



Newsletter

Volume 5, Issue 3

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Container Arrives in Lukashin

The container, that was packed in Columbus, arrived in Lukashin and was unloaded at the library in Lukashin (see Library article, p.). The cost of shipping the container came under budget. Our fund raising met the \$7,000 match; thus, we also had to assist in setting up the library. Our Armenia project coordinators unloaded many heavy boxes and totes and worked with local Master carpenters to build shelves for the hundreds of books and *National Geographic* magazines. Many thanks to all who donated time and dollars and coordinated the shipment.

—Dick Funt

Announcements

◆ Annual Meeting

There will be no face-to-face Annual Meeting this year in the interest of everyone's health. Two years ago, we held a very successful Annual Meeting at der Dutchman in Plain City; socializing with one another was an added benefit to that meeting.

◆ 4-H Youth Program

The 4-H Youth Program started this Summer. It will then restart in early March 2022 so that those who wish to grow vegetables can grow transplants for planting in May. There is a proposed garden site in Lukashin; soil tests have been taken. The test results show a very fertile plot. A cover crop will be planted this Fall.



Thank You to Our Sponsors

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LUKASHIN HEADQUARTERS



Village of Lukashin Coordinates: 40°11'15"N 44°0'16"E

As Dr. Funt defined, perhaps the most perfect reason for selecting the Village of Lukashin is that it is located just north of the 40th parallel North, a circle of latitude that is 40 degrees north of the Earth's equatorial plane. The uniqueness of this to us in Central Ohio is that the same parallel passes through the northern Franklin County and southern Delaware County line with a similar in climate.

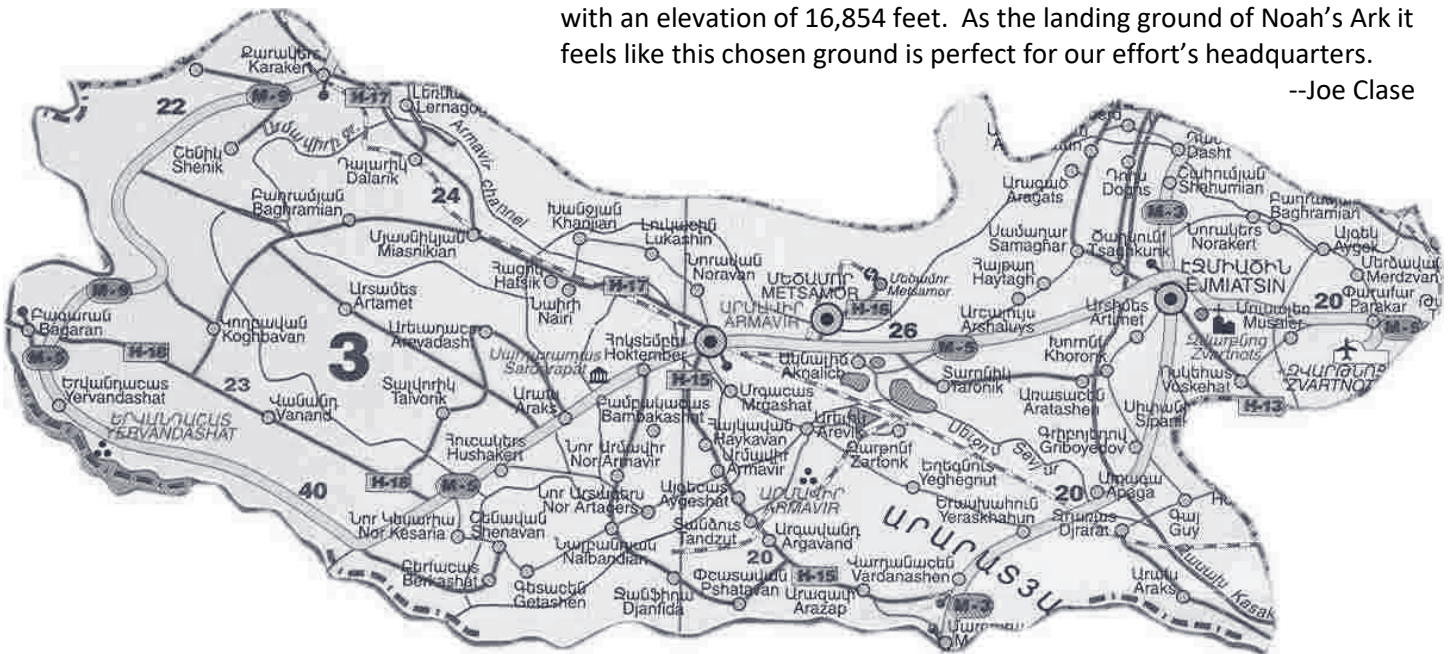
WHY HERE?

