

Kazakh Kids!

An Internet Newsletter for Kazakh-American
Adoptive Families

April 20, 2001

First Ever Issue!

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We are very excited to be bringing you the first issue of Kazakh Kids, a newsletter designed to help educate you about Kazakhstan and it's people, to serve as a way of bringing together all of us in a community and to share our experiences. As your Publishers/Editors/Writers we will do our best to address topics of interest to all of you, and to answer questions you have asked about your children's heritage. Please forgive the unprofessional layout, as we are new to this and are unskilled in this area. It is our hope that you will look past our errors and obvious lack of ability to see the information provided, and that you will use it as a tool to bring Kazakhstan and it's rich culture alive for your family.

In each issue we will bring you information such as traditional recipes, children's stories and nursery rhymes, kid's games, explanations of national holidays, descriptions of various regions of Kazakhstan, historical events and even language and phrases! We LOVE to hear from you and would be very happy to include articles written by you or to answer specific questions you may have pertaining to your child and the region they were adopted from. We view ourselves as only the catalyst and researchers for this newsletter, but feel it is a living, breathing form of communication to be shared by all who have an interest in Kazakhstan and it's children. We'd love your participation, so contact us with any ideas or with your own written articles!

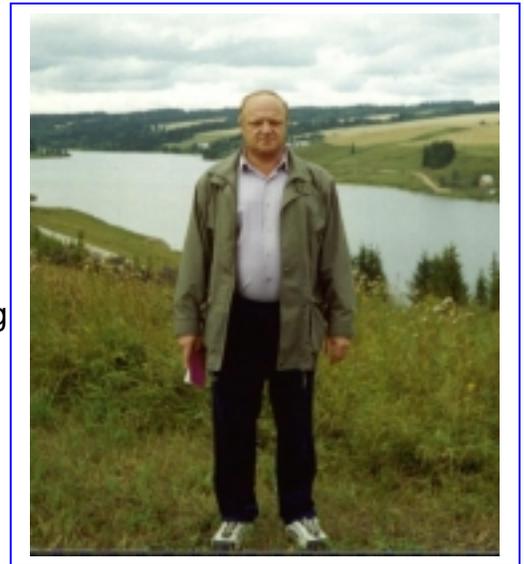
Our current plan is to produce one issue every three to four weeks (give or take depending upon our busy schedules...I told you this would be kind of relaxed!). Each issue will not contain all of the above mentioned ideas, as it would be a full-time research job to do that every two weeks! However, each issue will have a few of each of the selected topics and your wonderful suggestions. Just consider it a surprise when it arrives in your email box!

Now...to introduce us and present to you our first issue!

Who Are We?

About Sergey...

My name is Sergey Davidov. I am Russian, 46 years old, married, have two children and live in Russia in the town of Perm. I was born in the Latvian republic town of Riga and my father was an air force officer. The first several years of my life were spent wandering with my family all over the country, following the changeable fate of a Russian officer and the orders of my father's military chiefs. Aviation was the love of my father and he carried this love throughout his entire life. The roaming of military life filled my soul with the romance of traveling adventures to which I have remained ever faithful.



My mother had a strong desire for me to settle down and attend school to gain a good education, and that is how I ended up living with my grandmother...and residing in Kazakhstan in my youth. We lived in a small house near a railway station with a yard and little garden. Childhood is the best period of life, I suppose. We played games which are now long forgotten, went to the river to swim and fish, built huts in the metal dump nearby, and often went to the luggage yard of the railway station to investigate whether something had been lost while in transit.

After finishing school, due to my delay in deciding where to further my education, I was inducted into the Soviet Army. There my hunger for adventure was over satisfied. Having fulfilled my military obligation, I decided to think hard about my future and entered in the institute of communication in Tashkent. After returning home I began to work in the TV center where my father worked. I spent many happy times enjoying our new passion...hunting...together. Several years ago due to the difficult economic situation I had to leave Kazakhstan for Russia. I was lucky to find a job and place to live in Perm, but sometimes it seems that I left a part of my heart in Kazakhstan.

