

The RICE WORLD

Vol. 20 No. 2

Spring 2005

Office of International Students & Scholars, Rice University - MS 365, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, TX 77251-1892
Tel: (713) 348-6095, Fax: (713) 348-6058, Website: <http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~ois/>

TSUNAMI, IN SOUTH ASIA: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

We had a great turn out for the seminar "Tsunami in South Asia: Past, Present, and Future" on January 19th, 2005, thanks to the efforts and initiative of **Vinod Kumar, Priyank Jaiswal, and Mili Shah, and the cooperation between RISA and Rice for Peace.** The seminar was very informative and educational. The turn out of students, faculty, staff and community leaders was a good indicator that we are a caring community and together we want to reach those who are suffering. Vinod, the key organizer of the event, stated that he wanted to plan for this event because he wanted to do something to help the tsunami victims. With his unceasing diligence and dedication, we learned more about this alarming natural disaster and found a way to honor the victims by contributing in monetary or volunteer services, like these student leaders.

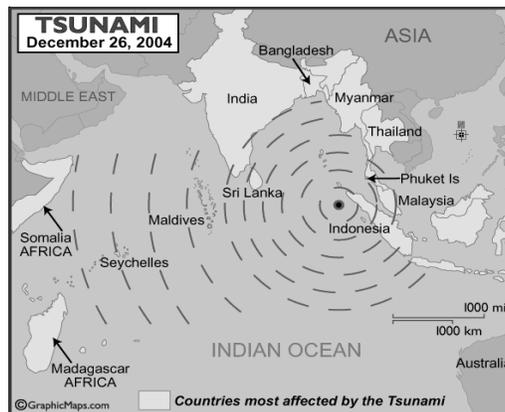


In the event, President David Leebron represented Rice to welcome the honorable representatives from the affected countries. They were Hon. Eddy Poerwana, Consul General, Indonesia, Mahendra Rodrigo, Sri Lankan Association, Sri Lanka, Hon. R. Koli, Deputy Consul General, India, Hon. Charles Foster, Honorary Consul General, Thailand. Professor Dale Sawyer, Rice Dept. of Earth Science - explained the tsunami in its geological perspective and Professor Patricia Reiff, Rice Dept. of Physics & Astronomy – explained how NASA satellite photos were able to capture the movement of the ocean waves and wind. At the end, Davis

Henderson, Red Cross Chapter CEO, and Professor William J. Cunningham, Member of Advisory Council Board of UNICEF were there to explain the on-going relief efforts.

Whoever wants to contribute to the relief efforts, may visit the web sites of the Red Cross, UNICEF and the Bush Clinton Fund, or come by our office the envelopes to mail a check to the Bush Clinton Fund.

Thanks to Leaders for Change, South Asian Society, Rice Student Volunteers Program and the Rice Philharmonics Society, there was a candle-light vigil to honor the victims of the Tsunami. Together we grieved with all those



who suffered lost ones and households in South Asia. They were far away before, but now they are very close to our hearts and minds.

As a Rice community, we are thankful that all our students returned safely and none of their families were among those who experienced the tsunami, to the best of our knowledge. World peace starts when one person really cares about the well being of another person. This may be a beginning of real hope for the whole human race.

*Article by Lily Lam,
Associate Director*



A Letter From the Director:

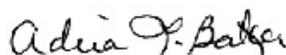
Dear International Students & Scholars,

We, at the OISS, feel so fortunate to have the opportunity to serve you as best as we can. I want to remind you of some of the services we provide, as I hope you'll stay connected to our listserve OISS-ANNOUNCE@rice.edu (see instructions on subscribing on page 4), so you can keep abreast of upcoming events. Some services we provide include signing your immigration documents for travel abroad, employment authorization for F and J visa holders, advice on non-immigrant visa status, personal/academic/financial issues, community volunteer-run programs that include free English classes, women's networking groups, and immigration workshops. This year I am pleased to announce that we are piloting an on-line tax service (see page 3 for details) for completing your tax forms.

In particular, I would like to mention that we want to be of assistance to you when difficult times come to your lives. Being far from home, challenges can feel multiplied, since you are not among the support of your family and friends at home.

More specifically, we have watched in sadness, along with the rest of the world, the natural disaster in Asia. I wish to express our deepest thoughts and heart-felt concern for Rice members, who have been impacted directly, or indirectly. I'm so proud of Vinod Kumar who led the program at Rice (see page 1). Please let us know if there is anything we can do to assist you.

