

2004 Summer  
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President's Letter  
By Don Mock

The spirit of volunteerism and a desire to build community on an international scale are two of the hallmarks of the Boulder-Dushanbe Sister Cities relationship. The time and effort that has been expended by some of our members over the past two decades to help bridge the cultural divide between the Tajik and American ways of doing things is quite remarkable. Nothing illustrates this better than the planning and negotiations that have been involved in the exchange of the "mega" gifts (the Teahouse and the Cyber Café) between our two cities. No other US sister city has even attempted projects on this scale.

The good news is that all this hard work is paying off. As you can read elsewhere in this newsletter, we have received the go-ahead from the mayor of Dushanbe for the revised Cyber Café design. Now we can move into the real implementation phase (final design documents, groundbreaking, and construction).

But in some ways, the lasting accomplishment has been and will be the development of a functional working relationship between our two cities, and an appreciation for the ways we are alike and the ways we are different. The foundation for that relationship has been laid by the exchange of the gifts. But to capitalize on it, we must keep our energy levels up even after the last "brick" has been laid on the Cyber Café in Dushanbe.

To that end, we are pursuing several grant opportunities. One would help to create and maintain educational applications for the computer resources we plan to provide in the Cyber Café. Another would foster enhanced exchanges by specialists on the use of computer technology in governmental, environmental, medical, and business applications. For example, Dushanbe city planners could come to see how Boulder city planners use GIS (geographic information systems) to facilitate land use decision-making.

All of this takes volunteers to make it happen. Because of the national significance of the Boulder-Dushanbe connection, we probably have thrice the opportunities being offered to us as we have people to help pursue them. So I am putting out a call. If you would like to become more involved in BDSC in ways big or small, now is the opportune time to step forward and express your interest. We have committees to suit every interest: Reciprocal Gift, Education, Membership, Cultural, and Fundraising. For example, the Education Committee handles the newsletter, media relations, the BDSC Web site, as well as educational initiatives with Dushanbe. The Cultural Committee (which we are reforming) will handle visitors, official exchanges,

and Navruz (Persian New Year) events. We have a great need for a Volunteer Coordinator, too. Even if you can only spare a few hours a month, please consider answering this call. Just send an e-mail to me or give me a call at (303) 440-6283 to ask any questions or to request a volunteer assignment. You can and will make a difference! Thank you.

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#### Cyber Café Gift Update

Since the BDSC delegation returned from their successful trip to Dushanbe in February, Richard E. Hoagland, the US Ambassador to Tajikistan, has facilitated an ongoing dialogue between Dushanbe Mayor Ubaidulloev and the BDSC Reciprocal Gift Committee regarding the design of the Cyber Café. Mayor Ubaidulloev requested changes to the design that was presented to him in February that increase the presence and size of the Cyber Café to reflect its importance to the City of Dushanbe and its prominent location in the cultural heart of Dushanbe. After a number of iterations, the design now reflects a successful blending of the original vision as laid out by Chief Architect David Barrett and the changes reflecting the architecture sensibility of Dushanbe as suggested by the Mayor. The goal of an open interior design that bring in lots of natural light to connect the building to its natural surroundings, along with solar power and natural day lighting and ventilation remains a theme in the design.

The redesign process dialogue has resulted in a larger, two-story building with expanded structural conditions, better functionality of the knowledge center component, and an elaborated outdoor water garden. The size of the building in its current, finalized state is 8,292 square feet with a roof terrace of 718 square feet. Mayor Ubaidulloev has pledged his support to funding the increases in cost accompanying the design increases.

Gift Committee Chair Vern Seieroe called the design "an ever-increasing function, usefulness and visual presence on Rudaki Avenue." There is a model of the finalized design in the Teahouse. Other details of the construction phase include:

Barrett Studio is completing the Construction Drawings for the building.

Structural, mechanical, electrical, and civil engineering will be provided by qualified Tajik engineers.

The Gift Committee will interface and coordinate with these engineering services with the help of Bob Ferenc, the BDSC on-site Construction Liaison. Bob will make his first trip to Dushanbe in July and will probably begin residency in Dushanbe at that time. Bob will facilitate the financial management and construction quality, and act as the BDSC diplomat in Dushanbe. He will keep the architects and Gift Committee abreast through e-mail, graphic and photographic communications; review all shop drawings, engineering submittals, and payment requests; and handle all day-to-day on-site problems. Bob's experience with solar energy, renewable materials, environmental design and construction will be key to the project's success.

