

Eighth Fulbright International Summer Institute Tryavna, August 10 – 22, 2009

This year the Fulbright International Summer Institute took place in the historic town of Tryavna. The eighth edition of the Institute attracted 94 participants from 13 countries: Albania, Belarus, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Ukraine, and the USA. An impressive team of 26 lecturers taught a total of 17

courses in a wide variety of subject areas. The new group of Fulbright grantees from the U.S. also attended the summer program and studied different aspects of Bulgarian history, politics, economy, tourism, social issues, folklore, literature and the arts.

FISI 2009 was an example of successful collaboration of several institutions – the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”, the New Bulgarian University, the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor and the *America for Bulgaria* Foundation. We would like to express our gratitude to all lecturers who invited their students to join this unique event, and all prestigious institutions that supported FISI without any reservations.

Traditionally, the Summer Institute was held in August (10 – 22), but in 2009 it offered a broader range of courses in a variety of fields: business, economics, finance and management (“The Financial Crisis: What Insights Can Modern Microeconomic Theory Provide?”; “Challenging Times in Capital Markets and Strategies for Saving & Investing”; “International Career Planning in a Globalized Economy”; “Projects Writing and Projects Management”), political science (“American Foreign Policy and the International System in the Era of Glo-



Official 2009 FISI Opening: (from left to right) Fulbright Commission ED Dr. Julia Stefanova; Eng. Dragomir Nikolov, Mayor of Tryavna; Ivanka Tzankova, Director, America for Bulgaria Foundation; Geoffrey Keating, Ambassador of Ireland to Bulgaria; and Prof. Alexander Fedotoff, Chairman, Fulbright Commission Board

FISI participants

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balization"), philosophy ("Logic in the Continental Tradition"; "Technology of Imagination"; "The Philosophical Issues of the XXI Century"), law ("Negotiation and Conflict Resolution", "D.A.R.E. - Debate. Argue. Reason. Examine."; "European Union Citizenship: Current Trends and Developments"), communications and media ("Public Relations: It Can Make or Break an Organization"; "Media and Globalization: a Multidisciplinary Approach"), cultural studies ("Prospering in Tough Times: How Does a Young Person Summon Up the Compassion, the Focus, the Strength, and the Wisdom to Launch New Careers during These Difficult Times?"; "Myth, Literature and Media"; "American Novels into Film"), and Bulgarian studies.

All courses were taught by distinguished American and European professors, most of whom are Fulbright alumni. The lecturers represented prestigious universities and institu-



FISI class

tions from the U.S., Bulgaria, and the UK: Harvard University, the University of Michigan, Arizona State University, University of Dayton, Cleveland State University, Gettysburg College, University of North Dakota, Sofia University, New Bulgarian University, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, University of Geodesy, Architecture and Civil Engineering, National Academy of Arts, University of Hull, University of Lincoln, Phelps Dunbar LLP, Media Development Center, American Research Centre in Sofia, etc.

The FISI students had a chance to enroll in courses that are part of regular M.A. programs, based on agreements with the University of Michigan, Sofia University and New Bulgarian University, the courses "Negotiation and Conflict Resolution", "Logic in Continental Tradition", "The Philosophical Issues of the XXI Century", "Myth, Literature and Media" and "American Novels into Film" provided their students with university credits.



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Timothy J. Ilg from the University of Dayton, Dayton, OH, teaching a course on "Prospering in Tough Times"

FISI 2009 also offered an exciting cultural program which demonstrated the achievements of Bulgarian culture and the magic of Bulgarian nature. The highlight of the weekend was a one-day trip to *Sokolski Monastery*, the open-air ethnographic museum *Etar* and the architectural reserve *Bozhentsi*.

The unique mixture of students with diverse ethnic, cultural and educational backgrounds, along with the very positive atmosphere, created a stimulating environment for exchange of knowledge, productive discussions on important and interesting issues, and, of course, a great deal of fun. Once again, FISI reaffirmed the validity and potential of the Fulbright idea of building mutual understanding through exchange of knowledge and cultural values.



2009 FISI graduates

FISI Impressions

Dobrin Stanev
 Undergraduate student, EU Studies
 Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Sofia, Bulgaria

The Spirit of Tryavna

I miss how we played volley at night
 in a circle outside our hotel
 I miss how I slept 5 hours a day
 and 9 hours I granted to study.
 After the study followed the party.

It lasted 2 weeks,
 it lasted a second.

I miss how Schaffner
 played the guitar
 late in the evening.
 Late in the night
 Ron also played
 as we all sang.

I miss the bonfire
 bona fide friends
 and the professors I miss.

I miss having breakfast at 8
 that strange odour of water,
 all of chairs in the white lobby
 where we everyday met.
 I miss Kramer's funniest walk,
 how we prepared together.

I miss doing business
 together with those
 vicious people
 that came from the lake.
 and getting to yes.
 instead of never.

I miss economics in Fender's class
 and that British Comodore's stories ,
 whose class I regret I couldn't attend.



I wish that I had.
 I yearn evermore.
 I miss the battle with Sofie
 and afterwards saying I'm sorry
 I wish I had
 a picture of her.
 beside the image of memory.

