FULBRIGHT COMMISSION ACTIVITIES IN 2004
Message from the Executive Director

Dear Fulbrighters and colleagues,

We are at the threshold of 2005 and our hands are full of the ripe fruits of the first leap year in the 21st century. During the last twelve months the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission continued to implement the goals of the Fulbright program on the basis of the following program objectives: administering academic exchanges in all fields, especially in U.S. and BG studies, the social sciences and the humanities; extending outreach to more American and Bulgarian universities; introducing new programs and program components; providing English and Bulgarian language training and computer testing; supporting and increasing the number of local Fulbright offices; continuing to maintain high standards of program administration according to the principles of bi-nationalism, peer review, academic and professional excellence and the current Fulbright program priorities.

In FY 2004 and AY 2004–2005 the overall number of exchangees was 43. Of them 23 were U.S. grantees and 20 were Bulgarian. There were eight U.S. lecturers in finance, business administration, philosophy, journalism, biology, computer science and medicine. They were assigned to the following universities in Bulgaria: Sofia University, the University of National and World Economy, the Technical University, the University of Rousse, the Varna Economics University, New Bulgarian University, the Bulgarian Medical Academy.

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curriculum development in the following areas: economics and business, library science, education management, law, sociology, U.S. studies. Under the Fulbright Teacher Exchange three U.S. grantees taught English language and American literature at language high schools in Sofia, Stara Zagora and Plovdiv.

On the Bulgarian side there were 20 grantees in the following categories and fields: six scholars in mechanical engineering, chemistry, medieval BG studies, sociology, finance and pharmacology, eight students in finance, business administration, law, international relations, East European studies and film studies, one H. Humphrey fellow in drug abuse prevention and treatment, three teachers in English language and American literature and two participants in the U.S. Studies Summer Institutes.

Grantee accomplishments

Among the many reports we received from grantees and alumni telling about recognitions, publications, joint research in the field of American studies, cognitive science, public policy etc, worth mention is the John Atanassoff award for special achievements in computer engineering Bulgaria’s President Georgui Parvanov recently presented to Preslav Nakov, a Bulgarian Ph.D. student at UC Berkeley. Radha Blackman, a U.S. Fulbright student in education, was recently awarded a six-month UNESCO internship in Paris. A number of distinguished Bulgarian Fulbright alumni presented papers at the annual conference of the Bulgarian American Studies Association on “America in the 21st Century” held in November 2003 and the 6th Fulbright Conference on “Strengthening Transatlantic Relations through Academic Exchanges” held on July 31st – August 1st in 2004. Some of them taught courses at the 3rd Fulbright International Summer Institute.

Non-Grant Activities

Last year was rich in events that aptly complemented the grant activities of the Commission. On July 11 – August 9 the Commission conducted its fourth Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar entitled “Bulgaria and the New Challenges of the 21st Century”. It was sponsored and administered by the U.S. Department of Education. The participants were 14 U.S. university and college professors and high school teachers from 11 U.S. states. The rich program involved four intensive weeks of lectures, discussions, workshops, meetings, cultural events and a tour of Bulgaria. During the last week the group participated in the 6th Fulbright conference and the Fulbright International Summer Institute in the mountain resort of Pamporovo.

The 6th International Fulbright Conference on “Strengthening Transatlantic Cooperation and European Integration through Cultural and Educational Exchange” took place on July 31 – August 1 also in Pamporovo. There were 54 participants from Bulgaria, the U.S., UK and Romania. Most of them were Fulbright grantees and alumni.

The third Fulbright International Summer Institute (FISI) followed immediately after the conference. It lasted three weeks and offered ten courses in a wide variety of areas, e.g. globalization, U.S. foreign policy, transatlantic relations, EU enlargement, negotiation and conflict resolution, Bulgarian culture, Bulgarian language etc. There were 50 participants from the U.S., Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Russia, Georgia and Uzbekistan. Most of the students received merit-based scholarships. Among the participants were also the AY 04–05 U.S. Fulbrighters and the
Fulbright-Hays Summer Seminar participants. FISI 2004 was a big success.

