



SILK ROAD ADVENTURES

TUCSON-ALMATY SISTER CITIES COMMITTEE

The mission of Tucson-Almaty Sister Cities Committee is to promote and develop people-to-people diplomacy between the citizens of Tucson, Arizona, and Almaty, Kazakhstan, through educational, cultural and economic relationships.

September 2008

Volume I, Issue I

TASCC SNAGS OPEN WORLD GRANT (page 4)

Chairman Chuck

WELCOME BACK STUDENTS!



It was great to be with you on Sunday. Thanks Kazakhstan Club for arranging the meeting room at the Student Union. Carol McGorray, Marana City Council member joined us and got a good look at what a sister city program is all about. GREAT seeing Akmaral and Huey, Dina Fernandez, Fred and Zura and Ed Marquardt. A big welcome to Aizhan Mateshova, a Bolashak transfer from Iowa State. Good to have Barbara C back from a busy and adventurous summer that spread from Arizona to Virginia, with stop offs in Colorado to play in her fav brass band.

SALLY SEZ.....

I must say that it was wonderful seeing So many of the students from Kazakhstan at the Welcoming Reception on Sunday. The evening was really fun....especially the "icebreaker" that Anton and Saumya presented, where everyone got a chance to meet each other. And, thanks to Saumya's laptop which enabled all of us to sign in and have a photo taken. Gary Sawyer was everywhere, taking pictures of the crowd and the food was really good., too. We have some great things coming up including the Tucson Meet Yourself International Fashion Show headed up by Zura Batsiyeva. Also, on September 11, TASCC members and students will go to KXCI Radio to present September Concert, a commemoration of the tragedy that was 9/11.

Sister Cities International Meetings

July 29-August 1, 2009 Belfast, Ireland
July 29-31, 2010 Albuquerque, New Mexico

- www.sister-cities.org/ for information on Belfast, Ireland in 2009

The Bulletin Board

Listen to KXCI FM Radio 91.3 on September 11th from 7-8pm. TASCC and students from Kazakhstan will be remembering and commemorating the events of September 11, 2001.

Interested in helping start another sister city program in Kazakhstan? Join Jerry Gary, 886-1260, in taking sister city programming to cities and towns adjacent to Tucson.

Watch for information on a combined TASCC public membership drive featuring a program by Dr. Irina Pushkina, Professor of International Tree Ring research and her associate, a visiting archeologist from Kazakhstan.

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TASCC MONTHLY MEETING

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

Tucson Medical Center
Alamo Building
Rincon Room
6:30-7:30pm

Join us for a short meeting and a program featuring Kazakhstan antiquities and jewelry.

FOOD AND DRINK PROVIDED

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Partnerships....A PLAN FOR SUCCESS

By Jerry Gary

Volunteer-run organizations sometimes, literally, run out of ideas on how to best perpetuate their mission. Focusing internally can have devastating effects, especially if the over-worked 'core' group of movers and shakers starts building a case of burn-out, and their vision becomes clouded. TASCC has found a way to keep themselves on-track through the extensive use of partnerships with businesses, other non-profit organizations and all levels of government. Most recently, a multifaceted partnership grew up around the committee's desire to bring the Almaty Isker Boys Choir to Tucson, in pursuit of its goal of creating people-to-people diplomacy through education, CULTURE, and economic development. The Isker project started in 2003, when Maira Tungatarova asked to meet with Jerry and Sally during their visit to Almaty with a teenaged Mariachi group. She met again with Mayor and Mrs. Walkup and Chairperson Barbara the following year....and the idea started taking shape when Beth Walkup urged Maira to bring the Isker to Tucson. Partners involved in that very successful project in January, 2008 were the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus,, the Flagstaff International Sister Cities Association, the South East Arizona Children's Choir, members of Tucson City Government, Tucson and Sierra Vista-area schools and churches.

In the Spotlight

U of A graduate, Army wife, owner/operator of a Tastee Freez and gas station with husband Bill, career music teacher, cofounder of the Southern Arizona Symphony Orchestra where she currently plays bass, bass player and vocalist with the Wildflowers, French horn player in the Arizona Symphonic Winds, Conductor/Artistic director of the Old Pueblo Brass Band, writer of books on poetry, mother of three, grandmother of two, great-grandmother of one, member of Delta Kappa Gamma Society, member of the International Horn Society, past Chair of TASCC...and all around world traveler. Any guesses on who this person is? Superwoman? Mother Teresa's little sister? Barbara Chinworth is the correct answer. Pulled into the vortex of sister city programming when she was recruited to handle distribution of 240 wheelchairs in Almaty in 2002, she has gone on to keep the dream of TASCC alive by serving as chairperson of the busy Education and Culture committee and serve as chair for TASCC. Notable achievement there was the establishment of an endowment fund to insure the continuation of People-to-People Diplomacy in our sister city of Almaty and heading the ISKER project this year. Her boundless energy has sustained us all.



