Thursday, February 3, 2011



DeRiga

The Newsletter of the U.S. Embassy to Latvia

February is American Heart Month

Heart Disease No. 1 Cause of Death Among Americans

About every 25 seconds, an American will experience a coronary crisis and about one every minute will die from one.

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. and is a major cause of disability. The most common heart disease in the U.S. is coronary heart disease, which often appears as a heart attack; about 470,00 people will have a recurrent heart attack.

The chance of developing coronary heart disease can be reduced by taking steps to prevent and control factors that put people at greater risk. Additionally, knowing the signs and symptoms of heart attacks are crucial to the most positive outcomes after having a heart attack. People who have survived a heart attack can also work to reduce their risk of another heart attack or stroke in the future.

Diseases and Conditions that Put Your Heart at Risk

Other conditions that affect your heart or increase your risk of death or disability include arrhythmia, heart failure, and peripheral artery disease (also known as PAD). High cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, diabetes, tobacco use, and secondhand smoke are also risk factors associated with heart disease.

Know Your Signs and Symptoms

Some heart attacks are sudden and intense; however, most start slowly, with mild pain or discomfort. Often people affected aren't sure what's wrong and wait too long before getting help. Here are some signs that can mean a heart attack is happening:

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes, or that goes away and comes back. It can feel like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath.** May occur with or without chest discomfort.
- **Other signs.** These may include breaking out into a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness.

The American Heart Association, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, the American Red Cross and the National Council on Aging have launched a new "Act in Time" campaign to increase people's awareness of heart attack and the importance of calling 9-1-1 (or whatever your emergency number is in your part of the world) immediately at the onset of heart attack symptoms.

Healthy Lifestyle: Diet and Nutrition

- A healthy diet and lifestyle are the best weapons you have to fight heart disease. Many people make it harder

("Heart Disease" continued on page 9)

"There must be something to acupuncture - after all, you never see any sick porcupines."

~ Bob Goddard

Weekend Weather

Friday: *Sun & clouds, afternoon wet snow*
High 37 F / 3 C
Low 33 F / 1 C

Saturday: *Snow & sleet*
High 40 F / 4 C
Low 34 F / 1 C

Sunday: *Partly sunny & breezy*
High 40 F / 5 C
Low 31 F / 1 C

From AccuWeather.com

Take a Look at What's Inside:

ICASS Survey
Page 2
Natural History Museum
Page 3
Valentine's Day Special
Page 4
Embassy Extras
Page 5

We want to fix ICASS services at post!
We need you to tell us what works and what's broken.



Provide your confidential feedback on post's ICASS services via the ICASS customer satisfaction survey.

The Survey is open to ALL LE staff, US direct hires, and family members older than 16.
Please take the survey today at www.apqc.org/ICASS_survey.

Survey deadline is February 10!

We Need Your Help!



The CLO is organizing the 2011 events calendar. If you have suggestions for excursions, restaurants or other activities that you would like to see happen, please submit your ideas to Dawn Nice: nicedm@state.gov and Liene Jelinska: jelinskal@state.gov. We are interested in all suggestions: kid-friendly, family-friendly, adults only, etc. REMEMBER--the CLO is here for you. We can't help you if you don't help us.



Attention All Cookie Lovers: It's Girl Scout Cookie Time!

Our own Karen Speidel has a Girl Scout cookie connection and has offered to take up a cookie collection. The cookies are $4 USD per box plus shipping. When we know how many boxes as a collective we will be ordering, then we will know the cost of the shipping.

Some of the more popular cookie varieties are: Samoas (vanilla cookies covered with caramel and coconut and striped with chocolate coating), Trefoils (shortbread), Thin Mints (thin, peppermint-flavored chocolate wafers covered in more chocolate), Tagalongs (cookies topped with peanut butter and covered with chocolate coating), and Do-Si-Dos (oatmeal cookies with peanut butter filling).

If you are interested, contact Karen and she will see what other cookie varieties are available, as they tend to vary between U.S. regions. Karen can be reached at speidelks@state.gov or 2633-3245.

Out & About
Mark Your Calendars!

