



PO Box 44132
Washington, DC 20026-4132
www.friendsofmongolia.org

NEWSLETTER FIFTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Material copyright © 2004 by Friends of Mongolia
JANUARY 2004

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. Friends of Mongolia exists to develop partnerships with the people of Mongolia in furtherance of cultural exchange and human development.

FOM FASHION EMERGENCY

Having a crisis after watching the latest makeover show? In honor of our **5th anniversary**, **FOM now has t-shirts** showing off our new logo (see left), available to our members. For a donation as low as \$15, you can have a FOM t-shirt shipped to your ger. You will be able to deduct all but six dollars of the donation on your income taxes. T-shirts are available in small, medium, large and extra large. Please specify size when donating. International donors please add \$5 for shipping.



MCKEE FINISHES GER DOCUMENTARY

FOM Board Member Chris McKee (pictured above with friend Badmaa) returned from Mongolia this August with over seventy hours of recorded video footage about life in khodoo and construction on the Baldan Baraivan Monastery in Khenti. The monastery footage was handed over to the Cultural Restoration Tourism Project, which is running the reconstruction, and the other thirty-five hours of footage is being edited into Mujaan, a 30-minute documentary about how Mongolians in the countryside build their gers, which should be finished in January 2004. Check out www.ragcha.com in the coming months for some teasers.

FOM OFFICER ELECTIONS

In order for Friends of Mongolia to grow to the next level of excellence, we need your help. Bring your new ideas, inspiration and leadership to the FOM officers. You need only have energy, commitment and a love for all things milk tea. Positions available include membership, communications, treasurer and co-coordinator.

John Tsai is this year's impartial election monitor. You can email him nominations to tsaijohnhans@yahoo.com. Deadline for nominations February 28th. You can mail nominations to 1836 Metzertott Road Apt. 1726; Adelphi, MD 20783; USA or call him at 301-434-8643.

FOM ADDRESS IN DC

Friends of Mongolia now has a mailing address in Washington, DC. Please address all correspondence to FOM, PO Box 44132, Washington, DC 20026-4132.

MONGOL HOLBOO TO LAUNCH IN DC

Now Mongolians won't have to rely on word of mouth to get the latest news in Mongolian. Mr. B. Nomin, of Montsame News, will be editor in chief of *Mongol Holboo*, the first Mongolian language newspaper published in the United States.

NEW MEMBERS BRING CONCRETE TO MONGOLIA

Many Friends of Mongolia have provided expertise in business, governance or social development. Our new members Prof. Luke Snell and his wife Billie brought knowledge of concrete to Mongolia's first national conference on concrete technology.

Billie Snell is Research Director and educational consultant to the Concrete Construction Resource Unit (CCRU). Luke is a professor of Engineering at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville and director of CCRU.

Luke Snell is quoted in *The Aleste* as saying "Mongolia is on the verge of a construction boom. Many people are moving into the cities to be closer to technology. There is a great need for housing, apartments, roads and sanitary structures. We are trying to provide knowledge and ways to improve structures to endure weather that produces temperatures as low as 40 below zero in the winter."

Snell showed Mongolians various ways of mixing concrete to make it stronger. Hopefully Mongolia will learn concrete lessons to patch ubiquitous cracked apartment blocks with new construction.

CAR MECHANIC EXPANDS BUSINESS IN MONGOLIA

Shur-Erdene repairs a car in his new garage built with a loan from USAID's GER initiative.

"This used to be just a big yard," said a smiling Shur-Erdene as he points to his new car repair garage. After he lost his job as a driver for a state-run business five years ago, he began using his car mechanic skills to feed his family. Weather permitting, Shur-Erdene fixed his neighbors' and friends' cars in his yard, and his home business grew by word of mouth.

Shur-Erdene lives in one of the ger districts of Darkhan, the second largest city in Mongolia. Last year, Shur-Erdene moved his family to a new home, closer to the main road, to attract more customers. Shur-Erdene knew he needed a covered workspace to continue to work in inclement weather and to expand his business. He asked the Growing Entrepreneurship

Rapidly (GER) Initiative to assist him. "Generally, it is difficult to get a loan if you live in a ger area as banks consider our collateral not enough for getting a loan. With the GER Initiative, I got a loan of \$500,000 togrogs (roughly \$450), and I built my garage," Shur-Erdene said.

