

Steve Brown's Afghanistan Trip Journal

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- **Location:** Kabul, Afghanistan
- **Date:** Sept 7
- **Time:** 7:00 AM
- **Title:** Hello from Kabul

Comments

This report will cover our days in transit and the first day in Afghanistan. The travel to get here was pretty much uneventful. We rented a car and drove to LAX. Our entertainment at LAX was over lunch watching how the airport security dealt with what appeared to be an abandoned suitcase and backpack. They and their dog looked at it for about a half hour before a drunk showed up to claim it. They scolded him and he laughed at them and that was the end of it. We took a flight of around 12 hours to London, had a long layover there and then had about a seven hour flight to Dubai. We laid over that night and met up with Ken Kraushner at the Dubai airport (a computer geek from D.C. who is helping us out with some IT stuff at Nangarhar University- NU). The three of us flew on to Kabul on KAM air. We asked what a first class upgrade would cost but were told they were sold out so they gave us complimentary business class seats. The airline is quite comfortable. We arrived in Kabul the morning of Sept 6 after leaving San Diego on Sept 3.

We were met by our driver who works for Ishaq and immediately went to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Embassy to see if we could assist in the issuance of UAE visas for the six Nangarhar University professors who are scheduled to be in UAE for an ESL training workshop on Sept 11. San Diego State University (SDSU) has provided all kinds of documentation but we were advised it was insufficient. They also need a letter of invitation from an UAE resident or business.

We met Ishaq at the UAE Embassy and he advised he had just taken possession of two pallets of ESL materials sent by SDSU under the World Bank program and arranged for their shipping to NU in Jalalabad.

From there we went to the home of Mina Wali who has been the President Elect of the Rotary Club of Kabul and who will take over as president at this time. (She just returned to Kabul from the States the day before after dealing with some health issues.) We talked

to her about the process of registering Rotary Clubs in Afghanistan since that is a big issue with some of the clubs here. The RC of Kabul has finally been able to register (took about three years) and we need to determine if it is best to consider the other clubs registered under that registration or if they should register independently. We will meet with the Ministry of Commerce regarding this. We also talked with Mina about the need for an UAE invitation to help obtain the visas for the Afghan professors. She advised she had a friend in UAE she will attempt to contact regarding this. His name is Mr. Shinwari 971 505 533769 Shinwari1973@yahoo.com.

We then checked into the German Guest House where we are staying. Our rooms are quite nice but I am a bit surprised that a German Guest house has no beer.

After trying to get a bit organized, we then went to the Kabul Inn where we were told the RC of Kabul would be meeting. There was a message for us that the meeting had been moved to one of the member's homes so we went there for the meeting. We talked about Rotary's Group Study Exchange program and how we will be interviewing Afghan candidates for this. Under this program, a total of seven Afghans can come to our Rotary district for approximately one month a year or so from now.)The club had six members present, three of whom are under age 40 and all interested in being interviewed. (Normally only one person on the team can be a Rotarian but we anticipate receiving an exception in this regard.) We also talked about the club registration process and some issues the club has regarding potential projects the club has had proposed to it. There is high level concern that Rotarians in the club should not benefit personally from projects and perhaps some misunderstandings as to how Rotary can help in working with other organizations. We invited all members to the Charter Ceremony for the Rotary Club of Logar which we will hold tomorrow evening. It sounds like most will attend that event. We were pleased to learn from Mina that she had made contact with Mr. Shinwari in UAE who indicated he would do what he could to help with the visas.

We came back to our guest house and I provided some specific GSE information by e-mail to one of the young Rotarians in the RC Kabul. We need to interview him tomorrow since he will be traveling when we plan to conduct most of the Kabul interviews on our return through Kabul heading home.

Rather late at night I also contacted Mr. Shinwari by phone who advised he will do what he can to help with the visas and sent him a detailed e-mail regarding what we think we will need. I called Steve Spencer at SDSU and so advised. He and Marla Federe are leaving the next night for the Dubai workshop. (It will still be attended by some who do not need the UAE visas.)

I am experiencing some technology issues. My computer will only work in the SAFE mode which is both very awkward and limiting--and it soon may not boot up altogether. So I am asking people to copy Fary on any communications to me since her computer is working fine. Skype (2 cents a minute telephone calls) will not work for telephoning from my computer because of my computer problem and also the internet is too slow for it to work on Fary's computer. Fortunately I have an international cell phone which

although expensive (4.00 per minute I think) works just fine in about any country in the world. Its number is: (011) 44 7841 176308 and I can receive incoming calls on it as well. I am leaving it one since right now our Afghan cell does not appear to be receiving incoming calls. I will figure out today if the Afghan number has changed (and so advise) or if there is some other issue.

So right now I have some technology challenges but we have enough redundancy so that these are just annoyances but should not impact what we hope to accomplish. We have our challenges in front of us and know we won't be able to accomplish all we set out to do but we will keep chipping away at things.

Good news. We had dinner at the Kabul Inn following the Rotary meeting and they sent a runner for beer for me to bring back to my guest house room that has its own refrigerator. Bad news—I was so tired I only had one beer yesterday. Good news--My Afghan diet has officially started.

That's all for now. Steve

- **Location:** Kabul, Afghanistan
- **Date:** Sept 8
- **Time:** 6:00 AM
- **Title:** Busy times

Comments

Saturday, Sept 8 4:00 AM

We have a big day coming up today so I need to get an early start on things. Yesterday was quite productive given Friday is their “Sunday” here. We started with a breakfast meeting with Maria Beebe. She is the lead person from Washington State University (WSU) administrating a \$12.7 M grant from USAID to bring in electronic learning classrooms to Afghanistan. Not enough time for the details here but through the San Diego~Jalalabad Sister Cities Foundation we were invited some time back to make a proposal to access some of these funds to build an online program to train teachers to Teach English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) to be centered at NU. The proposal would also include hardware and software for the Internal Learning Center we have constructed and are in the process of furnishing at NU. This meeting was an introductory meeting to prepare for a subsequent meeting with her later in the day.

Ishaq then met us at the German guest house to review many of our anticipated activities while we are in Kabul and later in Jalalabad.

We then went to Le Bistro and again met with Maria and Ishaq. Her common theme is that the cost to deliver the nine modules is far more than USAID is used to paying. Our response is that neither Fary nor I have developed the proposal for those costs and the persons who prepared the proposal have cut the costs to the bone and are not willing to cut the costs further. It is also clear to us (and we now think clear to Maria) that what is being proposed is far different/superior from any program they have been able to put in place so far. The program integrates and builds on what we are delivering through the World Bank TEFL classes SDSU is designing and implementing. We need to provide Maria the following information: The Eight year curriculum Marla has developed which is now going through the final stages of approval by the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) showing how a total of 12 TEFL related classes integrate into the regular curriculum (Three on-line modules will be provide by the World Bank funding.) How the two TEFL related Masters degrees programs of Rotary funded Scholars Israr and Sayad will integrated into application of the WSU proposal and how the World Bank funded training workshops scheduled to take place in San Diego the summers of 2008 and 200, will provide training of lead instructors to provide direct facilitation and also train in country facilitators for implementation starting at NU with the model to be replicated throughout the country of Afghanistan. (Marla and Steve during your ‘down time’ in Dubai can you please amplify?) Armed with this info, Maria will then meet with the brand new USAID program officer who is an ESL specialist regarding this. Fary and I may also meet with that person on our return through Kabul. Maria also noted that our proposal through WSU to USAID will be more attractive if we simply take out all the

