

THE JOURNAL

The Friendship Force of EDMONTON AND AREA to

FF BERLIN/BRANDENBURG, GERMANY AND FF KARISYAKA BAY, ISMIR, TURKEY

OCTOBER 2008

Tues. Sept. 30/08 – Marjorie Eckert

After a very long day, (*WHEN WE LEFT HOME IT WAS THE 29TH NOW IT IS THE 30TH*) it was so nice to see the signs held up by our hosts welcoming us! After a light dinner of wieners and potato salad we retired to our loft – 2 flights up. It is cold and rainy. We warmed the room with the radiator and slept well under down duvets. Big square feather pillows but no top sheet.

Our hosts, Rudy & Gisela, have been in Friendship Force since it started in 1977. They were on the second trip to Atlanta when the exchange took 250 people on a plane to Atlanta and the US sent 250 people to Georgia to be hosted at the same time. It was a very different type of an exchange in the beginning years. Our hostess was one of the greeters at the Wall when it was opened to the East.

Wed. Oct. 1. - Marjorie Eckert

Our hosts live in the very south part of Berlin. We took the S Ban Train to the main station to meet the group. There are 16 tracks leaving Main station. Raining quite hard today – almost got blown away.

On our sight seeing tour we saw the Historical City Centre, Spree River crosses Berlin, E/W Border crossing. (Palace of Tears is where families visiting across the wall had to say goodbye,) The Brandenburg Gate, TV tower (has revolving restaurant and viewing). In an open courtyard there is a window in the road looking down at the underground library where there is only one book left after the Nazi book burning. Former Jewish community: 3 universities: Humbolt, Free & Technical. Blvd under lime trees, new synagogue, flea market (sells home and garden items not food); Berlin Wall Documentation Centre. Parts of wall left after wall-peckers scrounged souvenirs; Alexander Square, Twin Tower Church – 13 Century. Wall bricks are laid in double row for remembrance; Check Point Charlie (story of wall on what is left of the wall). Lunch at Olympic Stadium: 9Euro + drinks. Nice buffet. Lunch time is for the main meal of the day.

Tour of **Olympic Stadium**: Originally built for 1936 Olympics and reconstructed in 2004. Original pool still used. We had very knowledgeable guides, one in English and one in German. Amazing history! There is a pillar outside for each Olympics. Calgary's is there. Stadium is multipurpose now, mainly for soccer. Raining so hard we could hardly see across the stadium. Acoustics were very good! Fan Club Store even had baby soothers and dog dishes!

We went home by train – the S Ban. We stopped near home to shop at a discount market for food. For supper we are having soup.

Thurs. Oct. 2 – Doug and Isabelle Southam

Our hosts drove us to the train station where we parked in underground parking. It takes us 50 min. to go through heavy morning traffic. It was just a short walk across the street to the loading place under the Maltke Bridge. This bridge survived the war but its ornate façade has been re-done, only in recent years by Polish workers. Our boat for the one hour **Spree River tour** was the Schoenberg. We had English receivers (head phones) which were much appreciated.

Our tour took us through both former East and West sides of this formerly divided city. We admired the large green areas and abundant trees. This is a lively area with many tourist boats and water “taksi’s”!! And there are lots of restaurants and entertainment areas along the river.

Many of the buildings had to be rebuilt after the war but care was taken to retain the portions of the former buildings. The halfway point of our tour was in front of the loch system. While buildings were being restored small sections of the old walls riddled with bullets were left as a reminder.

The sun shone at times but a bit chilly for those brave enough to go up to the top of the Parliament Buildings. At 11:45 we were met at the **Parliament Buildings Reichstag** by our knowledgeable guide, Claudia Trantow. She first described the 3 stages of the Reichstag which was overseen by 3 architects – Paul Wollot, Paul Baumgarten & Norman Foster. Each level is a different color. In some of the renovations a portion of the old wall was left exposed. The theme is openness and light. The exterior of the building is very 1880s but the interior is modern and state of the art.

The plenary section is visible through glass partitions and has a large visitor’s gallery. The Bundestay eagle is prominent in front of the glass wall. There are 614 seats.

Of interest- the **underground tunnel** with a portion of the old tunnel displayed graffiti left by the Soviet soldiers; the small multi-faith chapel; archives of German members of parliament consisting of 5000 metal boxes with names of members from 1919 – 1999 including one black box for 1933 – 1945 when there were not democratic elections; a brail model of the parliament buildings; voting doors marked “Ja, Nein, and Abstention”- probably used only once or twice a year.

Of interest also is that the members rotate – one week in Parliament, one week in the constituency, etc. A fine is paid if not in attendance at parliamentary sessions – what a good idea!

Our visit concluded with a visit to a huge glass cupola on the roof – a bird’s eye view of the city. After the tour we walked by the **Brandenburg Gate**, through the **memorial to the murdered Jews** of Europe and on to the **Potsdamer Platz**, a very modern high-rise shopping mall, just beside the Sony building.

Some of us indulged in some decadent ice cream at the plaza, - a perfect end of a busy day of sightseeing.

Friday, Oct. 3 – Isabelle and Doug Southam A National Holiday & free time.

