



The Sower

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Lincoln South Rotary

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WEEK OF MAY 27, 2011

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

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Today I am reflecting on recent dinner conversations with people from Azerbaijan, Georgia, Tajikistan and Pakistan. These students accompanied Jenny and I to Mount Rushmore over Memorial day after one spoke at Rotary. Each evening we had dinner and often discussed international politics. One student commented that currently Georgia is currently experiencing civil unrest due to some dissatisfaction with president Saakashvili. He is a light-

ning rod for criticism because he has initiated many reforms. There are still many entrenched interests that are against reform and transparency. Some who support him feel he is unnecessarily heavy handed. One student commented that Pakistan is wrestling with public “fallout” from the United States unilateral decision to invade that country. On the one hand people are glad Bin Laden was discovered. On the other hand they resent US incursions into sovereign Pakistani lands. Can you imagine the “fallout” if another nation invaded the United States on the pretext that it was for our own good? The student commented do people in the US realize how badly Pakistan citizens have been hurt by terrorism? One student commented that Tajikistan’s economy is terrible these days, since the world “economic downturn”, and depends on Russia for economic survival. Tajikistan is also courting improved relations with Pakistan as a means of stimulating economic growth. The country is arguably the poorest in the Central Asia and has a huge porous border with Afghanistan. Azerbaijan just won the Eurovision 2011 but has a repressive political regime with little freedom of speech. On the other hand it has been a good friend to Georgia helping supply gas when Russia stopped supplies in the middle of a horribly cold 2006 winter. None of those around the table were entirely satisfied with their nations politics. All were complimentary towards the United States with respect to the amount of freedom people (in the US) had to speak their minds regarding political or social issues.

On the question of the national policy all agreed that they and others often disagreed with the political motives and direction of leaders. But they also were pragmatic, recognizing that alliances were formed out of perceived mutual interest but that the potential partners for these “marriages” of convenience were limited. Can you imagine if your neighbor was powerful Russia and it offered your poor agrarian nation economic assistance (for a price). What would you do? Before you judge to harshly consider whether you would be inclined to accept if you desperately needed money to feed your family.

In addition decisions are often clouded by other factors. 1) Rampant corruption often mars political and economic alliances. 2) Many times leaders use religion as a tool for their personal ambitions. 3) There is a lack of access to objective news and, 4) sometimes a lack of motivation to seek it out. Ignorance is bliss especially when ruffling feathers can get you imprisoned or killed.

The good thing about exchange programs is participants can over time begin to talk openly. After a few weeks the cultural and religious differences between people are considered interesting but not threatening. The people actually become friends and are not inclined to impute malevolent motives to each other. Hopefully these young people who are intelligent educated creative critical thinkers will be the leaders of the future. Our world depends on it.

CLUB SERVICE TEAM ON DUTY

Roger Vicroy
Jenny Cardwell
Lance Odom



Future LSR Programs

- 6/3/11 Pam Dingman— CEO of Engineering Design Consultants.
- 6/10/11 Jessica Kolterman— Legislative Update
- 6/17/11 Pat Ohmberger, President of Nebraska Realtors— Housing Economy in NE and the US
- 6/24/11 Darren Macfee— ED Lincoln Children’s Museum— Upcoming renovation at the museum.
- 7/1/11 Barb Bartle— President Lincoln Community Foundation
- 7/8/11 Changing of the Guard

Events & Projects

- 8/26/11 District Governor Bob Perrin Official Visit.

PLACES TO MAKE UP

Tuesday morning—Sunrise Rotary at International House of Pancakes at 4501 North 27th (27th and Superior Ave.) at 7:00 AM

Tuesday Noon— Lincoln #14-Nebraska Club at 13th & M.

Wednesday 11:45 a.m.—Lincoln East at Valentinos at 70th & Van Dorn

Visiting Rotarians and Guests

Rotarians—Sheila Odom and Anita Crisp

Guests— Terry Pattavina, guest of Jim Pattavina, Buddy Otto, guest of Logan Otto and Sue Tecker, Talal Raza, Farid Tuayev, Parvis Jamalon and Tutula Chubabria all from SCC.



Lincoln South Rotary Clubrunner Links:

Meeting & speaker information:
<http://www.clubrunner.ca/CPrg/Home/speakers.asp?cid=6040>

Calendar of Events:
<http://www.clubrunner.ca/CPrg/Home/events.asp?cid=6040>

PROGRAM

2010-2011 Club Goals

1. *Club Strength— Leave the club better than when I took office.*
2. *Club Growth— Attain and maintain membership of 55.*
3. *Support Polio Eradication.*
4. *Support critical project in one of 3 areas; Health & Hunger, Water or Literacy.*
5. *Maintain 100% sustaining membership in the Rotary Foundation.*
6. *Achieve the Presidential Citation*
7. *HAVE FUN!*

**QUESTIONS?
COMMENTS?
ARTICLES?**

**Contact Newsletter
Editor**

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Farid Tuayev spoke to the club about the history and culture of Azerbaijan which is a small wealthy oil and gas producing country on the Caspian Sea in Central Asia. It is a critical country to US interests because its oil and gas resources are not subject to Russian control as are much of the other resources in the Caspian seal basin.



The country is 33,500 square miles and has a population of 9 million. The capital is Baku and the country has it's own language which is similar to Turkish. The predominant religion is Muslim and the country a democracy governed by a constitution. 60% of the country is mountainous and is rich in mineral resources. Many countries have occupied Azerbaijan (most recently the USSR) and it maintains diplomatic relations with 160 countries.

There are 11 climate zones in the country. The major holidays are New Years on 1/1; Women's Day on 3/8; Noruz, which is a holiday for spring on 3/21; and Independence day on 5/28. The currency is the Manat and Qepik (coins).

Agriculture is a large industry with potatoes, grains, cotton and tobacco the primary products. Privatization of the old state owned industry is still a major hurdle to overcome as more private farms begin to do business and increase exports.

Farid gave us several words to learn:

Hello= Salam

Thank You= Chol Sagol

Bye= Sagol



Rotary is on the Web!

Rotary International— www.rotary.org
District 5650— www.rotarydistrict5650.org
Lincoln South Rotary—

<http://www.clubrunner.ca/CPrg/Home/homeS.asp?cid=6040>