I wish
 I DARE.
 I miss the debate
 the heat of the trial at court,
 and I will appeal
 the verdict next year.
 just to see you again.

I miss the dancing
 and farewell dinner
 my room mate also I miss.
 Even the place called "Red Typhoon"
 and the red football club I miss.

I miss Julia's hair, Amanda's Bulgarian
 I miss Rone and Nevena
 and that reporter carrying a mic
 threatening people around her.

I miss Ambreen and Jawad and Diego
 and all of the Russians plus Sasha
 and all of the girls that lived nearby us
 and all of the rest I failed to mention.

I miss the fifteen nations:
 a hundred friends of the world
 who have decided to come
 in a Bulgarian town
 on top of the mountains
 as one.

The singing tower
 in the middle of Tryavna
 sang every night
 exactly at ten
 the very same song
 with the following name:

"Inseparable"



Yauhenia Parcheuskaya
 Undergraduate student, Management
 Belarus State Economic University, Minsk, Belarus

It was so full and so bright!

I am an undergraduate student at the Belarusian State Economic University (BSEU) in Minsk, Belarus. Although I am at an early stage of obtaining my Bachelor's degree, I am looking for a broadening the horizons of my student background. I realized that I wanted to study abroad during my summer holidays because this would certainly be a great chance for me in the future. When looking for the best summer school, FISl seemed to fit all my expectations and requirements: it has great experience in teaching international students, super-high level of teacher's professionalism and Tryavna is a place, where everyone must walk around.

FISl was undoubtedly a unique opportunity to spend two intensive weeks together with smart and interesting students and interact with gifted and captivating people. Studies here were so dynamic. The courses "International Career Planning", "Negotiation and Conflict Resolution", "Public Relations", "How to Launch New Careers during These Difficult Times" that I took surpassed all my hopes. Studies were demanding, but thoroughly enjoyable because we worked in groups and on "real-life" cases which engaged all of the group members and encouraged the exchange of ideas and experiences. I will always remember the energy and interaction during the case



discussions, strong team spirit and mutual trust when tasks had to be shared. Creative professors did their best to involve us in an amazing learning process by introducing role games, contests and personal projects in hot August of 2009. The FISl staff was brilliant, always smiling, and always pleasant.

Fulbright International Summer Institute provides the opportunity to improve yourself in different areas of studies, allowing you to further deepen your existing knowledge and to learn the new. I definitely got a better sense on how to balance passion and clarity to consider other people's ideas, how international carriers can be built and which intellectual capabilities and social skills leaders must have. To be honest, I learnt above all - that there are so many different and motivating activities that I could be engaged in!

And certainly impressions: the first emotions during the welcome dinner, a campfire, beautiful Bulgaria, the last sunny afternoon...saying "Довиждане"... The friendship that still remains beyond distances...

I really enjoyed my stay in Tryavna: every moment spent there is in my heart and every lesson of FISl is in my mind.



Oleksandra Pedchenko
 Graduate student, Modern Greek and English
 Kiev National Linguistic University, Kiev, Ukraine

I became charmed...



- Open-hearted Bulgarian people
- Rich Bulgarian history and culture

I spent 2 weeks in Tryavna:

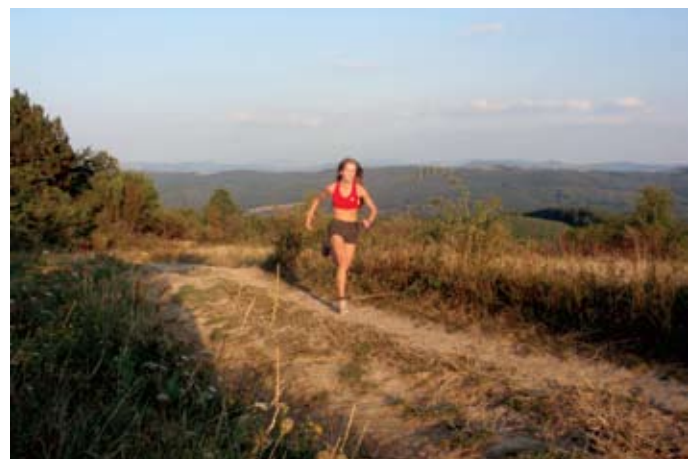
- Studying extremely interesting 6 subjects in which I am not an expert but I understood all because devoted lecturers did their best to create unique atmosphere of mutual understanding, to install special approach to each their student and to make you love the subject even if you previously thought it to be dull and complicated.
- Living on the magnificent hills filled with wild animals and berries. Fresh air, calm harmony of nature, no fuss of the city, perfect settling conditions, interesting people that make you think about what you have not thought before and cozy beautiful Tryavna with its unique charm .. that is all you need for self-development, that gives you desire for further studying, shows you that studying is the essential part of human being life and development and fills you with joy and active spirit.
- Doing sport. The conditions I lived in were perfect for jogging and other activities.

