

Friends of Davis International Center of Princeton University

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Creating Understanding through Conversation and Friendship

President's Corner



The 2009-2010 academic year is off to a flying start for **Friends of Davis International Center** as we help international students acclimatize to a new country.

Thus far, sixty new graduate students have been matched up with their own tutor in the

Individual English Conversation Program, and eighty-three spouses and students are participating in the **Group English Conversation Program**. Not to be outdone, the **Host Program** has assigned forty-eight new students to host families.

Walking Tours, an outgrowth of the Group Program, have already taken students on a tour of the campus, had a visit from the Princeton Borough Police Department, and have plans to visit the Princeton Public Library and a local restaurant. The **Book Club** will soon be back in action. In other words, the Friends continue to grow and be strong in support of our international student body. Thank you all!

Alison Hankinson, President

New Tutors and Hosts Sought

Are you interested in making friends with international graduate students at Princeton University while helping them become more comfortable speaking English?

If so, consider becoming a volunteer English tutor or host for **Friends of Davis International Center**. Volunteers can tutor one-on-one in the **Individual English Conversation Program**, where we meet weekly and set our own schedule. If you prefer a small group—generally the spouses of the students or scholars, then join the **Group English Conversation Program** which meets on campus Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:30 to 11:15. Join us for one or both mornings. Finally, if you would enjoy playing host to students and their families, consider the **Host Program**. *If you are interested in any of these programs, please call (609) 258-1170 or e-mail hhand@princeton.edu.*

Rebecca Matlock Becomes Honorary Trustee of Friends

Rebecca Matlock, author, photographer, and wife of Jack Matlock, the last United States Ambassador to the Soviet Union, was recently named by **Friends of**



Davis International Center as an Honorary Trustee.

Rebecca's most recent accomplishment is the publication in 2008 of *Challenges: A Memoir of My Life in Opera*, which she co-authored with **Sarah Caldwell**, founder and director of the Opera Company of Boston.

An 'amateur' photographer, Rebecca has had over fifty exhibits of her work, including shows in Moscow, Tbilisi, Georgia, Leningrad, Vladivostok, Washington, and New York. Fluent in Russian, Rebecca was often featured on Soviet radio and TV, and, as the wife of the American Ambassador, was able to take photographs of some of the most prominent figures in the Soviet Union, including President Mikhail Gorbachev.

From 1987 to 1991, the Matlocks lived in Spaso House, the American Ambassador's official residence. During that period, Rebecca wrote a book about Spaso House that helped the Soviets learn more about the Americans who lived there from 1961 to 1991.

As a photographer and diplomat, Rebecca traveled to all but one of the Republics in the Soviet Union, taking photos of people from all walks of life. One of her proudest moments was helping to distribute antibiotics for Soviet children that were donated by American pharmaceutical companies. She and several friends hand-delivered the drugs to hospitals throughout the nation, always making sure to alert the local news media for coverage of these positive American efforts!

The Matlocks now live in Princeton, where Ambassador Matlock was the first George F. Kennan Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study. They are the proud parents of five children and two grandchildren.

Swiss Wins 2009 Friends' Award

Yves Plancherel, a Princeton University graduate student from Switzerland, has won the tenth annual *Excellence in Teaching Award* presented by **Friends of Davis International Center**. The award is given to the outstanding international teaching assistant for excellence in teaching undergraduates and carries a \$1000 stipend.

Yves, a Ph.D. candidate in the Geosciences Department, was a teaching assistant for **Dr. Gregory E.**



van der Vink, a visiting faculty member in the Geosciences Department and the Princeton University 250th Anniversary Visiting Professor for Distinguished Teaching. In his letter nominating Yves, Professor van der Vink said, "In over fifteen years of teaching at Princeton, Yves is without a doubt the most deserving candidate I have encountered."

Yves is currently doing research under a grant from the National Science Foundation on the relationships between ocean circulation and the distribution of nutrients in the global ocean. He plans to contribute to the planning and implementation of infrastructures to deal with the fundamental societal issues of energy and water.

A former rescue soldier in the Swiss Army, Yves, 31, decided early on that he wanted to study marine biology. From his small Swiss village in the Alps where they make Gruyere cheese, Yves went on to do deep-sea scientific research in Hawaii, which then led to a Master's degree at the University of Hawaii in Manoa. He came to Princeton University in 2005 for his graduate studies on global scale marine biogeochemistry and the carbon cycle. These past two years, he has been the teaching assistant for the undergraduate course, "Investigating Natural Disasters."

In addition to his own research and teaching, Yves is the president of the Council of International Graduate Students and co-founder of the Sayre Hall Iron Chef competition. If all this is not enough, this talented young man is an experienced scuba diver, has successfully landed a plane twenty-seven times, and speaks four languages.

NEWSLETTERS TO BE E-MAILED!
To save on print and mail costs, the Friends' semi-annual newsletter will now be e-mailed. Besides saving money, it's in lovely color!

Two Hosts in the Friends' Host Program are Both Foreign Born

Sonali Pathirana, from Sri Lanka, and her husband **Frank Hoffmann**, from Germany, are hosts in the **Friends' Host Program** and have been since moving to Princeton six years ago from Cambridge, England, where the couple met and married. Both of them were doing graduate work at Cambridge: Sonali, studying for a masters in Development Economics, and Frank, a Ph.D. in Computer Sciences.

Sonali grew up in Sri Lanka, in an extended family that has "an enormous" network all over the globe. She has always had a friend or family connection to help her through her own period of living abroad. "I joined the Host Program to do for others what I've had the fortune to have had done for me, and through it, to make friends from around the world."



Sonali and Frank have hosted numerous students over the years and stay in touch with all of them. Their first two students, **Sarah**, a young woman from South Korea and **Jing**, a woman from China, both recently married. "We suddenly feel very elderly," says Sonali. Their other students include **Jia** from China, who recently transferred to Stanford to follow his professor, and **Zhiren**, also from China, who returned to Princeton after being with his professor in Jerusalem

Their current students are **Chun-yi** from Taiwan and **Jongbok**, a visiting scholar from South Korea, while their newest host student is Bosnian-born **Masa**.

As a rule, Sonali invites either another host family and their students or friends of hers to her potluck dinners because it forces the students to step outside their comfort zone and practice their English. "This way, they develop their language skills and confidence."

Sonali has introduced three other families to the **Host Program**. Because she feels so strongly about the benefits of the program, she also encourages current hosts to talk about the program to their friends to persuade them to try hosting for a year.

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princeton.edu/icfriends