



The U.S. Embassy and State Border Guard Service Maritime Brigade of Turkmenistan Conduct a Boarding Officers Seminar in Turkmenbashi City ...continued on p. 2.

Visiting Guest Speaker Professor David Guth Meets Media Representatives in Turkmenistan



Professor Guth during his presentation

From June 3 through June 7, 2005, David Guth, Professor of Journalism of the University of Kansas, led a series of workshops and seminars on media issues. He spoke about the U.S. Mass Media, basic elements of news, crisis communication, public relations, news gathering techniques ...

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Turkmen alumni set new goals at reunion read on p.9.



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THE SPOTLIGHT

Ambassador Jacobson visits cultural preservation project in Ahal Welayat



On July 12, Ambassador Jacobson and Public Affairs staff attended the completion ceremony for a restoration project at the Abu Said Abul Khair Shrine, near the village Maene Chache of Kaka etrap. The National Administration on Preservation of Cultural and Historical Sites received an Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation grant in 2003 for their work on the restoration of the XI century shrine. The project commenced in October 2004 and was completed recently. Continued on p. 2.

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## U.S. Embassy Activities in Turkmenistan

### Public Affairs Officer and General Services Officer lectures at Turkmenistan's State University

Embassy Ashgabat's PAO and GSO were the first Embassy officers in recent memory to serve as guest lecturers at Turkmen State University on June 1. Speaking to a group of about 50 English as Foreign Language (EFL) students, the PAO and GSO regaled their audience with their experiences studying at higher educational institutions in both the United States and Russia. Each officer encouraged the students to study abroad and to take advantage of the Embassy's educational and cultural resources. The PAO and GSO presented two in a series of six lectures by Embassy officers on U.S. culture, values, and policy at Turkmenistan's higher educational institutions.

### The U.S. Embassy and State Border Guard Service Maritime Brigade of Turkmenistan Conduct a Boarding Officers Seminar in Turkmenbashi City

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From July 25-29, 2005, the Embassy of the United States of America in cooperation with the Maritime Brigade of Turkmenistan's State Border Guard Service conducted a Boarding Officers Seminar in Turkmenbashi City. About 25 representatives from the U.S. Coast Guard and the State Border Guard Service of Turkmenistan are expected to participate. On July 29, U.S. Ambassador Tracey Ann Jacobson will meet the group to congratulate them on their successful cooperation.

The joint training activity is part of an ongoing exchange program led by the U.S. Embassy aimed at deterring the spread of weapons of mass destruction through joint training exercises and equipment transfers to customs and border security agencies. The course focused on boarding operations at sea, detaining vessels, discovering hidden compartments, use of force, and drug identification.

### Ambassador Jacobson visits cultural preservation project in Ahal Welayat

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The project turned out to be a great success, with several new historical objects being discovered that helped Turkmen scientists evaluate the monument in greater detail. During her remarks, Ambassador Jacobson congratulated the project participants on their achievements and stressed the value of preservation projects not only for the people of Turkmenistan, but also for the entire world.



### Public Affairs Section kicks off American Culture Days with movie festival in Turkmenbashi

On June 19-20, Public Affairs Section staff screened several American movies in Turkmenbashi in honor of U.S. Independence Day, including *E.T.*, *Saving Private Ryan*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and *North by Northwest*. Culture officials of Turkmenbashi provided the city's Palace of Culture as a venue for the festival. Each film attracted about 40 to 60 people. Public Affairs Section staff also presented small gifts to children who came for the movies.

### American culture days in northern Turkmenistan

On June 30 – July 1, Dashoguz hosted American Culture Days as over 900 people attended movies related to World War II and a PowerPoint presentation on the Holocaust. The Holocaust presentation was given before a screening of "Schindler's List." Other movies shown included "Patton," "White Snow and the Seven Dwarfs" and "North by Northwest."



### Visiting Guest Speaker Professor David Guth Meets Media Representatives in Turkmenistan

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and answered questions from the audience. The Turkmen government provided venues for the seminars, and also gave positive TV coverage of one of the workshops. Professor Guth also met with some of the foreign accredited journalists, freelance journalists and alumni of U.S. Government sponsored exchange programs. His visit was dedicated to World Press Freedom Day.



