Ambassador Addleton Book Launch

Friends of Mongolia cordially invites you to a reception to celebrate publication of Mongolia and the United States: A Diplomatic History by Jonathan S. Addleton. The book is the 52nd volume in the ADST-DACOR Diplomats and Diplomacy Series.

Mongolia and the United States provides a pioneering first-hand look at the remarkable growth in ties between two countries that share a growing list of interests and values, even though they are separated by vast distances. The author, Ambassador Jonathan S. Addleton, participated in a number of these developments, first as USAID country director (2001–04) and later as U.S. Ambassador (2009–12). In 2012, he was awarded the Polar Star, Mongolia’s highest civilian honor conferred on foreign citizens, for his role in strengthening ties between the United States and Mongolia. The narrative provides personal insights and is based on material that would otherwise be unavailable.

The event will be hosted in conjunction with Columbia University Press, DACOR (an organization of foreign affairs professionals), and the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training (ADST), and will take place at the historic DACOR Beacon House in Washington, D.C. on Tuesday, October 22, 2013 at 6:30 pm.

RSVP (acceptances only) to DACOR at 202-682-0500 x15 or prog.coor@dacorbacon.org. FOM members will receive a $5 discount when ordering the book with the form found on the FOM website.

“Long before they had diplomatic relations, Mongolia and the United States influenced one another in unusual and unrecognized ways. Now Jonathan Addleton’s inside look at the diplomatic relations between the two countries carries lessons for anyone wishing to learn from the past as a guide to future relations between the great powers of Asia and America.

- Jack Weatherford, author of *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World*
“Mongol Naadam” in Lorton, VA

On July 13, 2013 the Washington, DC Area Mongolian Community Association (WAMCA), in cooperation with the Mongolian Cultural Center (Mongol Soyeliin Tov) hosted their annual “Mongol Naadam” sports extravaganza at Occoquan Regional Park in Lorton, VA. Naadam is a traditional Mongolian summer festival that showcases Mongolian Wrestling, Archery, and a horse-race of roughly 25 km for children up to age 12-13. Of course, the annual event hosted by WAMCA modifies this to meet the constraints inherent in hosting such an event in a public park in the United States.

Naadam tends to occur around the hottest, muggiest time of the year for northern Virginia, however, as with their notable ancestors, the DC-area Mongolians are unstoppable – and Naadam 2013 was awesome! Mongolians turned out in great numbers, with over 200 people throughout the day. Many setting up large tents along the perimeter of the field on which most of the performances and competitions took place.

The event began with the singing of the Mongolian National anthem, followed by a parade of singers, dancers, and wrestlers who would be participating in the day’s events. This was followed by a full schedule of traditional Mongolian music, including songs performed by Bolormaa Jugdersuren, and traditional dances performed by the dance instructors and students of the Mongolian School of the National Capital Area – including Delgermaa Batchuluun and U. Tsolmon.

After the music section of the event, there were various running and athletic activities for the children. Then came the day’s main event – the wrestling competition (“bokh” in Mongolian). Wrestlers usually come to the DC area from all over the country to compete in the Naadam wrestling competition and this year was no exception. There is no time limit for matches and no weight classes in Mongolian wrestling. Whether the match lasted thirty seconds or thirty minutes, the competition was fierce. Congratulations to all the winners!! This year’s DC area Naadam was a great event, and fun for all who attended.
“Naadam is a traditional Mongolian summer festival that showcases Mongolian Wrestling, Archery, and a horse-race of roughly 25 km for children up to age 12-13.”

The LaPorta’s Host a Naadam Celebration

On July 21, 2013, Ann and Al LaPorta (Ambassador to Mongolia, retired) hosted a great pot-luck party for members and supporters of Friends of Mongolia, in honor of Mongol Naadam – the annual Mongolian summer sports holiday. About 50 people attended, and enjoyed Mongol huushur (Mongol mutton-empanada), arikhi (vodka), nisiel salat (potato salad), kvas, Mongolian snacks including yevan (large Mongolian cookies) and bortsog, among all the other non-Mongolian food and drinks attendees provided.