About a year ago I managed to set up a web site with the hope that someone somewhere would visit it. I tried to show the country I lived in all my life and the people I had met. I eventually received an email from Cindy La Joy who resides in the US and become acquainted with her. The kind heart of this woman, and her vital energy impressed me very much. From her I learned about American people who have adopted children from Kazakhstan. This has shown to me a world which I had never known of. The thought that there are people on this earth that would not allow any difficulties or obstacles to stand in the way of making children happy inspires me to be useful in this noble activity.

About Cindy...



Many of you have already “met” me on one of the Kazakh adoption email lists I participate in. My name is Cindy La Joy. I have been married for 14 years to my wonderful husband Dominick. We adopted our first child, Matthew, from Aqtobe, Kazakhstan in May 2000. From start to finish, our adoption journey was an incredible adventure and eye opening

experience. Having never traveled out of the country before, Dominick and I were surprised to find ourselves more often recognizing the similarities rather than the differences between the various peoples we encountered.

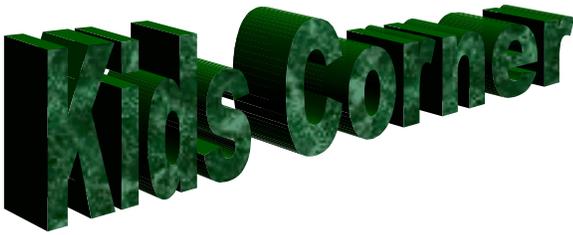
We live in the small rural town of Montrose, Colorado, which is located on the Western Slope of the Rockies. Our home is situated on three acres out in the country. We moved to Montrose 5 years ago after residing in Southern California for my entire life. It has proven to be one of the best decisions of our lives and once we relocated we realized that we finally felt ready to start our family.

We lead a very busy and happy life! Dominick is self-employed and works 8 months of the year as a mobile auto detailer, and during the 4 months of ski season he works at the café we own at the Montrose Airport. I work as an agent for Farmers Insurance and was fortunate enough to be able to cut my hours to part-time after returning with Matthew. I also handle all the bookkeeping and payroll for our businesses. Recently we started a new business making wooden children’s puzzles in order to help try and raise money for our second (and third??) adoption.

It is our goal to return to Kazakhstan sometime in 2002 or 2003 to adopt another child, most likely an infant boy. It is our hope that we can one day have 3 or 4 little Kazakhs running around our home! In the meantime, I realize how important it is to learn as much as possible about Matthew’s culture. Having met Sergey via the Internet, it was obvious that he would be a very valuable resource to help assist me in this area. We exchanged many emails and formed a very warm and open friendship. He expressed a willingness to answer any questions I might have and to share his experiences with us. This kind and sensitive

gentleman offered to work on this project with me, and little did I recognize what an incredible amount of interest there would be from all of you! It seems we all have much in common and a strong desire to understand our children's heritage.

As I stated in my first posting about this newsletter, we are not professionals and really have no idea what we are doing! Many of you have offered your assistance and we plan to take you up on those offers after we have put together a few issues and figured out how to best collaborate on this project. In the meantime, please bear with us as we gain experience and implement new ideas.



Whom to Choose

Many years ago there was a beautiful young girl who lived in an “**aul**” (small rural village). She had three grooms. The first was the son of a “**mulla**” (the priest of church). The second was the son of a merchant. The third was the son of a poor peasant. Each of them was strong, bold and handsome and the girl did not know whom to choose for marriage.

She decided to call all of them together and told them “The man I will choose to marry will be the one who will bring to me a gift that is the most wonderful thing in all the world”.

The men got on their horses and left for the East. Soon they arrived in a large town. “Let's separate here and ride in different directions”, said the son of the **mulla**. In half a year we will meet in this very place.” They said goodbye to one another and left.

They each visited many countries and towns. They shopped in many bazaars and small shops. They had each seen many wonderful things but could not choose the single one that could be considered the most wonderful thing in the world.