## U.S. Embassy Activities in Turkmenistan

### Soccer Match between U.S. Embassy and Turkmen Ministry of Foreign Affairs

On July 9, representatives of the U.S. Embassy and Turkmen Ministry of Foreign Affairs gathered for a friendly soccer game held at the International School in Ashgabat. The teams arrived wearing their own jerseys, and groups of supporters came out to cheer both sides. Opening remarks were provided by Ambassador Jacobson, and the game was covered by Turkmen television and a reporter from the Associated Press.

Despite a lack of practice, the Embassy team played very well together. Muhammedberdy Muhammedkuliev and Murad Ovez-Mamedov scored the first two goals of the game, and the half ended with the Embassy leading 2-0. The Ministry team was also quite strong, and was able to even the score during the second half. Thanks to the superb goaltending of Wepa Myaligulyev, who persevered through an unending series of shots on goal, the Turkmen side failed to score again late in the game. After two periods of overtime, the game ended with a tie, a diplomatic result.

Following the match, the two teams retired together to the Ambassador's residence for shashlik and refreshments. There is no word yet regarding when the two teams might meet again for a rematch.

### Soccer Match Pictures



### Presentation on the U.S. contribution to WWII

On June 30, Consular Officer Ian Turner gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled "America and World War II" during a meeting with alumni and WWII Veterans at the Dashoguz American Corner. In his presentation, Turner provided the audience with details and facts regarding American participation in WWII and assistance to the Soviet Union. He also discussed American actions in Western Europe, Northern Africa and the Pacific area. After the presentation, one of the veterans remarked that U.S. assistance to the Soviet people was vitally important in contributing to the Soviet victory at Stalingrad, the turning-point of the war, and opening a second, Western front. Furthermore, Turner's presentation showcased the cooperation of allied armies in WWII and drew parallels with today's joint struggle against global terrorism.

### Pictures from Dashoguz visit by Consular Officer Ian Turner



## U.S. Embassy Activities in Turkmenistan

### English Teachers Conference in Gokdere

From July 19 through 28, the seventh annual overnight conference for English teachers was held in Gokdere. The conference was organized by POET, an organization of English teachers in Turkmenistan, and included participants from all five welayats. During the event, participants attended classes on teaching methodology and concentrations such as poetry and photography. Teachers also organized their own workshops on debates, drama and creative thinking. In the evening, participants enjoyed activities including karaoke and square dancing.

This year a separate camp for children was hosted simultaneously at the hotel, so that teachers with young dependents could attend the conference. A total of 16 children of various ages participated in the camp, which included English language training and American games and sports.

Several representatives of the U.S. Embassy visited the conference over its eight days. Alumni Coordinator Gulyalek Soltanova told teachers about resources available for their use at the Embassy library, while Public Affairs Specialist Anjela Begjanova explained how they could apply for U.S. Government exchange programs, including the TEA program. Summer Intern Richard Fitzmaurice also gave a lecture on civic education and provided the participants with a booklet of sample lesson plans.

The overnight conference served as a great opportunity for teachers from all around Turkmenistan to gather together to share their unique experiences and ideas with one another.

### Public Affairs Section visits business development camp

On July 2, the Public Affairs Section Grants Coordinator and the DCM visited the Business Ideas Development summer camp. The Democracy Commission-funded camp provided enterprise development seminars and counseling for 25 young participants representing all five welayats (regions) of Turkmenistan. The campers come from underprivileged families and were selected from Enterprise Development Courses run by a private educational center. The campers were divided into three groups, and each group was asked to develop a business plan for a company of their choosing.

The first group proposed launching a private Health and Beauty Center which offers a wide range of physiotherapy and cosmetics consultations and procedures for people, including massage and sauna. The group took into account all the problems they might face with opening a business, starting with registration and ending with providing affordable prices for their services. On the other hand, the second group proposed starting a recycling company, while the third group expressed an interest in opening a Dance Club.