The non-grant activities of the Commission also included educational advising, language training, computer testing and paper-based test administration. Here is a summary of the results: Advisees in Sofia and the 8 local Fulbright info-centers (visits, e-mail, mail and phone inquiries):

- 41,600
- Website visits: 5,900
- English language trainees: 600
- Computer testing at CBT in Sofia: 2,993
- SAT administration: 513
- CFA administration: 159

The Commission maintains nine regional info-centers in the major university towns: Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Sliven, Burgas, Varna, Veliko Turnovo, Rousse, Smolyan and Vidin. The office in Vidin was opened in the fall of 2004. The standard activities of the Commission’s regional offices include educational advising, information about the Fulbright and other related programs, English language training, test registration and assistance to Fulbright grantees. The Vidin center is offering free English language training to Roma children studying at the “Simeon the Great” High School.

The positive results of our work in 2004 fill me with optimism for the future and especially for the coming year. Three major events have been put in the 2005 Fulbright calendar: celebration of the centennial of the birth of Senator James William Fulbright on April 9, the 25th conference of European Executive Directors of Fulbright Commissions on April 23–29 and the fourth Fulbright International Summer Seminar (FISI) on August 1–13. I am sure that the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission and its staff have the capacity, the energy and the creativity to meet the new challenges and write another exciting chapter in the history of the Fulbright program in Bulgaria.
Edward Monroe has a MS degree with a focus on earth science education from Johns Hopkins University. Prior to his Fulbright grant, he spent two years in Bulgaria as a Peace Corps volunteer.

Snejana Teneva: Edward, you have previously been to Bulgaria with the Peace Corps. Why did you apply again for a Fulbright scholarship to Bulgaria?

Edward Monroe: I enjoyed my first stay in Bulgaria very much and thought often about returning. In particular I missed the mountains, the black sea coast, and the warm nature and open heartedness of many Bulgarians. Despite its positives, at that time Bulgaria was undergoing a major transition. I witnessed national strikes, a siege on parliament, super-inflation and failing banks. Now that I have returned to Bulgaria through the Fulbright program, I can see many changes have taken place. Infrastructure is improving, new buildings are being constructed, and many young Bulgarians seem to have adapted quite well.

S.T. What does Fulbright mean to you?

Fulbright has been a wonderful opportunity for me to develop and exchange ideas. As an example, I recently attended a Fulbright conference in Berlin with over 300 participants made up of teachers, researchers, and professors. Participants were from a variety of states in the US, focused on different subject areas, and living/working throughout Europe. Still, we all seemed to have a fondness for sharing ideas. I think only Fulbright can provide an experience like that.

S.T. What is the objective of your Fulbright project?

My intent is to generate awareness for the restoration and upkeep of Bulgaria’s historical stone
buildings. From research results, I am producing articles for an English language newspaper in Sofia, as well as magazines in the US. My project is entitled, “Building Stones of Bulgaria from Ancient Times to the Present.” Bulgaria’s unique geology and history provide a wonderful place for my research. It has buildings that are over 2,500 years in age and diverse stone materials including various types of limestone, sandstone, granite, and marble.

S.T. Which sites have you selected to conduct your research?

My first research site was the Thracian tomb outside of the town of Starosel. I was amazed at their level of building technology from the 4th century BC. For the exterior of the tomb they cut large blocks of attractive and durable granite from a quarry, transported the blocks 20 km to the tomb, and secured them in place with iron rods. Other examples of research sites include the churches of seaside Nessebar, traditional homes in the Rhodopi Mountains, and the Ottoman fortress at Belogradchik.

S.T. How do you conduct your building stone research?

To begin, professional contacts at the research sites are very important, such as historians, archeologists, or quarry managers. Regardless of their specialty, it is helpful to talk with someone who can provide background information and refer me to others with knowledge of the area. My field research includes the identification of local landforms, quarries, and stones, as well as the historical background of the building. Photographs are also an important part of documentation and accompany the articles that I write later.

S.T. How did Fulbright change your life?