I send you my heartfelt gratitude:

- For high-professional lecturers
- For kind, committed administrators
- For your warm reception and good organization
- For interesting, gripping excursions
- For your best to make us spend our time unforgettably well

I was impressed from:

- Charming Bulgarian nature
- Delicious Bulgarian cuisine



I will remember these two weeks with warmth in my heart, for they gave me incredibly a lot of everything and Bulgaria is the country I want to return to.

Fulbright Office News

Fulbright Interview, September 29-30, 2009



Members of the nomination committee (from left to right): Geoffrey Dean, Fulbright Board Member; Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director, Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission; Maureen Duffy-Lewis, Fulbright lecturer, and Sherry Keneson Hall, CAO, U.S. Embassy

Pre-departure Orientation for Bulgarian Undergraduate Students, AY 2009-2010, Fulbright Advising Center



Visit of Drexel University Students to the Fulbright Commission Office



ED Dr. Julia Stefanova, presenting the Fulbright Program in Bulgaria to Drexel University students.



Cultural Orientation for American Fulbright Grantees



Official Opening of the Orientation Program: PAO Ken Moskowitz (first from left to right), talking to the new group of American Fulbright grantees, Thomas Huey, Security Officer, Eric Alexander, Consul General, and Fulbright Commission ED Dr. Julia Stefanova.

The cultural orientation for the AY 2009-10 American Fulbright grantees was held at the Fulbright Commission office on September 24-25, 2009. It was officially opened by Dr. Julia Stefanova, Executive Director of the Fulbright Commission, and representatives of the U.S. Embassy in Bulgaria: Ken Moskowitz, Public Affairs Officer, Eric Alexander, Consul General, and Thomas Huey, Security Officer.

The two-day orientation included discussions, a Q & A session, a visit to the National History Museum, and a one-day trip to the old town of Plovdiv.

Current Bulgarian Fulbrighters, American and Bulgarian Fulbright alumni attended the welcome reception in honor of the new U.S. grantees on September 24, 2009.



The U.S. Fulbright Grantees and Fulbright staff



Visit to the National History Museum



Fulbright Commission ED Dr. Julia Stefanova (right) welcomes the American Fulbright Grantees; Public Affairs Officer Ken Moskowitz



One-day trip to Plovdiv – Old Town

To Chicago and Back

Velina Draganova

**Bulgarian Fulbright exchange teacher, AY 2008-2009
Hylton Senior High School, Woodbridge, Virginia, U.S.A.
81st "Victor Hugo" High School, Sofia, Bulgaria**

My exchange in the United States

Living a stable life in Bulgaria, characterized by a comfortable home and two children, a five year old daughter and a son who was performing well in school, my husband and I figured we would not have a real chance to travel until the kids were much older. Fortunately Fulbright teacher exchange in the United States came along and made the impossible become possible.

I still remember the day when my assistant school principal Mrs. Partsova handed me the Fulbright teacher exchange paper and said: "You have to apply. This is for teachers just like you – teachers who love planning new activities, who like adventures and who enjoy challenges. Also, our students at 81st "Victor Hugo" High School would benefit from an American teacher." The Fulbright teacher exchange immediately caught my attention. I thought teaching in the United States would not only give me the chance to polish my English, but also, eventually, it would allow me to learn a lot about other life styles, traditions, ways of thinking and human cultures. My husband also agreed to embark on an experience that would prove to be life changing.

So I took the principal's advice and applied. Days after the test and interview procedures my school principal Mrs. Hristov and I received official letters of acceptance from the Executive Director of the Bulgarian- American Commission for Educational Exchange, Dr. Julia Stefanova. We were very touched and proud that we were going to participate in the most widely recognized and prestigious international exchange program in the world. For a Bulgarian teacher of English this is a dream come true. Even though I had traveled to some English speaking countries before, this would be the first time I would be teaching in one of them. The idea sounded scary at first, but soon it turned so real that all fears disappeared.

Once we were accepted to the exchange, the Program provided us with all the information we needed. The Bulgarian Fulbright staff in Sofia is an organized group of people who do things in a professional manner. They worked hard and helped the new grantees get ready for the exchange in the United States. I do not have enough words to thank them. The teacher exchange



preparation involved a one day orientation in June 2008 as well as a pre-departure orientation for new Fulbright grantees from Europe. Whenever we had questions, there was always someone from the Bulgarian Fulbright staff who was willing to talk to us. If someone was not there, our calls were always returned.

The day of our arrival in Washington was a memorable one. The first place that we saw was the huge Dulles Airport. We stood there, one suitcase on each side and our misplaced hearts somewhere in between our home country and the United States. That is when it finally hit us, we were in a completely different environment. Yet soon everything got better and better as we met people from Fulbright, what we call, the Fulbright family, waiting at the airport to take us to the hotel. We immediately felt their warmth and friendliness. This made us feel reassured and less nervous.

Orientation in Washington was a lot of fun. Fulbright really did a good job welcoming us. Our children were provided with daily child care, our spouses had their own schedule since we had to participate in discussion sessions with our American counterparts and regional coordinators. Meeting teachers from all over the world who had come to the United States through Fulbright made everyone feel better. At the Orientation farewell

dinner we exchanged addresses with Fulbright teachers that we still keep in touch with.

