

Taipei Incoming Journey

June 27-July 6, 2023

By Connie Williams

On Tuesday, June 27, Shirley Rosencrans, Barb Holt, Mary Stull and Frank Stull welcomed 17 Taipei ambassadors with a bus ride from Minneapolis through Iowa to Noelridge Park in Cedar Rapids. Along the way, the group got acquainted with a stop at the Surf Ballroom and Museum for the Buddy Holly tour and dinner in Clear Lake. Due to the smoke from Canadian wildfires, the scenery in Cedar Rapids was blurry by the time the group arrived.



Wednesday was Kalona Day, where the ambassadors and day hosts toured an Amish farm, enjoyed a family-style Mennonite lunch, then toured the Amish buggy shop and a goat dairy. There is a native group in Taiwan who are similar to the Amish, living without electricity and modern conveniences.



The Mississippi River was the theme for our day spent in Dubuque. The day started at the Mississippi River Museum, then Eagle Point Park and finishing with a tour of Lock & Dam #11 by the officers from the Army Corp of Engineers. The final stop was at The Field of Dreams in Dyersville, where Taipei club president, Francisco Hsu enjoyed batting practice.



Friday, June 30 began with a tour of the S Bar P Miniature Horse Farm near Anamosa, lunch at Sally's on Broadway, then on to Anamosa for the National Motorcycle Museum. As the group left the museum, the smoky overcast had cleared to show blue skies for the first time during the journey! Several ambassadors took pictures!



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Friday evening was enjoyable, thanks to the good food and great hospitality of our home dinner hosts. These home hosted dinners are a great way for more people to mix and mingle.



And now we're in July, with all of the local festivities and fun! The Iowa City day including a tour of the Stanley Art Museum, a walking tour of downtown, the Iowa City Jazz Fest and fireworks! Some ambassadors called it their favorite day! Thank you to the gracious day-to-night hosts, as this was a fun filled day!

Sunday, July 2 was free until 5pm. Hosts and ambassadors were able to enjoy a leisurely breakfast, at home or at the Freedom Festival pancake breakfast, shop, check out the classic car show, meet family members, attend church. It's safe to say that every household did something different.

Our journey banquet was held at the Clark Alumni House at Coe College, with a 5pm social hour and 6pm dinner buffet. In attendance was Bob and Nancy Mitchell, Bob is the Regional FFI Representative. In addition to the 15 Taipei ambassadors, other honored guests were three Afghan gentlemen, one of whom had been sponsored by our Friendship Force Club.

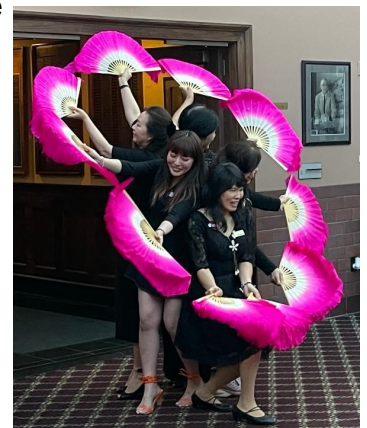
The Wayne Smith Legacy Award was presented to Mary Stull for her leadership to our club and to the Afghan Sponsor Circle.



Mary Stull shown with previous Legacy Award recipients Steve Williams and Vic Klopfenstein.



After the presentation of the award, we all enjoyed Taiwanese music and dance, skillfully presented by the Taipei ambassadors. It was a pleasant evening, great fun and conversation, ending with the song 'Let There Be Peace On Earth'.



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The final 'official' day of the journey was Monday, July 3, wrapping up with a tour of downtown Cedar Rapids, lunch with a view of Mount Trashmore and Quaker Oats, and a tour of our 'state of the art' Cedar Rapids Public Library.



As stated, the journey officially ended on July 3, with 2 ambassadors leaving that day and 2 ambassadors leaving on July 2. Due to flight availability, some left early and the remaining 13 stayed on with us until their July 6 return flight.



During this time, we enjoyed a variety of activities including back yard barbeques, Cedar Rapids Kernels baseball, more fireworks, hiking at Effigy Mounds, shopping and staying overnight at the historic Hotel Winneshiek in Decora.

The friends we made, the comradery of the group, the patience displayed by all made this journey all worth it. As in every journey, different things appealed to different people. But, we can honestly say that it was lots of fun and well worth the time and effort.



The journey committee of Christine Allen, Mary Stull, Nancy Bell, Shirley Rosencrans, Judy Frascht-Miner and Connie Williams did a great job to present our Iowa culture in a positive and delightful manner. Our home hosts, day hosts, dinner hosts, bus hosts and all of the club members along the way have made this journey memorable for our club and the Taipei club.

A HUGE THANK YOU TO EVERYONE INVOLVED! It is safe to say that hosting is a pleasure.

A WORLD OF FRIENDS IS A WORLD OF PEACE!