



American Corners (AC) and Cultural Centers (ACC) in Kazakhstan

What we offer

- ◆ Books & Magazines in English
- ◆ Reference Material
- ◆ DVDs, CDs & Videos
- ◆ Clubs & Discussions
- ◆ Educational Opportunities
- ◆ Parties & Celebrations

Inside this issue:

Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day	2-3
Teaching and Learning English at the American Corners	4-5
English Microscholarship Program and Summer Camp	6
JAZZ: Born in America. Enjoyed Worldwide	7
Celebrating Holidays	8
Poetry Month	8
ACK for kids	8
Guests at the American Corners in Kazakhstan	9
Annual AC Workshop	10
ACK Celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month	11
ACK program Expands Its Outreach in the East Kazakhstan	12
ACK program Expands Its Outreach in the East Kazakhstan	13

The eleventh American Corner was inaugurated in Astana

Chargé d'Affaires Pamela Spratlen officially opened American Corner Astana—the tenth American Corner in Kazakhstan—at a lively ceremony on April 22 attended by more than 100 people in Kazakhstan's National Academic Library.



In addition to the library director, participants included representatives from the Ministry of Culture and Astana Akimat, as well as one of Kazakhstan's most famous writers, Akim Tarzi.

The opening included performances by a jazz singer, Kazakh folk dancers and a specially composed



song in traditional Kazakh folk-song style that paid tribute both to the Library's cooperation with the Embassy and to President Nazarbayev's recent successful meeting with President Obama.

The Counselor for Public Affairs from the U.S. Embassy, Jeffrey Sexton and the Director of the library, Rakhimzhan Otarbayev signed the Memorandum of Understanding and after that, the AC Coordinator

Nourganym Agzamova offered guests a tour at the American Corner, telling them about its regular events and available resources.



The celebratory atmosphere was underlined by the unveiling at the library of a special State Department photo exhibit, *JAM Session: America's Jazz Ambassadors Embrace the World* (More about the exhibit on page 7). The event was widely covered by media.

Where we are

- ◆ Aktobe
- ◆ Almaty
- ◆ Astana
- ◆ Atyrau
- ◆ Karaganda
- ◆ Kostanai
- ◆ Oral
- ◆ Oskemen
- ◆ Pavlodar
- ◆ Petropavlovsk
- ◆ Shymkent

In 2010, the National Academic Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan celebrated its 6th anniversary.

Today, it serves more than 21 thousands readers. They can use around half a million books, 1,500 kinds of domestic and foreign periodicals, and variety of electronic information. Users' services include an electronic catalogue, electronic delivery of documents (books, articles from the big book-stacks of CIS and foreign countries), access to full-text scientific databases, virtual reference service, "Ask a Librarian." Information is provided in 55 languages. There are 13 rooms and three centers, among which there is a hall for disabled readers with the latest technology. In addition, there is a mobile training class for the study of the Kazakh language. The language laboratory is very popular with its 12 places for studying foreign languages.

Source: www.nabr.kz

Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day

Forty years after the first Earth Day, the world is in greater peril than ever. While climate change is the greatest challenge of our time, it also presents the greatest opportunity—an unprecedented opportunity to build a healthy, prosperous, clean energy economy now and for the future.

Earth Day 2010 can be a turning point to advance climate policy, energy efficiency, renewable energy, and green jobs. It is a pivotal opportunity for individuals, corporations and governments to join together and create a global green economy.

Source: www.earthday.net/earthday2010

In April, the American Corners in Kazakhstan joined the more than one billion people in 190 countries and created programming to celebrate Earth Day and educate the local population.

At the **American Corner in Pavlodar**, most of the programming in April was dedicated to Earth Day. At every meeting we discussed ecology, ecological problems of the Earth, and those of our country and region in particular. The main goal of those meetings was to make every participant think of the things s/he can do to save our planet for future generations.

The first meeting in this series was organized on April 19 by Shannon Huett, a Peace Corps volunteer, and a constant visitor of the AC, Heather Jones. It was for the children from Samal Center for Rehabilitated Youth. They prepared an interesting presentation, told about the history of Earth Day and ways everybody can protect our planet and its creatures from extinction. The boys and girls liked the motto suggested by

Heather—*Reduce, Reuse, Recycle* and agreed to follow it.

The children actively participated in the discussion and offered their ideas for making the city cleaner. All of them



agreed that planting trees and growing flowers is an effective way to make the air better. The AC Coordinator brought soil for everyone, and the young people tried to be gardeners and planted flower seeds. At the end, every student got a colorful *Earth Day* badge so that they could remember about this day and tell their relatives and friends about the importance of caring about our common home that we call *the Earth*.

Two days later, another Peace Corps volunteer, Chris Thomas, organized an *Amazing Earth Facts* quiz-game for the members of the English Club. Though the questions were not easy ones, two teams fought for the victory and learned a lot of really interesting facts about the Earth and other planets. After the game, we watched *An Inconvenient Truth*, a very interesting environmental documentary from the Corner's DVD collection.



On April 27, the AC Pavlodar organized a visit to the Center of Ecology and Tourism of Pavlodar for 13 young students from the boarding school for deaf children. The employees of the center showed them



their zoo corner and told about endangered animals of the region. The children were also shown a

beautiful garden in the greenhouse of the Center where plants from all over the world can be found.

Also, thanks to an informative exhibition of books titled *Ecology and Life*, all patrons of the host library during the month of April had a chance to learn more about this important topic.

by A. Klassen
AC Coordinator, Pavlodar

Is it important to plant trees? Is it crucial to create reservations and national parks? The answers seem obvious. **The American Corner in Astana** scheduled a discussion on April, 10—Arbor Day—in connection with Earth Day. The historical background of the holiday was explained by our guest George Mano, an English Language Fellow at the Academy of Finance Police of Kazakhstan. The custom to plant trees was originally held in barren areas of the state of Nebraska and later on spread around the USA.