At last the son of the **mulla** bought a pearly pearly **piala** (porcelain round cup) with “alive” water. He paid a thousand gold coins for it.



The son of the merchant bought a

flying **burka** (a Caucasian sheepskin coat) on which one could fly away to any country or up to the end of the earth.

The son of peasant had no money. He was wandering among poor small bazaar shops and in the junk shop he found a small mirror in a brass frame. It cost only two **kopecks** (coins). The peasant's son realized that it was a fairy mirror and that the junkman had not known about it, otherwise he would have charged a thousand gold coins for it. The son of the peasant bought the mirror. Looking at the mirror it was possible to see any thing that had ever existed and any events that had ever happened on the earth.

The six months had passed and the three young men met near the large town at the place agreed.

"The bride is certainly mine ", said the son of the **mulla**, "I will present to her the most wonderful thing. Look at this. This is a pearly **piala**, and "alive" water is in it. This water can cure any illness."

"No. The bride is mine." said the son of the merchant. "There are plenty of drugs in the world. Every doctor has his own "miraculous" drug but nobody has a flying **burka**. Nobody has even heard about such a miraculous item."

"And what do you have for the girl?" he asked the peasant's son," What wonderful thing have you found?"

The son of the peasant took out a small brass mirror. The friends began to laugh. "Is that all? Your present has no chance to win."

"My present is the most wonderful thing", said the poor young man. "It shows anything in the world, any event that is happening. Do you want to see our bride now?"

"It is impossible", the friends answered." There is three months riding distance between she and us.

"Then look at the mirror", said the son of peasant.

Just that moment they saw the girl lying in the bed. Evidently she was ill and her death was near. Her mother, father and many relatives were at her bedside crying.



"We must save her", said the son of merchant. "Let's get on my **burka** and fly home as quickly as possible".

The buddies got on the **burka** and by the end of the day they reached the **aul** they all lived in.

The son of the **mulla** took out the pearly **piala** and gave girl the “alive” water to drink. She breathed deeply and stood up from the bed. “Thank you”, the girl said, “I have recovered from my illness.”

“I have cured the girl”, said the son of the **mulla**, “I will marry her.”

“Without my **burka** you would be late with your “alive’ water”, said the son of the merchant, “And she would die. It is I who have saved the girl and I will be the one to marry her”.

“Without my all-seeing mirror we would never have known that the girl was ill and would not have saved her.” said the son of peasant.

The girl was thoughtful. “You are all right”, she said, “And each of you have saved me. In order to make my decision I shall add one more task. Let’s see which of you is the wisest. Bring me a type of food that when cooked with something sweet would never become sweet, and if cooked with something salty would never become salty. If it is cooked with fat it would never become greasy. I will wait for your answer until tomorrow evening.”

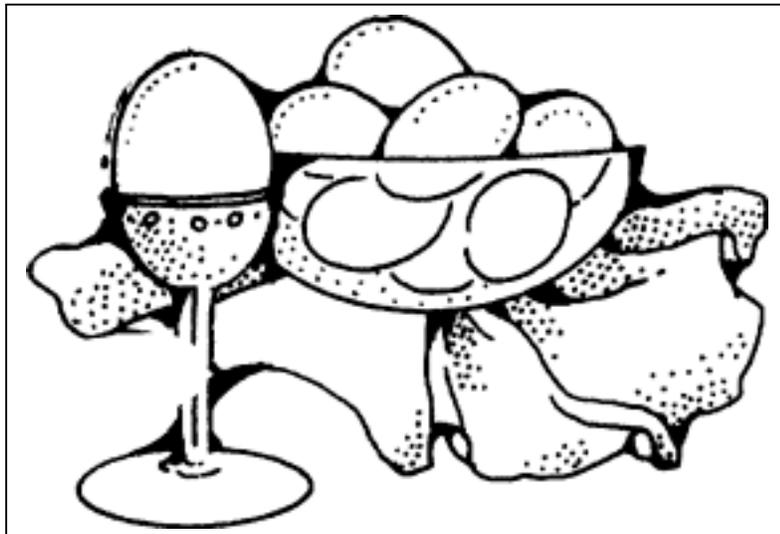
At the appointed time the first who came was the son of the **mulla**. He said, “I do not know of a food like this.”