There was a great turn-out and the weather cooperated so folks brought their kids, who enjoyed a “bounce house” outside and general mischief in the backyard and garden. This was a great opportunity for long-standing Friends of Mongolia Officers and Board members to meet and talk to new Co-Director, John Dwyer and Treasurer, Cara Eandi. It was great to also see earlier FOM officers, like George Economides -- who helped establish the FOM Scholarship Program with Wesley Nguyen back in 2006 – in attendance with his wife, Tsevlee, as they had just returned from 3.5 years back in Mongolia where George had served as Peace Corps Admin/Finance Officer.

In addition to our FOM Officers and Board, past and present, there were many other FOM-ers, FOM-supporters, and just friends and family who enjoyed a good time. A big thank you to the LaPorta’s for hosting in their lovely home, and to who all who prepared dishes and attended! Let’s do it again next year!
Over May 23-24, 2013, the Sain Tus Center NGO ran a successful training on business management, organization, and accounting in Jargalant soum (village), in western Mongolia’s Khuvd province. With 25 participants, the training was funded through a $250 grant from Friends of Mongolia’s annual small grant awards for sustainable community development. The project fulfilled its goal to provide training for low-income families in Jargalant soum that run their own businesses, and focused on increasing income through better management and marketing. The trainees all managed businesses related to tailoring or the production of felt products.

The mission goal of the Sain Tus Center is to, “[E]mpower Mongolians living in Western Mongolia through capacity-building projects that will help them increase their knowledge, make sound decisions, and improve their lives.” Prior to submitting their proposal for this project to Friends of Mongolia, Sain Tus consulted the owners of many small businesses in Jargalant to ask them what type of training they would like to receive, if possible, and Sain Tus sought to meet their needs through this grant award from FOM. This was a highly effective approach.

The Sain Tus Center split this training into four components:

- Financial Accounting and Funds Tracking: including weekly, monthly, and yearly tracking and estimates of revenues and liabilities.
- Organizational Structure and Management: including discussions on role and responsibility definition/designation, delegation of duties, and efficient supervision.
- Small Business Development: from initial business concept to business launch, and also including sessions on business principles, business research, identification of weaknesses/inefficiencies in a business, marketing concepts, and relationship skills (among employees, with suppliers, with customers, etc.)
- Micro-Enterprise Group Fund: this training component included information on how to create and manage a group fund (microenterprise loan system), how to find/create funds for a microenterprise group fund, and how to jointly monitor a group fund.

The feedback from post-training surveys was very optimistic, and in the estimate of Sain Tus Director, Ugaanerdene, many of these businesses are now, “on a robust track for sustainable growth.” To read more about this project and opportunities for other small grants, visit the www.friendsofmongolia.org.


With over twelve years of experience in early childhood education in the United States and Mongolia, Ms. Baterdene-Wyckoff is also hoping this book can be used to teach Mongolian children living in the United States. She has already offered this book as a supplement to the early-childhood curriculum taught by other Mongolian Schools in the United States: the Ger Center (in the San Francisco Bay Area), the Denver Mongolian School, and Los Angeles Mongolian School.

For those interested, read more on the FOM website, or you can order a copy of this book by contacting the author at: khandmaa78@yahoo.com.
At Friends of Mongolia we believe in the power of intercultural appreciation and understanding to build strong partnerships and friendships across national boundaries, and create new perspectives on life in other countries. Through the many intercultural events, concerts, film-screenings, and parties that we have hosted and supported throughout the years, this belief has been reaffirmed again and again.

We hope we can count on your generosity at this time to support our goal of sending out students and teachers from the Mongolian School of the National Capital Area to this special Middfest 30 Year Retrospective event October 5-6, 2013.

To make a proposed $35 - $50 donation to support this trip, please visit: www.friendsofmongolia.org/donate and make a special donation with the note/comment: “Middfest 30 Year Retrospective.”