hardware, software and related equipment and give WSU the wish list to procure those items directly with USAID's approval. This will essentially result in creating a technology rich ILC funded with USAID funds directly through WSU. We need to sharpen our wish list in this regard. Maria is confident this can proceed regardless of where things eventually sort out on the TEFL part of our proposal. WSU is in charge with creating ANGeL Centers throughout Afghanistan and utilization of the NU ILC we have built allows them to help accomplish that mandate. ANGeL stands for Afghan New Generation E Learning –not sure how that fits in with the Islam religion. Perhaps a VIRGiN Center would be more appropriate— Center for “Virtual Information Re Institutional [k]nowledge” We also learned from Maria that the Vice Chancellor from the Cal State University system was recently in Kabul on official Cal State business. She will provide us the details Perhaps this means that the unwritten Cal State policy of no Cal State employees, contractors or sub-contractors at any level can travel to Afghanistan has been modified or that that policy is being enforced selectively. (Fary is here on vacation and since I am not accountable to anyone (except Susan) I can meet with anyone I please. I invite Fary to join me as it suits her vacation interests and schedule.)

From Le Bistro we went to the Kabul Inn and interviewed Zahid Uilah Hamdard, a remarkable 28 year old member of the RC of Kabul for a possible position on the Group Study Exchange (GSE) team of Afghans who will be coming to our Rotary District in Rotary Year 2008-09. (He will be out of town when we conduct the rest of the interviews on our return through Kabul.) I do not want to say too much in this somewhat public document but he is a remarkable young man dedicated to the rebuilding of his country and he has the ambition, education and skills to make a significant difference. He is also a very dedicated Rotarian. (We anticipate obtaining an exception to the one Rotarian per GSE team rule.)

We then met with management at the Kabul Inn regarding the Charter night celebration for the RC of Logar to be held there later that afternoon/evening. No advanced arrangements had been made by the Pakistani Rotarians or the RC of Logar Rotarians. The Kabul Inn was very accommodating. We took over the entire dining room and set the table for 30 people. Four Pakistan Rotary leaders had made the trip, fourteen Logar Rotarians, Seven Rotarians from the RC of Kabul, an Afghan Rotarian from a club in Maryland and her guest, Ishaq Fary and I. It was a very dignified affair. We brought with us a large banner we had made for the RC of Logar, a medium sized Theme Banner for this year, and 14 copies of the ABC's of Rotary translated into Dari, Rotary pins for all members and officers pens. We also presented a Rotary bell and gavel to the President which was a gift from a Rotary Club in Maryland (different from the club of the attending Rotarian from Maryland.) Almost certainly, this was the largest gathering of Rotarians ever (or at least since the Soviet invasion) in the country of Afghanistan. We all made some Rotary speeches (I talked about the recent history behind the development of each of the four clubs now in Afghanistan and the upcoming GSE and the sister club relationships developing with the clubs in Afghanistan. Fary talked about the importance of holding regular meetings at regular places and attending regularly.) It was a great evening.

When people broke for the buffet dinner, I checked e-mail to see if Mr. Shinwari was able to provide the requested documents to assist in getting the UAE visas. The files were huge and my poor computer had difficulties but the bottom line is we receive three very strong documents. The only issue I have with the documents is that the letter is a total cut and paste complete with my exact reference to [fill in appropriate info re your personal and business background]. That information was provided in two separate documents – one is his business license and the other is something in Arabic with a bunch of colored seals which I am told reads very well. Ishaq believes the documentation is strong and what has been requested. When I returned to the guest house I printed out the documents using a combination of my computer, Fary's computer a pin drive and the portable printer. We had some serious formatting issues but they look pretty good.

I realized at the end of the day my Afghan diet was working pretty well. I had a roll in the morning, and interim beer at the guest house after breakfast , a small bowl of tomato soup, chocolate cake and wine at Le Bistro but missed out on dinner fussing about with Mr. Shinwari's documents. Back at the guest house, I went through some e-mails and prepared for today. We will be at the UAE Embassy at 8:00 AM and hope for the best for the visas for the eight NU representatives who are hoping to leave for Dubai in two days, meet with Abdul at the MOHE re World Bank contract, have lunch with Ms. Latif who is the WB program officer, meet with a Deputy at the Ministry of Education re salaries for the female teachers at the Jalalabad Rotary school, hope to meet with person at Ministry of Economics who registered the Rotary Club of Kabul, have tea with the Pakistani delegation and close with dinner with Michael Devenny who is the lead American ESL teacher at NU who will be leaving from Kabul tomorrow for the workshop in Dubai.

Should be an interesting day.

Steve

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Location: Kabul
- **Date:** Sept 9
- **Time:** 7:00 AM
- **Title:** Busy and productive day yesterday

Comments

Sunday 6:00 AM Kabul

We will leave for Jalalabad this morning after a very productive day yesterday. We still don't have the visas for the Afghan professors going to Dubai but we are closing in on the solution. We believe the visas can be issued in Dubai and have a team working on it. Ishaq is scanning passport info to Mr. Shinwari in Dubai. Steve Spencer has just arrived there from SDSU and working with Shinwari. I am sending \$2,000 in cash with the NU Chancellor who flies to Dubai this morning and Steve Spencer will then give \$2,800 in crisp new bills to the processing agent who advises we should have the visas late this afternoon which will be scanned and sent to the Afghan professors who will fly out tomorrow. I am talking bets on if this will actually happen. But if it does not happen tomorrow, we may be able to extend the training session a day or two if there is only a short delay. This all appears legal since this was suggested to us by the UAE Embassy when we met with their representative yesterday morning.

After that meeting we were joined by the NU Chancellor we (including Ishaq) met with Abdul at the MOHE regarding the SDSU/NU partnership. Without my going into detail in this report, he was extremely complimentary in all aspects about SDSU's performance under the agreement. He acknowledges some of the difficulties SDSU faces and some of the limitations it operates under. There also is a window of opportunity to have a smaller SDSU/NU partnership for building capacity in the NU Engineering department and Abdul (and at a later meeting the World Bank representative) strongly encourages SDSU to put together an "Expression of Interest" in this regard. The Chancellor also strongly wants this as well. Abdul will send me by e-mail the RFP that went out in this regard. He advises that the time to respond has expired but that won't be a problem for SDSU if it submits a proposal soon.

From there Fary, The Chancellor and I had lunch with Ms. Latif who is the World Bank Program Officer for these Afghan university partnerships. We have the clear impression from her (and Abdul) that so far the SDSU/NU partnership goes, it is working the best of any. Both she and Abdul had returned from vacation the previous day and both made a point to be sure to have meetings with us. This is all very satisfying and makes us proud of our hard working and diverse team. This program has challenges beyond imagination, yet team members find a way to effectively deal with the problems.

From there we met with Dr. Abdul Ghafoor Ghaz, Deputy Minister at the Afghan Ministry of Education. The purpose of the meeting was to advise him about our Rotary school in Jalalabad and seek funding for the female teachers we are paying for from the

States. He spent most of the time explaining to us the challenges facing 1-12 education in Afghanistan focusing on the increasing number of students and the difficulties they have in providing enough qualified teachers. It looks like they have a good long term plan using what we did in the States about 80 years ago setting up two year teaching colleges for high school graduates. He said there should be no problem funding salaries for the teachers for the academic year starting in 2008 as long as the Provincial Director of Education for Nangarhar Province includes this in his budget submission. What remains unclear is if that budget submission can clearly call out for female teachers. Fary and I will meet with the Director in Jalalabad if he is available to work through the details on this. We will probably be told the usual "no problem" but I am not sure what the appropriate follow up mechanism will be for this.