In order to enhance our language skills, we split up into groups of three to work in teams. Every team had to respond to the question *What can I personally do to help save trees?* Our participants presented strong arguments. The event ended with a planting dance: dig a hole, plant a twig, water the plant and dance!

by N. Agzamova
AC Coordinator, Astana

The American Corner in Oskemen also dedicated a few excellent events to the celebration of Earth Day.

A major exhibition on water and energy resources took place in the host Pushkin Library from April 1 till April 21. Materials at the exhibition provided information on the world's water and energy resources and demonstrated what everyone can do to save these valuable resources. The AC users and club members paid great attention to the exhibition.

On the whole, 72 college and university students, as well, as teachers of English visited the event. They got up-to-date information, successfully passed a test and were willing to use the acquired knowledge in daily life and classes.



Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day

On April 15, within the program devoted to the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, the AC Oskemen arranged a presentation by ecological club ENO-GREENS. The club was created and works under the guidance of Galina Melnikova, TEA-03 alumna, at school-gymnasium #10. Club members are senior grade students.



Since 2005, they have been members of the ENO-Environment Online, a global virtual school and network for sustainable development and environmental awareness (www.joensuu.fi/eno). ENO talked about their work to 54 students and teachers from nine Oskemen schools who came to the meeting. We would be happy if more schools from Kazakhstan will join ENO and take care of our planet. The AC plans to create a new page on its website to highlight regional ENO activities.

On April 22, ecological club ENO-GREENS was at the central city square to fly talking kites. The international event *Talking Kites* is conducted annually in honor of Yanush Korchak, a children's writer, doctor, advocate and humanist. His ideas form the basis of the modern child's rights declaration. Twelve members of the club together with Galina Melnikova, their leader, had a short meeting, flied kites and explained to the audience and passers-by the ideas and principles of the event. The AC participants came to join the activity as well. The day was beautiful, and bright kites attracted people's attention. Little children stopped with their mothers to watch the unusual event and read students wishes written on kites: *Peace to the whole world, Take care of*



Page 3

beautiful Earth, We are for cultural diversity and unity...

Next time, ENO-GREENS members are sure to have more participants and more children's dreams will fly high into the sky, and remind people to be attentive to their world and our fragile planet.

*by A. Zhamankulova
AC Coordinator, Oskemen*

On April 28, the **American Corner in Karaganda** held a Round Table discussion devoted to the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. We decorated the premises with thematic posters and presented respective books on environmental issues, so that our visitors could learn some facts related to that celebration. For example, about the birth of the Earth Day—in 1963, Senator Gaylord Nelson began to worry about our planet and in 1969, he decided to have a special day to teach everyone about the things that needed changing in our environment.

On April 22, 1970, the first Earth Day was held. People all over the country made promises to help the environment. Everyone got involved and since then, Earth Day has spread all over the planet.



Here in Karaganda, we discussed problems of litter in our city, and after the Round table discussion was finished, we cleaned a small garden near our host library. This was the way the members of the AC Karaganda Round Table celebrated Earth Day 2010!

*by Sh. Baimurzina
AC Coordinator, Karaganda*



Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
Washington, DC
April 19, 2010

Forty years ago, Earth Day began in the United States as a "teach-in"—a day to educate people about the environmental challenges facing our planet. Today, we know more than ever about the challenges of preserving our environment—from clean water to climate change—and Earth Day has evolved into a call for sustainable solutions and local action all over the world.

The Obama administration has taken concrete steps toward achieving these goals. Under the President's leadership, the United States has reengaged in international climate negotiations and we are more aggressively working to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions. And at the State Department, we are elevating environmental issues in our diplomatic relationships and forging new partnerships to better engage on those global challenges.

Last year, the State Department challenged our more than 60,000 employees worldwide to lessen the environmental footprint of our diplomatic work, and this year we are launching the Greening Embassy Forum to share what we've learned.

Today, environmental awareness and activism are on the rise across the world—proof that Earth Day's teachings have begun to change all of us, and change the environment we share. We have come a long way these last 40 years, but we have so much more to do. And we need your help to do it.

So Happy Earth Day. Let's make our country and our world as green as possible in the years ahead.

Video message is available here:
<http://www.state.gov/video/?videoid=78531249001>
& <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I8WSS7i5cvk>

Source: www.america.gov



Teaching and Learning English at the American Corners

The English language is rapidly gaining popularity in Kazakhstan. People realize that English language skills are crucial in order to study abroad or find a good job. The American Corners also contribute greatly to promoting the English language through offering their resources and implementing joint projects with Peace Corps volunteers, English Language Fellows, educational institutions and local administration; target groups vary from small kids to professionals. In Kostanai, Karaganda and Petropavlovsk the AC Coordinators, sometimes with the help from Peace Corps volunteers, offer English language classes for different levels, in practically all ACs in Kazakhstan regular English clubs, Discussion & Debate clubs in English take place—and this is highly appreciated by the AC patrons.

On April 13, the **American Corner in Oral** invited 17 kindergarten children and four teachers from kindergarten *Sholpan* to the extra curricular lesson with Katima Kupbayeva and her young pupils. Children played dialogue *At the shop*, played games with *Fruits*, and sang the song *If you want to be happy, clap your hands*. Afterwards, Katima told the fairytale *Round Cookie*, where children helped the heroes to overcome many obstacles in the way of the Round Cookie. Teachers from the kindergarten highly appreciated Katima's and the children's performance. The AC Oral and kindergarten *Sholpan* plan to cooperate further.

Another exciting experiment took place during the regular English Speaking Club—Aibek Akkalyiev had the bright idea to lead a discussion as a radio station. Seventeen participants called the new radio station, *American Corner FM*, where AC “DJs” received calls and questions on themes related to our city of Oral and discussed them.



