

**Helena International Affairs Council  
4/17/07 Minutes  
(prepared by Elaine Dahl)**

**Welcome and Introductions**

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE	MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE	AFFILIATES IN ATTENDANCE	GUESTS
Pat Murdo, Chair	Gabe Furshong	Kizuku Matsunaga (Kumamoto Plaza)	Ellen and Rick Bush, with guest speakers
Alex Rincon	Josh DeWeese	Tom Stearns (Kumamoto Plaza)	Kathleen Bush, to speak about Japan
Carla Wambach		Bill MacBride, Rotary International Committee	Alice Mirlesse, exchange student from Switzerland staying with the Bush family
Matt Kuntz		Marshall Gingery from HCC	
Elaine Dahl, Sec.			
Will Garvin, Vice- Chair			
Kay Hansen			

**Guest presentations**

Kathleen Bush gave a presentation on her exchange experience in Japan, with the Japan-U.S. Senate scholarship program. She wore a summer kimono and demonstrated various items from Japan, including a calligraphy set and a picture of her host family. She described her day-to-day experiences attending school and clubs, eating the food, practicing the “formalities” of Japanese culture and school life, and visiting Tokyo and other places in Japan. She will go to Switzerland next year.

Alice Mirlesse

Alice is an exchange student from Geneva, Switzerland, with the program Youth for Understanding (YFU). She primarily speaks French, but also speaks German and Italian, as well as English. She described the “roller coaster” and scary aspects of preparing for her exchange, as well as her experiences missing her airline connection and being delayed in an American airport with her luggage lost—but has viewed her experience here positively overall. She discussed her experiences in sports at Helena High (x-country, swimming and track), which are different and more competitive and intense than in her home country. She also described her participation in various clubs, and the differences between the school systems and teenagers here and in Switzerland. She passed around a book on Geneva, as well as a paper with profiles of students from Switzerland who want to participate in the exchange under the same program in the future.

**Review minutes**

Page 3—RE Canada, Alex said should not be 214, should be 14. Minutes approved as amended.

## **Current Issues**

### **Forum on the impacts of the war in Helena**

Matt reported that the groundwork is being laid on the forum. He'd like to explore holding it at Carroll, and they are considering who to invite as speakers. Bill asked how the idea was received, and Pat said she had discussed it with Mayor Smith, who said it would be HIAC's choice whether to move forward. Pat had not mentioned it to other commissioners. Matt said he thought it was in its infancy. Alex suggested inviting the Montana Human Rights Network, and Matt said he thought they were connected with PeaceSeekers. Alex also suggested CAJA as well. Carla suggested Mark Johnson of the World Affairs Council in Missoula. Pat said was not sure if a non-Helena speaker would be appropriate. Matt said he thought it might be. Bill said getting a balance might be difficult. Matt agreed, especially in light of a newspaper report that the VA had been given a mandate not to speak about returning veterans. Carla suggested we learn if that report is true and applicable to forums as well, and Matt suggested we learn how much military people can say, and it may be challenging if a lot of entities involved cannot be represented. Kay suggested we ask, at least. Bill mentioned that many administration representatives were here during Kyrgyzstan activities. Pat mentioned Rep. Rehberg and Sen. Tester might be available, and it might be appropriate to brief the Commission at the Wednesday meeting. Will stated he would be willing to do that, after consulting with Gabe and Matt about their general thoughts. Pat asked about the title of the forum, and Matt suggested we had time to resolve that and other issues.

### **Letter to educators**

Pat passed around copies of a draft letter to School Superintendent Messenger about the possibility of placing foreign language teachers in schools, and mentioned that HIAC had previously discussed sending it to other people. Pat also noted Alice's comment that Helena schools need good language teachers. Will commented that the word "may" could be changed to "will" or "probably"—but Pat and Alex stated that it was not certain the teaching services would be free. Matt suggested underlining "free." Pat suggested changing the "may" to "we hope" or "may or may not be." Pat said people could e-mail her with suggestions, then she would clear it with the mayor and then send it to the private schools and other organizations mentioned at the last meeting.

## **PNEDC**

Carla asked about the date. Pat said it was something like July 9-15, and she has not heard from Sheldon Bartel lately.

## **New brochure update / business cards**

The brochure will be available as soon as a copy is taken to the printers. Pat said she planned to provide business cards to members to give out at activities (esp. this summer), and would like to know if we want our personal information on them.

## **Upcoming Events**

5<sup>th</sup> annual Central Asia Conference—April 19-21 at UM. Ambassadors and other officials from various countries, as well as the US State Dept., will attend.

Events at Carroll—Alex handed out a notice of various events April 18-20 and April 24, including "The Challenge of China," a discussion of a book on Latin America by Greg Grandin

and a lecture, *Earth's Icy Biosphere*, and the Honors Convocation, as well as an upcoming workshop on the Fulbright Program.

Dutch TV Interview Documentary Matt mentioned an upcoming documentary on this documentary, which focused in part in Montana on the high recruitment rate for the military in Montana, and involved interviews with various Montanans.

Uganda priest Matt mentioned a Ugandan priest from Kampala who is interested in visiting in June, and Matt would contact the Catholic Church and see if he could help put that together.

Rotary events Bill reported the school supplies program is fully funded, and will likely be looking for another program. Bill stated he might pursue a Kyrgyzstan program further, in relation to the Farm in the Dell.

Lunch with Mei Mei Wong (Taiwan) and Mark Bisom Bill reported on his lunch, with the idea of the City sharing with the State in its international trade efforts in Japan and Taiwan. Bill broached the subject with Mark. The idea is for the city to supply a limited amount of money in exchange for a position in Taipei (perhaps sharing/expanding an office with Mei Mei). Of course, the Commission would need to approve, so this is just a starting point. Kay asked if HIAC could set up something specific to work on this, and Pat suggested we invite Mark to the next meeting.

Incoming French teacher from France Rick mentioned the teacher would be coming.

Matsunaga family Tom mentioned that the Matsunaga family has been here for almost 2 weeks, and they will be here until the end of March 2009. Mr. Matsunaga stated he would appreciate help getting used to Helena, and he described upcoming events planned by Kumamoto Plaza, including an artwalk on May 18—origami display, and Migratory Bird Day in a couple weeks (May 5 or 12?), and Kids' College at Rossiter School (Japanese immersion class, origami class, brush writing, etc. Tom stated he would take Mr. Matsunaga to the Downtown Helena meeting and Secretary of State's office. And on Thursday, Ian Marquand's video will be showing in Missoula, "Libby and Minamata"—mercury poisoning and asbestos issues with corresponding presentations in UM's Turner Hall.

Honorary consuls meeting Lunch with Mark Bisom. Elaine is scheduled to attend, along with Kumamoto Plaza delegates.

International Day of Dance Carla said in 2008, there would be an international day of dance in Butte.

Promoting Enrichment Activities for Kids (PEAK) program Carla reported her participation over the last six years with this program, teaching about birds, international folk dance, etc., and she won an award as "Distinguished Peak Educator." The award is a drum. She also discussed a meeting with Nancy Schweitzer and showed a picture.

Montana Environmental Educators Association Carla went to a banquet and won an award for her participation in this program as well, which she showed us.

Meeting adjourned at 7 p.m.