From there we met with Dr. Nazir Ahmad Shahidi, Deputy Minister at the Afghan Ministry of Economy. The purpose of the meeting was to determine what the options are to register the Rotary Clubs of Jalalabad, Herat, and Logar now that the RC of Kabul has been registered in Afghanistan under the name of "Rotary Kabul Org." using the NGO registration process. After a very confusing discussion, it sorts out that any non-profit organization will be deemed an NGO and must have an office in Kabul and register in Kabul. They also don't want separate registrations for additional clubs and even if that were to be attempted, the clubs would have to at least have a nominal office in Kabul. That does not work. So they see the Kabul Club (and its registration) as being the headquarters for Rotary in Afghanistan with the other clubs being like branch offices even though this is not the reality. So the other clubs need not register (in fact probably could not register) and can (and must) use the Kabul registration for all purposes. They can open bank accounts using the Kabul registration number and the MOE has offices in the Provinces which can assist in this regard. The Kabul Club will be required to report every six months regarding its "activities" including funding for projects and how the projects are going, and that report must include information regarding all of "its Afghan affiliates". In theory this could work but given the nature of Rotary as a volunteer organization, often one gets what it pays for. So the other Afghan Clubs may not always timely provide the info needed and RC Kabul will have its own challenges in compliance. Like most other things in Afghanistan, this will likely sort itself out over time unless they bring in some retired US IRS experts to help set up the compliance procedure and penalties. RC Kabul President-Elect Mina Wali attended this meeting with us and hopefully will still be willing to assume the responsibilities of President.

From there we had hoped to have tea with the Pakistani Rotary delegation but we could not find them. So Ishaq, Fary and I went back to the guest house only to determine that Fary had consumed more than her allotted share of Heineken. Fortunately, Ishaq had anticipated the problem and had a reserve amount in the car.

The Chancellor joined us and we went to an Afghan greasy spoon for dinner with NU ESL teachers, Michael Devenny and Kevin Edgerton for. Michael and Kevin are leaving for the workshop in Dubai today. It had been a long day so we did not do much socializing.

Looking forward to Jalalabad and time at the Taj.

Steve

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Location: Jalalabad-- TheTaj
- **Date:** Sept 10
- **Time:** 7:45 AM
- **Title:** Quiet day yesterday

Comments

Monday 7:00 AM

Not much to report regarding yesterday. Travel from Kabul to Jalalabad went fine. It now takes only three hours and there are no problems clearing security checkpoints. On the security side things seem pretty much the same as previous trips. Yesterday was a national Holiday commemorating the death of Masood- the leader of the Northern Alliance who was assassinated three days before Sept 11, 2001

Upon arrival at the Taj, Ken tried to fix my computer but we need to track down an operating system disk for him to have a chance to fix it. We spent the afternoon with Ken getting caught up on his activities and then time with the Taj gang when they returned from working on the road to Tora Bora.

Steve

- **Location:** Jalalabad TheTaj
- **Date:** Sept 11
- **Time:** 7:30 AM
- **Title:** Busy day yesterday

Comments

Monday (Sept 11) Jalalabad

It is a bit inspiring being here on Sept 11. Our Rotary school is only about a mile from where Ben Laden's massive compound was and also near the site of an El Quida training camp. What a difference six years makes. I do believe we are making serious inroads in fighting the war on terror through providing education, opportunity and hope to the people of Afghanistan. It is a cliché but we do need to win the hearts and minds of the Afghans and I seriously believe that the collective efforts of all involved in our Rotary, Sister Cities, and SDSU projects are moving things in this direction. Enough philosophizing-- now back to business.

Yesterday the three of us went to the NU main campus. Ken worked at the computer lab getting some things up and running and continuing his assessment of the wireless system between buildings and determining what peripheral items need to be installed to have it work and hold up in the elements.

Fary and I met with Professor Shinwari (not the visa Shinwari in Dubai) Head of the Language Department to talk about the various things underway to build ESL capacity at NU. He is very enthusiastic about this program. He also introduced us to four of the five ESL candidates who have been preliminarily selected to start teaching ESL in the fall of 2008 at NU. We scheduled interviews with them for later that day which will be discussed later herein.

Professor Safi Dost invited us to his office where we had our "three cups of tea" and we were also joined by Hamid Kadwal—both Safi and Hamid had been GSE team members and traveled to San Diego in May of 2005. We then stopped by the Engineering Department to see about getting going on a preliminary assessment but apparently there had been a death of someone resulting in the entire faculty going to a funeral that day.

We then went to the International Learning Center to inspect the work. The construction is complete and it looks great. We need to get going on the furnishing of the same. We will meet with the carpenter (perhaps today) to bring him to the facility to make furniture for it. Ishaq is working on tables and chairs for the lecture halls. It is the second prettiest building on campus.

We then went to the Guest House for an inspection. I was not a big fan of spending \$10,000 for a security wall around the building but I was wrong. Not only does the wall provide actual security but it encloses a huge private courtyard on all four sides with

many trees and grass—OK some dirt and gravel as well. We need to chase down an Afghan landscape architect to make a plan for this area. Need to find some Jalalabad yellow pages for this. I would estimate the area enclosed is a little less than one acre in size. The outside of the building is very attractive as well. Inside the building is beautiful. The carpet is attractive but not laid down very well. The carpenter has build two sofas, two lounging chairs three end tables, a coffee table, a dining room table with six chairs, six beds, six nightstands, and three desks. The quality is very good. Fary claims this was all done for \$2,500. I think he is non-union. There were several punch list items that needed to be dealt with and we went through these with the contractor's representative. The biggest issue was not locating power outlets on the walls where they are needed. These will be added to the bedrooms for power to the desks and night stands and the living room for power to the computer set up there and the TV/ DVD station.

We then picked up Ken and dropped him at the Taj. I picked up the 40 banners we had specially designed and made for the RC of Jalalabad and then went to the Teaching Hospital and met with Dr. Khan—President of the Club. We were joined by Rotarians Dr. Khalil, Dost, Kadwal and two other new members. Several of the others are out of town. The club is doing well. Some may even come to the International Convention in LA. Fary talked about the cable car project. (The Encinitas Coastal RC in San Diego is providing funds to build a cable car to take villagers across the Kabul River thus avoiding a walking trip of many miles preventing kids from going to school and limiting access to medical care) I brought the club members up to date regarding their club registration issues. We also discussed the Matching Grant project to furnish the Guest House and ILC and also the pending MG application to furnish the female dormitory on the NU main campus. We also asked them to consider coming up with a small project that does not relate directly to any of their own professions—for example, not a project for a hospital where they work.