Fulbright has helped me to grow as a person and as a professional. I have had the opportunity to design and conduct research on the topic of my choice. Through this process, I have met many wonderful people. Bulgarian colleagues and professionals have been incredibly welcoming and generous. On more than one occasion someone has gone out of his/her way to meet with me. Indeed, I have had many engaging chats over a cup of coffee. I look forward to my further research work and eventually sharing stories from my Fulbright experience when I return to the US.
NEW PROGRAM OFFICER FOR US GRANTEES

Rada Kaneva was recently appointed as program officer for US grantees. She holds a Bachelor’s degree in Turkish studies from Sofia University and a Master’s degree in European integration from New Bulgarian University.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES FOR U.S. FULBRIGHT GRANTEES

Trip to Borovets, February 2005
CELEBRATION OF THE CENTENNIAL OF SENATOR JAMES WILLIAM FULBRIGHT

April 9, 2005, Saturday

Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”
Aula

14:00 – 14:45 Official opening and greeting addresses:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Julia Stefanova,
Executive Director, Bulgarian Fulbright Commission

Prof. DS Boyan Biolchev, Rector, Sofia University

Geffrey Levine, DCM, US Embassy

14:45 – 16:15 Session 1: Presentations:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Julia Stefanova
Dr. Kostadin Grozev
Prof. John Deely – USA
Leila Mustanoia – Finland

16:15 – 16:30 Coffee break

16:30 – 17:45 Session 2: Roundtable discussion I:

How the Fulbright grant changed my life

Participants: Fulbright alumni: senior scholars

17:45 – 19:00 Session 3: Roundtable discussion II:

How the Fulbright grant changed my life

Participants: Fulbright alumni: graduate students

19:00 – 19:30 Closing session

19:45 – 22:00 Reception at “Yaitseto” restaurant, Sofia University

Sponsors: the Bulgarian Fulbright Commission and the Bulgarian Fulbright Alumni Association
The Fulbright International Summer Institute (FISI) is an academic and cultural program created by the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission in 2002. FISI offers one- or two-week intensive courses in a wide variety of subject areas. All courses are taught in English by distinguished professors from the U.S., Europe and Bulgaria, and are addressed to undergraduate and graduate students, university faculty and professionals. This year FISI is scheduled to take place from August 1 to August 13, 2005 in Pamporovo. You can choose from the following courses:

### Business and Economics

**Course 1:** Negotiation and Conflict Resolution  
**Lecturer:** Prof. George Siedel, University of Michigan, Business School, MI, USA

**Course 2:** Applied Microeconomics  
**Lecturer:** Prof. Ann Fender, Gettysburg College, PA, USA

**Course 3:** Global Business Strategy: Globalization, Multinational Corporations, and the Nation-State  
**Lecturer:** Prof. Alexander Billon, University of Delaware, DE, USA

**Course 4:** Financial Management  
**Lecturer:** Prof. Chenchuramaiah Bathala, Cleveland State University, OH, USA

**Course 5:** Change Management: Let Your Creativity Escape: Change the Paradigm  
**Lecturer:** John Davie, Vector Management International Ltd., UK

**Course 6:** Legal Ethics  
**Lecturer:** Dr. Sheila Hochhauser, Kansas State University, KS, USA

**Course 7:** Business Culture and Business Idiom  
**Lecturer:** Dr. Shtiliana Halacheva-Rousseva, Technical University, Bulgaria

### Education and Communication

**Course 8:** Integrated Interactive International Education  
**Lecturers:** Dr. Leon Richards and Linda Fujikawa, Kapi‘olani Community College, University of Hawaii, HI, USA

**Course 9:** Professional Communication for Intercultural Times  
**Lecturer:** Dr. Noemi Marin, Florida Atlantic University, FL, USA

**Course 10:** Advocacy Workshop (Argument and Public Speaking Training)  
**Lecturer:** Dr. Joseph Zompetti, Illinois State University, IL, USA

**Course 11:** Cooperative Learning and Cultural Sensitivity  
**Lecturers:** Shelley Friend and Dana Goodrich, Northwest Vista College, TX, USA
### Politics and International Relations