After each presentation, the jury members, which included local and foreign businessmen and representatives from the U.S. Embassy, asked each group questions about their presentations. Since all three groups answered the questions well, the jury decided not to identify an overall winner, but instead recognized each group as winners in specific categories. Thus, the first group was commended for its team work,

while the second group presented the most original idea, and the third group's proposal was judged to be the most realistic.

### First summer camp for English ACCESS Microscholarship program in Gokdere

From July 11 to 17, the English ACCESS Microscholarship program organized its first ever English language immersion summer camp for 35 ACCESS students from all over Turkmenistan. Ten local teachers, Peace Corps volunteers and U.S. Government program alumni also participated in the camp, which was held in Geokdere. The camp included not only English lessons, but also activities which promoted leadership, creativity, team work and healthy lifestyles. The children greatly enjoyed speaking English in an immersion environment and participating in various fun and exciting activities.

The program is supported by the Turkmen government and provides underprivileged youth with a chance to learn new skills.



## U.S. Agencies

### USAID Center for Disease Control installs blood safety equipment

On June 8, Center for Disease Control (CDC) expert began installing six sets of blood safety equipment, valued at US\$120,000, which were donated to blood banks in Turkmenistan earlier this year. Currently the equipment in all blood banks of Turkmenistan is out of date, and patients are frequently infected with hepatitis B and/or C during blood transfusion. The equipment will increase the safety of the blood supply and improve the accuracy of HIV and other test results, which in turn can help improve the country's response to infections as they arise. The donation is part of a comprehensive laboratory improvement and training program to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne diseases such as hepatitis, brucellosis and syphilis. With financial support from USAID, CDC will also train the blood bank's laboratory staff on correct usage of the new equipment. The Government of Turkmenistan will provide kits for blood tests and has renovated laboratory premises.

### ACCELS, American Corners Ashgabat:

#### Brain ring intellectual game among alumni

UGRAD alumna 2003 Firyuza Babayeva is organizing a *Brain Ring* competition for alumni of all programs, with the final game to be on July 29th. On July 7<sup>th</sup> the first training session was held at the ACCELS/EAC library, where 12 UGRAD and FLEX alumni were introduced to the game. The main aim of the project is to improve the logic reasoning skills of alumni and strengthen the ties between them. During the training alumni were divided into two teams and played against each other thus practicing and recalling major events and characters from world history and culture.

### Mary: American corner opens its doors to the community people

On July 4, 2004 and 2005, FLEX alumni Bahar Aydogyeva, Magtymguly Geldyyev, Anastasiya Kuznetsova, Taiyana Mendikovskaya, Ahmed Tagiyev, and Leyla Yagdyeva organized an American Corner Open Day for visitors. The aim of the event was to inform visitors about the American Corner's mission, its work in the community and plans for the future. The event also served to introduce this year's new FLEX alumni and to celebrate U.S. Independence Day. The agenda included alumni poster presentations on their most challenging experience in the United States and a movie showing as a part of the cultural program. In addition, the AC displayed new library resources and provided advising for those interested in applying for U.S. educational exchange programs.

### Mary: Community service seminars inspire participants to volunteer

On July 6-8, TASP student Mohammed Hommayev held a series of seminars and activities dedicated to the importance of community service. On July 6, Hommayev held a Community Service-Learning seminar for 12 local high school students and recent graduates. Hommayev started his training by introducing the basic concepts of democracy, community and civil society. In their introductions, students briefly shared their past experiences and why they are interested in public service. During the seminar, participants learned about the historical development of democracy, how NGOs contribute to community

development and the importance of civil society. Hommayev also talked about some of the NGOs operating in Turkmenistan such as Counterpart International, Medicine San Frontiers, and the International Red Cross. Students learned how each of these organizations were involved in humanitarian assistance, civil society development, working with youth, environmental protection, health awareness and other fields.

On July 7, Hommayev conducted a Service-Learning seminar for 13 people. During the seminar, participants discovered how to conduct needs assessment research in their communities. They also learned how to plan community projects, work in a team environment and recruit volunteers. In addition, a presentation was provided on SL activities in the US and Kyrgyzstan.