Article by Jerry Gary

Teaching for Friendship, a continuing saga

Last month, we left our friends, Dan and Karen somewhere deep in Kazakhstan with these words: “Listening to Aslan’s favorite “Techno” music, off we went to Pervomayskie.”

After about an hour’s ride we entered the Settlement. Around us were unpaved roads, ruins of buildings from old Soviet times, carcasses of cars and apartment blocks and houses in various states of repair. WOW! What had we gotten ourselves into?

We were taken to meet the families we would stay with for the next two weeks. Natasha, one of the local English teachers, agreed to host Karen in her small apartment. I was taken to a “farmhouse” belonging to Igor and Marina Ivanov. I was given Micha’s, their 13 year old son’s room. He moved to the living room. Igor had about 200 words of English, I, about 50 words of Russian. Micha, a summer English Camp participant also could speak a bit of English. So between us, my dictionary, and acting stuff out we managed to communicate pretty well.

I was shown around the property, meeting Roxy, the German Shepherd, Masha, the cat, and a few cages full of unnamed rabbits. I saw their gardens of corn, tomatoes, onions, potatoes, etc. I was offered a “banya,” a bath in a wood-fired sauna. Igor insisted on having me lay down on a high bench, in the most extreme heat while he rigorously beat me with birch branches. That put me in an amazing altered state! Afterwards, Marina cooked a huge meal, of which I could identify perhaps a few of the dishes. Wow, again! How did I get here? The next morning we were picked up at 9AM and taken to the Community Center, where the classes were held. We were greeted by Anara, her mother, Gulbarshin Kassimanova, Director of the Development Program, Melissa Peros, the Peace Core representative, the two local English teachers, Natasha (host to Karen) and Victoria, and of course, the 26 students of the Summer English Camp.

Gulbarshin, with Melissa as interpreter, took us on a tour of the Center, explaining that it’s purpose was to provide training and assistance to promote the local economy and welfare. We saw the sewing training center, the kitchen used for culinary training (which provided lunches for students and staff), the meeting hall (used for kid’s discos on Saturday nights) and finally, the outdoor toilets (three holes for the boys, three for the girls).

We found children’s ability to understand and speak English varied wildly. There were a few high school girls who were speaking about a 6 to 7 on a scale of 10. Some younger kids had skills at about a 2 on that same scale. We decided that except for some group activities, we’d split the class into two groups with me taking the mostly older, more skilled, students and Karen, the

mostly older, more skilled, students and Karen, the younger ones. With each of us, on a floating basis, to assist with explanations in Russian and classroom activities were Anara, Melissa, the the English teachers, Victoria and Natasha.

We lead the classes three hours each day, 10 AM – 12 PM, then another hour after lunch, 12:30 PM – 1:30 PM. After that we had planning meetings, or used the slow, twitchy, cell-phone-to-satellite-based internet connection to keep in touch with home. At 4 PM we were driven back to our respective families.

As Karen and I do in China, we used a variety of games, activities and techniques that would encourage the students to feel at ease speaking English. For example, one “big event” for everyone was a construction game where students were given “money” to buy (in English, of course) materials; soda straws, tape and string to make a building.

Evenings and weekends we got the chance to participate in some of the cultural life of the Community. We were invited to attend a big traditional wedding for one of Anara’s cousins in Ust-Kaminogorsk. I think that there were about 300 people who attended. There were folk musicians, traditional Kazakh food (including horse) and many, particularly older people, in traditional costumes. As foreign guests, Karen and I were invited to come forward to offer a toast to the bride and groom, then were urged to do a dance. (I hope that part doesn’t make it to the internet!)

The first free weekend we went to a nearby lake to celebrate Anara’s 30th birthday. This entailed a long ride on what here would be considered a Jeep road. There were two cars with Anara’s brother and father racing each other. At one point, we had to take a ferry across a river. The ferry consisted of a platform barely big enough for two cars, towed by an old motor boat

At the lake, a tarp between the cars provided shade. We swam and hung out while family members prepared a traditional meal of shashlik, skewered meat cooked over a wood fire. They had a wood fired samovar with a chimney to make tea.

We ended the classes second Friday, with a ceremony and a great lunch provided by the students’ parents. Based upon the students’ evaluations, the program was well received. We had extensive discussions with Gulbarshin, Anara, and Melissa regarding how grant money might be found to continue in future years.

The weekend prior to our departure was spent sightseeing in Ust-Kaminogorsk, the nearby city of about 300,000. Our hosts were Gulbarshin and her son and her niece, a young woman who is a university student in Virginia.

Dan and Karen traveled on to Almaty, where they made many new friends and contacts for future outreach in our partnership with Teaching for Friendship.

