



# FRIENDS OF MONGOLIA

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Summer 2003

*Friends of Mongolia (FOM) is an incorporated nonprofit organization conducting operations in both Mongolia and the United States. It is an affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association and its membership includes both Americans and Mongolians. It is organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational and developmental purposes. FOM exists to develop partnerships with the people of Mongolia in furtherance of cultural exchange and human development.*



Ganzorig Gombosuren announces the events at the Washington, DC area Naadam festival held on July 13. For more info: [www.mongoliadc.org](http://www.mongoliadc.org).  
(Photo by Mongolian Community in Washington DC Area)

## NEW MONGOLIAN DOCUMENTARY IN PRODUCTION

Newly elected FOM Board Member Chris McKee is heading off to Mongolia this summer to make a documentary about how Mongolian nomads build their gers.

"Have you ever seen *Baraka*? *Powaqaqatsi*? *Koyaanisqatsi*?" he says when asked about *THE NOMAD'S HOME*, "Well, it's going to be something like those films - just music and images - except you're going to see a whole process unfold instead of it being random and beautiful with a theme. That's the ideal anyways. It may just end up being your standard Discovery Channel fare with narration if people don't like it."

McKee says the project should be done by January barring

any catastrophes and should be about 15 minutes long. It's designed to start classroom discussions and interest film festival goers "without making them feel like they need to work or get stoned to enjoy unusual, educational films." Then he starts the process of marketing and distributing the film to festivals, related businesses, and Mongolia enthusiasts. He promises to update FOM in the fall.

You can email him at [gawara@ragcha.com](mailto:gawara@ragcha.com) if you have questions. He warns it might take a few months to get back to people.

## NEWS CLIPS FROM MONGOLIA

- **President Bush appointed Pamela J. H. Slutz**, of Texas, to be U.S.



Photo by Chris McKee

Ambassador to Mongolia. She recently served as Deputy Director of the American Institute in Taipei, Taiwan. Her husband Ronald Deutch, who served in Mongolia as the Deputy Chief of Mission joins her in his retirement. Both are members of Friends of Mongolia.

- The Washington Post reports that the U.S. will fund a Polish-led **peacekeeping force to Iraq**. The force will consist of over 30 nations, including Mongolia. Costs are expected to exceed \$200 Million.
- Reuters reports that Mongolia's opposition leader in Parliament, Gundalai, has been released by police after protests by activists. He had been arrested after a violent incident at Democratic Party headquarters. Gundalai recently called for an investigation of the Justice Minister.
- Reuters reports that Mongolia joins 55 nations in exempting Americans from prosecution in the International Criminal Court.
- The Xinhua news agency reports that storms killed 18 people in Mongolia and destroyed over 100 homes in Ulaanbaatar this July.

## NEW BOOK ON MONGOLIA REVIEWED

By Adam Zenko

*Mongolia Today: Science, Culture, Environment, and Development*, ed. Dendeiin Badarach, Raymond Zilinskas, and Peter Balint, (RoutledgeCurzon, New York, 2003.)

As good academic books on Mongolia are exceedingly rare, I wanted to share with you an excellent one that just came along. To find it, you will likely have to do an inter-library loan search.

*Mongolia Today* provides an interesting hodge-podge of articles by academics (largely Mongols) on topics such as industrialization, the environment, biotechnology, indigenous technologies, animal husbandry, traditional medicine, the Gobi desert, and native birds, fish, and microbiota. For example, all the difficult questions you may have had about herding animals and native dairy products are all answered here. Much recent research on animal, bird, and plant species that exist only in Mongolia is included, as well as an extensive case study on the nearly extinct Gobi Bear.

While reading the book I found two things of special interest. First, there are many technologies, medicines, products, and even unique species that have yet to be commercially developed. Traditional Mongolian medicine, although based on the Tibetan and Aryurvedic systems, had discovered its own plant-based drugs. Those drugs based on native plants or made from Mongolian "trade secret" formulas should have substantial commercial potential. Also, as every tourist to Mongolia knows, Mongolian dairy products are very unique, and come from all of the domestic animal species.

