

Yours in Friendship July 2009

Mark Your Calendars

July 19th - General Meeting

The Friendship Force General Meeting will be at 6:00 pm on July 19th in the Overlook Pavilion at Ellis Park, with light refreshments served. Then we'll adjourn for an evening of entertainment by the Cedar Rapids Municipal Band at 7:30 pm. You will need your lawn chair for the concert. Coolers with snacks and beverages, including beer and wine, can be brought into the park. Plan on picnicking to the music of the Cedar Rapids Municipal Band!

July 19th - Board Meeting

A Board Meeting will be held at 4:30 p.m., just before the General Meeting, in the Overlook Pavilion at Ellis Park.

July 24th-26th - Mystery Trip- ED Sally Fairchild. If you are interested in going, let Sally know ASAP. Space is very limited!

August 20th - Let's Eat Out, 6:00 p.m., Stone City General Store and Pub, Stone City. RSVP before Thursday, August 13th to Jeanne & Jack Knopp at jpkjlk@qwest.com or phone at 319 465-4402.

September 20th - Tri-Club Picnic at City Park in Monticello. More details to come.

April 2010 : Kapiti Coast and Christchurch, New Zealand- Please contact Phyllis Seidl at seidlgerald@msn.com or Darby Anderson at darbyanderson1@gmail.com if you are interested in this exchange.

In Other News

Exchange Reports

As you know, our club was extremely busy in May, June and July. To read all about the IRIS, Open World and Peru exchanges, please see the attachment at the end of this newsletter. On behalf of the club, we'd like to sincerely thank all those who helped plan, host and participate in these exchanges. YOU make them successful!

International Conference in Okinawa has been cancelled. We appreciate Ron Swanson's willingness to represent us at the conference but we learned in late June that the event was cancelled due to low registration. Friendship Force International is planning for a big conference in Washington D.C. in 2010.

Freedom Festival

Thank you volunteers! Sorry that the Father's Day event was cancelled but we still earned \$500 for the balloon glow and the fireworks and had a good time in the process. Thanks to John and Cheryl Elliott for all their help arranging volunteer teams.

Rockwell Grant— Great News!

Tressa Youngbear started us on the trail of a Rockwell grant last winter. We received word early spring that we were *not* awarded a Rockwell Collins Community Partnership Grant, and in fact, they did not award *any* new grants this year. We were told, however, that our application was passed on to other programs in human resources at Rockwell. In June we got a very short letter from Rockwell: “On behalf of Rockwell Collins, I am pleased to enclose a check in the amount of \$5,000. This contribution represents support to promote Cedar Rapids exchanges and cultural enhancement.” Thank you, Tressa, for learning about and writing that first grant!

Your Input Needed

Put on your creative thinking caps for the type of programming you’ve always wished we could offer our inbound exchanges. I know the recent inbound Exchange Directors will have some good ideas for us. We will be collecting and discussing ideas at the upcoming board and general meetings. This is a wonderful opportunity for our club!

Correction: FF CR/IC members Steve Williams and Richard Bice were recently inducted into the Volunteer Hall of Fame by Cedar Rapids Community Schools. You can read more about it at

<http://www.cr.k12.ia.us/aboutUs/volunteer/volunteerRecognition2009.html>

They are featured toward the bottom of the webpage. This was reported incorrectly in the June newsletter. Our apologies!

Friendship Force Traveler’s Tip of the Month:

Travel more, pack less.— Steve Williams

We’re going to include a tip in the newsletter from time to time, so please email your ideas to Darby or Audrey and we’ll print one at a time in upcoming newsletters.

Yours in Friendship,

Darby Anderson and Audrey Bradford

Exchange Reports

IRIS Report from Vic Klopfenstein...

We had 10 Ukrainians and two interpreters with the IRIS Program. The Seidl's, Rinkenbergers, Hansens, Hildebrands, Annette Nuehring as well as the Klopfensteins hosted these delegates. This project was called "Community Connection" (Volunteerism & Community Visioning.) Pat and Vic Klopfenstein were hosts for the potluck dinner on May 31st. More than 60 Azerbaijanians, Ukrainians, interpreters, hosts, local elected guests and other guests had a wonderful, international old-fashioned backyard party. A birthday was celebrated and Alina Poznanska played the guitar and led the Ukrainians in several folk songs for our enjoyment.