A general contractor and subcontractors will be hired locally (in Dushanbe).

The Construction Phase is expected to begin in early 2005, with the goal of an official groundbreaking at the time of Dushanbe's 80th anniversary in October 2004.

The Engineers Without Borders solar power project is beginning with leadership by Ron West, BDSC, and Tim Hillman, EWB.

([www.ewbusa.org/ewb/project/display.do?mode=display&ID=63](http://www.ewbusa.org/ewb/project/display.do?mode=display&ID=63))

An Art Acquisition Committee is being formed to select appropriate art for the Cyber Café (art that reflects Boulder aesthetics and Western themes).

Fund raising

Our fundraising effort has been in the background while project redesign and planning were underway. Our current fundraising total of over \$370,760 in cash and in-kind donations and pledges represents a broad base of support from our members, friends, foundations, and corporations.

The city of Dushanbe has donated a site for the building and Mayor Ubaidulloev has renewed and extended his support toward the project. We have also begun to fulfil the loan program that the City of Boulder voted to support in its Dec. 16, 2003 city council meeting.

We hope you will consider the Cyber Café for Dushanbe in you gift plans for 2004. This year our project will come to life and your support will help ensure its success.

Thank you for your past support and participation in completing this cultural exchange between our two cities.

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Feedback from Dushanbe Mayor Makhmadsaid Ubaidulloev

(Editor's Note: The following letter was sent to Cyber Café Chief Architect David Barrett.)

May 31, 2004

Dear Mr. David Barrett,

Accept my warm greetings to you, to your colleagues and friends, moreover to whoever is an active participant in the project to build an Internet café in the city of Dushanbe, and also once more sincere thanks to all the citizens of our sister city Boulder who help by contributing to the design and construction of the Internet café.

I convey to you sincere gratitude for the presentations of your drawings. Having considered the presentation of your proposed project, I want to make note that the presented version in full measure answers the requests as regards the given plot of land and the given objective and my wishes. I convey my gratitude for your perseverance and for the fact that you fulfilled my wishes stipulated in my previous letter. I think that the \_expression of my remarks beneficially influenced the appearance of the Internet café. I should like to rely on the fact that my remarks did not cause you a lot of work and difficulty.

Along with this and taking into account that you are very busy at work, I should like to ask you when you work out the construction of the support construction and foundation to provide for every eventuality, envisaging future development of the café structure up to four stories, since just behind the construction site of the Internet café we are decreasing the number of stories from 17 to 9 of a residential complex project on the opposite side of the space.

I hope that my request will not be too much work for you.

With sincere esteem and gratitude for your work.

M. Ubaidulloev  
Chairman of the City of Dushanbe

(Translated from Russian 6/4/04 by  
Mary Axe and Anna Nemirovsky)

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Call for Volunteers

BDSC needs your help! This is a good time to get involved in BDSC's many activities and projects as a volunteer. Here are some of BDSC's volunteer needs and opportunities at this time:

People to host Tajik visitors from time to time, usually for short periods of time, and and/or to show

them around Boulder. This would be a wonderful opportunity to meet new people, learn about Tajikistan, and build good will and understanding between Americans and Tajiks at a person-to-person level. That's what Sister Cities is all about!

Someone to help write press releases and BDSC Web site content, especially once the Cyber Café gift is being built in Dushanbe. BDSC needs help in getting this compelling story out to the public.

People with an interest in education, distance education, and teaching English as a Foreign Language through the Internet. BDSC would like to connect the people in the two sister cities through online educational projects.

Someone to help recruit new members.

Someone to help coordinate and assist volunteers.

Cyber Café Gift: the Reciprocal Gift Committee is always looking for people who wish to get involved in its work.

If you are interested, contact Don Mock or George Peknik.

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#### Former Tajik Students in Boulder Awarded University Degrees

Rano Burkhanova, a Tajik Foreign Student Association (FSA) exchange student who attended Fairview High School in Boulder in the late 90's, received her Master's degree in Industrial Psychology from Cornell University on May 30. Rano received financial support from BDSC during her undergraduate years at DePauw University. Firuz Kamalov, another Tajik FSA student, attended New Vista High School in Boulder in 1999-2000. Firuz graduated from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, this spring where he was a scholarship student. Firuz will be attending graduate school at the University of Minnesota this fall. Statistics is his area of interest.

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#### CALENDAR: "Cooking with Tea with Lenny Martinelli"

Experience the variety of ways that tea can be used in the culinary arts, in a unique class with the Executive Chef and Proprietor of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse, Lenny Martinelli. The class will be at 11 am on Saturday, July 10.

