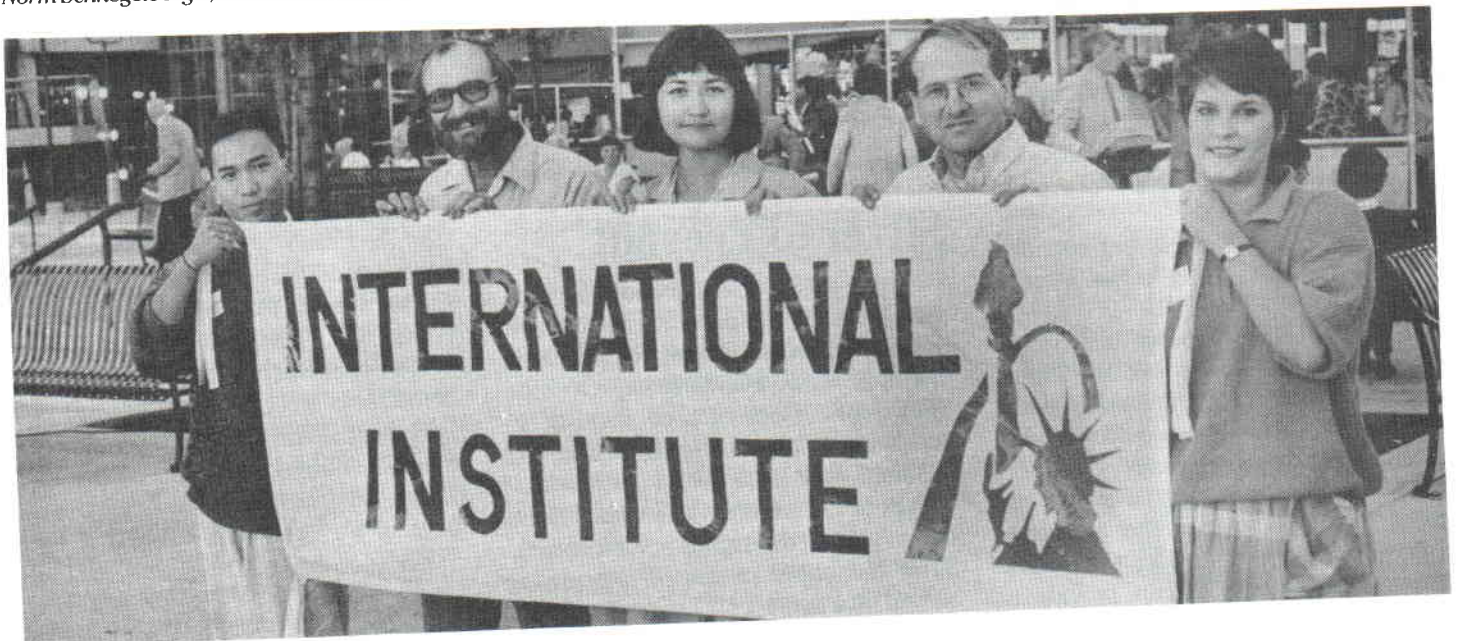
Cheryl Schaerer, President of VidCom Consultants, Inc.

Two individuals were elected to second terms of one year each.

Raymond Gallardo, Vice President (International) at Mallinckrodt, and *Seung H. Kim, Ph.D.,* Director of the International Business Program at St. Louis University.

Bruce Adaire, Vice President at Anheuser-Busch, Intl., *Joe Balcer,* and *Margie W. May* were elected to second terms of three years each.

Institute staff participate in United Way Annual Drive Kick-Off at Union Station; (from left) Minh Duong, Norm Schnegelberger, Anna Peterson, Eric Wernecke, and Sharon Wilson.





(Foreground) Bob Morehead, Flum's General Manager and (rear) Hiep Nguyen, Cool Glide VI Department Head. Nguyen is a Vietnamese refugee and former Institute client.

English in the Work Place Debuts

Last May, Paul Flum Ideas, Inc., in West County, was the site for a pilot English in the Work Place Program (EWP).

Robert Morehead, Flum's General Manager, asked Institute staff to set up an on-site job-related English program. The company wanted to keep and upgrade its refugee employees.

Institute staff devised a specific short-term curriculum from an on-site needs analysis. Teaching salaries were provided by the Parkway Adult Basic Education Program.

About 12 refugee employees attended a one hour class twice a week for 6 weeks.