Since our first mission trip together in 2018, when Dr. Richard Funt introduced me to Vardges Davtyan, President of the Lukashin Agricultural Association, I understood there was something special in the Village of Lukashin that calls us to locate our effort there. While Lukashin is within one-mile of the City of Armariv, it is about a three-mile drive from the center of each community.

The Village is home to about 2,500 residents who are primarily farmers, many of whom have family in the United States who fled to the States during the Armenian Genocide of 1909. The Lukashin Agricultural Association is an agricultural cooperative non-governmental organization (NGO) that functions very similar to our American agricultural cooperatives. Vardges' NGO has been successful in seeking grants for shared equipment that his member farmers can utilize, including a large storage facility for farmer produce that is located on the southeast side of the Village.

The Village is located in the center of the Ararat Valley, with the clear view on a nice day of Mount Ararat's snow-capped mountaintop in Turkey. The Village has a beautiful landscape and is representative of the farming conditions of the rest of the Armariv region. Mount Ararat consists of two major volcanic cones: Greater Ararat and Little Ararat. Greater Ararat is the highest peak in Turkey and the Armenian Highland with an elevation of 16,854 feet. As the landing ground of Noah's Ark it feels like this chosen ground is perfect for our effort's headquarters.

--Joe Clase





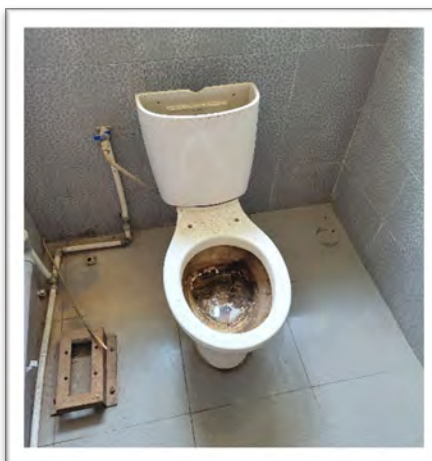
The Lukashin Community Building



Unpacking the Library



Lobby Area (in need of repair)



Restroom (in need of repair)

THE LIBRARY

Prior to our trip, the Lukashin Community Leader of the Village of Lukashin, Karen Mkrtychyan, was gracious to grant us the ability to temporarily utilize their community meeting hall for our organization’s library and headquarters, free of charge. After meeting with Mr. Mkrychyan, he agreed the Village will solidify this agreement with a 5-to-10-year lease, which will be eligible for renewal upon expiration. This opportunity will allow us to grow our programing to support a larger space in the future.



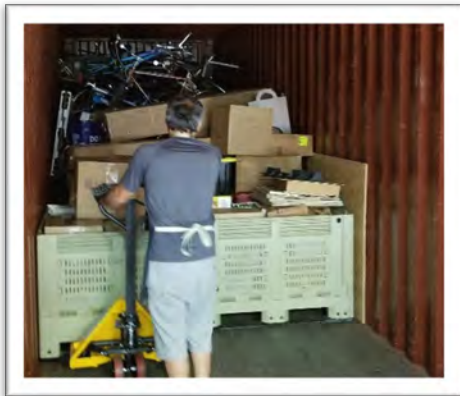
Pictured: Karen Mkrtychyan, Joe Clase, Richard Funt (from left to right)

Our 2021 shipment of supplies for the youth program and library was received and unloaded prior to the approval. The Lukashin Agricultural Association agreed to be the receiver of the shipment to help us get clearance to unload the supplies. Thanks to the help of our Adam Bdoyan and our team on the ground in Armenia, the shipment was a success.

The library space is located just off the main lobby straight in the front door of the community center. The entrance is centered in the room, which measured eighteen feet (18’) by forty-eight feet (48’) at 864 square feet in area. The space will be a great location for the library, which is planned to the right side of the room, and we can use the left side for meeting and gathering space for the youth. The new air conditioner was added by our team to make the space more inviting to youth in the summer months.