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<th>Course 14:</th>
<th>American Foreign Policy and the International System in the Age of Globalization</th>
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<td>Lecturer:</td>
<td>Prof. Mark Kramer, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA</td>
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<th>Course 15:</th>
<th>Transatlantic Security in the Geopolitics of the 21st Century</th>
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<td>Lecturer:</td>
<td>Dr. Kostadin Grozev, Sofia University, Bulgaria</td>
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<th>Course 16:</th>
<th>The European Union: Legal Principles</th>
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<td>Lecturers:</td>
<td>Prof. Jo-Carby-Hall, University of Hull, and Diane Ryland, University of Lincoln, UK</td>
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<th>Course 17:</th>
<th>Southeast Europe in the Context of the New Dynamics of the Euro-Atlantic Relations</th>
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<td>Lecturers:</td>
<td>Dr. Dinko Dinkov and Stoyan Stoyanov, University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria</td>
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<th>Course 18:</th>
<th>Aging of the European and North American Societies: Implications for the Younger Generation</th>
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<td>Lecturer:</td>
<td>Dr. Timothy Ilg, University of Dayton, OH, USA</td>
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### Art and Culture

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<th>Course 18:</th>
<th>Cultural Traditions in Bulgaria and Europe</th>
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<th>Course 19:</th>
<th>Bulgarian Language Instruction</th>
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<th>Course 20:</th>
<th>African-American Music and Cultural Globalization</th>
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<td>Lecturer:</td>
<td>Dr. Claire Levy, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, Bulgaria</td>
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<th>Course 21:</th>
<th>Visual Literacy: Principles of Artistic Perception</th>
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<td>Lecturer:</td>
<td>Dr. Boyan Dobrev, Academy of Fine Arts, Bulgaria</td>
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<th>Course 22:</th>
<th>Classic Novels into Film</th>
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<td>Lecturer:</td>
<td>Dr. Madeleine Danova, Sofia University, Bulgaria</td>
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<th>Course 23:</th>
<th>The Culture of Perception: How to Figure out Contemporary Arts and Discourses and to Have Fun at That</th>
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<td>Lecturer:</td>
<td>Dr. Dimitar Kambourov, Sofia University, Bulgaria</td>
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If you want to participate in this event, please visit [www.fisi-bg.info](http://www.fisi-bg.info) for practical information and application forms. You can also obtain general information from: Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange

17, Alexander Stamboliiski Blvd. Sofia 1000, Bulgaria  
Tel.: +359 (02) 980 82 12  
E-mail: rkaneva@fulbrsof.bol.bg
A DAY OF AMERICAN-BULGARIAN FRIENDSHIP IN CHANDLER

Violeta Tsoneva, Fulbright exchange teacher, Hamilton High School Chandler, Arizona

http://vionet.blogspot.com
http://vionet2.blogspot.com

Chandler Mall, March 5. In the background is the Arizona state tree, the Palo Verde (meaning green stick)

The card I received from Boyan put it, “Well, our tadpole days are over, feelings older, tired, and broke; can’t hop as high, can’t catch no fly but at least we haven’t croaked.” Yes, I am glad I am still alive (not croaked, dead) and I can live to the fullest and make the best out of my life. I had celebrated my birthday in Moscow while I was a post-graduate student at Moscow State University and now life gave me the opportunity to celebrate March 4 in Arizona. According to http://www.etn.nl/distanc4.htm with information about the flying distances between 325 major airports in the world, the flying distance between SkyHarbor Airport, Phoenix, Arizona and Sofia Airport, Bulgaria is 10,397 km (6,460 miles). And though I am that far away from my family and friends in Bulgaria, I felt the positive energy from the teachers and students at Hamilton High School, my friends throughout the USA and the world and, of course, my father, daughter, husband, relatives, in-laws and old friends. Their love and efforts to make me feel special on March 4 made my birthday a real holiday for me.

The birthday person stands out on her/his day in different ways in Bulgaria and the USA. At HHS it is common for the birthday girl or boy to walk
proudly with a bunch of balloons and flowers. The students carry them from one classroom to another and sometimes there are announcements that there are gifts left for them at the front desk. I decided to celebrate my birthday at school the way I always do it in Bulgaria. In our country it is the birthday person who buys some candy and treats his friends to them. I had no Bulgarian candy, but Boyan and I had found a shop in Mesa that sells food from Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey and some Arab countries. I gave all my students lokum (Turkish Delight) I had bought from Giado grocery store (on Dobson St., near the corner with Guadalupe St.). When they saw the lokum chunks with toothpicks, some of them asked me what it was, wanted to know whether I had made it, and some were honest to say that they were scared. I explained that lokum is a desert that is a popular food in the Balkan countries and that the best lokum is made in Turkey. Its ingredients are sugar, starch, water, flavorings, and nuts. To make the students feel comfortable with tasting lokum, I was the first one to put a piece of lokum in my mouth and eat it in one gulp. All three boxes of lokum were eaten and the students were smiling, it seemed everybody liked the delight from the Balkans.