Another time, Aibek led a discussion similar to a popular talk-show “*Let them*

talk,” hosted by Andrey Malakhov. We turned on a TV and a video camera, and thus, with the camera directed at the speaker, we had the atmosphere of a real program. Everyone was involved in the process of discussion.

As one can see, with some creative ideas we turned regular events into an unforgettable and fun experience while speaking and practicing English!

*by Zh. Mussina
AC Coordinator, Oral*

The **American Corner in Oskemen** continues the tradition of organizing various seminars, trainings, workshops and contests in connection with English language teaching and learning.

On April 23 and 24, an eight-hour course on TEFL was held at the premises of the AC. Samantha Prudente and Tom Yacko, new PC volunteers, arranged a special program and had presented it to 21 EFL teachers from school #44 and the Zhyryanovsk region. The seminar focused on lesson planning, objectives, warm ups, and teaching new vocabulary, as well as on learning new methods and games to teach speaking, reading, writing, and listening. All methods were targeted at different levels of learners, as it is important to be able to adapt your lessons to fit the needs of all students.

On April 24, the 6th annual high school students' Research Paper conference Language is a Mediator of Friendship and Collaboration - 2010 took place at the American Corner. 22 research papers from 12 schools were considered by the jury, and 10 of them were selected to be presented at the conference. The jury consisted of a teacher from local university, O. Bogun, PC volunteer Jaime Teicheiro, and Ms. Nesterenko, methodologist from the Regional Education Department. The first place was taken by the students of the school # 38 A. Aubakirova and D. Bayandarova for their joint research paper, *Modern Youth Subcultures*.



“This is my first time participating in such a wonderful conference. I was really impressed by the participants who presented their works. They showed outstanding knowledge of their research and English language skills. I wish them good luck and every success.” said Jaime Teicheiro, a member of the jury. The conference was attended by 46 people.

*by A. Zhamankulova
AC Coordinator, Oskemen*

In May 2010, the first trial-level intercollegiate moot court competition was announced. The moot court trial, which was to be conducted completely in English and incorporate American criminal procedure, took place between a team from the Financial Police Academy (FPA) representing the prosecution and a team from the Kazakh University of Law and Humanities representing the defense. The competition was created to improve the students' English ability, to make them more familiar with American courtroom procedures and evidence collection, and to raise their awareness of the rule of law in police work.

The **American Corner in Astana**, as a point of access to information about the USA, functioned as a venue for the preparations by the Financial Police Academy team. The team coach was George Mano, English Language Fellow, who is a frequent moderator of AC Astana events. Guess who won the competition? Yes, it was the FPA team who had their preparation phase at the AC Astana!

*by N. Agzamova
AC Coordinator, Astana*



Teaching and Learning English at the American Corners

On April 20, the **American Corner Petropavlovsk** hosted a seminar for English language teachers. American teacher Mathew Ellis from Virginia shared his experience with local colleagues. First, the lecturer launched a discussion on an important question—What makes a good teacher?



It was agreed upon that creative and inspirational teachers motivate their students to learn by using their personal qualities, their positive experiences, and their excellent communication skills. The qualities of a good teacher and innovative English language teaching methods were covered during this teacher training course.

*by L. Temenova
AC Coordinator, Petropavlovsk*

The **American Corner in Karaganda** hosted a course named *Learn How to Teach English to Children* from the middle of February until April 2010. This course was organized through a partnership between the U.S. State Department English Language Fellowship and the National Association of Teachers of Kazakhstan (NATEK). Adam Blankenship, an English Language Fellow and a professional English teacher from the United States, was the moderator.

Six times a week, different groups of people studied at the AC at the Gogol Library. They covered the following topics: Supporting ELL's in Math Class,



Word Study for Phonics, Vocabulary and Spelling, and Writing Workshop. Classes were sponsored by the U.S. State Department.

Using the AC's equipment, teachers watched and discussed recorded lessons from classrooms in the USA. Teachers completed the course being more confident and feeling more comfortable while teaching English language to the kids. All the participants successfully completed an eight-week course and received a certificate. One of the participants said, "I have improved my teaching and spoken English skills. Now they are much better than ever before."

As a result, the AC Karaganda served as an educational center, and most all of the teachers have become our regular users.

*by Sh. Baimurzina
AC Coordinator, Karaganda*

In June, the American Corner in Aktobe hosted a representative of the American Professional Associates Organization, Randy Fields, who conducted the three-week English language course for students of Aktobe, ages 14 to 20. The teachers of these free classes were the students of American colleges from different American states.



Students were divided into three groups, Pre-intermediate level, Intermediate level and Advanced level, and taught in a fun and entertaining way. They sang songs, played games, and took part in interesting discussions. Some of the sessions were based on the American Corner resources.

*by E. Lebedkina
AC Coordinator, Aktobe*

English Access Microscholarship Program

Six English Access Microscholarship Programs (*Access*) are being successfully implemented in five cities in Kazakhstan—Aktobe, Pavlodar, Shymkent, Atyrau, and Taraz. *Access* provides a foundation of English language skills to non-elite, 14-18 year old students through afterschool classes and intensive summer learning activities.

Access students gain an appreciation for American culture and democratic values, increase their ability to participate successfully in the socio-economic development of their countries, and gain the ability to compete for and participate in future U.S. exchange and study programs.

Since its inception in 2004, approximately 55,000 students in more than 70 countries have participated in the *Access Program*.

Source: <http://exchanges.state.gov>.

Please read about some *Access Program* highlights on the next page!

English Access Microscholarship Program and Summer Camp

I remember the day I got a call from Sofia Mikhailovna from Shymkent. She said that *Access* program alumni from Shymkent planned to travel to the Kazakhstani capital Astana and wished to visit the **American Corner in Astana**.