Peru Exchange Report from Dianne Karal...

As you all can imagine, it is very difficult to summarize three weeks packed with activities and adventures, but this is my attempt. Irvin & Tressa, Dale & Cheryl, Mike & Dianne, Steve Williams, John Sauer, Dianne Peckosh and Mary Lukas loaded into two vans and drove to Chicago on June 7th. On June 8th we left for Miami, where we met up with Thanh Vu from Olympia, then onto Lima, where we were joined by Beth Duff from Cincinnati and Ron & Joyce Swanson from Shawnee, Kansas. We rested and waited at the airport for our next flight leaving at 4:20 am for Iquitos. After a two-hour flight, we arrived in Iquitos and began our four-hour motorboat ride up the Amazon. Along the way we visited a medical clinic that we had each brought supplies for. The medical technician and nurse dispense medicines to 12 villages under very primitive conditions. We finally arrived at the Tahuayo Lodge, ate lunch and rested a bit. The lodge was very nice, nearly all screened in and consisted of a reading room, a hammock room, dining room, kitchen and seventeen guest rooms. There is even a Research Center, where varieties of plants and animals are studied by visiting scientists. There is, of course, no electricity, so other than flashlights, we were literally "in the dark." The experience included: changing clothes in the dark, crawling into bed with sheets that felt damp from all the humidity, throwing toilet paper in a basket instead of flushing it, and all the noises from the birds, monkeys and who knows what else.

There were several choices of activities: zip-lining, piranha fishing, bird watching, visiting a local Shaman, swimming with pink dolphins, visiting a local school and village, hiking in the rain forest looking for poison dart frogs and shopping at a local craft market. We each signed up for the activities that appealed to us, and for nearly three days we got to see, experience, and share in the rhythm of their daily lives. Even though it was more challenging than most thought it would be, we all thoroughly enjoyed our time there. The knowledgeable staff made sure we had good food, great experiences and provided for our every need.

We returned to Iquitos and by boat toured the area called Belen, full of floating house boats, merchant shops, restaurants, a church and fuel stations. Then we left for our return flight for Lima. We flew to Lima and got settled into the Ramada Hotel where we took HOT showers. Bob and Sonia Derge had arrived the day before and were there to greet us. John, Mike and Dianne went to the airport to await the arrival of Liz Sauer, Betty Emrich and Bernita Walker. They got in around 12:30 am.

We were at the airport by 9:30 am. We left Lima at 12:25 pm and arrived in Cusco at 2 pm. We had a light lunch at the Picoaga Hotel and then went on a walking tour of Cusco. We visited the Cusco

Cathedral. It was spectacular! All the life-sized Saints from the surrounding churches were dressed in their finest and were on display for only one week out of the year, and we got to see them. Wow! Some of the group spent the afternoon exploring, some shopped and some went back to the hotel to rest. In the evening, we walked to the "Inca Wall" restaurant for a buffet and traditional dance show.

Some of the group was experiencing difficulties with the high altitude; shortness of breath, stomach upset, and their heart pounding really hard, but everyone felt good enough to go on the tour. We visited Sacsayhuaman, the most sacred temple of the Incas, and the Sacred Valley, which is the land that extends between Pisac and Ollantaytambo. Our next stop was at the popular Pisac Market, where everything from vegetables to handicrafts was for sale. It was a beautiful array of sights, sounds and smells. Then we went onto Ollantayambo, with its spectacular rising terrace walls that served as an integral means of defense. Because of its strategic location in the Sacred Valley, Ollantaytambo became a prime center within the Inca Empire. We ended our day at the Libertado Valle Sagrado Lodge, which was a great hotel, set on the side of the mountain with waterfalls, beautiful plants and comfortable rooms.

