

Buralarda

Newsletter of Arkadaşlar, Friends of Turkey



NEW CEO FOR ARKADAŞLAR

SPRING 1998

Once again Arkadaşlar has undergone a change of leadership with the completion of Jean Lavid's two-year term. We have been fortunate to find a worthy successor to Jean in Ed Block, a former T-8, recently returned from Peace Corps Director assignments in the Baltics and in Slovakia. Ed agreed to see us into the 21st century and hopefully through our next reunion.

I want to thank Jean Lavid most appreciatively for her fine service. I was always impressed with Jeannie's organizational talents when she established the T-9 newsletter many years ago. She did not disappoint us as President. Her energy abounds!

There has also been some movement on the Board. Leaving after completion of his term is Gerry Karey (T-8). Many thanks to Gerry, especially for his "Where are they now" contributions to this newsletter.

Claudia Liebler also leaves the Board. Claudia has been a long-time contributor to Arkadaşlar; she was one of the behind-the-scenes masterminds of our 1995 reunion.

The new Board members are: Ed Block (T-8), Sandy Anderson (T-13), Dave Bloch (T-2), John Gallivan (T-2), Marcia Gnuse (T-13), Mike Jewell (T-1), Jean Lavid (T-9), Jerry Leach (T-4), Lin Loughed (T-16), Mary Helen Madden (T-10), Linda Scheffer (T-8), and John Wintrol (T-2).

We are especially delighted to have Sandy Andersen and Linda Scheffer accepting the entreaties of their colleagues to remain for at least one more term. Without their work on the membership database and mailing lists, Arkadaşlar would not be viable.

Dave Weinman, Amca

1999 Reunion in Izmir !!!

Ed Block is proposing that Arkadaşlar's next reunion take place in Turkey in the fall of 1999.

A former Peace Corps/Turkey staffer, Hilmi Sümerman, now owns several companies in Turkey, and he is in position to provide a conference site in Izmir. According to Ed, Peace Corps medical staff have in recent years used this site for yearly conferences, and they come away raving about how good it is.

The idea would be for Arkadaşlar to get together for a day or so in Izmir, and then take off to the places to wherever else in Turkey people want to go.

Ed would like to know what Arkadaşlar members think about this idea. You can e-mail him at

m, or get in touch with any of the Board members.

RELIVING MY YOUTH WITH PRIDE: A RETURN TO THE PEACE CORPS AFTER 30 YEARS

By Ed Block, Turkey 8

I had the great honor and privilege of being appointed by then Peace Corps Director Carol Bellamy to serve as Peace Corps Country Director, first in the Baltic States of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia beginning in May 1994 and then in Slovakia/Hungary, beginning in September 1996.

It was a job I had dreamed about from the time I finished my Peace Corps service in Turkey in 1967. Of course, I had a wonderful role model; our Country Director in Turkey at the time was Dave Weinman.

Arriving in Riga, Latvia, in May of 1994, I had very real fears about what lay ahead of me. It's one thing to be a Peace Corps Volunteer teaching High School English in Ünye, Turkey in 1965-67, but quite another to be responsible for the lives, safety and security of 120 plus Volunteers scattered across 3 former Soviet Republics immediately after the post-Soviet era.

The Russian soldiers hanging around the Riga airport with their Kalishnikov automatic weapons on ready were not the most reassuring of greetings to my first post as Peace Corps CD.

Upon arrival, I was promptly briefed by a 'welcoming team' of Group 1 & 2 Baltic PCVs about their issues of concern:

- not receiving their living allowances on time (in the early days, due to difficulties with the banking system, we often had to send our drivers to hand-deliver living allowances to PCVs);
- insufficient living allowances to 'live' (inflation was rampant, causing havoc with living allowances) ;
- very little PC support for PCVs in Estonia and Lithuania, because the unique 3-country post was still in startup mode out of Riga, (primarily because of the Arctic climate and the extreme isolation, we lost almost one-half of our Group I PCVs assigned to Estonia before the end of the first winter-- of course, winter there doesn't end until mid-May).