On July 8, the seminar participants performed community research in rural hospitals, bazaars, parks and other public places. After lunch, the participants gathered again to discuss their community observation surveys, which they had learned how to conduct during the Service-Learning seminar. All participants worked together in teams and presented their ideas about what they could do in the future to address problems in their community.

### World Blood Donor Day highlights importance of healthy lifestyles, safe blood supply

With financial support from USAID/AED-START, the World Health Organization celebrated World Blood Donor Day on June 14 in Ashgabat. Turkmenistan has a national system for collecting, storing, and providing donor blood to patients, but in practice, patients still remains dependent on donations from families or friends. Evidence from around the world demonstrates that voluntary, unpaid donors are the foundation of a safe blood supply because they are least likely to transmit potentially life-threatening infections to the recipients of their blood, but no promotional programs exist in Turkmenistan to encourage people to volunteer their blood. This event highlighted the importance of strategies to attract a new generation of blood donors – young people with healthy lifestyles – that result in safe blood available for use wherever and whenever it is needed to save lives.

### Turkmenbashy: U.S. Independence Day of American celebrated with orphanage children in Balkanabat

On July 6 FLEX alumni visited children at Balkanabat orphanage in honor of U.S. Independence Day. The event brought together 50 children and 15 FLEX alumni, as well as Turkmenistan American University Scholarship Program (TASP) students and local volunteers. After a short speech by Kristina Razahova, Regional Representative of the Turkmenbashy American Corner, FLEX alumni led an entertainment program related to the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. At the event's conclusion, all of the children were provided donations from the American Corner and FLEX alumni.

## U.S. Agencies

### Peace Corps

#### Overnight Aqua Camp a Major Success

One of the more popular Peace Corps summer camps took a new form this year. Although it has been an annual event in Turkmenbashi since 1999, Aqua Camp for the first time was held overnight this summer. Previously, the camp was conducted only during the day, forcing participants to commute from Turkmenbashi to the beach every morning and afternoon.

As in years past, the camp was organized by Turkmenbashi Peace Corps volunteers and Emma Hodjakulievna, a TEA alumnus and director of the Diller Duryasi English language center. 24 students of various ages took part in the camp, which was held for five days and nights at the Comcast Bank Hotel in Awaza. The organizers were awarded a democracy grant from the U.S. Embassy, which was used to help cover the costs of the hotel.

The new version of camp turned out to be very successful. Volunteers and teachers agreed that holding the camp overnight provided the campers with greater immersion into the English language. Although there was concern that some of them might grow homesick, the campers thoroughly enjoyed their extra time speaking English and no one complained of homesickness.

Each day, campers spent roughly half their time inside and outside. At the beach, volunteers taught campers new sports, including baseball, ultimate frisbee and capture the flag. Volunteers also gave swimming lessons and taught basic water safety. Back at the hotel, volunteers and local teachers led classes on a wide variety of interesting topics, including Swahili and African culture, Spanish, photography, slang, ecology and drama. At night, the campers enjoyed watching movies and learning American songs.

While at camp, the students were forbidden to speak any language other than English. To help enforce this rule, staff issued "Diller Dollars" to the campers and then fined them each time they heard Russian or Turkmen spoken. Campers also were given extra dollars for excellent effort. The system worked and students rarely spoke any other language than English. Overall, the language abilities of the students were quite impressive, especially considering their age.

In addition to the overnight version of Aqua Camp, Peace Corps volunteers and the Diller Duryasi center will be holding a second Aqua Camp this year from July 25<sup>th</sup> – August 1<sup>st</sup>. It will host approximately 60 students and will take the form of a daytime camp.



