very practical sense, and for us specialists in another way, is the construction of a new narrative of the nations residing there. But what narrative can lend a sense of cohesion to polities that have been wrenched unpredictably and unceremoniously from one shape into another? The attempt on the part of some countries to deny 50 years of history and restart the story as if nothing had happened since 1940 is as impossible as the pretense (shared by many in Russia) that the current changes are an aberration soon to be replaced by a resumption of the Brezhnevian era of sovetskoe blagodenstvo "era of Soviet prosperity.

Only a new imagining of the nation, a combination of selective remembering and forgetting, can create a story that bestows dignity on the members of a nation’s major social and cultural groups, validates their past commitments and sacrifices, and offers them a coherent picture of themselves as a people. This is as much a study in cultural creation as a project of the usual social science or even historical research. We need to know what a culture is, how it is formed and articulated, how narratives are constructed, and how they function in their cultural contexts. In other words, we need the skills of literature specialists to understand one of the most critical aspects of what is now occurring in the region.

Here at the institute, we are very interested in facilitating efforts by our faculty and students to mount research and teaching ventures that bring together historians, social scientists, and scholars from literature and the arts. Some of this has been done, of course not least by Michael Holquist himself when he served as chair of our Slavic Language and Literature department a few years ago. But we would hope to build a continuing effort on these lines, and we welcome proposals of this kind for workshops, courses, and research collaboration. — David Ransel

The Fort Wayne campus held several international events as part of the range of activities for Diversity Week March 18-23.

Activities included an international food bazaar and craft fair, a panel discussion of “Views of the Third World: India and Pakistan,” and a screening of Métisse by the French Club.

Diversity Week was conceived by the IPFW Diversity Council to acknowledge the unique contributions of all peoples around the world.

Appointed by Chancellor Michael A. Wartell in November 1994, the Diversity Council seeks to (1) demonstrate through curriculum, support systems, and policies that IPFW values diversity, (2) maintain a campus environment that welcomes people of diverse backgrounds, and (3) identify diversity as a vital source of intellectual, social, and personal growth essential to university education.

Nawrez Celebrated by Central Asian Students

Though Nawrez is celebrated mainly by Islamic peoples, the festival is not religious in nature.

Central Eurasian Studies professor Nazif Shahrani explained that spring was a time when the shepherding nomads of Central Asia came together to celebrate the end of winter and the birth of new animals.

According to professor William Fierman, the celebration of Nawrez was prohibited in Communist-dominated Central Asia from the 1930s to the 1970s and then again in the 1980s.

“Nawrez is not only a celebration of our culture but also a celebration of our independence,” said Azamat Abdimomun, vice president of the Kazakhstan Student Association, which was the primary sponsor of the festival.

Beth Spangle
Indiana Daily Student