



# Senior Network Action Committee U.S. PEACE CORPS - UKRAINE

News, Autumn 2010

## OUR ODESSA ODYSSEY

*Blog by Francine Cary, Group 36 - CD*

September 4-5, 2010... Photo montage below: The grand curtain of the Opera House dazzles... Jud admires a garden in the City Park... SNACers enjoy Odessa... A fantastic ornamental passageway... “Mother-in-Law Bridge” with wedding locks, overlooking a Black Sea port... Grand Opera House, inside and out... One of many beautiful fountains... The Odessa train station... An Orthodox church across from our hotel.

We senior volunteers had another great SNAC (Senior Network Action Committee) meeting in another great city: Odessa. This is a port city on the Black Sea built under orders from Catherine the Great of Russia in the 19th century. What a feast! A unique cosmopolitan mix of Russian, Ukrainian, and Mediterranean.

Our Hotel Tsentralny, as its name suggests, was well located across from a lovely park and the largest Russian Orthodox church in Odessa. The bells chimed the hour all day and night. The art and craft show was lovely, too.

The city has beautiful architecture, with heavy French and Italian influence. Buildings from the pre-Soviet era, many restored and rehabilitated, have lots of ornamentation, fantastic statuary, intricate wrought iron work, gargoyles and stone carvings. Many of these fantastic decorations, reminders of ancient artisan traditions and pride of craftsmanship, are around the high ledges above shops and boutiques. Our tour guide Anatoly showed us a stunning example as we took a shortcut between Deribasiva and Preobrazhenskaya streets on our walk toward the Black Sea and the Opera House.

Westrolled along tree-lined boulevards and promenades, past statues and fountains, through parks and gardens. We walked over the “mother-in-law” bridge, noted for the hundreds of locks of all sizes and styles left by newlyweds for good luck; past an impressive City Hall; a statue of Russian poet Alexander Pushkin; past the Potyomkinski Skhody, a grand stairway that leads down to the Sea; and on to the stunning Opera House and Ballet Theatre.

*continued on page 4*



# GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIRMEN



*from Frank Kersting,  
outgoing SNAC Chairman*



*from Jim Eleazer,  
incoming SNAC Chairman*

Friends and Fellow SNACers:

For those unable to attend the SNAC meeting in Odessa, it was a memorable and an appropriate celebration of Labor Day with new friends. There was a SNAC record set, with more than 25 folks attending. The hotel was nice, but not very accommodating for our meeting; an adjacent Cafe provided a suitable venue.

All that I can say about Odessa is, if you have not visited the city, it needs to be on your travel list.

With the orderly transition to Jim Eleazer, our new Chair, plans are underway for the late-fall meeting. Wishing Jim, the officers and all the crew fair sailing as SNAC provides a welcome haven for the over-50 volunteers.

Wishing everyone a rewarding Peace Corps experience in this enigmatic land.

In friendship, ☺ *Frank*



*They're not lyin'... the Odessa meeting was great!  
See everyone in Lviv soon!*

Hello Fellow SNAC'ers!

First of all I would like to start out by acknowledging all the great work done over the past year by Frank, Carol, Fran, and Barb T. The simple testimony to their great work lies in the record setting attendance (25+) at the Odessa meeting. Frank made a real effort to connect with groups 37 and 38, and it paid off. Morale and camaraderie were outstanding.

Odessa was a wonderful place to visit and 80-years-young Bernie from the city so nice they named it twice (NY, NY) was photographed with more brides than Donald Trump. My personal favorite was the Odessa Opera House, which is acknowledged as the second nicest Opera House in all of Europe, behind only the one in Vienna.

Our next meeting and city tour is scheduled for November 6th in Lviv. I plan to have a 'successes and failures forum' at the meeting as well as a presentation by "The Energy Efficient Cities of Ukraine" NGO. The spring meeting is already scheduled for Crimea and will educate us about the Tatar culture. I am really looking forward to what is sure to be a superior event.

We need peer mentors for the next groups of senior volunteers, so if you are interested please email me at [james.eleazer79@gmail.com](mailto:james.eleazer79@gmail.com). Even if you are not interested, email me anyway.

Yours in Senior Volunteerism,

Da' Chair, *Jim*

**Senior Network Action Committee (SNAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes: 4 September 2010 • Odessa**

**Attending:** Frank & Carol Kersting, TEFL-35; Jim Eleazer, CD-36; Patricia Combs, CD-36; Barbara Trecker CD-36; Fran Cary, CD-36; Terry Mattison, CD-38; Deborah Garofalo, CD-36; Ilse Whisner, CD-36; Ed Novick, CD-36; James Buell, CD-38; Lynae Slinden CD-38; Barbara Wieser, CD-37; Laurie Bestor, CD-38; Jud Dolphin, CD-36; Neva Kerus, CD-38; Megan O'Connor, CD-38; Cheryl Pratt, CD-38; Maggie Hankamp, CD-38; Vicki Lamb, CD-38; Suzanne Marcy, TEFL-35; Susan Lucey, CD-38; Bernard Cheriff, CD-38; Janet McLaughlin, CD-38. Guests: Molly Calvanese, TEFL-35, Region 7 Warden; Dr. Valery Gontarenko, PCMO.