Since many Westerners love odd cheeses for example, couldn't Mongolian cheeses be made using hygienic methods and then marketed abroad? Since all Mongolian meat is grass-fed, free-range, and 100% organic, wouldn't foreigners pay a premium for it? Eventually, much of Mongolia's sustainable wealth may come from products derived from unique biotechnological and genetic properties from Mongolian minerals, plants, and animals as described in Chapter Three.

Second, a great deal more work needs to be done to preserve the pre-Communist texts inside Mongolia. As Mongolia's pre-1921 educational system took place almost entirely within its monastic system, all books were written in the old Mongolian script or Tibetan, in the traditional printing method of long thin pages. The subjects of these books included technology, medicine, grammar, logic, religion, poetry, drama, and astrology. Very little has been done to preserve, catalogue, study, or even read these manuscripts which go back hundreds of years, although they embody most of Mongolia's native knowledge base. Although some were destroyed during Mongolia's socialist period, they still exist in the State Library, monasteries' libraries, and in private homes throughout the country.

In conclusion, since this book contains chapters on a wide variety of subjects, it should have something for everyone, including nature lovers, scientists, and even business people, and it raises many remarkable questions about Mongolia's future development.

## FOM ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

Friends of Mongolia have elected a new group of officers and Board of Directors. Officers serve a one-year term and board members serve a three-year term. Welcome aboard!

**Rick Smith, Co-Coordinator** [Smithrichardj1@hotmail.com](mailto:Smithrichardj1@hotmail.com)

Rick Smith is a community planning and development specialist at the US Department of Housing and Urban Development. A graduate of the University of Michigan School of Social Work, he served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Choibalsan, Mongolia.

**Patrick Sommerville, Co-Coordinator** [patrick.sommerville@att.net](mailto:patrick.sommerville@att.net)

Patrick Sommerville was a Peace Corps-Mongolia Teacher Trainer in Ulaanbaatar from 1996 to 1998. He earned his MPA, specializing in International Public and Nonprofit Management, from New York University's Wagner Graduate School. Patrick currently works at CHF International in the Management Associates Program.

**Lara Ho, Membership Coordinator** [laraho@post.harvard.edu](mailto:laraho@post.harvard.edu)

Lara Ho was a Peace Corps Mongolia TEFL volunteer in Bugat Soum, Bulgan Aimag from 1996 to 1998. She graduated from Harvard College in 1995 and from Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing in 2000 with a B. S. in Nursing. Now she works on as a nurse on the HIV/AIDS unit at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore.

**Adam Zenko, Treasurer** [adamzenko@hotmail.com](mailto:adamzenko@hotmail.com)

Adam Zenko was a Peace Corps Mongolia English teacher and community development worker in Tsetserleg, Arhangai from 1996 to 1998. He is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin and is currently finishing an M.A. in Languages and Cultures of Asia. He is currently a third-year law student at the University of Wisconsin.

**Yuen Hao-Huang, Communications Coordinator**

[huangyuenhao@hotmail.com](mailto:huangyuenhao@hotmail.com)

Yuen Hao-Huang served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Mandalgov, where he taught English. He recently worked with the Global Public Sector practice of Grant Thornton as a management consultant. He graduated in Political Science from UC San Diego in 1993 and holds a Master of Science in Foreign Service from Georgetown University.

**Roger Cohen, Mongolia Country Representative and Board**

**Member** [airag19@yahoo.com](mailto:airag19@yahoo.com)

Roger Cohen was a Peace Corps volunteer in Mongolia from 1996-1998 in Bayanhongor aimag. He holds a masters degree in teaching from the School For International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont. He recently served as the teacher trainer at the Soros Foundation. Roger is current a Teaching Fellow at the U.S. Embassy in UB.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2003-2006

**Allison Croft** [allison.croft@miis.edu](mailto:allison.croft@miis.edu)

Ally Christie-Croft is a former Peace Corps-Mongolia volunteer, who taught English in Bainchandamin Soum from 1994 to 1996. She was a Volunteer Coordinator for Peace Corps Mongolia during 1996/97. She recently finished an MBA from Monterrey Institute and will return to Mongolia shortly.

