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Newsletter of Arkadaşlar, Friends of Turkey Number 13, September 2000

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FROM THE PRESIDENT:

You can take the volunteer out of the country, but you can't take the spirit of volunteerism out of the volunteer. Thanks to the indomitable spirit of a small corps of returned Turkey volunteers, Arkadaşlar has become a strong organization.

One of the major contributors to Arkadaşlar is our retiring newsletter editor, John Gallivan (T-2). John worked miracles for the last 7 years gathering articles, laying out the newsletter, and overseeing the production and distribution. The only way we could possibly repay John for his superhuman efforts is by continuing where he left off by helping the current editors produce a timely and informative newsletter.

Publishing a newsletter is not an easy task; we need the cooperation of all of our members to supply us with news and articles (in digital format). We need representatives around the world to keep track of events in a region or group. We need your help.

We need help not only with the newsletter, but with our web site, community projects, and outreach activities. Our pioneers are ready to share the glory. E-mail me and let's talk about how you can help us carry on; how you can be an integral part of Arkadaşlar.

Best wishes, Lin Lougheed (T-16)

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TURKISH EARTHQUAKE WRAP-UP

This is an update regarding Arkadaşlar's response to the devastating earthquake in Turkey last year. I am very pleased to report that in 1999, 179 of our members contributed \$13,336; and in 2000, 77 members have contributed \$3,800 (so far) for a total of \$17,156 contributed by 256 of our members to the Turkish Earthquake Relief Fund. Our 1999 contributions have been donated to the American Red Cross and Kizilay for the earthquake recovery and relief effort. Our year 2000 contributions, when they reach \$5,000 are to be sent to the Istanbul Yardim Grubu (IYG), an organization of business people who want to cut the red tape and get immediate funding to projects like a modular community, new schools, and earthquake sensing stations.

Additionally, we had 28 people among our Arkadaşlar group, including a volunteer pediatrician, signed up to go to Turkey to assist with the recovery and relief effort. We even had a possible airline to carry us. What we didn't have was a private voluntary organization to finance our costs while over there. One PVO was very interested in sponsoring our group, but indicated we would have to pay all of our own costs including transportation. As it happened, within a very short time after the earthquake, the Turkish government determined it could handle all of the work and the non-Turkish PVOs were asked to close out their operations in the country.

Nevertheless, our hats are off to the 28 Arkadaşlar volunteers who signed up

and were ready to go to Turkey to assist earthquake victims on very short notice. If it happens again, we now know that people who are interested in assisting disaster victims in Turkey will probably need to be prepared to go over at their own expense. And a Cok Teşekkür Ederim to all Arkadaşlar who opened (and continue to open) your checkbooks to assist the victims of this tragic disaster in Turkey.

Ed Block (T-8), Past President

P.S. Two of our members, Chris Lair and Carol LaMotte (both T-3), happened to be in Turkey that fall and were able to assist relief efforts through a young woman from Sabanci University, whom they met through Carol's son. They all went to Golcük and she introduced them to a citizen involved in relief efforts. Reports Carol: "We were off and running. It was the most satisfying volunteer work we have done, far and away more rewarding and useful than our Peace Corps experience. But then we are older and wiser now, aren't we?"

TOPKAPI COMES TO US

Several RPCVs and friends enjoyed a March "Turkish Day" in Washington, D.C. The cherry blossoms were out, the day was cold, and the camaraderie was warm. Organized by Helen Johnson (T12), we started with a visit to the Corcoran Museum to see "Palace of Gold and Light: Treasures from the Topkapi, Istanbul." Two hundred works of art and artifacts from the Topkapi Palace collections are featured. Even if you have been to Topkapi many times, the exhibit is dazzling and beautiful.

In true Turkish style, the next event was a delightful meze in the home of Helen's friends Arlene and David Christian and their daughter Jeanine. Also participating were Sandy Comstock Anderson (T13), Linda Scheffer (T8), Donna Chmara (T13), Gulen Tangoren, and David Abelow.

The evening ended with dinner at the Levante restaurant. A few die-hards visited the Textile Museum the next day to see "Flowers of Silk and Gold: Four Centuries of Ottoman Embroidery" which was well worth the time.

HONOREE

Beverly Ausfahl, T13, has been presented with the Franklin H. Williams Award for outstanding community service. This award is presented to African Americans who have been PCVs. Beverly was recognized with other Volunteers on March 7, "Peace Corps Day," in Colorado. She is a native of Pueblo, Colorado who taught in California for several years after Peace Corps before returning there. She also spent time in Kenya and Senegal in 1985 developing teaching materials about Africa. Beverly said, "The whole thing (Peace Corps) had a great impact on me. One of the most altering things was to actually discover that there is more than one right answer. There are some things that you accept because that's the way you've always known them. Living in a different culture, you discover that your way may not be more right than theirs."