Following the Rotary meeting Fary and I went to the Guest House where we met the five recent NU English graduates who have been identified to be ESL instructors at NU starting fall of 2008. I interviewed each on video tape for the purpose of providing SDSU personnel information regarding the language abilities of each person. This was not an interview to determine qualifications or anything competitive. Their abilities all fell within a rather narrow range. Their language skills are a bit on the weak side but their enthusiasm will pick up that difference. Each one mentioned that they need more experience in conversational English. They advised their grammar skills are good although some made grammatical mistakes in so advising. Interestingly, all five of them are presently unemployed and I believe anticipate remaining so until they start their teaching in fall of 2008. This presents two opportunities; SDSU need not wait until summer of 2008 to undertake the intensive training institute to prepare them for teaching. It may make sense to schedule this earlier. It also means that there may be things SDSU can undertake over the next few months to strengthen their conversational English. For example by simply purchasing a TV and DVD player and setting it up in the ILC on a regular scheduled basis, we could arrange for them to watch culturally appropriate movies if such a thing exists anymore. We may need to resort to the old Western movies or some of the classics as opposed to today' stuff. We may be able to do things on a more

professional level as well. Perhaps Rosetta Stone level three would be useful and there probably are other software packages as well. The point is, we should have a several month running start to get these eager professors-in- waiting up to speed.

While this was going on, I had Ken take my computer to Wali's computer shop. Wali is sort of a Rotarian who runs perhaps the largest computer business in Jalalabad—Bruce Geier beware. The two of them declared my computer officially comatose which can work only in the SAFE mode until I return to San Diego and find the original repair disk that came with it. Only by using that disk might we be able to bring the computer back to life.

We then went back to the Taj and spent some time with Ken mapping out future activities.

Ishaq called that evening and advised that the visas (or at least six of the seven visas) have been issued and the Afghans will drive to Kabul tomorrow and fly to Dubai on an afternoon flight. Steve Spencer has advised that they are extending the Dubai workshop one day to pick up for the one day of lost time.

We also learned yesterday that another rogue holiday may show up on Wednesday. Apparently the anticipation of the guys in Saudi Arabia seeing the moon on Thursday (which connotes the official start of Ramadan and is an official holiday) may cause things to shut down on Wednesday. So we are planning accordingly.

Steve

- **Location:** The Taj Jalalabad
- **Date:** Sept 12
- **Time:** 7:30 AM
- **Title:** Another good day

Comments

Wednesday Sept 12 5:00 AM

Yesterday was both interesting and productive. We went to the Rotary school in the morning—unannounced. We go unannounced for two reasons. First, so that they don't prepare for our visit—we want to see how the school normally functions. Second, we know that the area where our school is located is considered “unstable”. Yet there have never been any incidents at our school so this is just a security precaution.

We stayed only for part of the morning session. That session is all boys. We were advised that the school now has 2,500 boys and 1,200 girls. We have asked that they provide us a detailed account of how many students are in each grade level and classroom and how many teachers they have—male and female. There can be a big difference between how many students are registered and how many attend since we don't think they regularly take students names off of the registry when they stop showing up. We were also told that because the school year had just started two days ago, many students had not yet come back from the villages. Nevertheless there are substantially more male students than ever before. Classes for the males now go from grades 1 through 10. One classroom must have had about 200 first grade boys in a room that was designed for 50. Every body was touching another body all crammed together. As you approached the open door it was like standing near a badly smelling blast furnace as the wave of body heat from the room blew out. They would be better off having some of those kids under trees for a classroom rather than crammed in like that but that is their decision. We also want to know how many teachers they have for each shift. I went into every classroom and three or four did not have a teacher.

There are some cosmetic repairs that need to be done at the school and we need to walk the school with Ishaq and have the work arranged. We also need a retaining wall near the six classroom wing. Satellite imaging indicates that when a big rain comes we may lose that wing without building a retaining wall.

When at the school we met a new young teacher, Noor Khan. He has been educated in Pakistan and speaks excellent English. He teaches English to the upper grades of boys. He gave us some good insights about some problems at the school--mainly lack of supplies and not enough teachers. He is the one who will be giving us demographic info about the school. I sense he will be more straight forward with us. One administrator was giving Fary information different than what Noor was telling me. So we basically put the two of them together and said you guys tell us what is the truth and the person Fary had been talking to changed his story about the number of female teachers. It turns out they

have three government female teachers and only three of the five female teachers we paid for last year are returning (who we will continue to pay). We will next visit the school in the afternoon session for the girls and assess the situation. Noor is aware of two females who have 14 years of education, live in the immediate area, and would like to teach. We will try to arrange a meeting with them (through their uncle) and see if they might be added to the faculty. Fary and Noor had an interesting cultural conflict when Noor advised that the arrangements must be made through the girl's uncle. Noor is very straightforward and unyielding when Fary expressed some displeasure with the system but Noor also hinted that he could not express all of his thoughts openly in front of the other teachers and administrators. He will be a good contact at the school but does not use internet. We also need to find an administrator for the internet lab, find an internet service provider to provide the monthly connection, and find funds for both.

After that we stopped by the medical school where we thought Ken and Maqsood would be working on a problem at the computer lab. It turns out that no internet signal is coming into the lab so Maqsood is going to run some more diagnostics and then talk to the ISP company.

We then stopped by the office of the Nangarhar Provincial Director of Education to meet with him regarding the school. He was not in but called me back late afternoon (interrupting my swim in the Taj pool) and we set an appointment for 11:00 AM today.

From the MPDOE office we picked up the carpenter we have been using for various items and took him the NU to go over things we need for the guest house and International Learning Center. We were greeted there by Dr. Aziz (a medical doctor turned contractor for the better pay) who was the general contractor for both buildings. We reviewed many items with Dr. Aziz including Fary giving him a lecture about laying carpet—they did not do a good job on that at the guest house. But overall he is a wonderful gentleman and we both like working with him very much.

We worked out a detailed plan with the carpenter for some additional items at the guest house—big computer desk for the main living area, substantial hutch for storage in the main living area, TV stand, and some small items for the bedrooms and bathrooms. He builds all these things from scratch so we need to be very specific on the details—like keep spaces open for computer wires and TV wires etc. He does exceptional work for a very low price. We also “designed” the layout for the furniture in the lobby area for the ILC and the office for that facility and ordered the appropriate furnishings to be built. It should be very nice. We went back to his shop and briefly reviewed the plans for the female dormitory and what will be needed to furnish the same. It is a huge job but he says he can handle it and Ishaq believes he can as well. I am interested to see how the trundle bunk beds we have spec'd out will turn out.

It was the end of the day so we went back to the Taj where Fary worked out in their first class gym and I swam some laps. Ishaq called and advised that six of the seven Afghans were at the Kabul airport with visas in hand waiting to fly to Dubai. Steve Spencer sent

an e-mail later advising of their arrival in Dubai. Fary and I had a scotch to celebrate. The seventh one may arrive in Dubai today which will require a further celebration.

Steve

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Location: The Taj
- **Date:** Sept 13
- **Time:** 7:00 aM
- **Title:** No rogue holiday yesterday

Comments

Thursday Sept 13 (first day of Ramadan) 6:00 AM

Yesterday started with Fary and I meeting six village people from a community that lives on the “wrong side” of the Kabul River. Because they do not have a way to cross the river anywhere near their village, their kids do not go to school and it is difficult to take villagers for medical care. In some places along the river, but not near their village, the Russians installed hand pulled cable cars to take people across the river. They have received a cost estimate from an engineer to install one but no technical drawings or specifications. That engineer is not willing to assist further with the project. Today we will visit the village (Fary has previously been there on her April 2006 trip thus hearing about this project) to obtain some more information. We will also be taken to a place where one of these cable cars is in operation. We advised the villagers that we will see if we can get an engineer at NU to provide the structural engineer for this project and we will require that the villagers also “retain” their own engineer to confirm what is being proposed.