Shur-Erdene's business is more stable now. He will work through this winter and by December he will have repaid his loan. He has asked the GER Initiative business advisors to assist him in locating and obtaining car color diagnostic equipment, so he can expand his business. Shur-Erdene said, "I want to expand my car repair business and I do not have enough knowledge to find information on where to get equipment." The GER Initiative is funded by USAID and USDA and implemented by CHF International.

Several FOM members were involved with GER's development. GER has locations in Darkhan and Ulaanbaatar and is considering expansion to Erdenet and Choibalsan.

Reprinted with permission from www.chfhq.org.

NEWS CLIPS FROM UB POST, MONGOL MESSENGER

- On December 30, Genghis Khan Bank/Angara Insurance paid \$5.8 million for Mongol Datgaal, privatizing the remainder of Mongolia's insurance industry. Lynch and Mahoney represented Genghis Bank at the closing ceremony.
- In new land reform policy, each Mongolian gets 0.07 hectares of land in certain districts.
- H.S. Securities Co., Ltd. of Japan bought AgBank for US\$6.85 million. The cabinet cancelled the tender for NIC.
- Ganhuuyag, CEO of XacBank, won "Manager of the Year" honors for the financial sector, an award given by the Mongolian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- The best television show for 2003 went to "Legal Hour," a courtroom drama produced in cooperation with GTZ.
- US Embassies are no strangers to public demonstration. A recent sit in at the US Embassy of Ulaanbaatar is not against President Bush, the Mongolia's own Ministry of Labor, who allegedly collected fees in a job trading scheme with South Korea that never materialized.
- North Korea doesn't just make nuclear threats. Mongolia and the People's Republic of North Korea signed an ostrich husbandry agreement this month.
- Asashoryu Dagvadorj, 22, became the first Mongolian sumo to obtain to the highest rank of *yokozuna*.

- Mongolian became SARS-less on May 26 after 15 suspected cases. Economic losses due to SARS in Mongolia are estimated to be 3 and three quarters billion MNT.
- President Hu Jintao visited Mongolia and made a four-point bilateral relations proposal. The Vatican cancelled its Papal visit because it would be premature and explained that "Our Lord doesn't want it."
- We weren't kidding when we told tourists you could get anything at the Black Market. A man named M tried to sell Russian missiles until he was arrested.
- In a related crime first, Mongolia's first bank robber in a black mask stole US\$90,000 and 70,000MNT. A guard sustained bullet wounds.
- On Nov. 7th. UNESCO blessed the *morin khuur* (horse violin) one of 28 masterpiece of oral and intangible heritage. The Uvs Lake basin is now part of the World Heritage List.
- US Congress passed \$10 million for Mongolia for FY2004. The total donor community pledged \$335 million.

DING DONG THE DEBT IS DEAD

Reuters brought us some great news over the new year. Russia agreed to forgive 98% of their \$3.5 billion debt. Mongolia incurred the debt during the Soviet period when the Soviet Union provided technical assistance to build infrastructure.

The US Congress questioned the payoff in the recent foreign aid bill, wondering why Mongolia should have to pay back the costs of "occupation." Mongolia made a final debt payment by selling bonds to a new investor: Ivanhoe of Canada, who is operating gold and copper mines in the South Gobi.

US JOINT CHIEFS CHAIR VISITS ULAANBAATAR

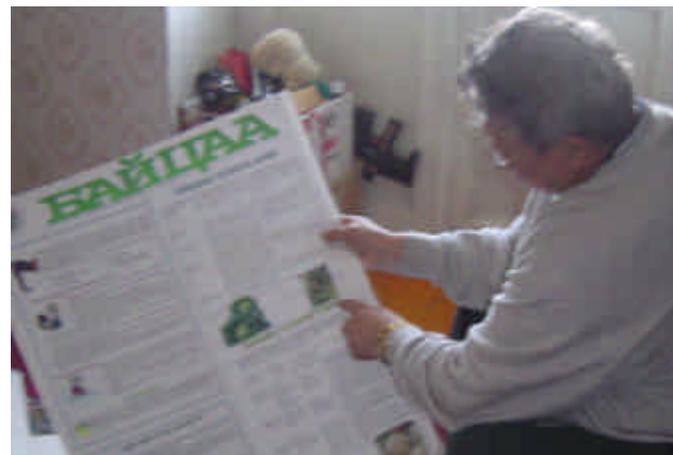
Mongolia became one of the first countries to support the United States in the War on Terrorism. They also repeated history by joining the coalition of over 30 countries to overthrow Saddam Hussain in Iraq, ironic, given Hussain's comparison of the United States to the Mongols of old, who conquered Baghdad almost 800 years ago.