**Chairman Frank Kersting called the meeting to order** about 11:00 a.m. at the cafe next to the Tsentraly Hotel in Odessa. He thanked Ilse Whisner for help with the site.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Bylaws reading, discussion, and final vote:

- 1) After discussion, with motion made and seconded, it was decided to use the term "Secretary" rather than communications coordinator. Sections III and IV.
- 2) Upon motion made and seconded, it was voted to approve a "simple majority" to make Bylaws changes. Section VI, Amending the Bylaws.
- 3) Consistency in use of language, such as the term 'Bylaws', duly noted. Frank will make corrections.
- 4) Friendly Amendment: After discussion and motion made and seconded, members agreed that we could bring guests to meetings; but guests would not be able to vote.
- 5) Later, upon motion made and seconded, and with further discussion, it was decided to delete a required meeting in Kiev. Section V, B2, under Meetings and Elections Committee, i.e. delete "with at least 1 meeting each year in Kiev." Upon motion made and seconded, the Bylaws were unanimously approved as revised.

Frank was thanked for his excellent work and dedication in leading and growing SNAC, as well as Carol, and presented with a token of appreciation from the members.

**NEW OFFICERS:**

The new chair, Jim Eleazer, took over. A first order of business was filling the Vice-chair position and Financial Officer. There was much discussion at various times during the meeting and the following unanimously elected: Terry Mattison, will serve as Vice Chair. Patricia Combs will serve as Financial Officer.

**COMMITTEES:**

- 1) **Membership and Newsletter:** Barbara Trecker and Fran Cary will continue to serve; Cheryl Pratt will join them. Suzanne Marcy will develop a SNAC membership list on Excel.
- 2) **Meetings and Elections Committee:** Much discussion on where and when to have next meeting, to determine who should chair and serve on this committee. Lviv in the fall and Crimea in spring were discussed. Ilse Whisner, U-36, agreed to chair this committee.
- 3) **21st Century Technology:** Peter McGuire (TEFL-35), Frank Kersting, Carl Whisner (CD-36) and Barbara Trecker are members of this committee to put technology to work in training. To date they have sent "We Wish We Had Known Then What We Know Now!" to Iryna Krupska to forward to the folks who have accepted PC-U bids. The recent Group 38-ers said they had not received this information. Discussion focused on 'closing this loop' with the PC training staff and including the Peer Advisory Committee to help disseminate this information; the latter may be key to information dissemination but it only reaches those who requested a Peer Advisor. Barbara Trecker has also put something together, at official volunteer website *pcukraine.org*, under technology. She said she is working with existing Technology committee.
- 4) **Tourism Committee:** 'in state of flux', Barbara Trecker reported, trying to assimilate with existing Tourism Working Group and information already on *pcukraine.org*. There is a form to fill out on tourism, to be helpful to PCVs traveling, sharing information about travels, places to stay, tours, helpful hints. Frank said that when any SNACers travel, it might be helpful to others if they complete the SNAC Tourism form to inform other volunteers traveling or thinking of traveling about lodging, etc.

**Dr. Valery reported briefly on new medical policy.** PCMO still doesn't have the list of medications that will require PCVs' signatures. We thanked him for bringing meds from Kiev!

Upon motion made and seconded, meeting adjourned. A two-hour tour of Odessa began at 1:30.

Respectfully submitted: Francine (Fran) Cary, CD-36 & SNAC secretary

# Odessa Odyssey

continued from page 1

Along the way we saw dozens of young couples, just married, dressed in their wedding finery, posing in front of the great statues, fountains and buildings. I've never seen so many beautiful wedding dresses, and high heels worn effortlessly by elegant young women. This is a great Ukrainian tradition, these wedding poses in front of notable buildings and monuments. We volunteers came from all over Ukraine, but we all know this tradition! Odessa was in full wedding swing on this perfect autumn weekend, sunny and bright under clear blue skies. We hoped all this tradition and good weather portended long and happy unions for all the happy couples.

