

Afghanistan



Dr. Ward Chambers, Associate Professor at UNO, spoke about Afghanistan at the Treynor Optimist Club on June 16. He also brought some items to display from Afghanistan. He rattled off a series of observations and facts about Afghanistan.

In 1893 the Russians and British decided on the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pashtuns have tribal areas on both sides of the border, so it is a very porous border.

From 1923 until 1972, the Afghanistsans lived in peace. Then the Russians invaded. Dr. Chambers said that the border and the Pashtun problem need to be solved to solve Afghanistan.

Dr. Chambers has been to Afghanistan about 20 times. He said that the people there don't use brick, they use baked dirt for building.

Before the latest war, Kabul was a city of 400,000-500,000 people. Now it has ten times that many people. The power grid cannot handle that increase.

There is no public water or sewer. Farmers use mules to pump water for irrigation. There are guns and land mines everywhere.

Afghanistan has high, rugged mountains. They reach about 26,000 feet.

The Sunnis have prayer five times a day. The Shia have prayer three



times each day. They all speak a Persian language. Most Muslims are very moderate. Medical professionals don't care about politics. They want to care for people.

There is no mechanized farming. Farmers own their land, usually 2 or 2 ½ acres. Everything is done by hand. Helmund Provence grows opium. Afghanistan grows about 80% of the worldwide opium. Most of the farmers used to grow wheat.

20% of children die before age 7. A lot of women die in childbirth. Elderly are cared for by families. The public hospitals are very primitive and terrible. The private hospitals are good.

There are some very wealthy people in Afghanistan. They move most of their money to Dubai to get it out of the country.

Dr. Chambers is helping set up medical schools. Most medical schools are taught in English in the Middle East. Doctors make about \$500 per month on their job. They make most of their money outside of their work, on an evening job.

UNO is setting up medical schools in Saudi Arabia, Oman, and India. They have exchange programs with Russia and China.

There are about 600 businesses in Nebraska that export overseas.