We moved into our new county where life started off at a fast pace and continued to hurtle along. Our family had to locate a new home, to buy a car, to acclimate to a new environment. I had the challenge of adapting to a new teaching position, a new host school, and a new principal. And all this - within two weeks, just before the school started. I doubt if I could have gone through all this if it had not been with the Fulbright program.

My host school's image is very different from schools in Bulgaria. When I enter Hylton Senior High School, the first thing that I see is a big bulldog, the school's mascot. All students and staff are proud to wear school spirit



clothes. I was also given a Bulldog T-shirt with the words: "Welcome to Hylton - home of the Bulldogs. Have a great Bulldog year!" As I walk in the hallways I see the diversity of students and teachers in the building and I realize that the whole world is there. The school does take on the characteristics of its leader, Mrs. Custard. The Principal is an admirable lady. She was voted "The State of Virginia's Principal of the Year" in 2008. She is dedicated and committed to school life to the extent that she evokes the idea of treating her students and staff like family. She takes students and teachers out for lunch, the big Bulldog family share new babies and retirements. She sends out weekly "Custard's Chat Time" newsletters to her staff, listing healthy foods teachers should eat. The CISL (Center of International Studies and Languages) specialty program has been providing seniors from different countries and continents in the world with one year student exchange at Hylton High School for many years.

My teaching experience in the host school started with an orientation for new teachers in Prince William County District. The orientation was both educational and entertaining. It was educational in that they taught us so many things that prepared us for the first day of school. They taught us how a high school is organized in the district, the paperwork we would have to complete and a lot about the expectations of the American kids and parents. Since I was going to teach ESOL, I learned a lot about the ESOL program. The most important lesson I learned and I would tell someone thinking of becoming an ESOL teacher is: "Don't bring any expectations with you and always keep a positive attitude. You will be teaching all sorts of students from diverse backgrounds. You must have a willingness to accept cultural differences." In fact, the whole concept of cultural exchange and diversity is what attracted me to Fulbright. During my first few weeks I used many of the things they taught us at the Orientation.

Teaching in an American school has been an adjustment

and a challenge. My first few weeks were tough at times. It seemed like an overwhelming experience at first but only until I realized how much support I get from my mentor Mrs. Cain, and from all colleagues in the ESOL department. My mentor, who is also the ESOL department chair, is the most supportive and inspiring person I have ever had the privilege to work with. When I first saw my school schedule I found that I would teach English in core subjects. I had never taught Science and Math before and I shared my concerns with my mentor. She came up with the idea of team teaching. My assistant teacher and I came up with the content. At Hylton I am accepted into a close circle of highly professional and hardworking teachers. Anything I need is graciously given, from advice to school supplies. The lesson I learnt from my experience is: "Ask, not assume." The best way is to learn while you work cooperatively, the worst way is to learn from your mistakes. The only time when you fail is when you do not try.

The kids are kids everywhere. They are basically good, but it is important to establish yourself immediately as an authority figure and, to be successful, you must have patience and persistence. As a homeroom teacher for a class of 23 students who had studied the first level but were considered unprepared for second level I had to handle some students who were behaviorally, emotionally and socially challenged. I had never before taught a class with students from such difficult backgrounds. At first, I was not sure if I would be able to really get through to these kids, but once the lights in their head started going on early during the year, I knew there was no limit to what I could do with the class. I became more and more attached to them as the year progressed.

I have been learning a lot from my students and I have had so many memorable moments with them so far: The day when we celebrated Thanksgiving was particularly special for my Hispanic students. They presented "The Day of the Dead" in the classroom, introducing customs of Hispanic countries, making creative colorful handcrafts, skulls and skeletons as a symbol of respect to death. Also, I discovered many interesting things such as the beautiful White Bell Filipino flower that my student from



In Washington DC, in front of the Jefferson Memorial, with Mrs. Cain

the Philippines gave me for Christmas; the holiday cards made by my students from Sierra Leone in Africa and Pakistan; the day when a new student from Nepal joined our class and told us the story of her country; the Afghan food that one of our students brought to the teachers to try. The list goes on and on.

What has been the most worthwhile is working with such a diverse and interesting group of high school students. I feel fortunate to talk to my students about Bulgaria. At school I made a cultural corner with books, souvenirs, and rose's oil from Bulgaria. My students could hear Bulgarian folk songs and watched a movie about my country. Being a cultural ambassador has been the most rewarding experience I have ever had in my personal and professional life. Part of the reason I am here is that the majority of the students I teach had never had the chance to travel out of their home countries or out of the USA and having a Fulbright teacher widens their perspective of the world and its multiple cultures. Through this adventure I've learned to appreciate more my country and my culture, and I've also learned to be more understanding and accepting of others. Every day, teachers give their hearts, mind and enthusiasm to the students, shaping their world and inspiring them in countless ways. As a Fulbright teacher, I know the importance of global education. That is why I instill in my students the desire to learn about other cultures and languages and explore. I firmly believe that everyone is unique and has a lot to give.