Frankly speaking, I was not sure what kind of program our guests expected from me, so, I invited our constant patron George Mano, English Language Fellow and Aliya Dzhakupova along with a FLEX alumna, Mona (Moldir Nuraskhan) who had just returned from the States. We had enough native and fluent speakers to conduct a good program.

The kids impressed us with their English language skills—I haven't met any 14-years-olds who spoke English so fluently! All the school graduates from this group were awarded gold medals at their schools (called *Altyn Belgi* in Kazakh)!



George told us the story of American Independence Day, and afterwards, we played an informative, interactive game that was prepared by Aliya and Mona. Then, I offered a guided tour around the library showing our technology, resources, and the interior of our host library—the National Academic Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Finally we had to say goodbye, as Sofia Mikhailovna and her students were about to go sightseeing Astana's landmarks. The Access Microscholarship Program is a great opportunity for our children to

realize and develop their potential and build a bright future for themselves.

by N. Agzamova
AC Coordinator,
Astana



Seven days at the end of July 2010 were very remarkable for the **American Corner in Oskemen**. During these days, a new USG project, "English Summer Camp for English Access Microscholarship Program alumni," was implemented. The project was carried out in partnership with the Regional NGO, *Youth Instructor Center*, and U.S. Peace Corps volunteers and alumni. The Summer Camp "Open Borders" aimed at developing students' English language communication skills and gaining greater insight into American and Kazakhstani cultures. Forty-three 14 to 18 year-old children from disadvantaged families, participants of the mentioned USG program, arrived in Oskemen on the morning of July 21. They came from Pavlodar (10 hours away by bus)



and Pervomaika, a village 80 km from Oskemen, and then further headed to a beautiful place in the mountains called *Altay Alps*. There, under the guidance of four professional instructors and the AC team of three PCVs, three alumni and three active AC patrons, they had an exciting stay in an area with a beautiful landscape.

Each day, three hours of English language classes and different cultural, educational, and sport activities were conducted. English classes varied from academic (Jaime) to interactive (Laura and Meriah) and role-play (AC team). Every evening, there was a special topic for a party (*Let's get acquainted, Halloween, Happy Thanksgiving, Cultures' Day, America: Far and Close ...*), disco, and Night Candle Talks, where children shared their impressions. An informative meeting on American exchange programs caused great interest, and Valya Puchkova, UGRAD-09 alumna became a wonderful source of important information in the camp.

A collection of about 100 books and magazines in English, Kazakh and Russian from the East-Kazakhstan Pushkin Library were in a mobile library, and 22 children used the library to prepare for their events. Photo Club was organized by a professional photographer, and we even arranged the exhibition of the best children's pictures!

On July 26, we welcomed Susanne Kuester, Cultural Affairs Officer and Balapan Ibrasheva, Outreach and Alumni Programs Coordinator, U.S. Embassy in Astana. They met with children and the Summer Camp staff, got acquainted with their living conditions and took part in the evening performance.

A party *America: Far and Close* was the biggest event among cultural activities arranged at the Summer Camp. According to the plot, a senior grade student (Ainur from Pavlodar) got news she had been selected as a FLEX finalist. She is happy but worries that she knows too little about the USA. Her granny puts her in a time machine that takes the girl to different time-periods and events in American history.

Through this simple plot, children learned more about the USA, and of course they were not just passive listeners, they actively played and participated in the performance.



They met President Lincoln, learned that jazz was born in America,

performed an old Indian legend about a dream-catcher, met some American celebrities, and even visited an American school. And there was a surprise—Susanne Kuester played a role of an American teacher and spoke about some traditions of American students, such as the *Piñata*. The evening ended with a lively discotheque.



Open Borders was a brief event that had a big impact. Everyone—children, their instructors, and teachers gained new exciting experiences and acquired knowledge, built new relationships, broke stereotypes and made friends.

by A. Zhamankulova
AC Coordinator, Oskemen

JAZZ: Born in America. Enjoyed Worldwide

Jazz has always drawn a lot of attention from young Kazakhstanis and served as a subject for discussion at American Corners more than once.

ACs in Kazakhstan also create active programming during **Jazz Appreciation Month** in April. Below are some highlights about *All That Jazz*...

The **American Corner in Oral** held its usual English Speaking Club on the theme of jazz. About 14 young college students took part in this activity.

The discussion started with the question “What do you know about jazz?”, and we found out that many students listened to jazz and one of active participants, Gaukhar Kazetova, said that she loved singing jazz songs.



We also looked through a number of books on jazz—*The Essential Library: Jazz* published by The New York Times, *Modern Jazz* and magazines with the articles on jazz. Participants watched video clips of Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong’s *Summertime*, and *What a Wonderful Life* and listened to records. As the final reward, Gaukhar sang a song *All That Jazz* from the musical *Chicago*. After the discussion many of participants shared with their opinions that jazz is a kind of everlasting music of the soul.

by Zh. Mussina
AC Coordinator, Oral

In honor of Jazz Appreciation Month a very informative and exciting event took place on May 6 at the **American Corner in Karaganda**.

The event was dedicated to the wonderful music of jazz that can express many different emotions and turn a tune that everyone knows into something very personal. The AC Coordinator and PCVs, together with active AC patrons, spoke about Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald and many others, and listened to well known and dear tunes. The U.S. Embassy in Astana sent us



colorful posters from the Smithsonian Institution, which served as a great decoration for the interesting “jazzy” event.

by Sh. Baimurzina
AC Coordinator, Karaganda

The **Ari Roland Jazz Quartet program** began on May 27, 2010 in Astana and was a tremendous success in Kazakhstan.