Museum Lets Hands Touch History and Brings the Past to the Present



One of Riga's oldest museums was recently renovated and modernized and now includes interactive exhibits, touch screens and many learning activities for kids. The second floor is dedicated to paleontology and geology and includes mockups of ancient ecosystems and fossils under glass, while the third floor specializes in zoology with an unparalleled taxidermy collection that includes everything from eagles to lions, and even a giraffe. The fourth and fifth floors present exhibits relating to human evolution, marine biology, botany and entomology. An impressive hanging skeleton of a killer whale offsets some more gruesome exhibits of human skulls and fetuses. The current special exhibit features beavers and otters and their habitats. Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Closed Monday and Tuesday. Admission 1.20, free for children not of school age. **NOTE--**Thursdays at the museum are free for all from 4 to 6 p.m. Take advantage of this offer, because it is a fun experience and you can't see it all in one visit! (Especially with kids.) **Barona 4, 6735-6024, *http://www.dabasmuzejs.gov.lv*.**

Riga Circus - Fun & Festive for the Whole Family
International "Madrid-Berlin-Riga-Moscow" Program Featured through March 13

Three "tempermental" Spanish guest artists have come all the way from sunny Madrid to Riga Circus to ham it up - unusual juggler Erik and two rope-balancers: Jose Luis and Jose Luis Jr., who will demonstrate amazing tricks on a tension rope.

From Berlin comes something of absolute awe for the Riga Circus audience. After a six-year break, elephants have once again returned to the ring! Three giant African elephants in the care of famous elephant trainer Sonny Frankello, a fourth-generation elephant trainer. With his friendly and caring way of treating his animals, Sonny is one of the best elephant trainers in the circus world. He and his elephants have travelled all around Europe and performed at the International Circus Festival in Monte Carlo, in Rome, Brussels and Paris, where they were awarded first prize for best animal training. Let's see what Sonny and his elephants have in store for Riga Circus viewers!

There is more form Germany. Also coming to Riga Circus is Eugeniy Shmarlovskiy, who has managed to become a Monte Carlo International Circus Festival, Festival de Cirque de Paris, Milan International Festival, Rome Golden Circo Festival and Barcelona Clown Festival prizewinner for his work with unusual circus animals - in this case, bright, attractive, singing parrots.

Riga is represented in the program by delightful and captivating Helena Vassilieva, a talented, versatile air-gymnast with a vast experience of performing in Europe. She has just returned from a tour in Germany. Her air numbers combine feminine fragility, body strength and flexibility, as well as bright, sophisticated clothing.

Since last autumn, when Riga Circus started its 122nd season, came a young, talented and versatile circus artist named Alexei Šmagins from St. Petersburg. In every circus program since he has performed with different circus numbers. During this half of the year he has teamed up to create a new, unique international circus duo - Alexei Šmagins and new air gymnast Svetlana Smirnova. In the circus program "Madrid-Berlin-Riga-Moscow," for the first time they will demonstrate, in the air, a number which uses a ring and silk ribbon at the same time.

Moscow is represented by artists from Moscow Nikulin Circus - one of the best clown duos, Alexei Emelins and Irina Prostecova, also known as Emelin & Co. Irina is aerialist, illusionist and dog trainer, while Alex is a balancer on the rope ladder, but together they dance step on skis. Together they are versatile clowns with a unique style and sense of humor.

The CLO office will organize a trip to Riga Circus for a matinee February 19 at 3 p.m. Please contact jelinskal@state.gov or nicedm@state.gov for ticket information and prices.



Out & About

Mark Your Calendars!

Valentine's Day Special

from CLO and the Marines

The CLO Office will be selling flowers and little treats that can be delivered to the person(s) of your choice in the Embassy.

FLOWERS

Roses:

Long stem: Ls 2.25 each
Med Stem: Ls 1.25 each
Short Stem: Ls 1.00 each

Bouquets:

Small: Ls 4.5
Med: Ls 7.5
Large: Ls 11.50
X-Large: Ls 16.00

Tulips:
Ls 0.75 each



TREATS:

Truffles:
Small box (2 truffles): Ls 1.30
Medium box (9 truffles): Ls 4.35
Large box (16 truffles): Ls 7.50

Handmade Cookies (Chocolate Chip, Oatmeal or Triple Chocolate Chip):
A nicely wrapped set of 4: Ls 1,70
Dozen Cookies in a nice box: Ls 5

Small New York **cheese cake** for one or two persons with Valentine Day's decoration (diameter 4.5 inches) wrapped in a nice box: Ls 5

Giving a flower to someone can have many meanings, It can mean thank you, friendship, appreciation, happiness, or love. We will have cards for you to fill out to attach to the flowers.