It is challenging to prepare lesson plans and constantly find the best way to introduce my Bulgarian culture into the different activities and projects I develop inside and outside of the class but it is also rewarding. I have had the chance to make a difference and I am happy that now, European countries and especially Bulgaria have become more than just dots on the map for my students. They have become real places filled with real and wonderful people.

Fulbright gave me the opportunity for self-growth, and all my experiences from this adventure will be a great resource that I will share with my colleagues and students when I return to teach in Bulgaria.

In addition to school life, my Fulbright family is just as important. Since the school year started, Fulbright alumni and regional program coordinators have hosted dinners and organized parties for the new exchange teachers in the USA. They also call us every once in awhile to see how we are doing. If some Fulbright teachers are having problems adjusting, they tell them, "It may be a stressful time right now, but don't worry too much. You need to have the mind frame that everything will work out at the end." Now I am not saying that everything has been easy and they do everything for us, but Fulbright is



always there to support us at any moment. The Fulbright-sponsored social events are wonderful, because they bring Fulbright teachers together throughout the year. You also find out that although you all have many similar experiences as other Fulbright teachers, your experiences are also different. At the social events, you get a sense of the general Fulbright experience for everyone. In October, my school administrator and I were invited to attend a conference in Little

Rock, Arkansas - the birthplace of Senator J. William Fulbright and former president Bill Clinton. The organizers could not have been more prepared for us, we spent four unforgettable days and had the opportunity to travel and visit many places of interest in Hot Springs and Little Rock.

Now that our time to go home is half gone, my family look back over these five months and experience a feeling of fulfillment. We have settled well in a quiet neighborhood in Woodbridge, Virginia, a beautiful place to live, and we continue to develop the friendships we have made since we first arrived. My husband Nikolay is attending an ESOL course for adults and also doing volunteer work in order to stay busy and develop social contacts. Our two children love going to their Elementary School and have made a lot of new friends. And although it is hard at times to adapt to a different way of doing things, we all admit that we would not trade this experience for anything. We believe that we have not only good neighbors, colleagues and mates but also lifelong friends that will remain for many years after we leave the United States. Of course, there are times when we wonder if it wouldn't have been easier to stay at home and not have made the trip. The answer is always: "Of course it would have been easier, but it would have been boring. We would have missed so much." We have had such an eye opening experience and enjoyed the company of so many people who appreciate our being here while we share our culture. All of our experiences have made us richer and better people.



To Chicago and Back

Stoyan Nedeltchev, Ph.D.

Dr. Stoyan Nedeltchev obtained his D. Eng. degree from Tokyo Institute of Technology (Japan). He received numerous prestigious fellowships and grants in the United States, Japan and Germany, including a Fulbright Senior Scholar Grant (USA, AY 2001/02, AY 2008/09), Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship (Germany, 2007-2009), DAAD Postdoctoral Fellowship (Germany, 2001, 2008), JSPS Postdoctoral Fellowship (Japan, 2002-2004), Takase Foundation Scholarship (Japan, AY 1998/99) and AIEJ Scholarship (Japan, AY 1997/98). His biography has been included in "Marquis Who's Who in the World", "2000 Outstanding Intellectuals of the 21st Century" and "Top 100 Educators 2009". In AY 2008-2009 Stoyan Nedeltchev was a Fulbright lecturer at the University of Pittsburgh, PA, U.S.A.



My second Fulbright Senior Scholar Grant began on March 1, 2009. I will perform a postdoctoral research in the group of Prof. Badie Morsi (Dept. of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering, the University of Pittsburgh) sponsored by the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission. My research will be focused on both the hydrodynamics and mass transfer in gas-liquid and gas-liquid-solid bubble column reactors. The lab of Prof. Morsi is among the three leading research groups in the United States on multiphase reactors and it is a great honor for me to be a member of this advanced group equipped with state-of-the-art facilities. The other two leading American groups are located at the Washington University in St. Louis (WUSL) (Missouri) and the Ohio State University in Columbus (Ohio). In the academic year 2001/02 the Fulbright Commission enabled me to spend 6 months at WUSL. So, through the Fulbright Program I am having a unique chance to specialize in two superb groups in the USA. I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all members of the Fulbright Commission who have evaluated favorably my applications. Everyone is aware how difficult and rare and at the same time prestigious is to receive twice the Fulbright Senior Scholar Grant. I am doing my best to represent the Bulgarian science and culture in the most positive way.

Since the very beginning of my stay in Pittsburgh Prof. Morsi and my labmates have shown their great hospitality and friendship. For instance, they picked me up at the air-

port, helped me to find a good accommodation, etc. Moreover, my colleagues even organized me a trip to the Niagara Falls (by their own cars) in order to familiarize me with the beauty of the North American nature. The view was really gorgeous!

Our research group represents a mixture of various cultures (Egyptian, French, Venezuelan and Myanmarian) and it is very interesting for me to learn more details about these countries. I have specialized in many different countries (USA, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, etc.) but for the first time I work with colleagues from countries like Venezuela and Myanmar. All members of my lab are fluent in English so there is no any language barrier among us for a good and friendly communication on various topics. One of the distinctive features of the American Universities is the great diversity of nationalities represented on campus. The University of Pittsburgh is not an exception and it looks like a real international University. Even there is a building on campus called "Cathedral of Learning" where the different international student communities have arranged their own "nationality rooms" which are being used as classrooms. The Cathedral of Learning is the second tallest educational building in the world (42 stories and about 163 m tall).