Thank you for the privilege of working with the greatest population. . .Rice international students and scholars!



Adria L. Baker, Director
Office of International Students & Scholars



RICE WORLD

Editor
Lily Lam

Layout, Graphics and Design
Maya Grosul



UNDERGRADUATE CORNER

Do you need a Texas ID or a Social Security Card?

Do you want to know how to obtain a Texas Driver's License?

Do you know that there are approximately 100 international undergraduates at Rice?

Are you curious to know the other student(s) from your country?

Become involved in the new International Undergraduate Society. A few students are getting together to form this new society. Please contact Mu-Yuan Chen (David) at mychen2@rice.edu for information.

Join other international undergraduates for lunch at the colleges. Mark your calendar:

Friday, January 21, at noon, in the Martel College Commons

Friday, February 4, at noon, in the Will Rice College Commons

Friday, February 25, at noon, in the Wiess College Commons

Friday, March 4, at noon, in the Sid Richardson College Commons

Friday, March 11, at noon, in the Jones College Commons

Friday, March 25, at noon, in the Hanszen College Commons

Friday, April 1, at noon, in the Baker College Commons

Friday, April 15, at noon, in the Brown College Commons

Friday, April 29, at noon, in the Lovett College Commons

Become a **Peer International Undergraduate Advisor** today and be a resource to new undergraduate students arriving in the fall. Please contact the OISS or email diep@rice.edu.

Article by Somarine Diep, International Student Advisor

New Social Security Rules for F-1 Students

As of October 13, the SSA implemented a new rule requiring that F-1 students provide evidence of having secured actual employment before they are eligible to apply for a Social Security number (SSN). Prior to this new rule, F-1 students were eligible for SSNs based solely on their eligibility to work. F-1 students applying for SSNs must now present an OISS letter stating that the student is authorized to work on-campus, the nature of the employment that has been obtained, and the identity of the campus employer. The F-1 student must also provide a separate statement from the on-campus employer to prove that employment has been secured.

Students who are solely on fellowships or scholarships are no longer eligible to apply for a SSN, as fellowships and scholarships do not count as employment. They are, however, eligible to apply for the ITIN (Tax Identification Number) for tax filing purposes.

Even though these new regulations may complicate matters, please note that you may still open a bank account without having a SSN or ITIN. You are invited to stop by OISS for more information regarding bank account procedures, and further instructions on applying for a SSN or ITIN.

*Article by Sandra Bloem,
SEVIS Department Administrator*

DID YOU SUBMIT A RECIPE FOR “A TASTE OF THE WORLD” INTERNATIONAL RECIPE BOOK?

In case you have not heard, we are creating an international cookbook for sale, and the proceeds will go toward funds for international student emergency needs and international outreach programming.

To offer your recipes, go to <http://rgs.rice.edu/oiss/recipe.html> or go to the main OISS web page and click on “Recipes Online” in the yellow box under “New” information. You may also use the form below, fill in the information and forward it to our office-MS-365.

Be a part of this great project. Submit one or more recipes today and ask your friends to help too. Have your country represented in the cookbook and help us raise money for you!

If you have any questions, please contact diep@rice.edu, vandanapriyank@yahoo.com, or amrutag4u@yahoo.com.

You may also complete the form below to submit your favorite recipe to the Office of International Students & Scholars.

1. Name of the Dish:
2. Country/Region of recipe:
3. Dish Category:
4. Brief story or background/history of dish:
5. Serving size (number):
6. Ingredients:
7. How to prepare:
8. Tips:
9. Your Name:
10. Rice Affiliation:
11. Your email address:
12. Source of the recipe (cookbook name, family recipe, personal, etc.)



Taxes Made Easier This Year (Let's Hope!)

The OISS is pleased to announce Rice's pilot program of an on-line tax service. We have purchased a tax software, CINTAX (arcticintl.com), that helps complete tax forms for Rice Internationals. As you might know, all internationals must file a 2004 tax form, whether you have received income in the USA or not.

Stay tuned to the OISS-ANNOUNCE listserv (see page 4 for instructions on subscribing) to learn how you can get your password to login and use this service free to you. In the past, Rice has depended upon tax workshops for instruction on tax filing. However, oftentimes, the schedule did not work for many, or their individual issues could not be addressed. We hope this new program will make the tax responsibility easier for you. Please feel free to give us input, as we implement this new pilot program.