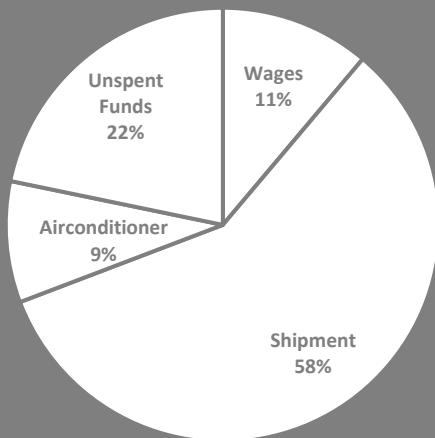
In exchange for their generosity, we are also asking the board to approve expenditure of an upgrade to the facility’s restroom and some repairs to the building’s lobby, which are pictured to the left. The lobby needs plaster work prior to a new paint, which is also needed in the library area, so the same contractor could easily complete these at the same time. The restroom is in need of a new sink and toilet but is otherwise in good condition.

The entire shipment was a coordinated effort by the team and a special thanks should be extended to all three of our program coordinators and

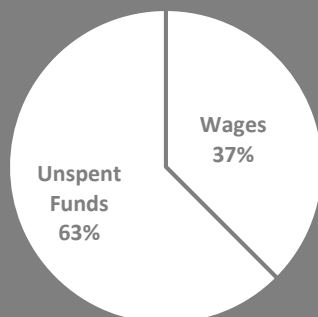


Loading Supplies on April 26, 2021.

GRANT ACCOUNTING BY LUKASHIN AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION



GRANT BUDGET FOR NEW ACCOUNT



to Associate Director Adam Bdoyan for use of his warehouse facility for nearly two months while we waited on the shipment to occur. Mr. Bdoyan also coordinated the shipment on behalf of the organization and helped ensure items made it safely to their destination. Also, a special thanks to Pat White and Executive Director Richard Funt for coordinating the drop-off of so many supplies that will help make our program a success.

There was some confusion instigated by Vardges Davtyan of the Lukashin Agricultural Association who labeled the supplies humanitarian and then sought tax exemption for the shipment. I believe this to be an unfortunate misunderstanding which we worked to correct during our stay in Armenia. While we saved some funds in avoiding more customs taxes, it appears this tied the goods to his non-governmental organization (NGO) and as a result we need to set up a local NGO to “officially” receive the goods from his NGO which accepted responsibility for them. Otherwise, some supplies were thought to be humanitarian goods and up for distribution to the community. As a result, a complete inventory of the shipment should be completed as soon as possible, and we are requesting Mr. Davtyan to help us retrieve any items that were intercepted and did not make it to the library. This list represents less than 5% of the shipment, but we want to see the issue rectified to the best of our ability, so we can proceed knowing we have everything that was shipped.

Our project coordinators will offer a better inventory of the supplies on hand after everything is unpacked. We also need the inventory in the U.S. to identify the exact in-kind value of all the supplies that were sent for our records.

The grant offered to the Lukashin Agricultural Association to cover the shipment and our 2021 labor assistance was received at \$8,967.94 after wire transfer fees were assessed. The shipment cost was \$5,207.00 and our labor costs to date (thru July) were \$1,000.00 along with a \$810.00 cost for the air conditioner, leaving a fund balance of \$1,950.94.

At the insistence of the Lukashin Agricultural Association, about \$250 is being budgeted to cover income taxes on the wages there were paid out to date. Additionally, our project coordinators have interviewed master carpenters to engage one of them to build bookshelves in the library to make sure all of the books can be unpacked. Any remaining funds are expected to be directed to the lobby and bathroom repairs, which will deplete this grant to a zero balance.

During our visit, \$4,000 in granted funds from various donor, but primarily Richard Funt, were deposited as cash into a local account that Associate Director Adam Bdoyan set up in his name, during his visit, to allow for us to operate independently from the Lukashin Agricultural Association and their NGO regulations. These funds will be used to pay remaining wages (July – October) for our project coordinators for the remainder of the year at an estimated \$1,500 and the other \$2,500 is reserved for any remaining youth program or library expenses.

--Joe Clase