On June 1, the group participated in a jazz workshop for underprivileged children organized by the National Academic Library at the **American Corner in Astana**. On this day every year, almost all former Soviet countries celebrate Children’s Protection Day. The workshop drew children from underprivileged families as



well as regular American Corner visitors – former, current and future FLEXers, UGRAD and MUSKIE hopefuls and many others who are interested in studying and working in the United States. The audience was able to engage in an open dialogue with the musicians.

On June 2, the quartet members traveled to Pavlodar. Following a press conference, the students of the Music College gathered at the Yestay Palace of Culture for a master-class. Approximately 55 students participated, and, as the master-class continued, the musicians split into four groups, each drawing a specific audience. After performing several songs, the quartet listened to local musicians and provided feedback and advice after each performance, culminating in a classroom practice session with students.

That evening, the quartet performed before over 1,000 people at the Yestay Palace of Culture. Despite the extra seating provided, many stood in the aisles and sat on stairs for the concert. The audience members were whistling, shouting words of encouragement, and clapping loudly as the band played on. During their rendition of *Summertime*, two women from the audience joined the band on stage to sing along.

As the quartet played on and the audience heard the first few chords of Kazakh folk songs, the venue erupted with overwhelming applause, whistles, and shouts of bravo. By incorporating traditional Kazakh folk songs into their repertoire, the quartet paid tribute to Kazakh traditions and culture.



The success of the Ari Roland Jazz Quartet program in Kazakhstan is a clear example of why the Jazz

Ambassadors program works and how much impact the universal language of music can have.

by Zh. Kul-Mukhammed
U.S. Embassy Astana

The U.S. Government continues the tradition of bringing jazz to the people of the world. A collection of some 50 photos showing jazz greats such as Duke Ellington, Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis as they traveled the world as *Jazz Ambassadors* were on display from April through July in Astana and Pavlodar. The **exhibit, Jam Session: America’s Jazz Ambassadors Embrace the World**, tells the story of the Jazz Ambassadors program, in which leading American musicians from the 1950s to 1970s spread friendship and built cultural ties around the world.



The U.S. Embassy in Astana timed the JAM Session Photo Exhibit with the opening of the American

Corner in Astana on April 22. The exhibit was officially presented at the host library by Chargé Pamela Spratlen. A month later, the exhibit moved to Pavlodar, a city in northeast of Kazakhstan.

In Pavlodar, the JAM Session Photo Exhibit coincided with the concert of the American jazz band Ari Roland Jazz Quartet. The exhibit was officially presented by Cultural Attaché Susanne Kuester and was hosted at the Yestay Palace of Culture. In both cities, the exhibition was accompanied by CDs with jazz music and promotion posters. The events were widely covered by local media – print, electronic, and television.



Celebrating holidays

“Home, sweet home” is a simple truth for many past generations, and, I hope, for future ones. International Family Day is annually celebrated on the 15th of May. We at the **American Corner in Astana** paid special attention to the date and divided our programming into two parts: the Family Tree Contest of paintings among some 20 Discussion Club members, and afterwards, we had a visit from an Embassy official—Emily Portanova accompanied by her spouse and her little son.



We discussed family values in the United States and Kazakhstan and compared them through writing a list of main features that every ideal family should have. Every member of discussion considered his own family as the model one. It was a very lively discussion.

by N. Agzamova
AC Coordinator, Astana

Mother’s Day is a holiday which is celebrated on various days of the year. Americans celebrate Mother’s Day on the second Sunday in May. The **American Corner in Oskemen** organized a media-lesson devoted to Mother’s Day for junior school students and their teachers. A colorful presentation was demonstrated



and students learned about the history and traditions of the holiday. There was a

discussion about differences between celebration of Women’s Day in Kazakhstan on March 8 and Mother’s Day in America. Students played games and got little presents from the American Corner.

As a result, 98 school students became aware of this wonderful American holiday and tradition of its celebration, they developed their English speaking skills, and got acquainted with the AC resources and services.

by A. Zhamankulova
AC Coordinator, Oskemen

A poem begins with a lump in the throat.

Robert Frost

“She is an Angel, Very Strong...” Poets love poetry so much that they used the pronoun *she* while speaking about it. We decided to dedicate a special event to Poetry Month, which is celebrated in April.

Heather Jones, a constant visitor of the **American Corner in Pavlodar** and a very interesting, enthusiastic person, organized a Poetry Night for all interested people. Peace Corps volunteers, English language teachers and students of high and secondary schools gathered to talk about their favorite authors, poems, and to show their talent in writing pieces of poetry themselves.

Dinara Kozhakhmet and Elmira Seitkanova, high school students, amazed everyone with the poems that they had dedicated to the people they love. And an English language teacher Saltanat Sagiyeva’s translations of *Who is close?* by Kazybek bi, a well-known Kazakh judge, and *If I Stumble* by Kasym Amanzholov, a famous Kazakh poet, didn’t leave anyone feeling indifferent. Answering the participants’ question about whether it had been difficult for her to translate and not to lose the beauty of the poem, Saltanat remarked, “Yes, it was not easy. But I like challenges.” Poems of such prominent American poets as H.W. Longfellow, E. E. Cummings, as well as children’s author Dr. Seuss were recited during the session. But one could hear not only poems of American and Kazakh authors— Heather’s favorite poet is Fiaz Ahmet from Iran, and she showed the beauty of his poetry by reading one of his pieces. It turned out that many people who attended the program liked poems with deep philosophical meaning. Among them was Nuriya Sagieva with a poem of an unknown monk, *I Wanted to Change the World*. At the end of the evening, Huett Shannon, a PCV, recited the poem *Pavlodar is Our Home* in Russian.



ACK for Kids

On the 1st of June, 14 enthusiastic users of the **American Corner in Oral** organized a flash mob action dedicated to International Children’s Protection Day. The idea came from the AC Coordinator and active patrons Arman and Alevtina. We decided to line up in a sentence *Protect children!* (*Bepezyme demeï!* in Russian) for 5 minutes near the Central City Park.