The second was the son of the merchant. He said, “I do not know of a food like this.”

At last the son of the peasant came in and handed the girl a chicken’s egg. “Cook it with sweet it will not be sweet, cook it with salt it will not be salty, cook it with fat it will not be greasy”, he said.

“You have won”, said the girl.

So she married the son of a peasant and their life together was long and happy.



Language Lounge

***“Among the people living on this earth there must be none nameless.
When a man is born, he is given a name.
It does not matter who he is by birth”.***

These words, spoken by Gomer many centuries ago, were confirmed by all people in existence. The range of Kazakh names is very wide and is not limited by any racial or national prejudices. The process of the formation of various names has gone on for several centuries.

The Kazakhs have no special made up names. All names come from the condition of their personal existence and the style of life they lead. It is not uncommon for names to be given that reflect certain events that occur at the time of the child’s birth. For example, if a child was born during a time of migration (nomadism) or other such events, you might find names such as:

Amandgol	=	“Goodbye”
Dgolay	=	“Was born during migration”
Maydan	=	“The field of battle”

Often the names reflect the hope of parents that the child will demonstrate certain character qualities:

Rishad	=	“Wise, reasonable”
Sabir	=	“Enduring, patient”
Burckut	=	“Strong as a gold eagle”

Women’s names correspond to beauty, grace, elegance

Ayisulu	=	“Moon beauty”
Altuin	=	“Gold moon”
Meruert	=	“Pearl”
Asembala	=	“Wonderful child”

Some names are derived from animals and their special characteristics. These names are very beautiful and unusual as well:

Aruistan	=	“Lion”
Karluiqash	=	“Swallow”
Batagoz	=	“The eyes of camel”

Sandurash = “Nightingale”

We can also see the geographic names: Bagdad, Oral (Ural mountain), Altay, Edil (Volga).

Sometimes names are given as a determination of the age of father:

Elubay = “50”
Muinbay = “1000”
Kuikuimbay = “40”
Guzin = “100”
Alpuisbay = “60”

Oftentimes the names reflect some folk’s traditions and customs.

In families where children had died, very often newborn children were given the names independently of sex:

Toktar = “Be alive”
Otegen, Tolemis = “Coming back, derived”

But if you ever stumble upon the following names, you will have come upon a new way of Kazakh thinking. The Kazakhs believe that these names may influence the sex of child that was born after girl:

Umsindic = “Lost hope”
Uldgas = “Boy after girl”

Of course, among Kazakh names you can see adopted ones. The following names can be traced to Russian and Jewish roots and were reproduced without any changes:

Andrey, Artur, Rosa, Boris, Marat, Raisa.

Most often Kazakh names have their own meanings:

Alma = “Apple”
Shecker = “Sugar sand”
Temiz = “Iron”

Just as many other nations, Kazakhs use a lot of different short-cut names. They are created by subtracting the ends of names and adding “sh” or “ken”:

Satuilgan = “Satish”
Auinagul = “Auinash”
Saducas = “Saken”

Parents, relatives and elder very often call children by diminutive names associated with the names of animal “children”:

Botam = “Child of camel”
Kosim = “Lamb”

Kazakh Kuties

We’d love to show off your Kazakh Kutie’s photo here! If you’d like to share a great (or not so great photo) of your children (biological siblings are welcome too!) please email one to me along with a brief description of the photo. Also keep in mind we have many people receiving this list who might appreciate seeing referral photos alongside current photos, so be sure and email those as well if you feel like sharing with all of us! Since I didn’t think to ask about this in my original post about the newsletter, you will all be subjected this month to my Kazakh Kutie (Only this month, I promise!). Send them in folks!