Lenny will demonstrate how black, oolong, green, and herbal teas can be used to create delicious recipes. Participants will be able to taste the dishes served up during the class, as well as take home the recipes.

The "Cooking with Tea" class is part of the "Summer Tea Series Rocky Mountain Tea Festival." Tickets are \$10. Registration in advance is recommended. Call 303-442-4993 for reservations.

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#### Central Asian Soccer Players Visit Boulder

Sister Cities International, Abt Associates, and USAID partnered to bring 18 Central Asian young soccer players to Boulder and six other US cities this spring. The children, aged 13-15, were from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, and Kazakhstan. During the "Friendship Tour" they lived, played and learned

alongside American youth. They were in Boulder from May 20-23. The Friendship Tour ([www.sportforunderstanding.org](http://www.sportforunderstanding.org)) was designed to use the shared love of sport to promote mutual understanding of the different cultures, traditions and histories of the United States and Central Asia.

Activities included a welcome barbeque at the Barnetts, a tour of the Teahouse by Lenny Martinelli, a cultural presentation at the Teahouse that included music, dance, costumes, and poetry of the four "Stans," a crafts sessions at Sacred Heart School, a friendly soccer match between the Central Asian All-Stars and Boulder Nova host team, soccer practice, and a workout session in the CU training room.

The following people are very involved in the planning and implementation of the Soccer Tour: Courtney Barnett, ABT Associates; Mary Johnson, transportation, general problem solver; Mary Barnett, Boulder tour chairman, BBQ host, communicator, and BDSC board member; Jim Creasey, Director of Coaching Boulder Nova Soccer; Bill Chait, soccer team Dad, host family coordinator; Jan Atevoght, Principal, Sacred Heart School, and Don Mock, President, Boulder Dushanbe Sister Cities.

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TAJIKISTAN: Interview with US Ambassador Richard E. Hoagland

Here is an excerpt from a recent interview with US Ambassador to Tajikistan Richard E. Hoagland from the United Nations website IRIN NEWS.

DUSHANBE, 6 May 2004 (IRIN) —

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Tajikistan has faced innumerable challenges in its quest for peace and prosperity.

Q:

In a recent interview you were quoted as saying Tajikistan was "at a crossroads". What did you mean by that?

A:

What I mean by that is that in Central Asia, Tajikistan has developed a relatively good reputation for democratic development and democratic practice. In fact, this is probably the result of the tragic civil war. But the positive outcome has been, rather than extreme power politics as you see in other places in the region, there is real dialogue and political pluralism that exist here. As the government consolidates it

power, as it heads towards elections, we would hope that they don't make some of the mistakes that the other countries in the region have made in the past. We would hope that they would continue along the path of democratic pluralism.

Q:

Tajikistan has faced a great deal of challenges since it gained independence in 1991. What is your overall assessment of where the country is now?

A:

What I often tell my colleagues in Washington is that Tajikistan is about 10 years behind the other [Central Asian] countries. That's not necessarily negative. What it means is that it can learn from the mistakes that other countries in the region have made during that period – and I believe they are. The government is committed to economic reform. It has pluralistic politics. And for that reason, I would say that Tajikistan is standing in a fairly good position in the region.

Q:

You mentioned that there has been a great deal of reform in the country. Can you please give some clear examples of that? Specific examples of what that reform would be?

A:

What I mean is that reform is starting and the government has the right intentions right now. Specifically, there has been a lot of new legislation written. For example: the parliament just passed the law on micro-financing which is terribly important for beginning to build small and medium sized enterprises. The president in his speech to the nation last Friday [30 April] reaffirmed his support for economic reform and called for banking reform so the conditions are established in the country for international investment. That's very positive.

Q:

What role do you see the United States having in this part of the world?

A:

Our fundamental policy for three years has been that security is not simply a matter of military and military agencies. True security for the countries of Central Asia will come only with economic and political reform. The citizens of the countries need to feel that they have a voice in their government. And that's why it is important to continue political reform. They need to feel that they and their children and grandchildren will have economic opportunity. And that's why it is important to continue economic reform. When those are lacking then the population would tend to turn to other voices, and the voices that still exist – the other voices that still exist in this region – do include extremists, terrorists and revolutionaries. So for real solid development and security in the region, these three factors must be taken into account: actual physical security, economic development and political development. The second point that I would make about the US role in the region is that we firmly support the sovereignty and independence of every country and every country's right to make its own decision about its foreign policy. Many people have raised the question of competition and between Russia and the United States.