Please note that your tax papers will be mailed to you from the Payroll office. If you do



not receive your documents, believe that the information is incorrect, or if you need clarification on the tax forms, please contact the Payroll Office (2nd floor, Allen Center).

The OISS website has “Tax Resources” so we invite you refer to it. One link, in particular, that has excellent interactive information is the University of Texas' international tax website: <http://www.utexas.edu/international/taxes/>.

Additional tips on taxes for internationals:

- Student on fellowships should be taxed at the most 14% of their income. This does not include any additional tax benefits. If you have reason to believe that you are being taxed more, feel free to ask the Payroll Office.

- Foreign nationals who have tax treaties should pay close attention to the terms of their treaties (<http://www.irs.gov/publications/p901/ar01.html>). If you have questions concerning benefits you think might apply to you, be sure to inquire at the Payroll Office.

Remember: taxes must be filed by April 15, 2005.

SIGNATURE FOR TRAVELLING AND APPLICATION OF OPT

Please bring your I-20 or DS-2019 form to OISS for signature before you travel out of the U.S. A. during summer. Failure to show current signature on your I-20 or DS-2019 form will result in delay or denial of entrance at the port of entry after arrival to the U.S. We appreciate if you will give us a few days in returning the I-20 and DS-2019 form to you, as April and May are busy months for our office. If you are a F-1 student graduating this May, please start your OPT (Practical Training) application process by mid-February. It may take up to 120 days for you to receive the work authorization from the day you submit your application to DHS. No application of OPT will be accepted once you have completed your degree program, so plan ahead!

This bi-annual publication is designed specifically for the needs of Rice international students and scholars. Please take time to read it.

COMMENCEMENT

Please email Marta Kapusta, martak@rice.edu, if you need an invitation letter for your parents to apply for a visa to come participate in your great milestone of life. Be sure to plan in advance, as many countries require several weeks for visa applications to be approved.

CONGRATULATIONS

to **DR. ADRIA BAKER**, who received the *Elizabeth Gillis Outstanding Service Award* on 02/02/05. This is the highest service award for Rice employee.

Fall Orientation volunteers needed. If you are available to assist the new coming student during the Fall orientation week, please contact Lily Lam at llam@rice.edu, X6095.

Subscribe to OISS Listserves

oiss-announce

You'll find out about free tickets, social activities, important immigration updates and requirements, and other special issues of interest to internationals at Rice.

To subscribe, please visit: <https://mailman.rice.edu/mailman/listinfo/oiss-announce>

oiss-market

You'll be able to buy and sell, find transportation for trips, and communicate with other internationals at Rice. Please, save discussions of special topics on issues to OISS-forum.

To subscribe, please visit: <https://mailman.rice.edu/mailman/listinfo/oiss-market>

oiss-forum

A forum for discussion of topics ranging from good restaurants to good dentists. Here is also the place to engage your peers in a friendly discussion of current issues and world events.

To subscribe, please visit: <https://mailman.rice.edu/mailman/listinfo/oiss-forum>

To unsubscribe from any of the above lists, you may visit the same website and follow the instructions listed at the bottom of the page.

Calendar of Spring OISS Events

The **Advanced Immigration Seminar** will be on: **Tuesday, March 1, 4:00-5:30 PM**. Room 301 Sewall Hall.
Speaker: Nichole Ezer, of the Law Firm of Tindall & Foster.

Brown Bag Series:

"Legal Rights for Tenants" By Mr. Steven D. Pooch, Attorney at Law
Friday, February 25, 2005
12:00-1:00 PM. OISS Lobby

Assertiveness Training by Dr. Lindley Doran, Asst Dean, Student Affairs & Director; Adjunct Associate Professor
Friday, March 25, 2005
12:00-1:00 PM. OISS Lobby

Culture Fair

Friday, February 18, 2005
12:00 to 4:00 PM at RMC

SIR Meetings

Starting from February, every first Wednesday of the month, International

Ladies (including spouses of scholars or students) get together to have lunch and fun time. 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. OISS Lobby.

Graduate Reception

Thursday, May 12, 2005,
3:00-4:30 PM. location to be announced.

Please, stay tuned for our OISS announcements for updates about these events.