Somehow, with the help of some very dedicated host country and US Peace Corps staff and of course strong-willed PCVs, we managed to overcome these problems and others during the 28 months of my tour as Peace Corps CD in the Baltics.

The one thing that struck me during this tour was how similar, in many ways, were the enormous challenges of Volunteer service in the Baltics compared to my PC service in Turkey. I had assumed, wrongly, that PCV service in Eastern and Central Europe in 1994 would be a piece of cake

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John Clark Leads the Way at AUK; Hillary Wants to Teach There

By Jerry Leach (T-4)

In November 1997, National President Askar Akaev signed a presidential decree establishing the independence of the American University in Kyrgyzstan. At the ceremony, University President John Clark (Turkey-4) awarded Hillary Clinton, in Kyrgyzstan on an official visit, an honorary degree. Hillary indicated her desire to come back and teach there after the end of the Clinton Administration.

Kyrgyz reformer Camilla Sharshkeeva, impressed by western universities in general and binational American universities in particular, started the school five years ago in the capital city Bishkek. The Kyrgyz Government provided buildings off the central square.

Currently a four-year undergraduate institution, AUK concentrates on subjects not previously taught in the Soviet Union or needing to be taught very differently. Its programs include business, journalism, and international relations.

It plans to expand into law, humanities, social sciences, and computer sciences. Instruction is primarily in English and secondarily in Russian and Kyrgyz. There is an English prep year for students who need it.

The school has currently 285 students, mostly Kyrgyz and Russian with small numbers of Koreans, Ukrainians, Uzbeks, and Kazaks. There are about 100 staff members of whom 80 are teachers.

At 3.5 to 1, the student-teacher ratio is one of the best in the world. There is no tenure. Ten American, Canadian, and British faculty members are there now, mostly hired within the country. Six Fulbright Fellows have served there so far.

The school has 25 of its students at Brown, Emory, Georgetown, Nebraska, and other US schools as undergraduates or graduates now. About 30 students graduated in the first graduating class last June and were immediately snapped up in the job market.

The school's annual budget is about \$300,000. Its funds come largely from tuition, about \$1,200 per year. The school has run in the black for five straight years. Monthly salaries are in the \$100-200 range. There is no differential for foreign faculty.

The Soros-backed Open Society Institute has become impressed with the school. George Soros, the famous financier and philanthropist, has offered the school a grant of \$4m which is currently under discussion at the school.

John Clark has been with the school for three years, Sara (Huntington) Ohly (T-4) has visited, and I serve on the Board. Arkadaşlar members have donated books and software and helped with foreign students. Ten Arkadaşlar members have so far expressed an interest in teaching at AUK.

The school needs a great deal. If you wish to help in any way, contact John Clark by e-mail at _____ or me at _____.

RELIVING MY YOUTH (From p. 3)

compared to the cross-cultural frustrations and physical hardships most Volunteers endured serving in Turkey during those very early days of Peace Corps.

An Old Letter

A friend of mine recently sent me a copy of a letter I had written her from Ünye three-quarters of the way through my PC tour in early 1967. What I had to say in that letter probably was fairly representative of the life of many (certainly, not all) of my Volunteer peers during that period:

"As for life here, truthfully, I have not been able to adjust to the quiet life at all.....I am utterly getting bored to death and if it wasn't that I hate to quit something I've started, and that there's only 7 more months to go, I'd probably be on my way home by now. With no girls, no parties, no movies, not even any television, life is pretty dull; and it's not that I like these things all the time, but I don't even have them for distraction. The Peace Corps gave us a 100-book paperback library, but I have gone through that already and anyway, one can't spend all his time reading. Living overseas hasn't been as easy as I thought it would be, nor as much fun...."

Having traveled to visit every Volunteer throughout the Baltic countries, about 27 years after writing this letter, I found the challenges I faced back then had not really changed much. Volunteers are still struggling to come to grips with how difficult it is to make a difference. Learning the language and acclimating to their surroundings are often cited as their most significant accomplishments. I remember a

Volunteer responding to my question about his contribution as a PCV, shortly before his return to the US: "I survived", he said.