We do not believe in zero-sum thinking. We don't think there needs to be a new "great game". There is room for real cooperation between Russia and the United States as well as other players in the region, including China and Iran for that matter.

Q:

Many aid agencies believe there should be less emphasis on humanitarian assistance to the country and more on development. Would you agree with that assessment?

A:

We do in fact. We have really changed the mix of our assistance in the last couple of years. During the 1990s, humanitarian assistance was an absolute must because of the civil war. It was essential simply to keep people fed and to take care of refugees both external and internal. Now that the country has achieved stability, now that the economy is beginning to grow, now that for all intents and purposes this is an absolutely normal country – the international donors need to help more with development so Tajikistan can catch up and move forward.



Q:

What in your view are the most pressing challenges the country faces now and what is your overall prognosis for the country for the next five years?

A:

I have always learned from my experience as a press spokesperson not to take speculative questions. At the moment, Tajikistan is very definitely on the right path with economic reform. It has an admirable degree of political pluralism. If those both continue and continue to grow, then I would have a very bright prognosis for the country in five years. But it's always dangerous to predict because nobody knows what is going to happen tomorrow.

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## The Cultural Context of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse (1st of 4 Parts)

By George Peknik

(This is the first of a series of articles about Central Asian teahouses, excerpted from George Peknik's soon-to-be published book, *The Meaning of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse*.)

### Origins of Teahouses

The first teahouses appeared in Japan in the 16th century. Soon after that, both teahouses and coffeehouses became popular meeting places in Central Asia, the Middle East, and later Europe. A teahouse in Tajikistan is called a choihona (literally, "teahouse").

Some Asian teahouses are not much more than a collection of a few tables and chairs along a sidewalk and an entrepreneur with a samovar. Others sit proudly on fashionable boulevards. Some, like the Saodat Teahouse in Dushanbe, are venues for wedding parties and destinations for guests on official state visits.

### The Cultural Context of the Boulder-Dushanbe Teahouse

In order to understand and appreciate the meaning of Boulder's unique Dushanbe Teahouse, one has to understand the cultural context from which the building sprang.

There are four traditions of Central Asian and Persian cultural history that are relevant to both the form and the function of the Central Asian teahouse. They are:

The Commercial Tradition, associated with the caravanserai or khan (inn) of the ancient Silk Road

#### The Meeting-place

Tradition, associated with the Persian tavern, the mei-khane ("wine-house") repeatedly mentioned in the poetry of the great Persian poet Omar Khayyam

The Spiritual Tradition, associated with the most important example of Islamic architectural achievement, the mosque (masjid)

The Aesthetic Tradition, associated with the so-called pleasure pavilions of Central Asian potentates, such as Tamerlane, or Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*.

#### The Commercial Tradition of Teahouses

Camel caravans crisscrossed Central and Southern Asia for thousands of years, both on the "Silk Road," which passed through what is now Tajikistan, and along its hundreds of tributaries. Marco Polo and other explorers who traveled along the ancient Silk Road were constantly exposed to new ideas, commercial products, sights, sounds and tastes. Some of these cultural artifacts circulated throughout Europe and the Far East and continue to influence life in the present day. Traveling along the Silk Road, like surfing the Internet nowadays, meant encountering unexpected surprises, discoveries and new

knowledge. Today the people who live where the Silk Road once existed are heirs to a heritage of trade and cultural exchange that still enriches their lives.

The caravanserais along the ancient Silk Road were the multi-service stations for the men who led and rode in the caravans. They provided a place to sleep, quarter and feed animals, store and display commercial goods, pray, eat, rest, and clean up. Travelers would pass along news from the “outside world” and gather news to take along to their next stops.

Some of these rest stops grew to become villages and even cities because of their strategic locations that allowed for access to water, tillable land, and markets. Once the towns created semi-permanent or permanent marketplaces, mosques, schools, and other institutions, teahouses sprang up as well to provide services not only to long-distance travellers but to town

residents as well. Thus, the caravanserai is one of the forerunners of the choihona.

Many caravanserais still exist in Central Asia and the Middle East, but many of them are in ruin and are in some cases being superseded by gas stations, fast food restaurants, motels, and modest road-side teahouses serving the

modern motorists and bus passengers. Others, such as in Bukhara and

Samarqand (in what is now Uzbekistan), have been refurbished and have been converted to bazaars and tourist sites.

Next: The Meeting Place Tradition of Teahouses

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