After the meeting we went to the office of Dr. Aayat Ullah Jali (a newer member of the RC Jalalabad) and met with him and Mr. Dildar Khan Shinwari who is President of the Afghan Blood Society. They have worked up a proposal to set up a blood bank in Jalalabad. They advise that right now there is no facility to store blood so if a patient needs blood an immediate donor needs to be located and the transfer is made without storing the blood for any time. We need to verify if this is true. Also, the proposal seems very heavy with personnel costs in our opinion. We understand that Dr. Art Mendoza (San Diego pathologist) met with these folks and was presented this proposal when he was here several months ago. We will look for his guidance in evaluating the proposal.

We then went to the Nangarhar Public Hospital and met with its Director, Dr. Pardis. He thanked us for enrolling him in the on-line Medical English course offered by UCSD. He successfully completed the course. He did advise that presently the internet service we have been providing is down. We arranged for Ken and Maqsood to run some diagnostics when Maqsood returns from Peshawar on Saturday. We had lunch in Dr. Pardis private quarters and he gave us a tour of the hospital. The most interesting part was the new section for rehabilitation of drug addicts—both men and women. These folks come from the poppy growing areas. The hospital first undertakes in-home counseling to determine if a candidate has a good chance of success in their program. They then start in a detoxification center and later go through various rehabilitation stages and I believe receive some vocational counseling as well.

Dr. Pardis advised that funds have run out to bring in a new group for their midwifery training. They just graduated a class from the two year program and now only have second year students. This has been run by International Medical Corps (IMC) and we hope to meet with the IMC representative. We also hope to meet with the head administrator of the nursing school (one person runs the male and female program) to put that person in touch with Dr. Rosemary Goodyear. Fary, and I (and Cynthia Willis—University of San Diego) met with Rosemary before coming to Afghanistan. Rosemary had a top position at USDs school of nursing for several years and now has become involved in assisting nursing programs in developing countries. She is interested in coming to Jalalabad to see how her volunteer services may be useful.

Dr. Pardis also indicated he is looking into programs where he might be able to obtain a Master's Degree in Public Health. He sees building capacity in the public health area—particularly community education- as a top priority for his country.

After this meeting we went to the office of the Afghan International Chamber of Commerce and met with its director Dr. Ahmad Mokhlis. We learned that his very able Deputy Director Dr. Samar Ihsan is no longer with that office. We talked with Dr. Mokhlis about the need to have a standing Sister Cities Committee in Jalalabad to be our counterpart organization in the San Diego~Jalalabad Sister Cities organization. We have had these discussions on previous trips but we need to provide more definition to the relationship for the Jalalabad piece to function effectively. Dr. Mokhlis will assemble a core group who we will meet with Sunday afternoon to explore this concept further. He also would like some kind of document providing him an official appointment to head up the Jalalabad group. We think that needs to come from the Jalalabad committee but we should be able to facilitate that. We also hope to identify a project—such as placing trash cans every block of the main street--and perhaps obtain some funding for this project. Right now there are very noticeable improvements in Jalalabad generally comparing back to how things looked and functioned on our first visit. The main streets are paved with dividers in the middle and sometimes landscaped in the dividers. There are some very nice sidewalks as well. We think the Nangarhar Governor has been able to tap into some funds for these improvements and then hires his own company to accomplish the same. Even if there is some corruption involved, the community as a whole is clearly benefiting from the work of this Governor.

We also learned from Dr. Mokhlis that his Chamber organization is working with USAID to obtain small loans or grants to help business development. John McEwaine is the program manager for this and we want to talk to him about the scope of their funding opportunities as it may relate to Sister Cities projects.

We then returned to the Taj to get caught up on paperwork. My fears of yesterday being a rogue holiday with no work accomplished were misplaced.

Steve

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Location: The Taj
- **Date:** Sept 14
- **Time:** 9:00 Am
- **Title:** Stumbling around in Afghanistan

Comments

Saturday Sept 14 8:30 AM

Yesterday was the first day of Ramadan and thus a holiday. We visited the village on the other side of the Kabul River that wants a cable car installed. We thought we were going to wade across the river but it was too deep. We were met by two young boys that had rafts made of sticks and inner tubes. We got on these rafts and they paddled using shovels to take us across the river. We met with the villagers and had our three cups of tea. We then walked less than a kilometer to the place where they want the cable car. A school is directly across the river. It looks quite feasible. During this walk I stepped into a hole covered by grass which has allowed my big toe to grow in size. The slightly pulled groin injury that resulted distracts from the pulsing of the big toe. These are just minor annoyance-not a big thing—no flowers or sympathy cards please.

We then hiked to some caves and tunnels (in 100 degree heat) the British built into the side of some cliffs. No sign of Ben Laden there.

After that we drove on the road to Kabul where we were advised a cable car set up existed. In looking at the situation, it gave us a good idea what not to do. A boy in the car pulls on the single cable to move it across. Fary and Muslim went in the car and had some problems because there was too much weight for the boy to move the car once it slid down to the bottom of the U of the cable. Muslim stood to help and sort of fell on Fary hurting her neck a little bit. It is the other side of her neck that remains sore from a fall here a few trips back.

We then came back to the Taj mid afternoon. Between Aleve and a few beers my pains became less noticeable. I swam a few laps and Fary went to the workout room and claimed to work out although there were no witnesses.

Last night is the when the Western workers for the various NGOs all come to the Taj to socialize. It offers incredible networking opportunities. I spent time with John McElwaine who works for USAID. He says their program may be able to fund a Sister Cities project like setting up trash cans throughout the main commercial areas of Jalalabad. We definitely will explore this. He said his wife works for an NGO—not sure which one—that might be interested in funding the cable car operation. We will explore this as well.

Steve

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- **Location:** The Taj
 - **Date:** Sept 15
 - **Time:** 10:00 AM
 - **Title:** Shopping in Jalalabad

Comments

Sept 15 9:45 AM (slept in this morning)

Yesterday we spent much of the time window shopping for appliances and other items for the Guest House and ILC--stove, refrigerator, microwave washing machine, TV, DVD, VCR etc.. After costing things out we then send wire instructions to our bank in San Diego. Problems on the San Diego end prevented the wire from getting sent but we should get the funds Tuesday or Wednesday of next week and then go on a shopping spree. They do not sale clothes dryers in Jalalabad so we will explore getting a stackable washer dryer unit in Pakistan.

We came back to the Taj and spent the rest of the afternoon sorting through the various e-mails and CVs we have received regarding candidates for the Rotary GSE team. We have opened up a bit of a political Pandora's Box and not quite sure how to shut it. We will be conducting interviews in Kabul and having other meetings there on our return trip.

We then reviewed the various things we will be spending money on to determine the amount of the wire transfer necessary. Since we are wiring funds from multiple sources into one account here, it gets rather confusion but we think we have it pretty well sorted out.

We have also prepared a list of things we must do while here and some optional activities as well. We are beginning to feel the pressure of our departure date closing in on us.

Steve

- **Location:** The Taj
- **Date:** Sept 16
- **Time:** 8:00 AM
- **Title:** Staying busy

Comments

Sunday Sept 16 5:30 AM

Yesterday we started our day going to the NU computer lab for a brief meeting with Muslim. We then went to the NU guest house and met with Dr. Aziz regarding some follow-up items. There are no air conditioning units in the main living area. He will take care of that. He will also install air conditioners at the NU computer lab and Medical school computer lab. The rooms are practically unbearable even at this time of year. We also got his opinion regarding locating appliances and plumbing and electrical work needed for the same.