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Kent Haruf, T8, of Murphysboro, Ill., has published a new novel Plainsong which has been published by Alfred A. Knopf, and is becoming a major success. It's getting rave reviews and has been nominated for a National Book Award. Hollywood is interested in the movie rights. According to the Arizona Republic, "Haruf has written a quietly moving book about ordinary people dealing with the emotional twists of ordinary life."

WISCONSIN BAYRAM DINNER

Russ Whitesel reports "We met here in Madison at a Turkish restaurant (The Dardanelles) and had a great meal and wonderful conversation about Turkey and the state of the world. Everyone from the label list was invited and the following attended: Michael and Susan Spitz (T-8), Davis Wilson (T-15) and his daughter, Paul Kinsley (T-9) and a friend, myself (T-8) and my wife, Liz. We are all looking forward to the 2000 edition.

NORTH CAROLINA BAYRAM DINNER

North Carolina Arkadaslar, family, and friends gathered in Chapel Hill the evening of October 30 at the home of Jordan Scepaniski (T-4). Organized by Ann Ringland (T-8) and Sally Poland (T-6), the group included Lucille (Mayes) Carter (T-3), John Thomas (T-4), Al Poland (T-6), and Jean Arrington from the very last Peace Corps Group, (T-17). Balmy fall weather allowed for outside festivities (see

photo) and Turkey and the Republic were toasted many times with Yeni raki and Kavaklidere wine. A spring 2000 event was being planned for John Thomas' house in Welcome, North Carolina. Individuals in the photo are

seated from left: Lucille (Mayes) Carter, Ann Ringland, and Jean Arrington. Standing from left are Sally Poland, Al Poland, Jordan Scepaniski, and John Thomas.



THE GENERAL BRINGS US HOME

Last summer, the New York Times sponsored a "Journey Home" contest and Donna Chmara (T13) won one of the prizes with the following:

The USS General Ballou left Bremerhaven, Germany in November 1950 and 12 days later arrived in New York with a cargo of displaced persons from Eastern Europe. We saw our homes and villages burnt by the Nazis during World War II before they took us to Germany for extermination or slave labor--early 20th century victims of ethnic cleansing. Our neighbors, friends, relatives were dead. We were the survivors.

My family were ethnically Polish Christians living in a village where boundaries changed with the prevailing politics. Once Polish, it is now in Belarus. During the war it was

alternately besieged by Russians and Germans, falling to the German army in 1943. We were herded into cattle cars headed for Germany. After exterminating the Jews, the grand plan was to kill the Slavic Christians or use the stronger ones for labor. I am alive today because they didn't have enough time to kill me. Looking at footage of recent events in Serbia and Kosovo opened up old wounds, especially seeing the babies, because that was me 56 years ago. I was 2 months old when captured and 2 years old when the war ended in 1945.

We now arrive in America. We are grateful for salvation from a refugee existence. However, the USS General Ballou--your safe and sturdy army ship--has a rough encounter with the high seas. Its passengers are already in a prolonged state of trauma. On this

journey of hope the motion sickness becomes a new enemy. We finally have food and cannot eat it. A private spot on the deck offers some dignity when holding it down becomes impossible.

Pulling into port we feel like human wreckage. The day is cold, dark and murky with drizzling rain. But wait, off in the haze my mother sees a welcoming beacon which rouses her. "Look, children. Over there. I think I see a statue of Jesus. In America they greet you at the harbor with a statue of Jesus. This must be a good country," she says. Translation: We have come to a place where we will not be killed for who we are.

At some point, as the General got us closer and closer to land, my mother figured out this was not a statue of Jesus. However, being met by the immigration authorities instead did not cramp her style. I would have understood if the war made my parents into lesser people. It didn't. They have their own victory in never becoming bitter. They rose from the ashes like the legendary Phoenix to start a new life built on love.

Actually my mother was right. Even though she was looking at the Statue of Liberty on that day in November 1950, America really is the land of Jesus. It is also the land of Moses, of Krishna, Buddha, Muhammed, and of all the great beings, human or divine, whose best thoughts we celebrate freely in our many cultures and religions. Has there ever been such a place as America? A land where so many different peoples live together, where the goal is equality, where we are all valued? We do not manifest our ideals perfectly but as long

as we reach for them in our laws, our public institutions, our private friendships we are on the right track. Ethnic cleansing has been replaced by ethnic diversity. Has there ever been such a place as America?

Four days after arriving we celebrated our first Thanksgiving.

ARKADAŞLAR REUNION IN TURKEY MAY 16-30, 1999

Here are comments of the yolcular (travelers) who participated in the reunion.