That day, there were many children and adults in the park. By standing there, we drew a lot of attention to our flash mob action. On June 1, many concerts and activities are organized for children in the city of Pavlodar and all over Kazakhstan. Also, our host library offered a concert for kindergarten children.

by Zh. Mussina
AC Coordinator, Oral

In order to help our young readers to recognize the significance of road traffic rules, we arranged an event called Traffic Lights. The American Corner in Astana invited about 70 kids from age seven to ten, accompanied by their teachers. During the event, children had an opportunity to get acquainted with the American Corner resources. The idea of being a part of the library community appealed very much to the kids, and the teachers were truly inspired by materials available at the AC. The event ended up with a cartoon that explained traffic regulations and importance of obeying them. We also organized follow-up activities in a form of quiz. We hope to bring age-diversity to AC events that attract high-school pupils, students, and professionals. We hope to continue our **American Corner for Kids** events in cooperation with schools in Astana.



by N. Agzamova
AC Coordinator, Astana

Guests at the American Corners in Kazakhstan

On June 29, **the American Corner Aktobe** hosted a meeting with Kevin Covert, Deputy Chief of the Political and Economic Section at the U.S. Embassy in Astana.

He spoke about the traditions of celebrating Independence Day in America. Right afterwards, our participants answered questions from a quiz about Independence Day. Also, our patrons asked questions, gave their opinions about ecological and renewable fuel, mentioned the new Customs Union between Russia and Kazakhstan, and discussed many other issues.



The meeting was very informative, and 25 participants—students from the Aktobe Zhubanov University, Peace Corps volunteers, and alumni of the USG-sponsored programs—appreciated this event very much!

*by E. Lebedkina
AC Coordinator, Aktobe*

On May 24, **the American Corner in Karaganda** hosted Mr. Joseph Weber, Associate Professor, and four students photographers from the College of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Nebraska.

The American guests participated in the AC's regular Round Table session and presented their state that has the nickname "Cornhusker State." The discussion was very interesting—the Kazakhstani participants had the feeling they visited Nebraska and its capital Lincoln! Also, the speakers discussed education in the USA and Kazakhstan. The future photographers were interested in visiting various places in Karaganda, its monuments and important places, and wished to learn about its history and make some photos.

The club members, local youth, played the role of guides and



interpreters and showed them around our wonderful city. The American Corner in Karaganda continues to be a place for interesting and informative meetings and attracts people of different nationalities and cultures!

On June 1, **the American Corner in Karaganda** hosted an exciting meeting with representatives of National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA). The American guests were Mark Bowman, Joel Montalbano, and Robert Navias. The first to speak was Mr. Bowman, Deputy Director, NASA's Human Space Flight Program in Russia. Mr. Bowman shared interesting facts from his 25 years of experience in space hardware development and integration, project management, and project engineering.

A very interesting presentation was offered by Mr. Montalbano, Director of the Human Space Flight Program – Russia at NASA's Johnson Space Center. He spoke about the Shuttle-Mir Program, and it gave everyone an insight into this amazing world. Mr. Navias, who is also called the "voice of NASA", shared information about NASA's public relations office's activities.



The meeting was very interesting and some 40 participants enjoyed this unique encounter immensely! The print and electronic media was invited and covered the event. Thus, the AC Karaganda served as a platform for scientific meetings, and it made us proud and happy!

*by Sh. Baimurzina
AC Coordinator, Karaganda*

On April 12, **the American Corner in Pavlodar** welcomed the Information Resource Officer William Middleton from Washington, D.C. and organized a number of meetings with the most active patrons and supporters of the



AC Pavlodar. Mr. Middleton met with Peace Corps volunteers, local teachers of English and regular AC visitors who shared their comments about the programming at the AC, presented some suggestions for future projects, and asked questions about various USG-programs. Our guest emphasized the importance of reading and commented positively on the annual national program One Country – One book which takes its roots in the USA. Also, 35 participants of the English Access Microscholarship Program had a chance to meet Mr. Middleton and thank him for the chance to learn English through this program.

The final meeting was timed with the regular English Language Club, My English. After students had taken a quiz "What do you know about the United States?" William Middleton told them some facts about the American capital Washington, D.C. and shared his impressions about Pavlodar and Kazakhstan.

*by A. Klassen
AC Coordinator, Pavlodar*

On August 2, **the American Corner in Shymkent** hosted a special guest—U.S. Special Representative to Muslim Communities Farah Pandith visited Kazakhstan to further President Obama's commitment to a new relationship with Muslims around the world based on mutual respect, mutual interest, and mutual responsibility.

Farah Pandith interacted with Shymkent youth and discussed Islam in the United States, Central Asia and Kazakhstan.

*by S. Marinich
AC Coordinator,
Shymkent*



Annual AC Workshop: Supporting and Sustaining Your American Corner

On August 11-13, the U.S. Embassy's fourth annual workshop for American Corner Coordinators took place in Almaty, Kazakhstan. Thirty-two AC Coordinators from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan presented their programming successes and the difficulties they face in their daily work, shared their experiences, and brainstormed about ways of strengthening programs at American Corners. Other themes included effective marketing, working with databases, education advising regarding U.S. government-sponsored exchange study programs, local volunteerism, and many other issues.



Deputy Chief of Mission Pamela Spratlen, the Counselor for Public Affairs at the U.S. Embassy Astana Jeffrey Sexton, together with Information Resource officer William Middleton from Washington D.C., welcomed participants to the workshop.



Just like last year, based on programming results, regular reporting, innovative programs and active outreach, a *Coordinator of the Year* was nominated. This year, the certificate was handed to Aiman Zhamankulova, the AC Coordinator from Oskemen, East Kazakhstan.