From there we met with the carpenter and reviewed his bill for work done to date (122,800 Afghanis = \$2,470) and received his estimate for additional work we ordered (103,100 Afghani=\$2,074).

We then went to our Rotary school to visit when the girls are in session. The afternoon session now has a female principal who also covers some of the classes: We found the following situation: • Grade 1 150 students no teacher- • Grade 2 200 students with teacher • Grade 3 106 students with teacher • Grade 4 160 students no teacher • Grade 5 48 students with teacher • Grade 6 47 students with teacher • Grade 7 30 students with teacher • Grade 8 37 students no teacher

Total teachers: 5 plus principal.

The principle claims she covers empty classrooms some of the time but she was not covering any classes when we arrived unannounced. They use only one classroom per grade so the lower grades have very packed classrooms. We will go to the school today with the Nangarhar Director of Education to review the situation regarding both the boys and girls sessions.

From there we returned to the Taj guest house and were met by Dr. Aziz. We thought we were going to a well landscaped garden with water features but instead we went to a private educational institute known as the Khurasan University of Modern Sciences. We believe Dr. Aziz is one of the founding members of KU (Dr. Aziz is 36 years old, holds a medical degree and has several businesses.) We spent time with some of their administrators who are totally fluent in English. They explained that the KU is affiliated with the Management Institute of Canada and receives its “accreditation” through the Canadian affiliate. Their courses are all business related, the language of instruction is English, they charge between \$40 and \$120 per month for their courses. They have about 30 students per class, including a few females. Their students are Afghans many of whom

work for NGOs here. They are interested in what we are doing at NU. It appears that KU is not accredited with the Afghan MOHE since they do not follow the proscribed curriculum of the MOHE.

I mentioned that I had talked with a USAID person at the party night at the Taj and USAID has funding to update the business school curriculum at NU and run it through the MOHE. (I believe Pakistan universities are involved in this.) KU is interested in this and may want to eventually adapt their curriculum to resemble the updated approved curriculum to get local accreditation. What we found interesting and impressive about KU is that it offers a good jump start alternative to government education and is not weighted down by bureaucracy. The instructors are mostly from Pakistan and will probably be providing some good business and management skills to local Afghans in decent jobs. Also, the objective is for KU to be self sufficient through tuition with no dependency on government or NGO funding.

After that we went back to the Taj and spent time with Ken reviewing his activities. He leaves today for Kabul.

When Fary and I were at KU she received a call from a US dept of State rep asking if we can meet with the rep on Monday. We are adjusting our schedule to make a quick trip to Kabul tomorrow –Monday returning to Jalalabad Tuesday morning. We will also be meeting with Colonel Cotts regarding bringing band width to Jalalabad using excess DOD capacity (if I understand things correctly). We are seeing if we can schedule a WSU/USAID meeting tomorrow in Kabul as well. If all goes efficiently, this may allow us to spend an extra day in Jalalabad at the tail end of our time here.

That's all for now.

Steve

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Location:
- **Date:** Sept. 17
- **Time:** 5:00 AM
- **Title:**

Comments

Yesterday my computer pretty much shut down. I can only access Excel files—no e-mails Word docs etc. So I am limping along using Fary's computer but as I type this we have no access to the internet so not sure when this will go out. For future communications to me please cc Fary at FaryM@att.net. Continue to send to me and I will attempt to work at the server level when available.

We went to the school yesterday to meet the Nangarhar Director of Education. He was two and a half hours later but when he arrived promised to add female teachers, a teacher for our science lab, training for our teachers and assistance with the computer lab. He rally shook things up at the school. We will meet with him after we return from Kabul to confirm all of this.

Fary and I also interviewed two females as potential teachers. One was wearing a burka and there with her husband. That made for an interesting interview. The other one wore all black with only a small slit for her eyes. One had 12 years of education and the other 14 but neither seemed very educated. They probably would qualify to teach the lower grades.

While at the school the head of the Chamber called us to cancel our Sister Cities meeting later that day.

After visiting our school, we stopped by the college of education to check out a new dorm that has just been built. They guy with the key to the gate had disappeared so the Department head could not gain access. We will try again later.

We then went to the appliance store and ordered the various things we have priced out for the NU guest hours. We hope to have these items delivered Tuesday afternoon.

We then met with the carpenter to provide some additional information regarding the dimensions of items he is building.

From there we went to the Taj to wait for Dr. Aziz to take us to a garden he has built. He called and said he was in another province and we need to cancel that engagement.

The end of this day required sampling the scotch at the Taj. It was a bit frustrating but we are keeping the faith.

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Location: Kabul
- **Date:** Sept 18
- **Time:** 6:00 AM
- **Title:** Meetings in Kabul

Comments

Sept 18 5:00 AM

Yesterday we left la or Kabul at 6:00 AM. After driving for 45 minutes we came along semis truck trailers stopped on the road back to back not moving. We passed on the other side of the road weaving in an out of a few cars coming in the other direction. The string of semis was about 20 miles long. We then found the problem. There had been a big rain the night before resulting in a serious of rock slides on the mountain taking out portions of the road. Some of the guardrail on the cliffs above the Kabul River was wiped out. There we around 20 of these rock slides and often there was only enough space for one car to squeeze through. But in Afghanistan everyone tries to get to the front of the line so often there would be a face off with cars face to face in long lines with no room for anyone to move. On one occasion a policeman came along and banged his rifle on the cars that we the most gross violators in creating a jam. One old driver got out and picked up a rock to attack another but he was restrained. This mess added about three hours to the trip but we made it safely and never felt in any particular danger.

We went straight to Camp Eggers--a US military company near the US Embassy and met with Col. Cotts. He is working with folks in the Pentagon to assist in bring band width to NU, NU Medical School and Nangarhar Public Hospital. As I understand it the Afghan Ministry of Communication allocates frequency and licenses companies to distribute the same. An organization known as Asia Consultancy Group (ACG) has assessed those three facilities and is requesting frequency be allocated to them. Cotts believe their proposal was not well received and probably misunderstood by the MOC. Department of Defense is becoming involved because they have several relationships with MOC and believe there is some chance those relationships may work to the advantage to have ACG's proposal approved. Col Cotts is following up on this and will keep us informed.

We had lunch at Camp Eggers (best meal we have had while here) and met Col. John Baliex who is a Dr. in the Surgeon General's office at Camp Eggers. He is very interest in learning more about our Peer to Peer proposal we are working to develop to connect medical and public health professionals in Jalalabad with their counterparts in the US.

From there we went to the German guest house, checked in and did some computer work. We then went to the US Embassy and met with Kristin Silverberg who had requested a meeting with Fary in Fary's capacity as Commissioner to the US Advisory Commission to UNESCO. Kristin is an Assistant Secretary. Bureau of International Organizational Affairs, US Dept. of State. We were joined by Kimberly McClure, Political Affairs officer US Embassy Kabul and Timothy Moore, Cultural Affairs Officer, US Embassy

Kabul. In essence, they asked to be briefed about our activities. Fary talked about the Rotary School project and I talked about the NU involvement and medical involvement. Tim provided the most useful information about Dept. of State programs like providing 30 Fulbright scholarships to Afghans (30 have just been awarded for AY 2008-09). And Humphrey Scholarships. There are several other programs that allow Afghans to come to the US for short term or longer term stays. He will send us a summary of his comments. Kristin was interested in how Fary's participation on the UNESCO Commission may be beneficial to some of the things we are working on. We will be giving that more thought.

