

THE CHEYENNE ROUNDUP



friendship force
CHEYENNE



March 2024

CALENDAR of EVENTS

March 11, 2024 6:00 Monthly meeting and Carry at Casey's Club

UPCOMING JOURNEYS

Incoming

San Antonio in June 12-19, 2024

Outgoing

Wairarapa New Zealand and Newcastle Australia in conjunction with the Western Michigan club - mid August, 2024

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Monthly Meeting

March 11, 2024
6:00 pm
Casey's Club
And via Zoom
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Friendship Force of Cheyenne

February 3, 2024

February meeting was held at the reception for Uzbekistan delegates. No formal business was conducted.

Friends,

Just a quick note about next Monday's meeting at Kasey's Club and by Zoom. I'll be there in person with a laptop.

The board and committee chairs (see the contact list in our lovely newsletter) will meet at 5 p.m. and we'll have our carry-in dinner at Casey's Club at 6 p.m.:

- * Program—Kentucky and Beyond
 - * *a quick* debrief of our February journey from Uzbekistan,
 - * and plans for our June visit from San Antonio,
- Check in with members

See you Monday!

Tim Thorson, Vice President

KENTUCKY & BEYOND

Marilyn Pettit and Vernice Miller will present the program, *Kentucky & Beyond*, for our March meeting. They will talk about their eight day trip to visit the Ark Encounter (replica of Noah's Ark) and the Creation Museum in Kentucky and other adventures which included Cincinnati, Ohio. You'll hear what made a lasting impression on Marilyn and see Vernice's treasured selfie!

They were *flooded* with many fun, happy memories that were *created* during this eight day trip that they are excited to share!

CLUB OFFICER

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Topic: Monthly Friendship Force of Cheyenne Club Meeting

Time: Nov 13, 2023 06:00 PM Mountain Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87252724386>

Meeting ID: 872 5272 4386

One tap mobile

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Dial by your location

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

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Meeting ID: 872 5272 4386

Our Journey From Uzbekistan

Our club, alongside community volunteers, hosted a congressional delegation from Uzbekistan from February 2 to 10. We had three non-member host families: Michael and Jerri Nelson (who have been members and remain interested in hosting), Jason Thomas and Sarah Burlingame, and Tim and Mary Kay Goetter. Tim and Elizabeth Thorson and Janet Black hosted as club members.

The delegates were: Senators Ravshanbek Alimov and Bakhtigul Butaeva and Deputies (like US Representatives): Firdavs Sharipov, Nuriddin Sultonov, and Sherzod Tukhtashev. Bakhrom Tuchiev, who facilitated last year's Uzbekistani delegation, returned along with Elmurad Kasym, our interpreter from the Denver area.

The delegates flew into Cheyenne on Friday afternoon. Several of us went to the Atlas Theater to watch a fundraiser production of male Broadway parts. We spent Saturday at the Terry Bison Ranch and lunch - thank you to Debbie Kaiser for setting up that! We had some delays getting back to the State Museum as our facilitator was getting pretty ill with a cold. But after a quick walk through of the museum, we learned that the Governor's Historic Mansion was closed to take down Christmas decorations.

This gave Senator Alimov the chance to tend to sick Bakhrom before we all met up again at Fran Fox's perfectly fit-for-purpose-of-hosting-parties home. It was a lovely reception with delegates visiting with club members and all of us catching up. Afterwards, we had some adventures seeing folks off on snowy roads. Exciting to see Wyoming snow squalls first hand.

On Sunday, the library presentation drew about twenty visitors - mostly hosts and club members. The presentations this year - and the introductions of the delegates to speak to their particular areas of expertise - went very well. We learned that many of the delegates this time come from the same province as Majuda who visited last year, Surxondaryo, along the border with Tajikistan and Afghanistan. It was great to have Kathleen Petersen up from Fort Collins to help! Thanks to Elizabeth for coordinating the rooms and tour at the library!

Monday morning, most of the delegates headed to Fort Collins to visit Old Town and get a quick view of the Colorado Rockies in the clouds. Monday afternoon the delegates were hosted by principal Brooke Cheney and Superintendent Stephen Newton. Monday evening found me laid out with a cold and the delegates joining a school board work session. Please thank Tim Bolin for arranging such great access to our educational system. Our school districts are probably the closest parallel to Uzbekistan's local governments / parishes / neighborhood concept of mahalla, part of their move away from authoritarian central planning to a more representative but stable system.

On Tuesday, the delegates met Laramie County Sheriff Brian Kozak and received a tour of the Laramie County Detention Center. Thanks to John Lee for setting this up! After lunch, we visited the State Capitol for a quick tour and long photo sessions in both houses of the Legislature.