The three-day workshop was funded by the Bureau of International Information Programs (IIP) and organized by the Public Affairs Office of the U.S. Embassy Astana and General Consulate in Almaty.

For more information about American Corners in Kazakhstan, please visit www.amcorners.kz



Twelve timeless reasons why libraries are good for the country and cannot be replaced by search engines:

1. They inform citizens and help them find not just information but accurate and authoritative information and knowledge.
2. They break down social boundaries by being open to all.
3. They level the playing field between the haves and the have-nots, the rich and the poor.
4. They value the individual and independent thinking and learning beyond the classroom.
5. They nourish creativity.
6. They open children's minds to the world around them.
7. They return high dividends on a relatively small investment.
8. They build communities and can be the intellectual centers of the communities they serve, whether that is a town, a university, a school, an organization, or a business.
9. They challenge you to examine controversies, to understand, and to make your own decisions.
10. They offer opportunities for lifelong learning.
11. They provide a safe haven, a sanctuary.
12. They preserve the past, the record of human existence.

Source: Libraries Now More Than Ever

by Leonard Kniffel

READ!



ACK celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month on September 15—October 15

Hispanic Heritage Month honors the diverse people of Spanish-speaking backgrounds in the United States.

From September 15 to October 15, a multitude of special programs, events, exhibits and Web sites celebrate the heritage, culture, spirit and extraordinary contributions of Hispanic Americans. The celebration of Hispanic Heritage began on a national scale in 1968.

Hispanics are the fastest-growing minority group in the United States, according to the Census Bureau. The Hispanic population is projected to nearly triple, from almost 47 million to 133 million, from 2008 to 2050, and will jump from 15 percent to 30 percent of the population.

Today, more than ever, Hispanic Americans play an integral role in shaping the American experience. They serve as leaders in government, law, business, science, sports, the arts and many other occupations. The influence of Hispanic culture is reflected in every aspect of American life, from politics to education to music and television.

Source: www.america.gov

Additional Resources

Gale Free Resources: *Hispanic Heritage*
www.gale.cengage.com

Anuario Hispano / *Hispanic Yearbook*
www.hispanicyearbook.com/index.php

Hispanic Genealogy Center
www.hispanicgenealogy.com

Latino Studies Journal
www.palgrave-journals.com/lst/index.html

Library Research Guide for Latino Studies Olin & Uris Libraries, Cornell University
www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/latinostudies.html

Hispanic Publishing Corp.
www.hispaniconline.com

The American Corner in Astana celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month through two events.

The first part was presented by Peace Corp Volunteer Kenneth Balla. The main points of his presentation included a brief overview of Hispanic culture in the Americas from the Spanish conquistadores through the Spanish-American war, modern facts, holidays, arts, sports, and food.

The next step was to raise awareness about lives the Americans of Hispanic origin lead in



the USA. This part was successfully delivered by the U.S. Embassy official Gerald C. Jacobson. Gerald visited AC Astana in a company of his spouse Dolores. Both of our visitors had deep insights into Hispanic heritage of the USA. Guests reported data about living conditions of immigrants from South and Central Americas, their lives and opportunities in the USA, along with telling a history of Hispanic Heritage Month in the USA, the political and social aspect of the celebration.

Surprisingly, the majority of visitors did not know most of the facts about this cultural heritage of Americans. Both events increased their awareness about an essential part of the American culture, represented by the Hispanic descendants who are at present citizens of the United States. Moreover, every presenter could speak Spanish perfectly. Therefore, the Kazakhstani participants learnt a few phrases like *Hola!* and *Como estas?* and took part in a real cross-cultural exchange between Kazakhstan and America.

by N. Agzamova
AC Coordinator, Astana

Hispanic Heritage Month honors the diverse people of Spanish-speaking backgrounds in the United States — those who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean.

For young students from the boarding school for deaf children **the American Corner in Pavlodar** chose an American tradition with Mexican roots—Piñatas. When children understood what this strange word meant they got very excited as they had seen this unusual and funny activity in some American movies.



But no pains, no gains—first we had to **MAKE** the piñatas. A short video *How to Make a Piñata* helped the boys and girls understand what they were going to do.

by A. Klassen
AC Coordinator, Pavlodar

Through the materials received from the U.S. Embassy in Astana we learnt much about Hispanic minority in the USA. An English teacher from the United States, Jana Printz, helped us to make the event even more interesting. She showed the audience that many words of Hispanic origin came to English. And also, through the presentation, the audience got acquainted with Hispanic-American musicians that are a lively part of American popular culture and perform in a broad range of genres.



As a result, this Round table showed us that Hispanic Americans play an integral role in shaping the American experience. The influence of Hispanic culture is reflected in every aspect of American life, from politics and education to music and television.

by Sh. Baimurzina
AC Coordinator, Karaganda



ACK Program Expands Its Outreach in the East Kazakhstan

Many libraries send us enquiries about possibilities to host an American Corner in their respective city. Our partner—the East Kazakhstan Oblast Pushkin Library in Oskemen—is the most active library in implementing so-called “American Shelf” small projects. In this issue, we proudly present the program “American Shelf” in Semey and Zyryanovsk.

End of November 2009, the East-Kazakhstan Abay Universal Library officially presented a project American Shelf to the general public. The U.S Embassy in Astana supported the project with a small grant providing a few sets of Scholastic books, basic office



equipment and internet connection. The Abay library—one of the oldest libraries in Kazakhstan—had already worked with international organizations: in 1995 the Abay library got internet connection through the Soros-Kazakhstan grant, and later, in cooperation with IREX, organized an internet club. Also, the local young generation is very active and demonstrates interest towards learning English and discovering new things through the library. In 2004, an English Club was founded for those who are interested in speaking English and learning about cultures of Anglophone countries.