General Myer became the first Chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to visit Mongolia this month when helped launch a proposed international center for the training of peacekeeping forces. The General praised Mongolian soldiers in a recent article by the AP: "They are disciplined. They are tough. They are physically fit. They are highly motivated." The US has pledged \$1 million for the center.

FRIENDS OF MONGOLIA REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOM has about \$600 to support a project in any sector (eg. education, human development, culture) in Mongolia. The project should be implemented with an NGO or public agency that has a track record of efficiently and effectively using donated funds. Overseas voluntary involvement is a plus, but not required.

After almost two years, Peace Corps Partnership was unable to utilize the donation made by Friends of Mongolia. Because no volunteer in Mongolia could utilize the \$600 before they finished their service, Peace Corps is returning the funds to FOM. If you are interested in directly supporting a PCV project anywhere in the world, Peace Corps now takes credit cards online at www.peacecorps.gov.



FOM SUPPORTS FAMILY FARMER'S ASSOCIATION (FFA)

This summer, FOM invested \$5000 in FFA, a Mongolian NGO dedicated to promote microfarming activities. Dr. R. Baljinnyam, President of FFA, an agronomist who consulted with UNDP, plans to develop training materials and videos for family gardeners in Ulaanbaatar and rural areas. "Let people see the food production cycles and processes with their own eyes and become confident in learning by doing, producing basic food stuffs of their own," he says. Although the project is slow starting, FFA has produced some materials (see Dr. Baljinnyam with cabbage lesson above) and shot raw footage of farming techniques.

FOM MEMBERS COLLABORATE ON WISCONSIN BOOKS FOR MONGOLIA

Two FOM members, Virginia M. Soukup-Robichaud and Adam Zenko are working together to bring donated books from Wisconsin to Mongolia. Donors of textbooks will be able to write off the value of the books as allowable by law. FOM will provide a letter of receipt. "I hope this book project can really take off," says Zenko. He can be reached at adamzenko@hotmail.com.

JOIN FOM (FOM)

As a member you can:

- Subscribe to our e-mail list serve
- Receive our newsletter
- Vote in FOM elections and meetings
- Serve on ad hoc committees for scholarships, fundraising and development projects
- Join the National Peace Corps Association for an additional \$25

_____ \$25 individual FOM

_____ \$40 family FOM (2 people at the same address)

_____ \$50 individual joint FOM/NPCA

_____ \$62.50 family joint FOM/NPCA

_____ I would like to receive future newsletters by e-mail

\$ _____ **Additional donation for FOM's general fund**

\$ _____ **Additional donation for the Scholarship Fund**

<http://scholarship.friendsofmongolia.org>

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

FOR MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY: NEW AND CURRENT MEMBERS (OPTIONAL)

Current Occupation: _____

Connection/interest in Mongolia: _____

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR DONORS. ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE. DONATE OVER \$15 AND RECEIVE AN FOM T-SHIRT. DONATE OVER \$50 AND RECEIVE A FREE GIFT. DONATIONS OVER \$100.00 WILL BE MAILED A RECEIPT.

Make check payable to: FOM

Send to:

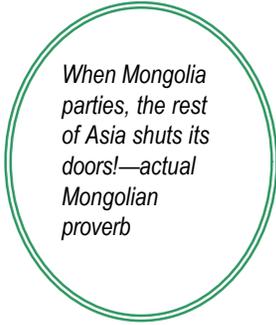
FOM

PO BOX 44132

WASHINGTON, DC 20026-4132

friendsofmongolia@worldnet.att.net

<http://www.friendsofmongolia.org>



PO BOX 44132
WASHINGTON, DC 20026-4132
friendsofmongolia@att.net