The Long Hot Summer



DAMIR KOZHANBAYEV: I worked for French people as a guide/interpreter helping them with an adoption. I introduced them to Kazakh culture and the life style of the city and we visited different places in and around Karaganda. Besides that, I officially represented them in social committees where couples who were about to adopt after 'bonding period' were interviewed by reps of Department of Education and the orphanage they were adopting from. The French people, of course, spoke English. I have already a 5 year experience in this field. In the end of the summer I visited my friends and swam in a river and ate a lot of food so I would not regret in America that I did not taste and eat enough food in Kazakhstan.



YERBOLAT ZHUMAKHMETOV: I enjoyed my summer break. It felt like I needed it. I spent a great amount of time with my family, uncles & aunts, grandmothers, cousins, and friends. I also managed to travel a little. My family and I visited my younger brother at his college graduation in UK. Then we all left to Turkey to get some rest and sun tan. After that, I had a summer internship with Deloitte from the beginning of July until the end of August. At Deloitte, there are three groups within Audit department: Consumer Industrial Product (CIP), Financial Services Institutions (FSI), and Resources (Oil & Gas). At first, I was in CIP, but then transferred to FSI, and finally, ended up in Resources group. It was a great experience - it was a great networking opportunity. I enjoyed this summer break - my last "summer break," since I plan to graduate this year, Kudai kalasa. Moreover, I look forward to taking another step up in my life, and continue moving forward.



ASSELE OMAROVA: This summer I made a trip to two major cities of Russia. I visited St Petersburg and Moscow. St Petersburg is considered as a cultural capital of Russia. Indeed, there are many museums, art galleries and theatres. Each building in St. Petersburg has a historical value. On my first day in St. Petersburg I went to famous Hermitage Museum. I spent whole day looking at different works of art. Especially, I was interested in exposition of Italian artists. I was able to see paintings of Michelangelo

ASSELE OMAROVA, continued

and Rafael. I also visited Peterhof, which is part of the city where the palace of Peter I is located. It is famous for its fountains and gardens. I also spent five days in Moscow. The city is very busy and vibrant. I was able to visit the Kremlin. I visited Tretyakov Gallery, which is not as big as the Hermitage Museum. Thus, I was able to see everything in one day. I liked my trip and I hope to visit these cities again.

Jerry and Sally on the way to SCI meeting in Kansas City, Mo.



Jerry and Sally at the Shidoni bronze foundry in Santa Fe, New Mexico

The trip to Kansas City in July was really a road-trip/vacation for the Gary's. The end goal, however, was to attend the Sister Cities International annual meeting. After two nights in Santa Fe, a night in Taos, a night in Dodge City and a night in Wichita, they arrived in Kansas City and registered for the conference. There is a sense of energy in the air at meetings like this. Hearing Mary Jean Eisenhower speak about Friendship Cities programming, Kansas Senator Sam Brownback speak about whatever ultraconservative pols speak about, visiting the WWI War Memorial and taking in the beauty of the fountains of Kansas City all segue into a meaningful time of learning. The workshops on "Open World Programming" and "Getting Your Message Across" both had great meaning for our TASC membership. Other topics presented were Sister Schools Connecting Classrooms, The Craft of Storytelling using web sites and blogs and Ideas and Solutions for Youth Programs. Next year's SCI meeting is in Belfast, Ireland. GET ON BOARD!

The September Concert

Join Chairman Chuck and two Bolashak students as they appear live on Global Rhythm Radio, 91.3FM, on Thursday, September 11, 2008 at 7pm. DJ Kevin Matthews will be alternately interviewing his guests and playing Kazakh music, both folk and modern. Some of the musical selections were recorded right here in Tucson in 2004 when the **Kazakhstan National Folk Ensemble** performed at Crowder



Hall at the University of Arizona.

The September Concert is a series of free musical performances held in cities around the world on September 11th every year. The concerts offer a way for our community to commemorate this historic date and focus on bringing all communities together, reaffirming our hope for world peace and celebrating life and universal humanity. the September 11th attacks on the United States..

New Grant for OPEN WORLD



A wide range of non profit and governmental organizations host Open World delegations. TASC undertook its first program in April of this year, and hosted a Rule of Law delegation, the FIRST delegation from Kazakhstan that has come under this program. Largely because of the success of this first-time effort,

TASC has been selected to host another delegation in late October of this year. Anton VanderWyst, our newly elected 1st Vice Chairman is heading up this one-week program between October 25th and November 2nd. "Women as Leaders: Non-traditional Educational Opportunities" is the topic that will be explored for four leaders from Kazakhstan. Help, suggestions and recommendations are welcomed by Anton as he designs an intensive program to present to our guests/visitors. Anyone that would like to be a home host one of our delegates from October 25 through September 1 should contact Anton. Home hosts are called on to show how American families live and, hopefully, form friendships that will continue through communication and even reciprocal visits to Kazakhstan. Anton can be reached by email at: antonv@umich.edu.