The next leg of our journey was by a glass-topped train to Aguas Calientes. Then by bus we went up the steep side of the mountain to Machu Picchu. Wow! Sometimes when you actually see things in person, they don't live up to your expectations. Not so with Machu Picchu, we were struck by how the Incas seemed to use, reflect and appreciate their environment. It was amazing- better than the pyramids, the Great Wall and Petra. It was awesome. We had perfect weather and we all felt blessed to be there! We stayed at the Inkaterra's El Pueblo Lodge. It was a fabulous place surrounded by the cloud forest. It had beautiful grounds, extensive orchid gardens and was close to the town and shopping.

Five of our group decided to return to Machu Picchu the next morning, another beautiful day, while the rest slept in, relaxed, lunched, shopped and took it easy. On the return train ride to Cusco, we were treated with a snack and a fashion show. It was a perfect ending to a perfect day!

We were supposed to be on a long bus ride the next day from Cusco to Puno with several stops along the way; seeing villages and farms. However, a farmers' strike blocked the highway and we were forced to change our plans for safety reasons. There have been episodes of violence between the farmers and the police and sometimes bystanders. The squabble is over water rights. Anyway, we were warned to stay out of the area. So we stayed in Cusco another day and that morning we all witnessed a parade and competition of grade school students in traditional costumes, dancing for prizes. It was quite a treat; an event that reminded us of a county fair atmosphere with grand stands, food, and bands. The center of town was full of people. We visited the Museum of the Sun Temple, which the conquering Spaniards turned into a church. It was a very interesting place with a blend of Inca and Spanish architecture. After lunch, we were all free to explore Cusco, shop, rest, etc.

Because we could not take the bus, we flew to Juliaca, then went by bus to Puno. The group, except for Tressa, Sonia, Betty and Bernita (because they were still suffering the effects of the high altitude, decided to stay at Taypikala Lagos instead of on Amantani Island) was taken on a three and a half hour motorboat ride across Lake Titicaca to Amantani Island where we spent the night. We were treated to a nice lunch and dinner, explored the island and participated in their folk dances in traditional clothing. There is no electricity and the darkness comes early. As we were headed to bed, we saw the most

amazing night sky any of us have ever seen. It was as if we could see the entire Milky Way – bright, up close and personal.

The next morning we visited Taquile Island, where some hiked and some just took it easy. We had lunch, then by motorboat, went to the manmade Uros Islands. We were greeted by the women and children in their brightly colored clothes and were told how the islands are made entirely of reeds. Walking on the surface was like walking on a sponge and every 14 days they have to cut and add more reeds to the surface. We rode on one of their newly made reed boats, visited their homes and shopped in their market area. They make amazing things and their marketing skills are irresistible. They sang songs to us in English as we left, and we were impressed with their fluency in English. It's an amazing place! We met the rest of our group back at the hotel and had dinner.

Onto our next adventure... we flew out of Juliaca to Lima then onto Trujillo. The Nor Peru FF met us at the airport with banners, music, roses and a performance of a traditional dance by a dance couple in beautiful costumes. Then we were all taken to our host's homes. We got back together for a welcome dinner and entertainment at the Grand Bolivar Hotel at 8 pm. The next morning we had "free" time with our hosts and then at 1 pm we went to the Briceno family home for a barbeque. The family's courtyard was large by Peruvian standards and contained many plants and trees. We played games, ate a huge lunch, had dessert and danced. The party broke up around 6 pm. A great time was had by all. The next day, we gathered at "Huaca Del Sol Y La Luna" (House of the Sun & Moon) and learned about the Moche culture. Each century a new level was added to the building, five in all, and each was very similar to the last. The main attractions still existing are the painted murals. Then we went to Pando's family home for a lunch buffet, with all their traditional dishes being served. After lunch, we walked to a nearby mall and did a little shopping but mostly made price comparisons. An ice cream cone is just 60 cents. The next day, we visited the city of Chan Chan. It is the largest mud city in the Americas. Once 70-80,000 people lived there and it contained nine palaces and 32 temples, as well as many homes and businesses. The site is partly original and partly restoration, although archeologists have moved away from rebuilding and are now just trying to preserve what remains. Our tour ended around noon, then to the beach and the El Mochica restaurant. We walked on the beach and in the surf, shopped for souvenirs, and enjoyed a demo of caballeros de totora (reed boats.) Next, we went to the central shopping market, where goods are somewhat organized with appliance stores on one street, many, many shoe stores on another and handicrafts on another.