They learned to improve their work-related communication skills. Supervisors could then expand employee job assignments. Colleagues could give and receive messages more easily.

EWP classes are now available to other local employers. The Institute's *Entry III* job training contract, effective through November 30, can provide a

teacher without cost to the employer.

Staff will design and teach a job-related curriculum specific to the needs of each employer. Vocational training and/or orientation to the work place can be provided.

Contact Margaret Silver at 773-9090 for additional information.

Silver to Present

Margaret Silver, Education Department Director, will present a paper, "Volunteer Teachers: Their Recruitment, Training, and Maintenance," at the TESOL-Int'l (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) meeting in Miami, April 21-25.

Papers are selected on a competitive basis. This is the eighth year that Mrs. Silver has either presented a paper or served on a panel.

Our Thanks . . .

The following businesses and organizations have assisted the Institute with gifts of cash and/or goods.

In September, McDonnell Douglas Charitable Trust and its Employee Fund made a combined gift of \$7,350 to Phase II of the Building Campaign.

Maritz, Inc. donated \$1,000 bringing their capital campaign gift to \$3,000. Last month, Centerre Bank, N.A., added another \$1,000 to its previous gifts.

Mr. & Mrs. William Tao gave \$1,000 through the Institute's Neighborhood Assistance Program designation. Bouras Mop Company gave another \$250. Marjorie Robins added \$500 to her already substantial assistance.

Southwestern Bell Corp. made a 1987 pledge of \$6,500. The funds are to be used on renovations related to the agency's Small People's Program.

Six families were assisted by the United Way/*Post-Dispatch* 100 Neediest Cases project. Donations were also received from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, the St. Louis Public Schools, Proctor & Gamble, and K-Mart.

A total of \$1,350 was donated to help 10 particularly needy refugee families by Paul Mendelson and American Loose Leaf Business Products, Kirk of the Hills Church, Pauline Eades and the Pitzman Fund, Mr. and Mrs. Elwood C. Hamsher, the First Congregational Church of St. Louis, and Marjorie Robins. An additional \$500 was donated to this effort by Venture Stores/May Company.

In November, the refugee program received a large donation of canned goods from the McDonnell Douglas Corporation employees' annual food drive.

The annual Thanksgiving feast for 150 newly arrived refugees was made possible by generous gifts of food, merchandise, and cash by local businesses and volunteers. Thanks to the employees of CIGNA Health Plan of St. Louis, Allen Foods, Inc., Jeff Thompson at Instant Whip, Schnuck's, National, and Dierberg's Markets as well as Wetterau, Inc., Bob Bartelli at Golden Dipt/D.C.A., and Board member, Antoine Solomon.

The International Friends gave large bags of fruit and nuts to each refugee

(See THANKS on page 6.)



Rika Koyama, from Japan, demonstrates the art of origami for members of Cub Scout Pack 489 from the Conway School in Ladue, led by Mrs. Connie Foley. The boys treated Institute clients to a Festival of Lights procession. Then, they joined Institute clients, staff, and volunteers to make Christmas tree decorations and share cookies and punch.

Clothing, Food, and Furnishings Needed

Refugee families come to St. Louis even during the coldest months of the year.

For many years, refugees arrived with a "standard issue" parka, given to them at their point of entry to the U.S. This service has become very sporadic with refugees arriving through New York now receiving sweaters instead of coats.

Donations of winter coats, hats, and mittens are more crucial than ever. Many of the refugees have never seen snow or been exposed to chilling winds like those in St. Louis.

Household furnishings are another necessity, which the refugees and the Institute cannot always afford to buy. Beds, working kitchen appliances, tables and chairs, sheets and towels, large sauce pans with lids, alarm clocks, and blankets are essentials for each new household.

Canned and boxed food items with long shelf lives are also appreciated. Instructors will teach refugees how to prepare unfamiliar food.

About 275 refugees from 15 countries are being sponsored annually by the Institute.

Call Deborah Young at 773-9090 to schedule a pick up for household furniture. Clothing and food can be brought to the International Institute from 8 a.m. to

9 p.m., Mon.-Thurs., and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Fri.

Donations are tax-deductible in accordance with IRS regulations.

Income Tax Assistance

Most Americans dread the confusing process of income tax preparation. The foreign-born population finds it even more confusing.

For the eighth year, the Institute hosted tax preparation sessions for local immigrants and refugees.