#### ILKINJILER's "pioneers" blaze new ground in defending farmers' rights

The challenges facing civil society organizations in Turkmenistan are well known, but the "Ikinjiler" Farmers' Association of Mary velayat, involving more than 150 farmers, continue to protect the interests of its members. Since last year, Ikinjiler, which translates as "pioneer" in Turkmen, has been promoting leased lands' distribution in accordance with the recently adopted Land Law. Although the law was passed in November 2004, little political will existed to proceed with the land distribution process. According to the Land Law, the Turkmen Government was supposed to establish land distribution committees at the district, regional and national levels to consider land applications immediately after the law became effective. In practice, however, the committees still had not been formed after seven months, and farmers had no way to apply

for land leases. Ikinjiler first complained to the district and regional authorities, but lacking resolution, they addressed the Cabinet of Ministers and Prosecutor's office. Ultimately, the Cabinet of Ministers sent the instructions to the regional authorities to set up the committees and recently, such committees were organized in Mary velayat. Since many people still remain unaware of the existence of land distribution committees, and furthermore, lack skills to write the applications, Ikinjiler has begun providing a range of technical assistance in how to write applications. Many USAID partners currently work closely with Ikinjiler, but Counterpart has been a long-standing supporter. Most recently, Ikinjiler was awarded grant under USAID/Counterpart's Water User's Association (WUA) project.

U.S. Agencies

**Dashoguz**

**American corner in Dashoguz organizes presentation for English teachers** On July 6, 2005, American Corner representative Zulfya Abdrimova and Peace Corps volunteers organized a presentation for Dashoguz English Teachers. Abdrimova gave a presentation about the history of the American Corner in Dashoguz and an overview of the services that it provides to the community. She also talked about the activities of Peace Corps volunteers and U.S. Government program alumni. In addition, Abdrimova gave a special power point presentation on eligibility and requirements for the TEA program and encouraged the teachers to apply. She also discussed eligibility and requirements for other U.S. Government exchange programs, including FLEX, JFDP and Muskie. More than 37 English teachers from all districts and Peace Corps Volunteers attended the presentation.

**Turkmenabat**

**Independence Day Celebration** On July 5, Alumni Assistant Sabina Huseyinova, 10 FLEX alumni and Peace Corps volunteer Mathew Briggs organized a celebration for U.S. Independence Day at the American Corner in Turkmenabat. 11 high school students and 4 visitors attended the event. To give people a better understanding of the holiday, Huseyinova talked about the history of July 4<sup>th</sup> and FLEX alumni performed a skit to demonstrate how it is celebrated in America. After the performance, alumni organized American games to engage participants in the holiday spirit.

**IREX/IATP NEWS IN BRIEF**

**Residents of Turkmenistan Mark**

**International Children's Day** On June 1, IATP access sites in five cities across Turkmenistan hosted a 90-minute online discussion for 18 people to mark International Children's Day. During the event, participants discussed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which spells out in an unequivocal manner the rights to which every child is entitled, regardless of his/her ethnicity, sex, religion, or social origin. The discussion was led by Dr. Murad Haitov, who mentioned that the Turkmen government had adopted a special law entitled "Guarantees of Children's Rights" in 2002 which complies with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Until recently, rural farms made use of child labor due to workforce shortages. Groups of children, aged 12-17, and their teachers used to work in the fields during harvests, missing classes for weeks at a time. Participants asked Dr. Haitov about the role of conventions in the adoption of state laws, as well as regarding the economic, cultural, and social rights of children. The online discussion helped raise greater awareness in Turkmenistan regarding children's rights.

**Alumni Discuss US Relationship with Uzbekistan and Central Asia with State Department Official Online**

On June 9, seventeen alumni of U.S. Government exchange programs from Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan gathered online at 10 IATP sites for a live discussion with Kent Logsdon, Deputy Director in the State Department's Office of Caucasus and Central Asian Affairs. The discussion, which was hosted at the State Department alumni website (<http://alumni.state.gov>), focused on America's relationship with Uzbekistan and Central Asia. Mr. Logsdon talked about the recent protests in Andijan, Uzbekistan and developments in relations between the United States and Central Asia.