Matthew Ryan La Joy
Referral Photo – 7 Months



Matthew “Doopie” La Joy
22 Months Old

Candid Questions

This is a publication for adoptive families and prospective adoptive families. As such, we are not only going to try to educate you about Kazakhstan, but to address issues that are important to you and your family. It is absolutely impossible for a non-adoptive parent to completely understand the complex emotions relating to the process we have to go through, the fears and anxieties that quietly well up inside, and the decisions we must face. Each issue we will pick a topic of general interest and concern and pose a question. This will be “our place” to vent, fume, rant and rave...and help! It will be opinion based, so please no “flaming” us about these opinions. Try and keep in mind that if one person has a particular viewpoint, it is highly likely that at least one other person will agree and relate to it!

What we will do is post an opinion/editorial written by myself (Cindy) and then in the following issue we will reprint any responses we get from all of you. Again, we want to stress that this is YOUR newsletter and it's success depends upon your active participation! And now, for our first topic...

Referral Time... or...What Are We Doing, Buying A Cantaloupe?

Ugh! With a capital “U”! For many of us, referral time is the worst part of the process. You’ve endured the homestudy and been grilled about every intimate detail of your life...past, present and future. You’ve spent hours and hours gathering documents and begging friends who are notaries to notarize “just one more” document. You’ve somehow managed to round up the funds for your adoption by begging, borrowing or stealing (we hope not!). Now you have one more decision to make, one more hurdle to jump over. You have to select a child.

It seemed so unnatural to me, like being put in control of an F-14 fighter having never even flown before. How in the world were we going to know which child was ours? How can you even THINK of picking a child to be yours? That is not the way God intended this “family thing” to work. You were supposed to just have a child and not have choices in the matter. If the kid turned out to have

ears like Uncle Jerry, then so be it. If he or she was a little Einstein or perhaps more like the Rain Man, well, not much you can do about it. Deal with it. Period.

But as adoptive parents, you are given control over your own destiny. You don't have to hope for a girl or a boy. You can pick the gender! You don't have to put up with old Uncle Jerry's ears if you don't want to. If you are afraid of a child having your own proclivity for sunburned skin with 4 minutes of exposure, you can solve that easily enough by selecting a darker skinned child.

To non-adoptive parents, it probably seems that easy. But it's not, is it? After carefully digesting every morsel of information you can find it becomes the scariest decision you have ever had to make. What about medical findings that aren't obvious? What about those that are? Why do they use such strange terms in their medical reports? Were we meant to have a boy or a girl? What about adopting a child of a different race? How will our families feel about that? Have years of institutionalization forever altered this child's spirit? Will they ever be able to bond with us or will we be faced with years of therapy for attachment related disorders? And quietly you ask only yourself...are we really doing the right thing?

Then to add to the difficulty of making this decision, there is the knowledge that you are altering the course of not only your life, but also the life of the child that you may decide NOT to accept. If you decline a referral, there is a whole entirely different set of emotions to deal with.

For us it was the most difficult thing we have ever had to do. We received a referral tape with 3 infant boys on it. As we watched the video, it was impossible not to think about the fact that 2 of these children would not be ours, and wonder if we were the last prospective parents who would ever give them a shot at having a mommy and daddy. Would someone else come along and want them? It was a very sobering thought.

It was almost like going to the supermarket and picking out a cantaloupe. You want to make sure you got just the right one out of all those in the heaping pile. But a thorough inspection of the physical appearance isn't really all that helpful except for in a superficial way. You don't really know what it's going to be like inside until you get that cantaloupe home and break it open. Just like with your prospective child...you can "thump" it a bit, check out his/her physical appearance, but those acts reveal nothing about the soul of the child you might elect to bring into your life for the remainder of it.

Thankfully, we all come through it and most often feel as if we have a child that was waiting just for us. But it definitely should be considered one of our "labor pains".

Thank you for your interest in our newsletter. We hope you've enjoyed this first issue, and that you will feel free to contact us with questions, story ideas, tales to tell of your own, and photos! Contact information is:

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