In the USA it is the birthday person who is taken out to lunch or dinner by family and friends. My colleague Bill did something similar – he bought me lunch on March 4. I had American food – a can of classic Coca Cola, a hamburger and an oatmeal cookie. During the lunch break while I was at the table with some other teachers in the staff room, a messenger approached me with a vase of fresh red roses and a greeting card – the greetings of HHS: “Happy birthday, Violeta!” followed by a smiling emotion. From that moment on I had to carry the vase of flowers with me. I was invited to a potluck party in the E-wing. The teachers there had prepared food and taken it to Room E-100. That was their way to celebrate the end of the AIMS (Arizona Instrument for Measuring Standards) exams, the latest benchmark test (Feb 28 – March 4) and the inevitably approaching end of the third quarter. I joined them and tasted some of the deserts as I have a sweet tooth. During conference time my colleague Diana Moore entered the classroom with a gift, her gorgeous smile and very stylish hair. She apologized she would not be able to come to my party in the evening as she had almost lost her voice. Before I left school in the afternoon, I was given a large greeting card signed by some teachers. On March 5 I received one more card from HHS that was signed by the school principal and his assistants and it had a bee on the front. The working bee was the connotation that I made as soon as I saw the card. Hard work as this of the working bee always pays back, this is how I decoded the message.

In the afternoon Boyan and I continued our preparations for the birthday dinner. I had invited a few teachers from the English Department and had promised them Bulgarian food and a sort of theme party whose topic would be Bulgaria. Bill rang the door bell at 6 p.m. sharp, a bit later came Cheryl carrying a birthday cake, and finally Doug showed up. First we had tarator – a cold soup made of yoghourt, fresh cucumbers, dill, olive oil, garlic, salt and walnuts. Next we served roasted peppers breaded with Bulgarian sheep’s cheese and eggs. There was also Bulgarian lyutenitsa we had bought from Giado – a dip made of steamed tomatoes, roasted red peppers, carrots and spices. The main dish was pork steaks stewed with onion, Cheddar cheese, sour cream and Bulgarian spices. The banitsa (cheese pastry) served with Bulgarian red Mavrud from Haskovo topped the dinner. Doug asked many questions about the food and how it was prepared. We decided to have a culinary workshop where I would teach Doug and some of our students how to cook some Bulgarian dishes. I have already made baklava and my Period 4 freshmen tasted it the last day of the first quarter in October. At the dinner table we talked about our various projects with students. Bill, Doug and I are thinking about a trip to Bulgaria for a group of students and teachers from HHS in the fall of 2005. The idea came from both freshmen and juniors who are in Period 4. My school in Sofia will host the visit and later it will send some of Mrs. Bravo-Buchanan’s current students to Chandler for a visit next year in March (Mrs. Bravo-Buchanan is my
A Bulgarian-American Commission for Educational Exchange exchange partner who is working at 91 German Language High School in 2004–2005 as an EFL teacher. So far this is just a project idea, but I know that whatever we decide to do with Bill Kleinman, it happens. I introduced him to iEARN (http://www.iearn.org) and the English-to-go World’s Largest Lesson (http://www.english-to-go.com) and he liked the idea of opening the walls of the English classroom to the international community of teachers and students. For a month a few teams of our juniors have been designing Web pages with HHS students’ contributions to iEARN projects and one myEUROPE project. Our choice of projects matches the curriculum and this will give our students the opportunity to improve their writing with the help of the international community of students and raise their awareness of diverse cultures and cultural context of world events.