**Alumni Discuss Media Issues with American Expert Online**

On June 7, IATP united 17 alumni of U.S. Government exchange programs for a 90-minute online discussion with Professor of Journalism David Guth at IATP access sites in Ashgabat, Dashoguz, and Balkanabat. IATP Alumni Coordinator Gulnara Chashemova moderated the discussion, initiated by the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat, to give alumni from all regions of Turkmenistan a chance to speak with an American media specialist. In the course of the online discussion, Professor Guth answered questions on the development of media in the United States, its role in people's daily lives, journalistic ethics, and what it takes to tell a good story. He was also asked about exchange opportunities for journalists, such as the Edmund S. Muskie and Fulbright programs. At present, there are no journalism departments at universities in Turkmenistan, and prospective students lack opportunities to enhance their journalistic knowledge and skills. Through the online discussion, alumni across Turkmenistan were able to learn more about journalism in the United States.

During the hour-long chat, alumni asked many questions regarding the U.S. reaction to the events in Andijan, U.S. efforts to resolve other potential conflicts in the region, and the plight of Uzbek refugees in Kyrgyzstan. Thanks to the ECA-initiated alumni website, U.S. Government program participants are able to stay in contact with one another and ECA, as well as participate in on-line discussions with U.S. government officials.



## U.S. Agencies

### Disabled Athlete Wins Grant in Dashoguz Using IATP Resources

Thanks in part to support from the Dashoguz IATP center, disabled athlete Ibraghim Nurdjanov has received a grant from Counterpart Consortium (CC) for the Dashoguz Disabled Athletes Sports Club (DASC). From February 28 to March 1, Nurdjanov participated in a two-day, 14-hour workshop on fundraising conducted by UNDP Small Grants and Public Participation Advisor Oleg Guchgeldiyev, Muskie 95. During the workshop, participants learned how to write and review proposals, develop budgets and build relationships with donors. After completing the workshop, Nurdjanov began working on his grant proposal. Using IATP's on-line resources, he was able to stay in touch with Guchgeldiyev and ask further questions. On May 11, Nurdjanov submitted his grant application, which proposed buying new sports equipment for 119 disabled athletes of DASC. On June 2, Nurdjanov received a phone call from Kerim Amanov, CC Program Manager in Dashoguz, informing him that DASC had been awarded \$,000 for the project. Nurdjanov will spend the grant money by buying various sports equipment such as weights, treadmills, stationary bikes, and elliptical machines. All of the purchased equipment will be used by athletes for rehabilitation and staying in shape.

### Residents Discuss Desertification and Drought Issues in Dashoguz

On June 16, Andrey Zatoka, IV 05, conducted a two-hour workshop in Dashoguz on environmental issues to mark the UN-initiated World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought. Fifteen participants, including five U.S. Government program alumni, Red Crescent volunteers and residents living near the IATP access site were present at the workshop. During the seminar, Zatoka explained that desertification is a major ecological, economic and social problem for many countries in the world, including those in Central Asia. He explained that desertification in arid and semi-arid regions is caused by many factors, including climatic variations and human activities such as overuse of irrigation, overgrazing, land reclamation and the building of roads and railways. Conservation and rehabilitation of degraded lands should be given a higher priority in Turkmenistan, since desertification caused by the overexploitation of natural resources has occurred in several of its regions, including Dashoguz. In addition, due to heavy use of irrigation on cotton fields, levels of salt and pesticides in Dashoguz's drinking water have exceeded recommended limits. As a result, there have been increases in the number of residents, especially women, who have experienced kidney problems, and rates of infant mortality have also increased.

### Students Complete Distance Learning Economics Course

On June 29, 13 trainees from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, and Great Britain completed Maral Meredov's nine-week distance learning (DL) course entitled "Basics of Econometrics," which is hosted by IATP's DL portal ([www.iatp.edu.tm/moodle](http://www.iatp.edu.tm/moodle)). The primary goal of the course was to teach econometrics to both students and economists, since the subject is not adequately covered at Turkmen universities. Econometrics is a combination of statistical and mathematical methods which is used by international economists to develop accurate economic forecasting and planning by quantifying theories and solutions to economic issues. Meredov's course, which began in March, consisted of nine modules and provided students with online lectures on basic

theories of econometrics. Making use of quizzes, polls, and forums, the course was also interactive and engaging. It is one of the six IATP DL courses offered by trainers from Turkmenistan, which have taught 54 students on various topics including psychology, journalism, mathematics, and interactive teaching methods.