Pittsburgh is a middle-size city (about 400,000 inhabitants) with many historic landmarks. It is strategically located at the forks of three rivers (Allegheny, Monongahela

and Ohio). The downtown area is called the Golden Triangle due to its triangular shape formed by these rivers. Once known as the "Steelmaking Capital of the World", Pittsburgh is now a hub for finance, medicine, education, technology and sports. Pittsburgh is well-known for its good Universities (Carnegie Mellon, the University of Pittsburgh, Chatham University, Carlow University, etc.) and famous sport teams (the Steelers, Penguins and Pirates). The city celebrated its 250th Anniversary last year with a year-long celebration. Pittsburgh is a city that's rich in culture and steeped in history. It is a fabulous city made up of interesting neighborhoods. Pittsburgh offers a lively mix of retail centers, department stores and shopping malls.

Most impressive and breathtaking views reveal at a place called The Point (where the three rivers converge) and atop Mt. Washington (400 m in height). There are many churches in town which represent architectural masterpieces and they should not be missed when visiting Pittsburgh. I was pleasantly surprised that there is a Bulgarian Club in town which I managed to visit. It has been established more than 75 years ago by some Bulgarian immigrants and it popularizes the Bulgarian culture and traditions among the Americans. There are many people from Slavic descent in Pittsburgh, so one can see some Croatian, Serbian and Polish clubs in town.

In mid-March I also attended the parade on the occasion of St. Patrick's Day and realized how important is this celebration for the local people. I was told that after the parade in New York, the second biggest one is held in Pittsburgh.

When I return to Bulgaria, I will share all these good memories with my relatives, friends and colleagues. I plan to transfer to my home institution (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences) the knowledge that I will gain at the University of Pittsburgh by establishing my own research group there. However, I realize that this will be a serious challenge due to the very specific and conservative structure of the Bulgarian science.

At the end of this article, I would like to share with the readers a few sentences about the return ("back") phase of the young Fulbrighters in Bulgaria. In the field of Engineering it should be top priority of our country to send young promising engineers abroad who after gaining some hands-on experience should return home. However, Bulgaria should provide all necessary conditions for the further career development of these researchers. For instance, this was the major driving force for the ongoing postwar success of Japan in all fields of Engineering. In most of the advanced societies in the world, the former Fulbrighters occupy highly prestigious positions (ministers, judges, Professors, etc.) but in Bulgaria (especially in the field of science) the situation is different. Very often the hardliners (in most cases some old Professors or senior researchers without international collaborations) in the Bulgarian science are trying to block the career of these young scholars by all possible means. That is why, all the responsible organizations in our country should work hard to resolve this problem and offer normal conditions for the successful career development of the young, ambitious and promising fellows. After all, the future of Bulgaria and its science belongs to the young people!



БЪЛГАРО-АМЕРИКАНСКА КОМИСИЯ ЗА ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЕН ОБМЕН "ФУЛБРАЙТ"

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Out of America

Emily Hillhouse

U.S. Fulbright graduate student, AY 2008 – 2009

Modern History, University of Texas, Austin

Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Sofia, Bulgaria

Project Title: *Peasant Modernity: The Display of Folk Culture in 20th Century Bulgaria*

It is a strange thing to move to a new place in the winter time. You have no memories of sunny days with picnics and barbeques or hot afternoons lounging by the pool to warm the icy hours or to soften the hard edges of the cold grey buildings with remembered foliage. For all you know, the skeletal tendril of that vine, which taps on your bedroom window, has always been and will always be dry and brittle. Winter is not an obviously auspicious time for beginnings.

When we arrived in Sofia this January, the snow was falling in huge, generous flakes. The streets were all but deserted, and most sane people were no doubt huddling by their space heaters- for Bulgaria was in the midst of a heating crisis. After settling into our thankfully warm apartment, we bundled up our baby, Molly, into her bear-suit (that is, a snow suit which makes her look like a bear), and struck out in search of the local "Fantastiko" grocery store.

The streets were an obstacle course of snowdrifts. My husband and I took turns trying to force the stroller down the street. We crossed a quiet park- where the snow was a bit thinner, and when we paused for a moment, we could hear the soft crackle of the snow falling all around us. It was as if Sofia were slumbering under an enchantment. Where were the noisy, happy, angry, busy people that one normally associates with cities?

When we arrived at our destination and pushed past the initial blast of heat, we found that the store was by no means as deserted as our quiet walk would have suggested. Outside we had felt cold, isolated and alone, but once we entered our little local grocery store, it was like we had entered the bosom of our family home.

"Oh, what a cute baby!" exclaimed a little girl.



The old man in the dairy section asked, "Isn't it too cold for her?"

By the vegetables, a group of teenage girls giggled, "Oh, she's a little bear!"