Please contact CLO by e-mail if you are interested in this offer (JelinskaL@state.gov or NiceDM@state.gov) and bring the money to the CLO office no later than noon, February 10th. We will deliver the flowers only inside the Embassy. The delivery will be made on Monday, February 14th by one of our Marines.

Happy Valentine's Day

Sometimes the heart sees what is invisible to the eye.

Winter Wonders Await in Jelgava Feb. 11 to 13



For the 13 time the Jelgava Ice Sculpture Festival takes place, this year from Feb. 11 to Feb. 13. This world-famous festival is the only one of its kind in the Baltics.

Every year more than 40,000 people visit and this year 26 well known artists from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Russia, Netherlands, France, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Hungary, Finland, Ireland and Great Britain will gather to create their icy art works, using about 40 tons of crystal clear ice, with the theme: "My religion – Freedom!"

Along with the ice sculpture exhibition there will be the longest snow sculptures in the Baltics, several ice bars, ice and snow activities and shows for children, concerts, etc. If the weather permits, the ice sculptures will be available for viewing in Uzvaras (Victory Park) in Jelgava until Feb. 20. Entrance tickets: Ls 2 for adults, Ls 1 for students, free for children younger than 7. Tickets are available at the entrance of the park.

Open: Feb. 11: 4 p.m. to midnight, Feb. 12: 10 a.m. to midnight and Feb. 13: 10 a.m. to midnight.

The CLO is organizing a trip the Ice Sculpture Festival in Jelgava Saturday, Feb. 12. We will meet at the embassy at 1:45 p.m. and leave at 2 p.m. After seeing the sculptures, we will have dinner in Jelgava. Please let us know if you are coming by Wednesday, Feb. 8. We will be carpooling, so also let us know if you need or can offer a ride.

Out & About
Mark Your Calendars!

Life is Too Short to Drink Bad Wine
Exclusive Wine Tasting March 2
Limited Space Available - Sign Up Now!



The International Women's Club of Riga is holding a wine tasting March 2 at 7:30 p.m. At the new Garage Wine Bar and Restaurant in Bergs Bazaar.

The events theme is "New World Wines from Latin America" and features four different wines. A talented sommelier will bring the wines to life, and serve an assortment of tapas prepared by the chef to complement the wines.

Price is 15 LVL for members (30 LVL per couple) or 17 LVL for non members.

Space is limited and you need to pay in advance to meet the commitment to the restaurant.

For more information contact Gale Rogers atgale.rogers@denkifuro.com or 2202-2911.

Embassy Extras
Join a Club to Socialize and Sharpen a Skill
Or Maybe Learn a New One!

The CLO has had some suggestions for establishing some new embassy social groups.

1. Photo Club - A group that gets together to discuss photography skills and technology, places in Riga to take pictures, and share ideas and information regarding cameras. Maybe some "field trips" would even be organized to try out some ideas.

2. Spanish Club - A group that gets together to practice Spanish-speaking skills.

If you are interested in either of these activities, send your name and preference of meeting times/days to CLO Office at nicedm@state.gov and jelinskal@state.gov.

Get Involved in Your Embassy Community!

Embassy Parking Rules and Regs - Know Your Zones

This is a reminder that embassy vehicles may only be parked on Remtes iela in the five spaces directly beside the chancery between the guard booth and the rear gate.

Personal vehicles may still be parked in front of the Gymnasium on Raiņa bulv. by obtaining a parking pass from the guard booth.

For the moment, we are also still being permitted to park red-plate vehicles in front of the former Ministry of Interior on Raina., but not on top of the snow banks so that they jut out into the center traffic lane.

For Riga paid parking information visit *http://www.europark.lv/en/sakumlapa*. For Riga free parking information visit *http://www.freeparkingriga.lv/*.



Don't stay at home and step into the summer!

Diplomatic Beach Volleyball Tournament 2011

In The Biggest Sand Box in Riga

"Brazīlija"



When: 5 March

Time: 12:00 – 15:00

Where: Jūrkalnes street 100, Riga (Close to Riga Airport)

Participation fee: 10 Ls per person

Apply by e-mail or phone: diplomaticclubriga@gmail.com

tel. +371 26162233





How About A Tasty New Dining Experience?