OR mail your donation to us at:
Friends of Mongolia
PO Box 53314
Washington, DC 20009

FOM is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization. All donations are tax deductible.

Middfest International Festival Fundraiser

To support our goal of promoting intercultural understanding between the U.S. and Mongolia, we are raising $1,500 in small donations from our members to send a group of Mongolian music and dance students from the Mongolian School of the National Capital Area (MSNCA) in Arlington, Virginia to Middletown, Ohio for the “Middfest 30 Year Retrospective” to be held October 5-6, 2013. And we need your help!

Each year Middletown, Ohio hosts the Middfest International Festival geared around the culture and music of one particular country. In 2008 it was Mongolia, and with your help we raised over $22,000 to send a dozen students from the Khankhongor School of the Performing Arts in Mongolia, as well as 14 students from the MSNCA, to that festival.

The trip was so successful that the students are being asked to return! The students from MSNCA and Khankhongor enjoyed the hospitality of families in Middletown, made lots of friends, and visited and performed at several local schools and libraries in addition to their performances at the main festival. For this year’s retrospective, the Middfest organizers have invited the MSNCA students from Virginia to come out and perform again. As the school is a volunteer-run non-profit organization, Friends of Mongolia would like to support their return trip to Middletown, Ohio.
Save the Wilson School in Arlington, VA: Home of the Mongolian School of the National Capital Area (MSNCA)

The Wilson School, built in 1910 and in 1926 named in honor of President Woodrow Wilson, is currently under threat of redevelopment. Beyond its historical significance, the Wilson School is also the home of the Mongolian School of the National Capital Area. As such, the Wilson School has served as type of educational and cultural center for the Mongolian Community in Arlington since opening its doors for classes in January 2007. Most Arlington Mongolians live in the Rosslyn area, a short walk from the Wilson School.

In its role as home of the Mongolian School, the Wilson School has hosted Mongolian holiday events for the community, including Mongolian New Year, Women’s Day, Children’s Day, and Tsagaan Sar/Lunar New Year. Also, through fund-raising concerts and intercultural events, the Wilson School has become a type of “Gateway to Mongolia” for many Arlington residents—of diverse backgrounds—who would never have had the opportunity to learn about the amazing culture of the Mongols.

“The Wilson School has served as type of educational and cultural center for the Mongolian Community in Arlington since opening its doors for classes in January 2007.”

The Friends of Mongolia, in support of the Mongolian School of the National Capital Area (MSNCA) and Preservation Arlington, urges our members and supporters to help us save the historic Wilson School building in Arlington, VA.

All that we are asking of you to show your support is to add your name to the Change petition here:

https://www.change.org/petitions/arlington-county-save-the-historic-wilson-school

Of course, any sale of the site first would have to be subject to a public hearing, and likely would require approval of the County Board in addition to the School Board. This is why we need your help.

We believe the Wilson school:

- Retains an important part of the character and urban fabric of Arlington
- Provides sense of place to the diverse community of Arlington, VA
- Serves a key role as the home of the Mongolian School of the National Capital Area in fostering intercultural understanding and bridge-building among Arlingtonians of different cultural backgrounds
- Provides a break from high density building developments in the Rosslyn Area, including a much needed recreational green space

Our goals are to:

- Retain and restore this century old property
- Retain recreational parkland, open space and permeability of site access
- Preserve and renovate existing affordable housing at Queens Court
- Retain the civic purpose of the school and educational history of use, including as home for the Mongolian School of the National Capital Area (MSNCA)
- Fulfill affordable housing goals of the site with rezoning

If you would like Arlington County to take these factors into consideration in their plans for this site, you can read more about it on our website and Facebook page, and don’t forget to sign the Change.org petition to send a letter to the school board at:

https://www.change.org/petitions/arlington-county-save-the-historic-wilson-school
FOM at the Library of Congress

On August 29, 2013, Friends of Mongolia near DC were invited to listen to Dr. Uranchimeg Tsultem give the multi-media lecture “Prior to Lenin: US Diplomacy and Western Explorers in the Early 20th Century,” at the Library of Congress. Dr. Tsultem included copies of manuscripts in traditional Mongolian script that had been damaged in Mongolia but found intact in the US, as well as an exhaustive account of some of the largest public figures who visited or lived in Mongolia prior to the Soviet occupation.