Grandmothers we had never met tugged on Molly's little feet and asked how old she was. The girls working at the store all battled their way through the shoppers to meet Molly. In that moment we knew that it had been no exaggeration when our friend back home told us that Bulgarians love babies.

In the days that followed, we began to feel like celebrities when we went out with Molly. As the weather improved, and moving around became easier, we became bolder and would take Molly to museums and restaurants. Everywhere we went we were met with a kindness and warmth that was far different from the bored indifference we were used to at home. At our little local grocery store, the girls would always gather for a word with Molly when we stopped by, and they would always ask after her by name if one of us ever came to the store without the baby in tow. Furthermore, everyone from our waitress to the woman selling flowers on the street corner had a piece of advice about how to better take care of Molly. It was as if, in coming to Bulgaria, we had inherited thousands of new relatives, all of whom were only too eager to help in bringing up our baby. It was so entirely different from the anonymity we had previously experienced living in

a big city that we didn't know quite what to make of it. Now, however, I suspect that when we return home we will wonder why nobody cares about our "little bear."

In those first days, I half wondered whether I should bring Molly with me when I started to try to do my research. Surely the sight of her would cause people to overlook my rusty Bulgarian? And perhaps people would be just that bit more patient, and willing to help, if confronted with a child dressed like a bear?? On the other hand, I could think of no excuse for bringing her along. So when the day came, I once again felt alone and isolated in a frozen winter landscape.

The Central State Archives are located in a stark, unfriendly building at the far end of Moskovska street. And on that first day, as I slipped and staggered across the slick yellow cobbles in front of the entrance, I will admit that I felt incredibly intimidated. All of my Bulgarian seemed to desert me and I could find myself believing, quite easily, that this building was still home to the Military Police. I dreaded the blank faces and sneering looks I imagined awaited me inside.

But as I stepped through the sliding glass doors, I was met by my contact, and new friend, Mariana. She kissed my cheeks, and set about on a whirlwind of introductions. She took me to an archivist, and then step by step through the system of ordering, retrieving and returning, signing in and

out, and making copies. She set up a meeting for me at the Ethnographic museum and at the archives of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. She guided me along every step of the way with a warmth and kindness which I had done nothing personally to deserve.

Doing research in the archives could have been as lonely and cold as that first walk to the grocery store. But not even winter could hide for long the astonishing generosity of spirit that I have met with at every corner. I don't mean to suggest that everything has passed off without a hitch. Of course there are dead ends and frustrations in any research project. But when you are feeling like you've hit a brick wall, there always seems to be somebody there to help you make a joke of it, and- more usefully- help you think of a strange and unusual way around the regulations.

So winter was just a season, and not a sign. The ice soon melted and the trees burst into riotous bloom. Now Molly wears little sundresses and we are told that it is too hot, or too dirty or too windy to be out playing in the park. The grandmothers pull on Molly's little feet, and ask if she is walking yet. In the archives, an archivist that I met that first day now turns the radio to play American pop when she sees me come in the room. I think she thinks it makes me feel more at home. And I wonder if I should tell her that I felt at home that very first day when I stepped in from the cold.

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Out of America

Michael J. Zerbe, Ph.D.

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My family and I are thrilled to be spending five months in Bulgaria. We live in Blagoevgrad, about two hours south of Sofia, and I teach American Studies for the Faculty of Philology and Faculty of Arts at South-West University "Neofit Rilsky."

In this article, I would like to focus on an aspect of Bulgarian life that has caught our attention since our arrival in early February: the difference in energy use between America and Bulgaria. We admire Bulgarians' efficient and conscious use of energy as compared to that we observe in the United States. Specifically, in Bulgaria, we have noticed this difference in energy consumption in seven areas of Bulgarian culture: pedestrian areas and walking, the careful use of electricity, the smaller size and more conscientious use of appliances and vehicles, the conversion of Bulgarian vehicles to run on natural gas, the use of public transportation, the lack of large lighted signs, and the phonetically efficient Bulgarian language.

Bulgarians walk. My family and I love the huge pedestrian zone in downtown Blagoevgrad and in other Bulgarian towns. There are few towns in the United States that offer anything remotely similar. It's so nice in Blagoevgrad's pedestrian area to be able to let our 3-year-old son Alex run around without any cars to dodge. Later this spring and into the early summer, we will enjoy eating and drinking outside in the sun at the many cafes and restaurants—and to be able to do so without any traffic! Blagoevgrad's pedestrian zone is always busy, and the many people walking from place to place give the city a sense of vitality

We enjoy walking, as Bulgarians do, to corner markets, pharmacies, and cafés. I also walk to the university from our apartment in Blagoevgrad. Zoning laws in the United States, while perhaps well intended originally, force people to drive cars even for the simplest of errands. (A few cities like New York and San Francisco, which still have traditional neighborhoods, are exceptions.) Need a loaf of bread? Into the car. Nails to repair the fence? Into the car. A new pair of shoes?