The two meetings we had in Kabul are like many we have had over the years—quite interesting, lots of enthusiasm but not sure what will come from the meetings.

Steve

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Location: The Tak
- **Date:** Sept 19
- **Time:** 7:30 AM
- **Title:** Running out of time here

Comments

Sept 18 5:30 pm (slight break in the action) Tuesday afternoon

Fary and I came back to Jalalabad from Kabul this morning. It only took three hours but the line of trucks waiting to go to Kabul was still lined up for many miles. We got a good view of the devastation caused by the landslides.

Upon arrival in Jalalabad we went straight to the university and met with the Chancellor and Ishaq to review upcoming activities. The dedication ceremony for the NU guest house and ILC will be tomorrow at 10: AM as will be the groundbreaking for the female dormitory. From there we went to the bank to determine the process to add Ishaq to the account, to see if our wire from the US has arrived (not yet), to get statements for the last several months, and to withdraw funds to purchase some appliance and electronic equipment for the NU guest house. We then went to the appliance dealer and ordered the items and requested delivery today. He said he could have all the stuff there in an hour. We paid him in crisp new \$100 bills the bank gave us—not sure how they get them in Afghanistan—perhaps from drug dealers.

We then went to the NU college of Education which is located on a remote campus. A Japanese group has built a female dormitory there. We wanted to visit it to see if that sparked any ideas for the dorm we are building. (Ours will be on the main campus for females. Most of our dorm's residents will be majoring in English and upon graduation teach English at the secondary level in Afghanistan.) The dorm we visited can hold eight girls per room but they have not provided for closets or study space in the rooms. They have 6 toilets for potentially 72 or more girls and six showers. They have an unfurnished dining hall and a kitchen. They have 11 additional rooms all the same size. They hope to use one of these rooms as an exercise room and the other for a library. They have no air conditioning and one electrical outlet per room. It sounds like they have no funds for furnishing except for the purchase of bunk beds. There is a wall around the building around 12 feet or more high with security wire above it. I may make it sound negative but the facility will be well utilized. My guess is that for around \$10,000 a six station computer lab could be installed in the room designated to be a library and a wireless connection could be set up running off of the V-SAT facility on the College of Education building in the vicinity. I want to explore this concept. (Let me know if anyone else is interested.)

From there we went to the NU guest house and met Dr. Aziz working on some of the items we requested. The delivery truck arrived with the stove, refrig, washing machine, flat screen TV, VCR, DVD player, microwave with coffee maker, toaster oven and

vacuum cleaner. Some work need to be undertaken to install some of these items. We need UPS power surge protectors to prevent blow out of items. Also the stove works both off of electricity and gas and we need to set up a propane connection. We need to do some plumbing for the washer and resize a built-in counter by the sink.

We then went to the Chamber's office for the sister Cities meeting. No one was there—apparently the head guy had to go to a funeral and did not tell us that.

After that we dropped in on the Nangarhar Director of Education to get his feedback on how his office can help our Rotary school. He had sent some science teachers to the school to look at our never used science lab and look at our computer lab. He advised that we need some materials to make the science lab work and they will be providing us this info. He recommends not firing up the internet connection for now and instead focusing only on software applications. He believes his office can find both male and female computer teachers and a cadre of other teachers for the school. He wants to know how much our budget can withstand to help to pay for female teachers and provide financial incentives for top teachers to come from Jalalabad proper to teach at our school. We also need to let him know our budget to fix up the school. Unfortunately I cannot access my Quicken file to provide that info at this time. Nevertheless we have a strong advocate for our school with high energy and good English language skills. We learned last night from the book distribution guy in Kabul that this Ed director we are dealing with was transferred to Nangarhar district for security reasons. Apparently he was working in one of the more dangerous provinces and some of the bad guys did not like his plans. His mother and brother were killed by an IED intended for him.

Got to run to dinner-more later.

Sept. 19 Wednesday 6:00 AM

We went to dinner at the Spingar Hotel with the Chancellor, Ishaq, Dean of the Engineering Faculty and one of his younger faculty members chosen to come to San Engineering faculty (assuming a SDSU engineering assessment goes forward). The dinner was informal with no agenda we could recognize. We did learn that the NU engineering program is 5 years-nine classroom semesters and a one semester internship. They believe at Kabul University the program is four years and if that is the case, their program can be restructured to be a four year curriculum. The NU curriculum was put in place by the Russians a couple of decades ago with no modernization in the interim. NU will break ground on a new engineer building shortly and NU also has funds to equip the same. We hope to get a copy of the plans and equipment list to bring back to SDSU to assist if SDSU will be involved in an engineering partnership with NU. We (The Chancellor, Fary and I) believe an engineering partnership is highly likely based on previous meetings and follow up e-mails.

Steve

- **Location:** NU computer lab
- **Date:** Sept 20
- **Time:** noon
- **Title:** running out of time

Comments

Thursday 6:00 AM Sept 20—this is our last day in Jalalabad

(Internet down at the Taj so sending from NU.)

Short on time-much to cover but will be brief.

Talked to Maria Beebe yesterday morning about USAID /WSU funding. USAID will provide funds to outfit the ILC. Steve Spencer and I need to put together a wish list and submit it to Maria quickly. Decision deferred for some time regarding on-line TESL program. Not sure how to bring that to a decision point.

Went to NU and observed English language testing in place conducted by all the ESL teachers SDSU has trained. About 40 students were at this session.

Went to guest house to put on final touches. From there we went to the NU auditorium for dedication ceremonies for guest house and ILC and ground breaking discussion re female dormitory. About 150 in attendance including 20 females. Speeches lasted about an hour. I gave brief history relating back to our first visit and our desire to assist in breaking the cycle of isolation for NU and steps taken to accomplish the same. Then we had ribbon cuttings for both the GH and ILC and shoveled some dirt where the dorm will sit. The Chancellor put the dorm out to bid giving bidders less than 24 hours to prepare their bids. Looks like Dr. Aziz is successful bidder at \$137,000. That is higher than the estimate of \$115,000 we were given a while back but no surprise to me. We have \$102,000 raised and I have some ideas as to how we can fill the gap.

From there we went to PRT (US military) and met with Civil Affairs folks, imbedded State Dept person, and a representative from DAI who works closely with this team. They are involved in a trash proposal that can fit well with a Sister Cities trash project and we want to collectively see if we can activate funding through the City Links program. We also discussed the potential for a “Fab lab” being installed in Jalalabad and how that might be utilized to make dumpsters from prototypes we supply. PRT is supporting a school near their base and its needs ESL books. We want to see if Marla might have some spare promotional samples distributor supply. PRT also wants to help with the cable car project and will provide some engineering expertise and oversight.

As a side note we learned that some of the PRT reps had reviewed Chuck DuVivier's Urban Planning report prepared over two years ago. In fact, one PRT member advised that

it was included in his preparation materials he was provided at Fort Bragg before coming to Jalalabad

We then met with Flouran Wali and Munira regarding the work they have done to assist overseeing the female teachers at our school we have been paying for.

From there we went to the Chamber of Commerce office and met with an assembled group of 11 community business leaders. The upshot of this meeting is that these folks are going to form a Jalalabad Sister Cities committee and they like the idea of their group becoming involved in the trash project. They see their role and mobilizing community involvement by assisting with an educational campaign and working with their peers.