In the lecture, Dr. Tsultem discussed everyone from the Bogd Khan, Mongolia’s last emperor and third highest leader in Tibetan Buddhism’s spiritual hierarchy, to Roy Chapman Andrews, the famed fossil-hunter who first discovered dinosaur eggs in Mongolia’s Flaming Cliffs. While many figures made an appearance in the lecture, the relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Bogd Khan, or “Bogdo Lama,” was a central topic. She showed how deeply their lifestyles contrasted and yet were similar through symbolic imagery in tangkas and photographs.

Dr. Tsultem is currently working on research as a Kluge Fellow at the John W. Kluge Center of the Library of Congress. She was previously a Lecturer at the University of California, Berkeley, and the Cultural Heritage Advisor to the President of Mongolia.

World Wise Schools’ Speakers Match

Since returning to the US in 2010, Cassandra Weiner (RPCV Mongolia ’07-’09) has been a speaker for World Wise Schools. She has shared her knowledge and love of Mongolia with Scouting Troops, Volunteer Organizations, and in classrooms of all levels. Her largest speaking engagement is at the annual Hampton Roads’ Girl Scouts’ World Thinking Day. World Thinking Day is part of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts Global Action Theme based on the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which aim to improve the lives of the world’s poorest people. This year’s theme was “Together We Can Save Children’s Lives.”

Dressed in her Mongol gutal and deel, Cassandra explained how life in the harsh Mongolian countryside can be difficult for many people, especially young children, but was proud to share that Mongolia was well on their way of meeting their MDG of reducing child mortality by 4% by 2015. The Girl Scouts then had lots of fun deciphering a Mongolian hand washing instructional poster and practicing their technique in a “tumpun” of glitter.

Cassandra is looking forward to next year’s World Thinking Day’s theme of “Education Opens Doors for All Girls and Boys.”

If you are an RPCV interested in becoming a speaker or are looking for an RPCV to speak at your next event, visit:

http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/
Spotlight on Tysons Mongolia and FOM

As you know from reading in this newsletter already, Friends of Mongolia hosted a DC-area FOM Tsagaan Sar Party in partnership with Ideal Future Talks (IFT) in February. It was great opportunity to see Friends of Mongolia members and FOM supporters who attended. Ariel Wyckoff, a FOM Board member, also presented on a proposed FOM youth internship program at an IFT event in March.

You may not know, however, that the leaders of Ideal Future Talks, Mr. Ariunbat Mijid and Nyamsuren Munkhbat, run a consulting firm called Tysons Mongolia. The Virginia-based consulting firm assists public and private clients from Mongolia to plan, develop, design and manage business, education, financial and travel projects – with a broader goal of supporting capacity building and development for Mongolian professionals. The Tysons Mongolia team is motivated to be one of the many “bridges” between Mongolia and United States by designing solutions to fit a broad range of logistical and managerial challenges.

Tysons Mongolia’s projects include successfully conducting the logistics for official visit of the President of Mongolia, Tsakhiagiin Elbegdorj, to the United States in June 2011, organizing the Mongolia Governors Summit in 2010, and creating the IFT - Ideal Future Talks – community networking organization in 2012. Their project with Tysons College, providing opportunities for professionals from Mongolia to study in the United States, has been successfully growing since 2009. Mongolians from many fields have been coming to the U.S. via Tysons Mongolia to learn best practices in professional education and training, enhance their knowledge of U.S. culture, and build a network of U.S. and Mongolian professionals.

Mark your calendars for November, 2013, when Tysons Mongolia’s travel company, American Travel Management System (ATMS), will organize the first “Mongolian Marathon.” Check the FOM website for more information as it becomes available!