However, I was also inspired by the fortitude of the Baltic PCVs. Despite the long winter months of darkness (the Baltics are the most northern PC post), the 'coolness' of the Baltic cultures, the extreme difficulty learning the unique and distinct languages in each of these 3 countries, and the common complaint of having "no real jobs", most Baltic Volunteers (just as we had to do in Turkey) learned to lower their expectations, adjusted to the climate, learned to speak the languages, and left the Baltics saying, as one typical Volunteer did: "It was the most profound experience in my life. I got more out of it than I was able to give."

What a tribute to the incredible vision of President Kennedy and Sargent Shriver and to the 150,000 plus RPCVs who "survived" our Peace Corps experience. Despite all the changes the world has seen over the 36 years since the founding of the Peace Corps, the Kennedy and Shriver legacy endures within all of us who served and all of those host country friends whose lives we touched.

Peace Corps Volunteers continue to "make a difference", not only in whatever modest and incremental cross-cultural impact we have on people's lives in our host countries, but just as importantly, in the lasting impact our Volunteer experience has within each of us.

For I have yet to meet a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, either in 1967 or in 1997, who doesn't take great pride in his or her two or more years of service and whose life direction hasn't been significantly affected in a very positive way by the experience.....including mine.

BAYRAM GET-TOGETHERS, AND OTHER ARKADAŞLAR NEWS

Oregon

Joe and Corinne (Merkel) Christy and their son Ian hosted the Oregon Cumhuriyet bayram celebration and feast in their interesting, eclectic home. We decided to tell you about the menu (everyone contributed) to make your mouths water.

The table was spread with Turkish textiles, and the food was beautifully displayed, including:

lahmacun, kabak dolmas, şiş köfte, yoğurt, taze fasulya, hummus, Türk salatası, simitler (available from a local shop), and ekmek. And for dessert - baklava, "American baklavası", lokum, kadayif, and helva.

With "çay" and "kahve" to finish it off!

Enjoying these Turkish delights were:

Joe and Corinne (Merkel) Christy (T-16), Jan Bergman (T-14) and Steve Katz, Pat Dillon (T-4), Betsy Hakkinen Galloway (T-12); Mimi Jones (T-3) and Jack Saunders and their daughter and her friend; Melissa Stewart (T-2), and guests Şerif and Gülhan Aktaş, who have been studying in Portland for a year and are returning to Turkey.

\$72 was collected for Sevinç Able School.

- Melissa Stewart, T-2

Southern California

Southern California Arkadaşlar held a second annual bayram dinner this year on November 1 at an authentic Turkish restaurant in Huntington Beach. The restaurant is run by a delightful Cypriot Turk, Erdem Denktaş, and his Izmirli wife, Esim. As one may guess, he is a close

relative of the President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

There were fifteen people in attendance, twelve RPCVs and 3 spouses: Carol LaMott, T-3; Katy Finn (who came up from San Diego), T-12; Dick Janzig, T-15; Dorien Grunbaum, T-6; Marie Pack Yağmur, T-16, Deborah Dumphy and Barbara and Paul Bussey, T-5; Barbara Gancher Goldsmith, T-8; and Mary Margaret Blount Mainer, Bill Aron and myself, all from T-2. The food was wonderful, but the restaurant was a bit too noisy, so next year we'll probably move to someone's home and have a potluck or have it catered. We would like to improve the attendance, as I sent out fifty invitations.

Everyone thought the wooden puzzle was quite charming. We sold chances for a dollar each and raffled it off. We asked our hostess, Esim, to draw the winning ticket from a basket. She enjoyed being included and thought it was a wonderful idea to help the school. Deborah Dumphy was the lucky winner. We raised \$40 for Sevinç Abla School.

(I did get a call from a Central Asia volunteer, but unfortunately she had to cancel at the last minute.)