From there we went to the Mayor's office and met with Mayor Lai Agha Kaker. He has been in office about 6 months. He has the Sister Cities Charter documents and Mission Statement on his wall but did not know what that is all about. He has been involved in the discussions with PRT regarding the trash collection project and welcomes Sister Cities involvement. He will have a rep from his office on the Sister Cities committee. We want to arrange for Mayor Jerry Sanders to send an introductory letter to the Jalalabad Mayor.

We then went to the Taj to decompress (two beers) for a half hour and then returned to the city to have dinner with some of the RC of Jalalabad folks.

We returned to the Taj to map out plans for our last day in Jalalabad and to prioritize what we will do in Kabul tomorrow.

Steve

- **Location:** Kabul-German Guest House
- **Date:** Sept 20
- **Time:** noon
- **Title:** Good-bye to Jalalabad -for now

Comments

Friday Sept 21 6:00 AM

Yesterday morning we picked up the carpenter and took him to the NU guest house. We need some modifications to the kitchen counter to accommodate space for a propane bottle. (The stove we purchased is both electric and gas.) Later Muslim and Ishaq met with us to review several financial matters. We are using one bank account here where we wire money from three different sources--LJGTRC Foundation, Sister Cities Foundation and Moini International Consulting. Muslim keeps meticulous records for this. I am unable to access my Quicken program to input as we go and fear having difficulties reconstructing the various things we are spending money on after I get home.

We then went to the bank with paperwork in hand to add Ishaq as a signatory on the account. Miraculously no problems. Usually the bank comes up with some last minute thing they require. Our wire transfer did come through. We withdrew cash to partially reimburse Ishaq for advances he has made (\$2,906) -he has advanced several thousand dollars from his personal funds, paid him the balance of his August salary-(\$500 had already been advanced) withdrew \$1,000 as a down payment to the carpenter for work ordered this trip on contract price of \$2,074, withdrew \$1,461 as balance owed carpenter for work completed on contract price of \$2,461 and withdrew \$1,000 for Ben (UN guy at the Taj) who is personally raising funds for the rebuilding a wall for a school where the UN guys caused some damage.

We then went to the NU computer lab to send essential e-mails-the system at the Taj had been down for a considerable time. We primarily needed to make arrangements for the GSE interview which will take place today.

After that we met with the Chancellor to review loose ends and thank him for his time while we were here. It was a very cordial meeting.

We then met up with Dr. Aziz and his engineer Najib (Ukraine educated) and were joined by Muslim and two of the cable car villagers. We went to the side of the river where the target school is for the village kids to go to when taking the cable car. We wanted Dr. Aziz's assessment. This required considerable walking through stones and across a small river walking on unsteady slippery stones. When I looked at the small river it brought back instant memories of my fall the other day and I wanted to scream "no way". But with people hanging on to me I was able to get across. The villagers just take off their shoes and hop across.

There has been a fair amount of rain but Fay and I missed it on our trip to Kabul. The Kabul River is literally twice as wide compared to when we were at it before and it has quite a current. Glad we were not in one of the make shift rafts. Seeing the river at this height provides a new perspective/challenge regarding the cable car situation. The span will be bigger than originally thought and perhaps it will not be usable all of the time. One of the pillars will probably need to be placed in an area that goes under water some of the time. We are going to have the PRT engineers come to the site to assess the situation. There was a lively discussion with the villagers on both sides of the river as to the typical high water mark. The villagers to benefit from this project are adamant that the river never gets very high. They are concerned that someone else will get the funds earmarked for this if we don't build the cable car no matter what. They also think all of us are being paid for these assessments and that the money will disappear--going to those of us present. They also want us to start immediately without the necessary engineering work. I want to check with Eric Frost to see if SDSU's Immersive Visualization lab has some satellite imagery that can help regarding various high water marks for the river. I think the PRT can provide some GPS coordinates to assist in that piece. This episode took close to three hours.

From there Dr. Aziz took us to an outlying part of Jalalabad we had never before seen. It had miles of beautiful rice paddies situated against mountains in the background. At one end of this was his beautiful vacation home with immense garden. We asked where he gets the bogenvia (sp?) draped against the wall since we want some for the NU guest house wall. He advised he will provide the same at no charge since he is now a Rotarian in spirit. We believe he will also help us with the design of some landscape features for the NU guest house. He explained that his family owns the miles of rice paddies in this area. He then took us to his family fish farm where he snatched a fish with his hands from the water. I was not particularly interested in that. We talked about the dorm construction some—apparently no one provided a copy of our detailed electrical plan to the bidders. He also showed me the bill of quantities that the bidders used to submit their price. This is a one and one-half page document with estimates provided by the NU engineering department for the quantity of materials required. I had not seen this before. We need to re-engage our US pro bono Afghan architect, Abdul Rick Mohammad Sucker Clark to review the situation to keep his Afghan liability exposure to a minimum.

We then went back to the Taj for some shot decompression therapy before being picked up for diner with the Mayor. Gleyn from DAI came to pick us up. When traveling with DAI you ride in a forward vehicle with an armed guard followed by a chase car with additional armed guards. I think it is the only time we felt insecure while here. It gives the mistaken impression that someone important is in the car. DAI folks are required to travel this way as are many other NGOs where their people are allowed to travel at all. It certainly draws attention to the situation.

We met the Mayor at the guest house Mayor Arselai started to build until he was dismissed. The guest house is very palatial. The Mayor speaks English and Gleyn clearly has a close relationship with him. (There are always political rumors in Jalalabad and some of our friends speculate there may be another change of Mayors shortly.) We had

our tea and then adjourned to a large dining room. Gleyn has a 10:00 PM curfew so we left at 9:50 and our armada dropped him at the DAI guest house and took us back to the Taj. It was NGO night there (every Thursday) so the music was loud and about 50 people were here. Fary and I did not partake in the frivolity but instead mapped out our time for Kabul.

On to Kabul in about an hour. (Internet is down at the Taj so will try to send this from the German guest house in Kabul later today.)

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- **Location:** Kabul
 - **Date:** Sept 22
 - **Time:** 9:00 AM
 - **Title:** Last days in Afghanistan

Comments

Sept 22 8:00 AM

Yesterday the drive to Kabul was spectacular and uneventful.

After checking in to the guest house we went to the Kabul Inn and interviewed six potential GSE candidates. Only one candidate from the Logar club would be considered acceptable. Four persons (including the one we interviewed last week) from the Kabul club are from very good to exceptional.

Had dinner at a French restaurant.

This morning Saturday again met with Maria Beebe re WSU/USAID.

Just came back from Ministry of Higher Ed where we met with Sukumar Karthikand learned that SDSU has been "short listed" regarding submitting an Engineering proposal.

This morning will go to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to get a free stamp avoiding a \$100 exit fee and then to KAM air to resolve a dispute regarding my ticket then on to the airport arriving in Dubai later this evening.

This will be the final journal entry from Afghanistan and perhaps the last one regarding this trip.

Looking forward to seeing everyone soon

Steve

Sept 23

We went to the Foreign Affairs office to obtain our registration stamp. Not sure we needed it by may have had to pay a \$100 exit fee without it. Flew to Dubai and spend the night there. We then flew to London. It took over two hours to move within Heathrow terminals to get to our gate area. We were at Heathrow about five hours with our flight leaving an hour and a half late for LAX. Arrive at LAX around 8:30 PM the same day we left Dubai. It took over two hours to get out of LAX and get a cab. We met Susan and a hotel near LAX . She drove us to San Diego arriving around 1:30 AM. Great to be home.