Mike Zerbe in the Central Market in Sofia

Into the car

Walking is not only healthy, but by getting people out of their cars, it reduces energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Another way that Bulgarians conserve energy is with their conscientious use of electricity. Like most Bulgarians, when we want hot water, we have to turn on our hot water tank; we don't have hot water on demand at any time of the day as we do in the U.S. Like most Bulgarians, we do not have a dryer or a dishwasher as we do in the U.S. Also, the lights on the stairs coming up to our apartment in Blagoevgrad are on a timer. We turn them on upon entering the building on the ground floor, and then we've got about a minute to get up the fourth floor before they turn off. (If we don't make it, there are switches at each floor to turn them back on.) In the States, these lights would stay on all the time. Similarly, when we stayed at a hotel in Sofia a couple of weeks ago, we couldn't figure out how to turn on the lights in the room. We quickly discovered that we had to insert our card key into a slot just inside the door to turn on the electricity in the room. Because we had to take the key with us when we left the room to go sightseeing, there was no way that the lights or TV could stay on while we were gone. In America, it is too common for the lights and/or television to remain on when the hotel guests leave the room.

Just about every appliance and vehicle that uses energy uses less of it in Bulgaria than in the United States. Mostly this difference is due to the smaller size of appliances (e.g., refrigerators, stove/ovens, and washing machines) and vehicles in

Bulgaria. But a desire to consume less also plays a role. For example, in our apartment, we used small space heaters during the winter months. We have two of them, and we moved them around the apartment depending on where we were at any given time. In America, too many houses are kept fully heated all the time, whether people are in a particular room or not. Another example is the heat at the university. There wasn't much of it during the winter months! The careful rationing of heat forced me to think how much we and other Americans take for granted the warm buildings we work in during the winter and conversely, these same buildings that are quite cool in the summer because of air conditioning. Perhaps we could stand to experiment with keeping the thermostat at 67° F (19° C) during the winter and 77° F (25° C) during the summer instead of a year-round 72° F (22° C).

We have also noted that computers and copiers at the university are turned off at the end of the day. At many American places of employment, they would remain on, as do many lights.

Vehicles in Bulgaria have demonstrated to us a third area in which Bulgarians use energy efficiently and consciously. Shortly after our arrival, while speaking outside with a colleague at South-West University, I remarked on the small size of the gas (petrol) tank in his car. He responded that what I was referring to was not a petrol tank at all; it was a natural gas tank. I then discovered that many Bulgarians have adapted their cars to run on natural gas, which is a cleaner-burning fuel than gasoline.

Bulgaria has a public transportation network to be proud of, especially with regard to busses, and our experiences traveling to various points within the country have demonstrated that the public transportation system is used extensively. Except in large cities, public transportation in the United States is sorely lacking, again forcing people into their cars. For example, we live in the state of Pennsylvania and have the good fortune to be just a few minutes away from a train station. We have good train (and bus) access to large cities like Philadelphia and New York. But other large cities that are just as close, namely Baltimore and Washington, D.C., are not reachable by train unless one is prepared to take an enormously time-consuming detour. And our public transportation options are considered to be quite good by American standards. Bulgaria's excellent bus system enables people to go where they want to go, when they want to go, in a much more energy efficient manner than

is generally possible in the U.S.

My family and I have noticed that Bulgaria does not contain many large signs that are lighted at night. Signs like these are commonplace in the United States; many stores, fast food restaurants, hotels, and gas stations in the commercial "strips" that are a part of almost every American city and town have enormous signs that project many meters into the night sky and shine brightly all night long—14 hours or more during winter of sky-high, at time nearly blinding Golden Arches (McDonalds), Hampton Inn, and Exxon. In addition to consuming vast quantities of energy, the glare from these signs is a primary source of light pollution, which when combined with smog from vehicles and emission-producing factories, prevents stars from being visible. We enjoy being able to see the Big Dipper and other constellations regularly here in Blagoevgrad.

To be sure, many of these energy saving practices that I have mentioned are common in Bulgaria just as much for economic reasons they are for environmental reasons. But it's nice to see these practices just the same. They enable us to think about how the United States, the country that consumes the most energy in the world and thus has the planet's largest carbon footprint, could use energy more wisely.

I would like to discuss one final area of energy efficiency in Bulgaria: the phonetically logical Bulgarian language. What a pleasure it is to learn a language that is as phonetically friendly as Bulgarian is! If the letter is present in a Bulgarian word, for the most part, the sound of the letter is pronounced. Compare this straightforward approach to English, or French, both of which have a large number of silent letters. Now it may be somewhat of a stretch to link linguistic practices to energy efficiency, but I would argue that a Bulgarian needs to, on average, type fewer letters per word than an American would because of the absence of silent letters in the Bulgarian language. Fewer characters translates to less memory (energy) on the computer and less paper (energy) for printing.

Before closing, I would like to thank the Bulgarian-American Fulbright Commission for providing this wonderful, life-changing opportunity to me and my family. We would also like to thank Bulgarians for the countless random acts of kindness bestowed upon us. We have received help to buy food, find an apartment, get our laundry done, conduct business at the bank, find places, get our hair cut, enroll our son in kindergarten, and obtain Internet access. Our lives are all the richer for it.