

Letter from the President:

Looking Forward to a Wonderful Future Together

In December 2011 the Albuquerque International Association has turned five years old. It seems like we started only yesterday, but we have accomplished so much! During the past five years AIA organized 146 events attended by more than 15,000 people, and acquired 350 individual and institutional members. We have made a strong contribution to the quality of life in Albuquerque and especially to the international education of people aged from 15 to 90! Not bad for a startup non-profit organization in Albuquerque!

This could not have been achieved without the dedicated help of the Founding Members, the Board and many volunteers. It is a big joint success! Thank you all for your invaluable help. We are looking forward to a wonderful future together!

Speaking about the future, AIA is now planning for next five years. In 2012 we will offer two International Lecture Series (ILS). The first one is under the umbrella title “Bubble, Bubble, Boil & Trouble: Critical Countries & Critical Issues We Do Not Understand”. I created this format to provide more diversity to the AIA ILS. Closely following the audience reaction to AIA offerings, I noticed that even with such important subjects as Terrorism, few people attended all five lectures. “Bubble, Bubble” will give us the opportunity to introduce more topics and different countries in a single series, and provide you with more exciting intellectual and cultural fare. We will run a “Bubble, Bubble” series every winter-spring season. This year it will focus on Turkey, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Geophysical Catastrophes. “Bubble, Bubble” planning for 2013 is underway, and if you have any specific topics, countries or speakers in mind, please contact us at your earliest convenience (info@abqinternational.org).

Our fall 2012 ILS will focus on “Immigration around the World”. Immigration is not only the past, but also the future of developed countries like the United States. Whether we like it or not, immigration will continue. What we need to know is how to manage it so that it works to the benefit, not the detriment of our country. We will look at different models of immigration around the world and try to learn from them.

As usual, there will be many other events – individual lectures, dinners, book discussions and international cuisine gatherings. And this year we are adding a new program, a Movie Club, where we will get together to eat, drink, watch and discuss the best international films.

During the next five years, I would like to see two things happen. First, I want us to reach and exceed the goal of five hundred members. We need to do this in order to become self-sustaining and to become a stable landmark on the Albuquerque educational, social and intellectual landscape. The battle-cry of AIA’s 2012 membership drive will be: “It Takes a Village.” I want you to think who of your friends, relatives, colleagues, partners and significant

others would enjoy what AIA is doing and then write a letter inviting them to join, enclosing a calendar of events. One of AIA's Board members, George Dallal, did this last year, and brought 20 new members into the organization!

Second, I would like AIA to become more democratic organization in the future. (I hope you enjoy this phrase coming from a person of Russian background). Presidents, executives and board members should be elected and come and go within a set period of time. It would be good to start this process this year.

Cordially,

Marina Oborotova

President

Center for International Studies/

Albuquerque International Association