On Wednesday, the delegates met with Laramie County Clerk Debra Lee, a perennial delegate favorite, where they learned about elections and especially how local officials have control over the conduct of elections. The delegates even got to check out a voting machine and learn about election security here. The delegates (and hosts) were impressed to learn that Clerk Lee had been an election monitor in Afghanistan (Uzbekistan's neighbor) for its first post-Taliban governments.

On Wednesday afternoon, the delegates met with Senator Tara Nethercott and Speaker of the House Albert Sommers. Sara Burlingame, one of our first-time hosts and a former legislator, set this up and it was our only significant legislative networking during the program. Both legislators were great hosts and both were interested to learn about the geographic and economic similarities between Wyoming and the Surdaxaryo region of Uzbekistan (also a frontier region). We had a bit of a diplomatic oops when we crossed paths with the Governor in an employee recognition ceremony and ended up being shooed out of the employee photo opportunity.

Saving the day in terms of elected officials, Cheyenne Mayor Patrick Collins was an enthusiastic and interested host. He responded favorably (will need to follow-up, see note below about Uzbekistan embassy) to the idea of a sister-city relationship with Surxundaryo's primary city of Termez. The delegation presented Mayor Collins with a beautiful velvet bokhara - a type of ceremonial robe -which he wore to Monday's council meeting.

The takeaway being that we really need to get some sort of buy-in from the Governor's office, at least for Members of Parliament delegations like the past two. Or we need to totally avoid crossing paths, which can be tricky in our Capitol. As the former ambassador from Uzbekistan to France, Ukraine, Russia, and Moldova; Senator Alimov was more than understanding of the unintentional slight.

Our plans for Thursday were thrown out due to inclement weather intermittently closing the road to Laramie. That's a known risk this time of year, but was thought worthwhile since we got a much better response from the UW economic development and research folks than our local and state economic development groups. LEADS and the Wyoming Business Council were interested but their involvement depended on the Governor's office. The Governor and Rep. Hageman's office chose not to be involved, as with our last delegation from Uzbekistan.

On the plus side, this meant the delegates had plenty of time to shop for and prepare a Uzbek meal instead of the planned library pizza party. We were concerned about yet another change of plans, but volunteers and club members rallied to make for another great evening together and arguably a friendlier environment than the meeting room.

I made a recommendation to Friendship Force Club International and the Congressional Office for International Leadership (COIL) that they advise clubs for Uzbekistan and Central Asian countries to include only host families without dogs, since misunderstandings around dogs complicated hosting (thank you so much, Nelsons!) and led to hangups in last-minute planning and one host family who was willing but unable to host this journey - and Elizabeth and I on cots for the week.

We always had abundant volunteers available to help get people to or from host homes. Thank you club members Ron Poelma, Debbie Kaiser, John Kaiser, Lisa Provance and John Kaiser for serving as day hosts. Huge thanks to Fran Fox who again singlehandedly welcomed a crowd for a delightful evening. Finally, thank you to club members who joined us for the public presentations, welcome reception and ad hoc farewell party. This delegation and our last was enhanced so much through the assistance and involvement of Dr. Dilnoza Khasilova of UW, who drove over to visit the delegates on Thursday night despite our having to cancel our UW program earlier in the day.

As a follow-up to the visit, Dr. Khasilova has put me in touch with Uzbekistan's embassy to the U.S. about inviting Mayor Collins, Senator Nethercott and Representative Sommer to meet Uzbekistan's ambassador in April when they are visiting the state.

On the business side, it looks like the total cash expenses for the journey will come out to about \$3,000. If you have any expenses that you haven't submitted, please do so as soon as possible so John Lee can get an expense check to you and so we can account for the costs of the journey. This means the club will net about \$2,500 (from \$5,000 paid by FFI) from hosting this journey. I've turned over the receipts and expense report to our Treasurer, John Lee, to cut expense checks.

I've sent in our follow-up paperwork to Friendship Force but any comments or quotes from hosts or club members are welcome along with photos. This journey strained our club's resources - too much was done by too small of a hosting group and that is mostly my fault for not asking for more help sooner. But I do think it calls into question the number of available host homes in the club at present. We hope that our community volunteers will consider future hosting opportunities - and let's remember to keep our doors open for new members as well!

I've gathered photos submitted by Janet and myself and added them to a shared drive in Google photos. I'll try to share the Album from the trip with the whole club group but here is also a link that should open the album: <https://photos.app.goo.gl/2jhbukrtq5aSV1av6>.

While we counted our reception at Fran's as our February meeting, we did not conduct a formal meeting amongst the delicious food and drinks. I look forward to seeing you on March 11!

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