### Alumni Discuss Library and Information Issues with American Expert Online



On June 28, 18 alumni of U.S. Government exchange programs gathered at IATP access sites in Ashgabat, Dashoguz, and Mary for a 60-minute online discussion with Professor of Information Studies John Richardson. IATP Alumni Coordinator Gulnara Chashemova moderated the discussion, which was organized by the US Embassy in Ashgabat to give alumni from all regions of Turkmenistan a chance to speak with an American specialist of library and information sciences. Libraries in Turkmenistan are still using paper catalogs and archives, forcing visitors to spend a lot of time to search for materials. In the course of the online discussion, Professor Richardson answered questions on library systems and technologies used in the United States. He also spoke about possible funding sources, online libraries, and digitalizing sources. The online discussion provided alumni with ideas that could be used to improve the standards of local libraries in Turkmenistan.

### Two Alumni Win Project Smile Grants

Adelya Mishenko, CI 02, and Dayanch Hojageldiyev, UGRAD 05, have received Project Smile grants. Adelya's project will allow 8<sup>th</sup> grade students from Balkanabat Secondary School #11 to participate in lessons organized by ecologists from the Ministry of Nature Protection. The goal of the lessons is to teach students about ecological problems afflicting their communities and the world as a whole. These lessons will be followed by a countryside clean-up event. Dayanch will organize a "Young Explorers" club at a local library that will expose 15 youth to world geography and culminate in an excursion to the countryside.



Alumni Beat

**DL Students Complete Journalism Course**

On July 15, thirteen distance learning (DL) students from Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine completed Dina Bayborodina's four-month DL course entitled "The Kitchen of Journalism" that she has been teaching from IATP's DL portal at [www.dl.iatp.kz](http://www.dl.iatp.kz) since March 10. Bayborodina is a retired journalist who received a degree in journalism from Lomonosov Moscow State University in Russia and worked as a journalist in Turkmenistan for more than 25 years for "Turkmenskaya Iskra" ("Turkmen Spark") newspaper. She also produced three educational shows for Turkmen TV. From November to February, IATP Web Development and Training Coordinator Alexander Mukhamedov taught Bayborodina and five other DL consultants how to create DL courses, incorporating lectures, forums, chats, tests, and glossaries into online courses. DL matches the training skills and needs of people otherwise separated by time and space and allows people to learn without taking them away from home or the office. Bay-

borodina's course provided a unique opportunity for Turkmen residents to learn what journalism is and gain journalistic skills. At present, there is not a single university journalism department in Turkmenistan, and students and current journalists have no options in the country, where they can enhance their knowledge and journalistic skills such as gathering, editing, and presentation of the objective information. Her course consisted of three stages: introduction, training, and practical part. Bayborodina used online lectures, polls, quizzes, glossaries and forums to enhance the students' use of critical thinking and writing skills. As a result, DL students were able to write their first literary worth essays and articles. Alyona Kalinina, a DL student from Ukraine, for instance, launched her individual project on the DL forum by posting her debut article on selection process of the European musical contest "Eurovision-2005," held in Ukraine. Bayborodina's course is one of the six IATP DL courses offered by trainers from Turkmenistan, who have taught 54 students on different topics such as psychology, econometrics, mathematics, and interactive teaching methods.

**Turkmen Alumni Set New Goals at Reunion** *...continued from p. 1*

On July 17-18, the annual U.S. Government program alumni reunion was held in Turkmenbashi. Through various presentations, workshops, games and recreational activities about 70 alumni from all over Turkmenistan shared their ideas about potential projects, including efforts to protect the environment help disadvantaged groups, encourage professional development and promote the growth of informational resource centers. In particular, alumni brainstormed ideas to acquire academic development materials for existing alumni resource centers and organize English language courses and camps for youth. Session leaders also trained alumni in fundraising, networking and developing structured grant proposals.

The annual Alumni Reunion brought together active alumni who are committed to addressing social problems in Turkmenistan. Participants representing almost all U.S. Government exchange programs established new contacts with each other as well as created a positive environment for newly returned alumni who are already prepared to contribute to the development of the National Alumni Association and work on creation of new alumni resource centers in smaller cities of Turkmenistan.