The next morning we left at 7 am for Chiclayo. It was a three hour bus ride to visit the Museum Senior De Sipan. We thoroughly enjoyed the two hours we spent in the museum. We had lunch and a tour of Chiclayo. Then we began our return trip, stopping at the beach and at a local market and arrived back in Trujillo after 9 pm. It was a long day, but enjoyable. Our next morning was spent at a senior center, where they entertained us with skits, aerobic demonstrations, tai chi and dancing. It is a very active group and you could tell they loved performing for us. In the afternoon, some of us went to a horse show and saw a Peruvian horse perform in a natural (no artificial devices or special training) four-beat footfall that provides a ride of incomparable smoothness. The horse and rider "danced" with a beautiful girl, usually a bride. We went back to our host's homes to rest and get ready for a late evening at a local night club. Everyone danced and had a great time. The party broke up and everyone was home between 1:30 and 2:30 am. Our last day in Trujillo began with a Farewell Breakfast, then a walking tour of downtown where we saw magnificent mansions built by sugar barons that are now mostly used as banks. We visited the central food market and the magnificent Cathedral. It was a great exchange. We

were impressed by the warmth of our hosts, and by the way they shared their families' lives with us. It was such a pleasure to see how the family members are all so important and involved with each other. They really knew how to make us feel welcome!

We all met at the airport between 3-4 pm. Our flight was late "Peruvian time." We left Lima at 11:30 pm and arrived in Miami at 6 am and finally into Chicago around 10:45 am. The final ten of us took the shuttle back to the hotel to pick up our vans. During the time we were gone, Steve's van had sat in water up past the wheels due to 12 hours of rainfall, and the brakes and drums were rusted solid. Luckily there was an auto repair shop next door. Steve arranged to get the needed repairs done and we went for lunch. The repairs were done around 4 pm and we headed home. When we arrived in Cedar Rapids, the Youngbear's car wouldn't start because the battery was run down. The guys purchased jumper cables and got them going. Everyone was home by 10:45 pm.

Open World Report from Steve Williams (taken from the report sent to Open World and FFI)

Names of Delegates and Facilitator: Delegates: Mehriban Hajiyeva, Vafa Jafarova, Vagar Salami. Facilitator- Jeyhun Karamov.

Hosts and Delegates:

Host Family: Stephen and Nancy Miller	Delegate: Vugar Salami
Host Family: Mike and Dianne Karal	Delegates: Vafa Jafarova
Host Family: Audrey Bradford	Delegate: Mehriban Hajiyeva
Host Family: Colleen and Jim Nieman	Facilitator: Jeyhun Karamov
Host Family: Steve and Nancy Williams	Interpreter: Bahar Salimova

Benefits to Americans

This Open World visit had direct results to the Friendship Force of Cedar Rapids/Iowa City. Our club will lead a global exchange to Azerbaijan in September of 2010 and we will now have contacts in Baku and have some basic understanding of the culture and the people. The facilitator and I talked about the opportunity all during the week.

In addition, the host families will continue contact through the Digital Directory and through personal correspondence. I think it is likely that more personal visits will result in the United States and in Azerbaijan.

The citizens of Eastern Iowa now have some basic understanding of Azerbaijan. The delegates made a positive impression on everyone they met. One college student is interested in visiting in Baku when he can.

Potential Partnerships

There may be partnerships though none are obvious at this time. The relationship between U.S. citizens and the delegates was very positive and could result in several interesting developments. One instructor at Kirkwood Community College expressed some interest in establishing a relationship with community-type colleges in Azerbaijan.

Potential Projects

The delegates seemed most interested in political activism in the U.S. They spent a great deal of time discussing projects in Iowa City with two college students. Specifically the students were discussing a referendum to ban students under the age of 21 from bars and how students activated resistance to the referendum.

The delegates spoke of admiration for the rule of law in American culture. This was most related to smoking bans in public places, but I believe generalized to other areas of law.