Working with VITA, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, job placement staff helped income tax workshops on February 7 and 14 by providing interpreters when needed.

Accountants, tax specialists, and business students volunteered their time to complete nearly 100 returns.

The workshops were staffed to handle about 50 applicants per session. On Feb-

ruary 7, nearly 100 people showed up. About half of them had to be turned away.

"New Americans want to behave correctly in their new homeland, but paying taxes can be very confusing," said Eric Wernecke, Job Placement Director.

"Refugees really appreciate the help," he added. "You can see it in their faces."

VITA operates income tax assistance seminars at about 100 locations in the St. Louis area each tax season.



Thanks

(from page 4)

family who attended the Institute's Festival of Lights celebration in December. Thanks to Sara Levins for arranging such a useful and extremely thoughtful holiday donation.

When 6 classes from Ladue Jr. High School visited the Institute during November and December, they came with gifts and contributions. About 100 students learned about refugees and their lives in America through orientation and visits to English classes. Lead teacher from Ladue was Hazel Silverstein.

Daisy Ichtertz, who worked in the Institute's Education Department in 1983 and who now lives in New Jersey, continues her benevolence long distance. Daisy still stocks the thermofax machine she donated with paper supplies.



(Right) Seay Chorn, a Cambodian refugee, learns to count American currency with the help of her English teacher, Joan Masselink, who is a volunteer.

Photo by Ken Perry

MO Tax Credit Available

The Institute's Capital Campaign has been renewed for tax credits as of January 1 for a year under Missouri's Neighborhood Assistance Program.

The program, operated by Missouri's Department of Economic Development, enables corporations and partnerships paying Missouri taxes to receive a tax credit for a portion of any gift made to a qualified NAP.

"This is the third NAP cycle under which we've had approval," said Anna Peterson, Institute Executive Director. "I expect local businesses to look much more closely at such tax credits since recent federal tax law changes will mean additional taxes for some of these businesses."

Tax credits for up to \$50,000 in total gifts are eligible under this funding cycle.

Several businesses, including Union Electric Company and William Tao & Associates, made use of the NAP credits last year.

For further information, contact Ms. Peterson at 773-9090.

More Than Teaching English

Learning English is the key to survival in America for most refugees. But, practical orientation is just as important.

Instructors at the International Institute orient their students while teaching English. Instead of teaching language that may not be used regularly, instructors concentrate on language specific to their students' day-to-day survival.

Currently, morning program instructors are involved in two special orientation programs.

On Thursday mornings, they demonstrate how to cook with foods available through the Institute's Food Bank. Pancakes or biscuits might be prepared one week. Another week, the lesson may involve cheese and its many uses.

In the winter, weatherization sessions are also offered. Students are taught how to measure their apartment windows for plastic covering, about the relationship of the thermostat to the temperature in the apartment — and about the resulting energy bill.

Orientation to American supermarkets, currency, postage, and banks is, of course, critical to the self-sufficiency of each refugee family. Such orientation is offered on an on-going basis.

Many Institute instructors are volunteers, who team teach. For more information, contact Margaret Silver at 773-9090.

AARP Provides Clerical Help

For the past year, two to three Institute clerical positions have been filled by workers assigned by the AARP (American Association of Retired Persons) and paid by the Missouri Division of Family Services.

These older adults usually seek training to re-enter the job market.

Currently, three part-time AARP employees are on staff. They provide clerical assistance including filing, preparing bulk mailings, making copies, and inputting client contact summaries into the Institute's data base.

In December, an AARP employee, Jettuan Frazier, was hired full time by the Institute to serve as a secretary in its Human Services Program.

Entry III is Funded

Refugees will receive vocational and pre-vocational skills training as well as initial job placement and job upgrading under a third year of special government funding.

The contract, called *Entry III*, was awarded to a St. Louis consortium, with the Institute serving as lead agency. Other members include the English Language School in University City, Catholic Charities Refugee Services, and Metropolitan Employment & Rehabilitation Services (MERS).

The contract, which began December 1, enables Institute staff to provide pre-vocational power sewing skills training.