**Layton Croft** [Laytoncroft@yahoo.com](mailto:Laytoncroft@yahoo.com)

Layton Croft currently serves as the Country Representative for the Asia Foundation in Mongolia. Before that, he worked for PACT in Mongolia for the Gobi Initiative. He is a former Peace Corps volunteer and trainer.

**Rachel Fix** [Rachel\\_Fix@harvard.edu](mailto:Rachel_Fix@harvard.edu)

Rachel Fix is an education consultant for under-performing schools in Northern California. She is a Mongolia RPCV (1996-1998) who has worked as a consultant for education programs in several countries, including Albania and Armenia. Rachel has a master's degree in International Education Policy from Harvard University and is currently pursuing a PhD at UC Berkeley.

**Ganzorig Gombosuren** [gganzorig@hotmail.com](mailto:gganzorig@hotmail.com)

Ganzorig Gombosuren was a Mongolian Supreme Court Justice from 1990 to 1998. Currently he is living in the United States. He is a graduate of the American University, Washington School of Law and Open Society Institute Scholar.

**Ken Heldenfels** [kheldenfels@mn.peacecorps.gov](mailto:kheldenfels@mn.peacecorps.gov)

Ken served as Country Director in Mongolia from Jan. 2001 - July 2003. He was the Programming & Training Officer in Armenia 1998-2000 and served as a small business development PCV in Hungary 1995-97. Prior to Peace Corps, Ken worked in the private sector for many years, including positions with Pepsi Cola International, Igloo Products Corp., and Anderson, Clayton & Co.

**Alphonse La Porta** [a\\_laporta@yahoo.com](mailto:a_laporta@yahoo.com)

Alphonse "Al" La Porta currently is Political Advisor to the Commander in Chief of NATO Forces in Southern Europe, resident in Naples, Italy. He served as US Ambassador to Mongolia, 1997-2000 and had extensive diplomatic experience in East Asia. He retires from the US Foreign Service this fall and will relocate to Washington, D.C.

**Chris McKee** [gawaragcha@hotmail.com](mailto:gawaragcha@hotmail.com)

Chris McKee is an independent filmmaker from Northern California. He served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Mongolia.

**John Napoleoni** [jnap@mc.net](mailto:jnap@mc.net)

John Napoleoni was a PCV teacher of accounting at the Economic College of Mongolia from 1994 - 1996. He was the director of the

Mon-Forte cashmere processing factory until 2001. For the past three years, John has been an independent consultant for a variety of donor-funded initiatives in Mongolia. Currently, John is the primary advisor to the Mongolian Cashmere Promotion Society.

**Oyuntsetseg Oidov** [oyuntsetseg.oidov@undp.org](mailto:oyuntsetseg.oidov@undp.org)

O. Oyuntsetseg currently serves as the Executive Director of the Women's Information and Research Centre in Mongolia. A respected leader amongst NGO's, Oyuna has worked to build consensus among many groups. She is a Board Member of the Soros Foundation/Open Society Institute Board of Directors and serves on several other women issue-focused NGO boards.

**Mark Stibich** [feltbag@yahoo.com](mailto:feltbag@yahoo.com)

Mark "Skeeter" Stibich was a Mongolia PCV from 1996-1998. He returned twice to work on the Gobi Regional Economic Growth Initiative. Currently, Skeeter is finishing up his PhD in Public Health at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health. Skeeter has also done work in radio both in Mongolia and in Baltimore. Find out more at [www.stibich.com](http://www.stibich.com).

**Mark Zober** [mzober@netvision.net.il](mailto:mzober@netvision.net.il)

Mark Zober is a former Mongolia Country Director. He currently works in a range of capacity and peace building initiatives with Trumah International, an organization dedicated to the advancement of health, education and social welfare in Israel. Mr. Zober received his Ph.D. from Brandeis University and his Master's degree the University of Pittsburgh.



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