Visits by Americans

Specifically we discussed the Friendship Force visit to Baku in 2010. The delegates, facilitator and interpreter all volunteered to assist in our planning and to meet with us in Baku to continue personal relationships. One delegates indicated an interest in pursuing graduate studies in the U.S. We will be considering a particular travel agent based on recommendations of the delegates.

Professional Program Highlights,

The best session may have been two University of Iowa students talking to the delegates about their experiences in politics and studying at the University in Iowa City.

Clint Twedt-Ball took the delegates to the Flood Recovery Center on Tuesday June 2. They saw volunteers working to speed recovery of the Cedar Rapids flood of 2008.

Lunch with a young Republican activist, a former candidate for Congress, and two youth 4-H leaders on Friday June 5 was well received. The discussion was lively.

The Friday afternoon visit to the Cedar Rapids Gazette by two of the delegates and the interpreter was excellent.

Sharing with two elected politicians in Marion was a highlight. Nick Wagner and Craig Adamson talked about getting elected and the process of governing at the city and state levels.

Members of Congress/VIPs

The delegates met with staff members of Congressman David Loebsack and U.S. Senators Charles Grassley and Tom Harkin. Kristen Running of Loebsacks' office, Beth Freeman of Harkin's office and Mary Day of Grassley's staff were well received by the delegates and provided useful information.

The delegates met with State rep. Swati Dandekar in Des Moines at the state capital.

In addition the delegates were introduced at the Marion city council meeting and met with the mayor, Paul Rehn. Councilman Craig Adamson and state representative Nick Wagner talked to the delegates after they were introduced at the meeting.

Mayor Kay Halloran met with the delegates in her office for an hour.

Comments and Recommendations

This was an outstanding group of young people. The interpreter was excellent and went beyond the call of duty helping prepare an Azerbaijani meal and doing everything she could to make the week successful.

The group was on time, curious, outgoing and fun to be around. The impressions they left with us will be lasting and positive.

The Gazette's article about this exchange is below.

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Column: DORMAN

Visitors inspire columnist

By Todd Dorman The Gazette

Sometimes, you get a dose of perspective and inspiration when you least expect it. Mine came Friday afternoon. My boss asked me to sit in on a visit by a pair of journalists from Azerbaijan. I'd like to say I was enthused, but hey, it was Friday afternoon.

I had to hit Google to figure out exactly where Azerbaijan is. As it turns out, it's on a very important piece of real estate bordering Iran, Russia, Georgia, Armenia and the Caspian Sea.

The journalists, including a young columnist, were curious about how an American newspaper operates. They asked a lot of questions through an interpreter about how many employees we have, how many papers we print and so on. They were especially curious about our advertising, who buys it and how much we sell.

This didn't seem like exciting stuff. I admit checking the clock a couple of times. But then, the young columnist turned to the interpreter and spoke for quite awhile. Then the interpreter explained.

The columnist was sorry for asking questions that might seem simplistic, but they are journalists who work or have worked for opposition newspapers that stand up to the nation's oppressive government. They're interested in advertising because it's very difficult for their publications to sell ads. Businesses are afraid to buy them for fear the government will retaliate.

They then went on to talk about journalists who have been beaten, stabbed and jailed in Azerbaijan with either the direct involvement or tacit approval of the government. Others have been silenced through trumped-up lawsuits. Newspapers have been shuttered by a government frightened that its citizens will learn the truth. The columnist said her pieces have been altered by those fearful of retribution.

In short, these young writers are risking much to speak truth to power. I felt a mixture of inspiration and embarrassment.

While I worry over whether I'm using Twitter enough and obsess over blog hits, there are journalists out there taking real hits. I'm concerned about the future of print. They're concerned about a future in prison.

But meeting them was also a much-needed reminder of why I got into this business, and why I'll never regret choosing this vocation, even if it does go the way of the rotary dial phone.

Who knows how long I'll get to do this. But I do know the next time I'm reluctant to write what I think because I'm afraid of nasty e-mail, I'm scared to ask a question that might offend or I'm skittish about tackling a touchy subject, I'll think about our visitors from Azerbaijan.

Todd Dorman's column appears on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. Contact the writer: (319) 398-8452 or todd.dorman@gazcomm.com

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