Every gift I received from my colleagues was with a message. The cake from Cheryl had the Happy Birthday, Violeta sign written in red and it was a merry spot on the table – just as Cheryl is – she always smiles and she is good-hearted and compassionate. The pink bag full of BodySource cosmetics was her reminder that I should take care of my body when exposed to the heat and sun of Arizona. Bill had decided to make history with a very special gift – one that addressed my soul. He gave me John Steinbeck’s The Grapes of Wrath with the expectation not to make it “a burden, a curse” but a challenge for me during the last quarter of school. I hope that after The Great Gatsby I will enjoy team-teaching Steinbeck and Barbara Kingsolver with Bill to all our curious juniors. Doug had chosen a CD with a collection of topical songs by Pete Seeger in which the banjo and 12-string guitar player sings about prominent events and themes of the 20th century – the Spanish Civil War, the civil rights and the anti-war movements, etc. On that day I received once more flowers from Irina and Vassil since their original ones were delivered a few days earlier by mistake. They demanded that the florist deliver fresh flowers to me on the day of my birth. The jumbo card the teachers from HHS had signed and their greetings dominated the day and the gift table. In fact, all those gifts came to prove the Latin saying Mens sana in corpore sano. I hope this wish will come true while I am in Arizona and next back in Bulgaria.

Boyan’s gifts were with a message as well. He had wrapped a DVD of the comedy Raising Arizona with Nicols Cage and Holly Hunter and, with his European taste, a stylish ballpoint pen Jarden de Paris. This reminded me of our dream to go to Paris together and visit the places that Boyan had been to while he lived there with his parents in the 1970s. Another gift of his is his love and attempts to make me happy not only on my birthday.

March 4 was a special day for me and I spent it with friends. Those who could not be with me on that day, sent their e-cards, e-mailed, called by telephone, sent cards by traditional mail. My ex-students sent their greetings from different parts of the world. Alex sent his greetings from Canada, Atanas – from France, Dimitar – from Germany. I am thankful to everybody who made me feel special on March 4 and enjoy life. Now I am writing this while I am listening to Pete Seeger singing. Little Boxes is there, too. This is a song that my students and I heard in the English Language classroom last year when Radha Blackman, another Fulbright scholar in Bulgaria, took a cassette of her favorites to my class. March 4, 2005 was a day of American-Bulgarian friendship in Chandler.
My travel to Bulgaria by now is definitely more dramatic than I would have ever imagined. I would have never imagined to get injured exactly one week after we arrived in Sofia. I would never have imagined I would experience Bulgaria medical service first-handed. But what has impressed me most is that Bulgaria is such a beautiful land.

Bulgaria is a beautiful land because its topographic variation is diversified in a comparatively small land area. Within a day’s drive, one is able to see plains, mountains, plateaus, basins, rivers, lakes, and oceans all come together. I feel God has decided to make Bulgaria a topographic penjin, a miniature landscape on the grand worldview. And such natural beauty is blended with the richness of history. Everywhere you turn, a story of the old past would come to greet you and immerse you in the long tradition of human civilization.
Bulgaria is a beautiful land because its scholars and poets, under pretty harsh living conditions, keep renewing the intellectual mind and the conscience of the society. I didn’t cry for my injury, but tears just came to my eyes when I heard the Bulgarian poets produced songs of souls when their daily life was a constant struggle. I had to cheer the Bulgarian will for freedom when a high school English teacher, who graduated from University of Sofia 38 years ago and had been teaching ever since, said that she was willing to give up having heat in the winter time in order to have freedom.

Bulgaria is a beautiful land because, most of all, this fatherland or motherland has raised sons and daughters like Lyubomir and Maria.

Lyubomir was the Bulgarian young man who sent me to the emergency hospital on that unfortunate night of my fall. When I invited Lyubomir to my hotel two nights after he helped me, he didn’t say much about his 12-hour day working schedule. He said that Bulgaria was in the change so he needed to work long hours. He said that he wanted to go to school for energy management as it was not safe for Bulgaria to depend on the nuclear power energy. Because of Lyubomir I can see that Bulgaria is a land full of hope.

Maria is a nurse at the best emergency hospital in Sofia. Maria is the sister of Anna, a Bulgaria Fulbright staff member. Maria was there to meet us the first day when we arrived in Sofia. Maria treated me with love and care a sister would give after I got injured. Maria has taught me that humanitarian love conquers any culture and language barrier. As my primary injury was caused by stepping into a particular uncovered drainage in downtown Sofia, I was asked many times if I wanted to sue the city of Sofia. I wanted the city to make sure the drainage was covered, but I just could not bring a charge against a city that had raised Lyubomir and Maria.