**Pictures from Alumni Reunion —Turkmenbashi 2005**



## Alumni Beat

### Alumni enjoy the first ever alumni talent festival

June 25 marked the first ever Alumni Talent Festival organized by alumni and funded by PAS and IREX. Alumni as well as international community members from the Embassy, Peace Corps and USAID were invited to the Festival. Alumni were able to demonstrate their talents and love for American music through a karaoke competition. Songs performed by contestants included Platters' Only You, Frank Sinatra's New York, New York, Elvis Presley's Love Me Tender, The Eagles' Hotel California and many others. The first three places were awarded prizes. The event also served as a great opportunity for alumni to network with international organizations.

### Residents Create Online City Tour Guide in Mary

On July 18, Sergey Kolodin, Russian teacher, and Anton Orlov and Parahat Agahanov, high school graduates finished their joint website, [www.iatp.edu.tm/mary\\_guide](http://www.iatp.edu.tm/mary_guide), on the Mary city tour after completing a one-week Web design course conducted by IATP Trainer Ruslan Kuliyeu at the IATP access site in Mary. From July 6 to 15, Kuliyeu introduced the trainees to Web page editors and taught them how to design a website, create links, optimize images for the Web, and create user-friendly layouts. Prior to the Web design course, all the trainees attended series of IATP courses on computer and Internet basics in September 2004. The website is mainly targeted for tourists visiting the old city. Mary is one of the major ancient cities of southwest Central Asia that UNESCO declared as one of the World Heritage Sites in 1999, a program which aims to catalogue, name, and preserve sites of outstanding importance, either cultural or natural, to the common heritage of humankind. The website contains thorough information in Russian on the history of Mary, its sightseeings, shopping malls and markets, hotels, and recreation centers. With the addition of this website, the IATP server in Turkmenistan now hosts 130 websites, the majority of Web content hosted in the country.

### Alumni Attend Continuing Education Seminar

On July 2-3, 17 alumni of U.S. Government programs participated in an Alumni Continuing Education seminar entitled "Educational Technologies." The training was held at the Sheraton Ak Altyn hotel and conducted by certified trainers Tahir Garipov and Galina Kalagina, both alumni of the International Visitors Program. The primary purpose of the seminar was to teach the participants how to use time effectively and keep themselves up-to-date with new technologies. Over the two days, alumni learned a great deal by participating in role-playing sessions and various other activities.

### FLEX alumni family welcomes new alumni at Dashoguz American corner

On July 7, Alumni Coordinator Irina Kletchuk organized a welcome party for old and new FLEX alumni at the Dashoguz American Corner. FLEX alumni from years past took turns introducing each other, while the new arrivals shared their experiences as exchange students in the United States and discussed their future plans. Older alumni also discussed opportunities for volunteering in alumni activities and community projects.

### New UGRAD Alumni Participate in the Re-entry Workshop

On June 24, eight recently returned UGRAD alumni participated in a Re-entry workshop organized by IREX. Cultural Affairs Officer Natalie Ashton-Baker welcomed the new alumni and spoke about opportunities for them in Turkmenistan. During the workshop, the new alumni looked back at their experiences in the United States, and discussed any changes that might have occurred during their year abroad. They also talked about their plans for the future and learned about opportunities available to them through IREX, IATP, and PAS. In addition, new alumni had a chance to hear about the return experiences of previous program participants and discuss those with them.

Following the all-day workshop, the new arrivals gathered with approximately 50 other U.S. Government-sponsored alumni, along with staff from the US Embassy and representatives of foreign organizations at the Grand Turkmen Hotel for a Welcome Home reception. The event was officially opened by U.S. Embassy Charge-d'Affaires Jennifer Brush. Ms. Brush welcomed back the new alumni and congratulated them with the successful completion of the program. Later, alumni and guests were shown a short presentation, made up of photographs taken by the new alumni during their year in the United States. After the presentation, the guests enjoyed a live music performance by a local group. The event served as a good opportunity for alumni to meet new people and improve their networking skills.