Join Us For Dinner Club Feb. 26 at Slavu



This "Slavic" restaurant makes it's home in Old Town - the heart and pride of our city, whose antiquity and beauty has always attracted many tourists. (There is also a restaurant in Jurmala.)

Slāvu has 10 years of experience and success in the restaurant business, which specializes in classic Russian cuisine, and has experienced chefs and highly professional waiters.

The restaurant's original interior details include Russian folklore artifacts and songs from the Latvian countryside floating through the air, and invariably attracts regular local customers and tourists alike.

Appetizers range from unpressed caviar for 40 Ls to Russian pickles for 2.90 Ls. Soups, salads, and hot entrees on the menu include the restaurant's famous Czar fish soup with salmon, sturgeon, pike perch, shrimp and mushrooms; "Soviet Union" salad with boiled beef, potatoes, pickles, carrots, green peas and eggs; and Chicken a la Tabaka that is fried and served with garlic-lemon sauce.

The restaurant also caters to large groups and features specials like steamed sturgeon (serving 8 to 10 people) for 70 Ls and whole, boneless piglet stuffed with ham, cheese, fruit and nuts and served hot or cold (serving 15) for 100 Ls.

Slāvu is located at Valnu 19. They are open 11 a.m. to midnight. 6728-3974; reservations are not required but recommended. Visit them on the Web at *http://www.slavu.lv/riga*.

Metro Marketplace

COULD YOU HELP ME PLEASE?

If you have a question that someone in the expat community may be able to answer, please send it to us and we will put it in the newsletter. Be sure to list your contact information so that any responses can be sent directly to you.

FOR SALE




2008 SAAB 9-3 Sportcombi Vector 2.0t Biopower. Like new, 174 hp (205 hp Turbo), 18,000 km, bioethenol fuel or petrol, blue metallic paint, leather & textile sport seats, manual 6-gear transmission, serviced regularly at SAAB Vikings Motors Riga. Also comes with 1 set Continental 17" alloy wheels and 1 set Michelin 16" winter tires. Other assorted extras. Need to sell quickly. $15,950 Ls (price can be discussed). Joakim Lofvendahl, 2915-3070 or joakim.lofvendahl@foreign.ministry.se.

FOR THE MUSICALLY MINDED



Saxophone lessons for children. Mr. James Soper (son of the British ambassador) is offering lessons for all ages and experience levels. Has a BA in saxophone performance, lessons taught in English, 10 Ls per hour, 2825-2353, recommended by Gale Rogers.

Music lessons for children, including drums, piano and xylophone. Classes beginning as young as 6 months with rhythm, coordination and communication; builds self esteem. Teaching in Latvian and English, reasonable prices. Orff Music Studio, Kugu iela 11, 2nd floor, 2651-6010, studija@orff.lv, *http://www.orff.lv*, recommended by Kate Smith.

For those who will be leaving post, please don't forget to advertise your wares in the classifieds!
Remember - one man's junk is another man's treasure!



February 2011

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12 Ice Sculpture Trip to Jelgalva 
13	14 Valentine's Day! 	15	16	17	18	19 Riga Circus 3 p.m. 
20	21  President's Day Holiday Embassy Closed	22	23	24	25	26 Dinner Club Slāvu 7 p.m. 
27	28					

Weekly Update

FLO Weekly Update is a compilation of news and information from the Family Liaison Office of the Department of State for U.S. government employees, their family members, and Members of Household (MOH) who are serving, have served, or will be serving at U.S. Missions overseas. Visit FLO on the Internet at: *www.state.gov/m/dghr/flo*. For questions or more information, email: FLO@state.gov; or call FLO at **(800) 440- 0397 or (202) 647-1076.**

February 1, 2011

FSI's Transition Center Schedule of Courses (February-April, 2011)

Feb. 23	Tax Seminar (MQ117)
Feb. 26	Protocol and US Representation Abroad (MQ116)
Feb. 28-March 1	Security Overseas Seminar (MQ911)
March 7-8 and 21-22	Security Overseas Seminar (MQ911)
April 4-5 and 18-19	Security Overseas Seminar (MQ911)
March 4	High Stress Assignment Outbriefing (MQ950)
April 8	High Stress Assignment Outbriefing (MQ950)
March 4	Regulations, Allowances and Finances (MQ104)
April 8	Regulations, Allowances and Finances (MQ104)
March 5	Youth Security Overseas Seminar (MQ914)
March 5	Communicating Across Cultures (MQ802)
March 15	Explaining America (MQ115)
March 16	Legal Considerations in the Foreign Service (MQ854)
March 30	Maintaining Long Distance Relationships (MQ801)
April 2	Protocol and US Representation Abroad (MQ116)
April 21	Post Options for Employment and Training Overseas (MQ703)
April 27-28	English Teaching Seminar: An Employment Option (MQ107)

For further information on registration and tuition requirements, if applicable, e-mail the FSI Transition Center at FSITCTraining@state.gov.