MARY LEWIS CAMERON, T-12,
1966-67 IN ERENKÖY AND KONYA

A friend from college, Shana, traveled with me. She had lived in Turkey with her family in the late 50s. This was the first trip back for both of us. We rented a van with guide and driver for 6 days. We spent 3 nights in Cappadocia, 1 night in Pamukkale and 2 nights in Izmir. They drove us to Bursa where we spent 1 night at the home of a Turkish doctor friend of mine. We spent the last 4 nights at the Armada in Istanbul.

Both Shana and I were able to go back to places we lived 42 and 35 years ago. I found my old apartment in Konya. My former landlord's mother is living there now and allowed me to look at the apartment and take pictures. I also found the orphanage in Konya where I worked and was taken on a tour. What a difference! The emphasis now seems to be on educating and not just warehousing these kids.

The country is infinitely cleaner than when I lived there. The people, if possible, are even more friendly than I remember. The society is much more open in many ways with women accepted more readily. I was surprised to see a large number of the young (16, 17 and into the 20s) dressed in the fundamentalist manner. The Turks I know today don't seem worried that Turkey will lose its secular status. I see today a country with enormous potential that is succeeding at realizing that potential and holding onto its past--no easy task.

DONNA CHMARA, T-13, 1966-68 IN ESKIŞEHİR

I went to Eskişehir for a week. Since my PC roommate and I had done a sightseeing tour of Turkey in 1996 with our spouses, this trip was primarily social. The week was spent at my former school, the Anadolu Lisesi, at the newly built Anadolu Univertesi, and at the homes of new and old friends--talking, going to the market, writing down recipes, looking at old photographs, and eating fabulous food.

Throughout the week I taught at the lise and presented two combined English classes for faculty at the university. It was exhilarating to actually go back to my site of 32 years ago and teach there again. I was curious; they were curious. Good combination. The questions were diverse: What are the differences between American and Turkish students/educational systems, do you like Turkish food, how can Turkey become as prosperous as the US, what do you think of Ocalan, of the woman

who walked into the Turkish Parliament wearing a head scarf, how can you explain the killings in Littleton, Colorado, have you seen any movie stars, tell us about race relations in the US, do you like the NJ Nets, what have you seen of Turkey? We learned from each other.

During visits to people's homes, the conversations got beyond the surface politeness, especially with many women. There was much laughter, and we spoke frankly about education, marriage, religion, values. We connected.

It was so much easier this time. Turkey has become more modern. I have become older and more relaxed in handling situations. The prosperity was evident, but I never got a straight answer as to the circumstances of the remaining poor. The Turkish sense of color, design, aesthetics was just as appealing as ever. This time around I felt the enormously ancient sense of time that the Turks live with--the Anatolian Civilizations Museum made this so explicit, and I felt it while sitting in the tea garden at the entrance to Hagia Sophia--the base of the table was a piece of marble from a column possibly 2000 years old. Finally it was so special to hang out with Peace Corps people again. You're the best!

VALERIE OLSON, WIFE OF ERIK OLSON, T-4, 1962-64 IN CEYHAN & SIVAS AND 1 YEAR TEACHING AT THE TURKISH NAVAL ACADEMY IN ISTANBUL

Dave Weinman, who was Peace Corps Deputy Director when Erik was in Turkey, included me in a group that

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traveled to Cappadocia, Konya, along the south and west coasts (including 5 days sailing on a gullet), and Istanbul. Gene and Susan Paslow joined us for most of the trip as did Ed Block.

For me, the visit to the EEG Monitoring Unit for Epileptic Children, established in the Pediatric Neurology Department at Hacettepe Children's Hospital in Erik's memory was very poignant. The support of the unit by returned Peace Corps Volunteers reinforced Erik's close connection with his Peace Corps friends and with Turkey.

My memories of Turkey in the 1960s (and later) were constantly bumping against the present changes and growth, and my warm feelings about the people and country remain constant. I was so pleased to be included as an "honorary" member of Arkadaslar so that I could share in the Peace Corps reunion.

BONNIE LANDES PURA, T-4, 1964-67
IN BALIKESIR--BEREKETLI KOYU,
KIRKARELI-YANCIKLAR KOYU,
ANKARA OFFICE

I am part of the Ankara Committee, so during the independent part of the reunion, I returned to the reality of work and family. The highlight of the reunion for me was reliving memories of the time in PC service with others of the Turkey 4 group. My basic impression was what a group of truly good-willed people we were. There is indeed hope for the world peace so many desire.