- Tony Venegoni, T-2

Arizona

Jackie McKee Day, T-8, and her husband spent a bayram evening with Herb Cohen, T-11, and Cele Collins Cohen, T-9, in Tempe. Jackie mailed out eleven invitations; she got only four calls expressing regrets and was therefore expecting more

people, but only Herb and Cele showed. They had a good time anyway, with the Cohen displaying photographs from a recent trip to the memleket.

New York City

We had our New York City bayram dinner at the Paşa Restaurant on the Upper West Side. Sixteen people were in attendance. This was our 4th annual. Attendance has ranged from 15 to 25 during that span.

Last year I visited my old school, Adapazarı Lisesi, which now has doubled its student body, to around 3,000, with double sessions. The house that Ken Marian and I roomed in is gone. The population has shot from 80,000 to 250,000+, and the town is barely recognizable. Teachers' salaries have not kept up with inflation

The tourist attractions in Istanbul have been vastly improved. I indulged myself by staying at the Pera Palas, and will never tire of walking around that venerable city.

- Robert McCord T-8

Washington

Forty Arkadaşlar members gathered at Atilla's Restaurant in Arlington, Va. for the Washington-area bayram event. Meze, Atilla's famous fresh pida bread, buffet-style döner kebab with various special sauces, and Efes beer from Turkey were all a big hit. The manager, Çoskun Bey, had set apart a section of the restaurant for our use, so there was plenty of privacy and room to schmooze and catch up. Jerry and Marianne Leach, T-4, entertained everybody after the meal with a terrific set of slides from a lengthy trip throughout Turkey last summer. Included were many pictures of Sevinç Abla

School in Adana, which Arkadaşlar has given financial support to.

- Jean Lavid, T-9

ALAN B. SHAW

Alan B. Shaw, father of Nathan, Elijah and Emily, husband of Rosemary, Minister to the First Congregational parish in Petersham, Mass., and towering member of the Turkey I group, died on November 28, 1998, as the result of an acute asthma attack.

Alan grew up in Concord, Mass., where he is buried. He graduated from Groton School and Harvard College (1962). His three master's degrees reflect the rich range of his interests: the M.I.A. from American University, the M.B.A. from New York University, and in 1991 the M. Div from Harvard Divinity School.

In Turkey, Alan taught in Çorum his first year, and at Ereğli (Konya) his second. We remember his interest in archaeology, leading us on afield trip to this or that ruin, his love of good food and drink (making certain we had the ingredients for exotic cocktails in remote provinces) and his love of conversation with friends, often long and late of night.

He always was such an open and sweet man. It seemed a natural step for Alan to leave the world of business and banking to become a minister in recent years.

Warren Pritchard, Turkey 1

ARKADAŞLAR ESTABLISHMENTS

The Orange Blossom

Henry and Michal Weathers Schliff, T-16, own and operate the Orange Blossom Bakery-Cafe, in Buxton, North Carolina near the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse, on North Carolina's Outer Banks. They have recently published a spiral-bound compilation of their favorite recipes, entitled "Meet Me at the Orange Blossom." A recipe for "Turkish Customs Apple Coffee Cake" is accompanied by a great story involving the Izmir docks. Other stories and anecdotes, written by Michal, intersperse the recipes. Arkadaşlar members who used to start off their days in Turkey with steaming bowls of mercimek çorbası will enjoy "On the Way to Marmaris," which introduces the book's soup recipes. Copies are available for \$23.95, and may be purchased by mail. The address is P.O. Box 250, Buxton NC 27920.

The Beauport Inn

George and Kathy Wilson (George was a Care staffer who worked with community-development volunteers) run the Beauport Inn and Cafe, a year-round bed-and-breakfast establishment in Ogunquit, Maine. The Beauport features a "continental plus" breakfast, and also a private dining room. It is located a few minutes' walk from the heart of Ogunquit, a well-known tourist destination on Maine's southern coast. Ogunquit features antique shops, art galleries, seafood restaurants, fishing boats, a picturesque coastline, and a beautiful beach. The Beauport Inn is located at 102 Shore Road in Ogunquit. The phone number is (207) 646-8680.

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