Yes it is most because the sons and daughters like Lyubomir and Maria that Bulgaria is a beautiful land. And I feel proud that such a beautiful land has become a milestone in my life journey.

Bulgaria Travel Journal
August 3rd, 2004
LEAVING

When I came, the sunflowers were holding high their youthful pride;

Now I’m leaving, they bow gently with natured modesty.

I’m saying goodbye but that doesn’t mean departure

For I’ll bring with me the silent lyrics of Korprovshitsa, the simple elegance of mountain villages, the Thracian breeze of Bourgas, the Roman echoes of Plovdiv, the beauty, kindness, and the Snejana smile of Sofia, and of course, the evergreen uprightness, the eternal blue moon, and the virgin daybreak of Pamporovo.

All I’ll bring with me is yours, yours, yours.

So I know that in the bright sunshine of Fulbright We’ll see a future together in the foresight.
I had always heard extremely positive things about the Fulbright Program. Around the world it is known as a vibrant, dynamic, and competitive program that provides in-country experience, cultural and intellectual exchange, and lifelong memories. I was thrilled to be accepted to Bulgaria.

This was my first experience in Eastern Europe, so I did not know what to expect. I was pleasantly surprised. I loved the openness, helpfulness and international perspective of everyone involved, as well as the opportunity to see so much of Bulgaria. From the mountains to the sea, to the small towns and cities in between, I thoroughly enjoyed the lectures on Bulgarian history, politics and economics, the food, especially the mountain trout and Black Sea sturgeon, the haunting music, learning a few folklore dance and dancing it in the ___ cave and in Plovdiv’s Roman amphitheater, learning a few Bulgarian words, comparing Latin and Slavic root words and verb endings, hearing a language so different, the Fulbright International Summer Institute, learning about global politics and the legal implications of the European Union, talking to my Bulgarian, U.S. and European Union colleagues, and meeting and traveling with the Fulbright staff, who, I must say, took better care of me than anyone has ever done (just don’t tell my wife that.)

Because our Bulgarian colleagues were on vacation while we were there, I was particularly touched that they would take time to meet with us. Before leaving, a colleague, whose husband is Bulgarian, asked what I would see. When I listed Sofia, Rila Monastery, Veliko Turnovo, Varna, Bourgas,
Sozopol, Nessebar, the Medara Horseman, Pamporovo, and said that there were a few more places that we would see also, she was speechless. So I really feel like I learned more about Bulgaria than most people learn about any country, and all within one month.

I am hoping to bring a Bulgarian colleague to San Antonio College, for a month, a semester or a year; Boyan Dobrev, has already expressed an interest. I talked to the college president about my Bulgaria experience, and he is very excited and supports hosting a Bulgarian Fulbrighter. (In November we have a one-month Fulbright lecturer here from Kazakhstan.)

Currently, I have a website with photos (courtesy of a colleague, Jimmy (Jeeemee) Clark.) I will also post a short story by Emil Andreev – he is a Bulgarian short story writer, considered the “(Gabriel García) Marquez” of Bulgaria. He and I email regularly, and he is thrilled to have his work posted on the web. I have also been creating translucent map layers accessible via the internet, using ArcIMS. My Iberian peninsula maps have just gone up; Bulgaria will follow shortly.

All of these are at my homepage. If you google.com “San Antonio College Texas.” Then, within our college website, search “Manzo’s homepage”. If you have a really, really, really good memory, you can type in http://www.accd.edu/sac/forlang/jmanzo/

When I look at Bulgaria, I see tremendous growth potential, a beautiful, unspoiled countryside, and extremely bright and energetic people. It reminds me of the Spain I saw during the early 80’s to the early 90’s. Their membership in the European Union has had tremendous impact on the country; I hope for the same growth for Bulgaria.

I am very much looking forward to returning, and bringing my wife, who has only been able to hear all of my wonderful stories and see the photos, and am actively pursuing a one semester or one year Fulbright to return to Bulgaria.