ANGELA COSTANZE WARNER, T-4,
1964-67 IN KARABÜK

On our trip to Karabük, Linda Scheffer (T-8) traveled with Owen and me. Since we had traveled all the way from New Zealand, 10 days was not long enough for us to see some of Turkey, for Owen and I would not be able to travel there again. This meant that we had to make the most of the time that we had available. We found a unique tour with Fez Bus Travel Company. This is a hop-on hop-off bus that lets you plan your own itinerary and travel at your own pace.

Everyday was a highlight of our 18-day Fez Bus tour. However, a couple of days stand out on our tour. One was when we stopped at the Gallipoli memorials where the ANZAC (Australian and New Zealand forces) suffered major losses on 25 April 1915. Owen and I were given Turkish and ANZAC bullets--a memento from our Turkish tour guide. Another highlight was having a mud bath near Daylon. Going down into the underground city of Derinkoyu was another highlight. We stopped at Ecebat, Selcuk, Kuşadası, Ephesus, Pamukkale, Köyceğiz, Fethiye, Kas, Olympos, Antalya, Edgirdir, Urgup, and Goreme; then we were dropped off in Ankara.

The most significant highlight was going back to our Peace Corps teaching station with Linda--she was my ex-roommate. We traveled on a local bus for 3 hours until we reached Karabük. We stayed at the Social Club in the new town. We found our old apartment on Karanfil Street. We searched out the Turkish-English teacher, Turkay, who was on the staff of the Demir Celik (Iron and Steel) High School in 1965 and her daughter, Berna. We had dinner at the

Social Club compliments of Ann and Erol Akleman, who was the former head of the Iron and Steel Factory.

The next day, we went to Iron and Steel High School where the principal gave us a commemorative plate celebrating 40 years of the opening of the high school. He also showed us a video of the celebrations in 1995. Then a tour of Safranbolu-10K north of Karabük. Safranbolu is a small town of well-preserved Ottoman houses. The town was founded between 2000-1500 BC. Safranbolu's traditional character is now protected by regulation. UNESCO has dubbed the old town a World Heritage site.

The next day we went to the TED Karabük Koleji. Owen was the central figure for all the children were interested in both his plumbing profession (no Turkish word for plumber) and being from New Zealand. Owen produced some Australian and New Zealand money for the children to see. Everywhere we went, the Turkish people were so kind and tried to sepak to us. It was a magical reunion for all of us.

My impressions were really quite few. To me, nothing has really changed. Oh, yes, the cosmetic ones such as new roads, businesses, buildings, a few new gadgets such as cell phones, e-mail and wall-to-wall people. I was most disappointed with the women wearing scarves for political statements. In 1965, I don't remember seeing very many women with the exception of the elderly wearing scarves. Seeing examples of East meeting West was again emphasized as were the very old

methods and ways of doing things alongside those ways of the modern era.

We had a wonderful time. Turkey is a very long way from New Zealand, and the trip is now but a distant memory as is my time with the Peace Corps.

DAVE WEINMAN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, 1962-63 AND 1966-67

I traveled to Cappadocia, Konya, southern coast to Antalya, gullet to Marmaris, Bodrum, north to Ephesus via Didyma, Miletus, Priene, and Istanbul. Gene and Susan Paslov and Ed Block and Karen Keefer joined us on the cruise part. The remainder of the group were friends from the US, including Valerie Olson.

The most significant part of the trip was the opportunity to see again almost all of the Turkish staff of my two tours there (Ali Yonceova, Yalcin Bayer, Hilmi Sumerman, Aydin Comelekoğlu, Yildiz Tuncer, Ayla Bilge, and Ali Osman). Other moments included visiting and revisiting the great historic sites which Turkey offers. Many in their beauty and peaceful environments have almost a religious climate about them.

My overall impression is that of Turkey's economic development and a sense that entrepreneurship is beginning to take hold. There seems to be a real excitement about future possibilities symbolized by the massive campaign to build!

RECENT NEWS OF DECEASED FRIENDS

Michael Austrian, T-5, died March 15, 2000 in Washington of cancer. Mike had been a member of the foreign service from 1967 to his retirement in 1994. He had been assigned to Turkey several times and was a member of the U.S. team that enforced the cease-fire in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq after the Gulf War.



AUSTRIAN



STUBBS

John Dubrieul, T-12, died April 14, 1993

Hugh O'Neil, T-9

Donald Weber, T-15, died in November, 1999 in Daytona Beach, Florida, of cancer and diabetes. Don was librarian who was Projects Librarian for the Air Force Library System in Turkey; head of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Library of Congress; and Chief of the Bureau of Braille and Talking Book Library Services. He was an author and recipient of awards including the Campbell Medal and Citation from the American Library Association.



O'NEIL



DUBRIEUL

Michael Scholnik, T-4

Tom Stubbs, T-4



SCHOLNIK



WEBER