"Women who've never worked outside the home before and who come from nontechnologically-based societies face special disadvantages in the American

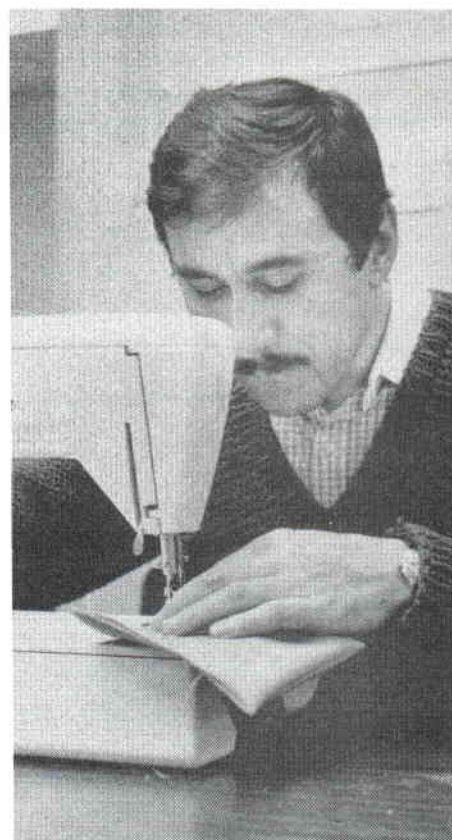
work place," said Margaret Silver, Institute Education Department Director.

"We must work more slowly and very precisely with such clients, who in many cases are illiterate in their native language."

Vocational skills training is offered at MERS. Classes in data entry, food service, housekeeping, and custodial services as well as nurse aide and clerk/typist skills are available.

Two new programs are being offered under *Entry III*: an English in the Work Place Program featured in this newsletter and an evening language program, specializing in vocational English and job search skills necessary for job upgrading.

About 90 clients per year receive initial job placements after graduation from training.



Ekrem Gelilov, a Bulgarian refugee, learns to sew in the Institute's Entry III program.

Ethnic Self-Help Offered

Since December, 1985, two local mutual assistance associations have been providing services to their community members under contract with the state of Missouri.

The Lao Buddhist Association, which rents space at the Institute, provides services for which the refugees no longer qualify under the Institute's variety of federal and state grants. Areas of continuing concern to the LBA's small staff are medical interpreting and helping to arrange baby-sitting for mothers who work. Noupanh Douangkeomany, the Project Director, served as the Institute's Lao Caseworker before his appointment by the LBA.

The Ethiopian Refugee Mutual Aid Association of Missouri (ERMAAM), is housed at 3548 S. Grand Blvd. Its acting Director is Gedlu Metaferia, formerly a Medical Interpreter with the St. Louis Public Health Department. ERMAAM staff help community members, who are, again, no longer eligible for Institute services or who have needs beyond the agency's resources.

"Both these projects are the result of federal efforts to organize and motivate local ethnic communities to start helping their own members," said Elisabeth

Price, Institute Human Services Director. "Federal funds to other types of refugee service agencies are being sharply cut so we encourage self-help efforts."

"Unless such ethnic groups can organize volunteers to help new refugee arrivals, many of the needs of the community must inevitably go unmet," she added.

Video Equipment Gift

Panasonic professional video editing equipment has been purchased with a gift from the Roblee Foundation.

The equipment will enable staff to videotape orientations for newly arriving refugees and produce voice overlays in whatever languages are needed.

"The equipment will allow us greater flexibility to sponsor whichever refugees need homes, rather than only those for whom we have bilingual staff," said Anna Peterson, Institute Executive Director.

Membership

Memberships are a vital source of income for the agency's general budget. Last year, over 10 percent of the Institute's unrestricted income came from memberships.

Please help us by taking out or renewing a membership. An application appears on the following page.

Volunteer teacher training tapes will also be produced.

In addition, the equipment will be used to produce videos for fund raising and public relations purposes.

"We will be able to take our story to the community and show them what we are doing," said Peterson. "We're one of the best kept secrets in town, but not for much longer."

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International Institute of Metropolitan St. Louis Annual Membership Program

| Category | Individual/Family | Business/Organization |
|-------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Regular | \$10 | \$50 |
| Contributor | \$25 | \$250 |
| Patron | \$50 | \$500 |
| Sponsor | \$100 | \$1,000 |

Enclosed is \$ _____ for an individual/family business/organization membership in the International Institute of Metropolitan St. Louis.

Regular Contributor Patron Sponsor

Name _____

Business or Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone (_____) _____

New Membership Renewal

Memberships are tax-deductible. New memberships after September 1 will be credited to the next year.