The American Shelf (AS) in Semey already has a large collection of books in English and receives, when possible, some resources from the U.S. Embassy in Astana which arrive as donations from the Smithsonian Institution from Washington D.C. The AS uses efficiently the received information and resources and attracts 100+ people to the AS programming every month. This is a

result of a great professionalism of the Library Director Roza Ussebayeva and charming AS Coordinator Assiya Shaimukhametova. Below you will see a few highlights from the AS programming during the past months.



for our readers we prepared interesting games, exhibitions, presents, and, of course, Christmas songs!



presentation contained the materials sent to us from the U.S. Embassy in Astana about Black History, as well as internet materials about African-American politicians, musicians, writers, and sportsmen.

We found the information which you sent on Internet Freedom very interesting. This theme is important for libraries, and also for every person in the world. We found some articles on the Internet freedom theme in various magazines “Information Technology and Education,” “Management” and newspapers “The juridical newspaper,”



“Express-K” and on January 28, we organized a special event dedicated to the Internet Freedom for our colleagues.

In February, we organized a special event dedicated to the American



Libraries for our colleagues from the Medical Library and for the Library of the Pedagogical Institute.

In 2004, our colleague, Deputy Director Bakhyt Tusupova visited six American libraries, and she shared information and gained insight into the work of the American libraries with her colleagues.

End of December, we organized a Christmas celebration with our colleagues—

St. Valentine’s Day is becoming a popular celebration in Semey!



Therefore, on February 15, the American Shelves prepared a row of materials explaining where the holiday takes its roots and decorated the room with lovely hearts and cupids!

On March 4, within the frames of Women’s History Month, the AS Semey prepared contest dedicated to International Women’s Day. The contest ran under the title



Outstanding Women of the World and the participants

included local students and colleagues from the library. We also prepared information about Michelle Obama, the First Lady of the USA using resources from the U.S. Embassy.

From March 7 until March 13, a program called *Teen Tech Week* took place at the American Shelf in Semey. It was an initiative aimed at teens, librarians, educators, parents, and others and was meant to encourage teens to take advantage of library’s non-print



ACK Program Expands Its Outreach in the East Kazakhstan

resources. The 2010 theme was *Learn, Create, Share @ Your Library* and kids expressed a great interest in learning about library's digital resources.

Thanks to the programming ideas and resources from the U.S. Embassy, we prepared in April an interesting and useful meeting dedicated to Intellectual Property Day. We invited colleagues from the Medical Institute's Library, the Scientific-Technical Library, schools #20 and #36, and the Central Library for Children.



Our guests discussed different aspects of intellectual property, and the Director of Semey Scientific-Technical Library A. Saulebaeva told the attendees about library's work with patents, trademarks, and industrial designs. T. Knyazkova works with patents at the Medical Institute, and she continued discussion about problems of patents, copyright and author law.

With the beginning of the new school year, AS Semey invited local teachers of English language and presented them the new AS resources. The teachers really liked the scholastic books and were



excited to use them for their lessons. End of September, our department of Foreign Languages and the American Shelf organized two events dedicated to the Day of Languages of Kazakhstan.

Within the cultural project launched by



should be fluent in three languages—Kazakh, Russian and English. One of the events—a contest—consisted of some sections such as *Proverbs, Riddles, Play on Words, Art of Speech* in these three languages. The event was organized for the pupils of school #30 and children from the orphanage # 8. The winners got books and other presents and the event was covered by the local media.

by A. Shaimukhametova
AS Coordinator, Semey

A big event happened in May in Zyryanovsk, a small miner's town in the East Kazakhstan Oblast—the **American Shelf Zyryanovsk**, a branch of Oskemen American Corner, was opened.

The opening ceremony was attended by representatives of the Oblast Pushkin Library: Bibigul Shagieva, Deputy Director and Aiman Zhamankulova, AC Coordinator.

Nadezhda Snegireva, Director of Zyryanovsk Central Library, greeted the public and expressed her appreciation on the opportunity to host American Shelf and have Meriah Cory as its Coordinator.

Meriah, a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer, is going to stay in the town for her third year and work for the library. She introduced the American Shelf resource to public. The collection American Shelf starts with is not very big yet—there are books on the USA, English textbooks, fiction for young readers and adults, magazines and a few DVDs.



The AC and Meriah have discussed some future projects

to enlarge the collection and get new equipment. There are a number of activities to be held in the library, such as exhibitions and seminars, discussion and movie clubs; and Speaking Club for teachers is to start in June already. To continue acquaintance to America, Meriah and Tom Yacko, another PCV in Zyryanovsk, conducted Jeopardy game and it appeared great fun both for students and their teachers.

Among 36 attendees of the event, there were English language teachers and senior students, librarians and library users. They enjoyed the program very much, and strongly agreed that the American Shelf would become a great opportunity to learn about the USA, develop English, and strengthen cultural connections between our countries.

by A. Zhamankulova
AC Coordinator, Oskemen

This past summer at the newly opened American Shelf in Zyryanovsk we have welcomed many visitors. They have been varying in age from 3 years old to over 40 years old. All have come with many questions about American culture and with a drive to speak in English. One of the more interesting activities that took place was a Conversation and Game Club. This club took place 3 times a week for 2 months. There were 12 youths from all over, some coming from Russia, the UAE and local surrounding areas. All enjoyed coming and sharing their life stories and playing games and learning new vocabulary.

The club was started so that students could practice their English skills during the summer holidays. Through activities students were provided with the opportunity to improve their English skills and participate in a constructive summer activity. Some of the activities and games consisted of playing *Uno*—this helped with easy recall of numbers and colors, a variety of American card games helped with numbers and asking questions, *Pictionary* game allowed students to use descriptive terms, and random discussion topics to encourage basic conversation.

Meriah Cory
PCV, Zyryanovsk