J. Kirby Simon Trust Welcomes Grant Applications

The J. Kirby Simon Foreign Service Trust is accepting applications for grants in 2011 to support community service projects where American and locally engaged employees and family members are volunteering overseas. The grants support projects that are usually conducted in cooperation with local charitable or educational organizations. For additional information about the Trust and complete submission guidelines, visit www.kirbysimontrust.org. Proposals for projects to be funded during calendar year 2011 must be received by **March 1, 2011.**

AFSA Seeks Nominations for Performance Awards

AFSA is again sponsoring three awards to recognize diplomats and family members for exemplary performance of assigned or voluntary duties overseas. Please take time to nominate the FS personnel and family members who go above and beyond to support your overseas community. Winners receive a $2,500 monetary prize and a certificate and are honored at a ceremony in late June in the Benjamin Franklin Room at the State Department. **The deadline for nominations is February 28, 2011.** For nomination details and guidelines, visit www.afsa.org/awards or contact Perri Green at green@afsa.org.

Heart Disease

(Continued from page 1)

than it is. It is important to remember that it is the overall pattern of the choices you make that counts. As you make daily food choices, base your eating patterns on these recommendations:

- Choose lean meats and poultry without skin and prepare them without added saturated and trans fat.
- Select fat-free, 1% and low-fat dairy products.
- Cut back on foods containing partially hydrogenated vegetable oils to reduce trans fat in your diet.
- Cut back on foods high in cholesterol. Aim to eat less than 300 mg of cholesterol each day.
- Cut back on beverages and foods with added sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with little or no salt. Aim to eat less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day. All people with hypertension, all middle-aged and older adults, and all black people (because they are prone to hypertension) should consume no more than 1,500 mg of sodium per day.
- If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation. That means no more than one drink per day if you're a woman and two if you're a man.
- Keep an eye on your portion sizes.

For more information and other tips on keeping your heart healthy, visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Web site at http://www.cdc.gov/features/heartmonth.

Ronald McDonald Care Mobile Brings Smiles to Children



The Ronald McDonald House's Care Mobile continues rolling its way around Latvia to assist children in orphanages and rural regions of the country who need it's help.

One of the most memorable visits lately was to Irlava Orphanage, where it provided healthcare for 23 kids from families with a history of drug and alcohol abuse. Care Mobiles are state-of-the-art vehicles that deliver a variety of pediatric services, including primary care, well child visits and developmental screenings; immunizations; diagnostic, preventive and restorative dental care; oral hygiene education; vision, hearing and lead screening; school and sports physicals; nutrition counseling; pediatric specialties like oncology, cardiology and otolaryngology; ophthalmology; mental health assessment and social service referrals; health education; and care for special needs children.

Another visit was paid to the town of Jaunjelgava, together with an allergy specialist and neurologist. During this visit, 43 little patients were treated. The Care Mobile's next visit to Jaunjelgava is March 22. If you would like to join the Care Mobile's visit, or you have toys, good clothes, or shoes you would like to donate, please contact Vija Tirzmale at 2657-6799 or vija@rmhc-latvia.lv. It will make a difference for the kids who are living there. Why should Christmas come just once a year?

"What a great start of the year! I wish you all to have days like this when you are happy with your work and you feel that you are making a difference!" said Vija Tirzmale, Rondald McDonald House Charities director.

The *DeRiga* is published by the Community Liaison Office of the U.S. Embassy in Riga, Latvia
7 Raina Blvd., Riga, Latvia LV-1510

CLO: Dawn Nice, nicedm@state.gov
CLO Assistant: Liene Jelinska, jelinskal@state.gov
Newsletter Editor: Kate Smith, smithkc@state.gov

Phone: 6703-6251; Fax: 6782-0047

We look forward to any comments, ideas or suggestions!