We then did different things around the city, and there's plenty to do. The Jewish museum, archeological museum, and art gallery. Going to the beaches, where many seniors went swimming. Taking a boat ride or cruise along the Sea. For some of us, a highlight of our Odessa trip was a night at the Opera House and Ballet Theatre, one of greatest and most beautiful in the world, a French rococo and gold leaf delight. We all agreed that it ranked right up there with La Scala, the Vienna opera house and, Jud and I thought, the Budapest opera house. We enjoyed a delightful ballet, *Paquita*, a



cornerstone of the traditional classical ballet repertory, according to the program notes, accompanied by a wonderful full orchestra, and after the intermission, a colorful interpretation of *Faust*, with devils, witches and temptresses galore. It was lovely to be surrounded by such awesome beauty and classical music traditions, in the style of master dancers like Mikhail Baryshnikov, Anna Pavlova, Vasyl Njinsky, and Rudolph Nureyev.

A walk through the city at night, full of lights, music, and happy, friendly people, ended our SNAC-filled day. No matter our ages, sites, or experiences, Peace Corps Volunteers know how to have a good time, enjoy each other's company, and embrace the beauty that surrounds us. Odessa was another wonderful Ukrainian adventure!

Read more of Fran's Carey's blogs at  
<http://fran-ukrainian-adventure.blogspot.com>



HELLO  
to Fellow Volunteers  
and New Friends in  
Groups 39 & 40...



Welcome to Ukraine & Peace Corps!



Now plan on joining SNAC — a support and social group for the over-50 volunteer who seeks camaraderie, advice and opportunities to meet other 'seniors' in scenic Ukrainian venues.

We look forward to meeting you in the near future,  
during your tenure as volunteers!

## **S.N.A.C.** **Senior Network Action Committee**

**A Support Group for Peace Corps Volunteers  
over age 50, serving in Ukraine**

### **MISSION**

SNAC's Mission is two-fold:

The first mission is to fulfill its founding intent of a social venue for older volunteers by having meetings in different Ukrainian cities, as well as offering camaraderie and support.

The second mission is to support Peace Corps efforts both in Ukraine and in Washington by offering our expertise through various SNAC committees, as well as collaborating with other Peace Corps groups to enhance the volunteers' service experience and that of our host institutions and sites.

#### **Newsletter Editor:**

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**Photos:** Frank & Carol Kersting, Fran Cary, Barbara Trecker

*The activities and views expressed in this publication are the volunteers' own personal statements and do not reflect or represent any official position of the Peace Corps.*

**NEXT MEETING:**  
**November 6 in LVIV**  
**Mark your calendar ...**  
**& stay tuned for details**  
**from Chairman Jim!**





*Nymphs and nymphets.  
(Not SNACers, just in case  
you were waiting for names...)*



*The stunning ornate architecture and glass roof  
of the "Passage" shopping center ...  
it was practically MAGIC! (as per shop below)*

*The church across the street from our hotel,  
from which the bells tolled the hour. Every hour.  
(No wake-up calls needed here!)*



*Such interesting buildings!  
Everywhere we looked — another  
architectural feature and unique detail!*



**A VERY SPECIAL  
THANK YOU  
to our tour guide  
Anatoli**  
*who led us through the  
historic sights on a  
two-hour walking tour  
of historic sights and  
interesting sights  
of central Odessa.*

*Sometimes it was like  
herding cats  
(independent thinkers  
like PC volunteers  
are a good-natured but  
kinda' ornery bunch!)  
Anatoli bore it all with  
grace, good humor,  
and a sheaf of well-  
prepared information.*



*The Odessa Opera House, night and day... second only to the famed Vienna opera house. SNACers enjoyed opera one evening, and ballet another night...*

*All seats were grand, but the loge box seats were a real bargain for those accustomed to NY prices! Right, Debbie? (below)*

*It was enough to make one Dream of the Dance and Jump for Joy! An inspired Barbara hams it up, of course.*



*Russian language programs, no problem for Fran, Carol, Vicki & Jud?*



*Satchmo was right:  
it IS  
a wonderful  
world!*

*Right, Jud?*



*SNACers Pat, Debbie & Ilse need snacks to get them through a SNAC meeting of course!*

*Right: Sue ponders the menu; Suzanne and Neva have already ordered. (Smiling why? Hey, no borsch today!)*



*Which SNACer's legs are these?*

*Someone is taking advantage of the convenient changing cabinets on Odessa's Black Sea shoreline before a chilly swim. (Hint: she is accustomed to beach life, but on the Atlantic & Gulf side of the US, not the warmer Hawaii & California waters!)*



*Jud and Bernie ... with bookends.*

*(There's a story here, we're sure. Even if we have to make one up.)*

*Carol Kersting amongst the ruins at the catacombs, showing real Peace Corps 'can-do' attitude as she takes the stairs at a run?!? (Another hint re: above ... those are not her legs.)*



*More SNACs snacking... Maggie and Suzanne enjoy ice cream and a concert in the park. (PS: No! Stop that thought right now... That guy is NOT doing what it might look like he is doing to the fountain. It is a perfectly pleasant day and everyone is behaving themselves. See the dancers?)*