This is the day of German Unity to celebrate the restoration of **German Reunification**. This is a federal holiday so most businesses close and children are out of school.

Our group spent the day doing many things. Our hosts took us to Dampflok fest which was a festival of railway steam engines. It was held on the grounds of an old roundhouse.

Joining us were Ron and Barbara and their hosts. Together we took the I Bon to the Templehof Airport – famous for airlifts during the period Germany was a divided city. It will be closed shortly because of proximity of residential property.

Berlin's public transportation system is extremely convenient. There is even helpful (live) information with the push of a button – ask Ron about that!

In the evening we enjoyed a potluck barbeque with Ron and Barbara & hosts Sabine and Detlif, Jim and Pat & hosts Heike and Lothar and our hosts Sabine and Wolfgang.

Sat. Oct. 4 – Barbara Ashmore

Our hosts live in the former East Germany, so the time to travel to meeting points in the city is a little longer.

Today we had a tour of the internationally famous **Berlin Zoo**. Our English speaking guide placed emphasis on the architecture of the animal houses. The giraffe house is an ornate Arabic style structure complete with frescos. The giraffes look quite royal in their grand surroundings. We saw the more functional animal houses of the 60's and the more modern enclosures that now have moats and trenches as a barrier instead of the traditional iron bars? Our tour guide posed an interesting question -- - was the switch to moats / trenches from bars for the comfort of the animals or their human captors? After the tour we continued our visit to the zoo with our hosts – Bine & Detlif and Doug, Isabelle, Sabine and Wolfgang.

A definite highlight was seeing **Knut** “the teenage ice bear” (polar bear to us). The visit to the nocturnal exhibit was very interesting? A question that came to mind is “are these creatures in perpetual night or do they experience their daytime at night when there are no tourists?” I almost forgot to mention the wonderful sight of seeing children and adults alike laughing with glee at seeing the giant hippos - Their enormous mouths gaping open, as their keepers threw food to them. We had snacks at the food kiosks and then walked over to KaDeWe – a very high end department store. Ron and Detlif explored the international food floor. It was like the old Woodward's food area but on a much grander scale. Martini Bars, caviar at 830 EU per tin, fresh seafood, a bakery and chocolate from around the world. Ironically, the maple syrup from Canada was cheaper here than at home.

Ron purchased a Moosehead beer for Detlif's beer bottle collection and, feeling nostalgic, some Canadian cheddar. Bine and I wandered through the ladies clothing and accessories. I tried on boots, we tried on some very fashionable hats and both of us admired the wonderful styles.

There was also a fabric department that contained many luxurious textiles. We then wandered through the hobby dept. Doug, Isabelle, Sabine and Wolfgang were in the restaurant enjoying *Koffee and Kuchen*. From there we made our way to the Senior Centre where we had our **Mid-term party**. This social room is booked Saturdays throughout the year by the FF of Berlin-Brandenburg for their various functions. The room was decorated in a festive fall theme and we were presented with a wonderful feast. Of special mention were the dishes of raw pork (best served with finely dried onion and the crackling that I have not had since my childhood). We had a wonderful French chardonnay with our meal, a steal at 3 EUs a bottle.

Today we got to be “the entertainment”. I think we can be quite proud of our efforts and we were successful in engaging our hosts in the Canadian tradition of *square dancing*!

Sunday, Oct. 5 – Ron Ashmore

A free day – Thanksgiving Day.

We woke up to hearing the local church bells and woodpeckers. At 10 a.m. Isabelle, Doug and their hosts joined us for a 90 minute drive to the country village of Spreewald. We went on a 2 hour boat ride through the canals and streams of the river Spree. The boat reminded me of a gondola as it was poled by the guide and held 20 people. Midway, we stopped for lunch of bread and sausages. When we arrived back at our departure point we were greeted by a men’s choir. The village market was visited where there were several stalls and shops as well as a brass band.

We then drove to the home of Detlif’s mother and her boyfriend which is an old farmhouse. The house was built in 1850 and has been renovated completely by them and their family. When asked what the population of the village was Detlif’s mother counted each person and informed us the population was 40. The house was chosen to be the front cover of the local 2008 calendar which was distributed to each home in the area (about 10,000 people). On the drive back, we drove on the Autobahn where some areas had no speed limit. We were very pleased that our drive (Sabine) still drove at 100Kms/hr. We had a wonderful Greek dinner when we got back to Wildav.

PS 1: Grilled cheese sandwiches are not popular in Germany. I made one with cheddar cheese and tomato in the morning and ate most of it for breakfast myself.

PS2: We saw many people picking mushrooms in the forest on the drive to Spreewald in the morning and ate some dried mushrooms at the farm that Jim and Pat had picked on Friday.

Monday, Oct. 6 – Jessie Parker

Our last day in Berlin began with rain on our way to **Potsdam**, just outside Berlin and the capital of Brandenburg. We left the car in a grocery store parking lot and bought a 5 person day ticket for the U Ban and S Ban. It was an interesting ride to airport through pines and former small villages.

With our own bus and a tour guide, we had a 3 hour tour through the city, formerly the summer home of the Kaisers. The palaces are closed on Mondays but we walked in the terraced grounds and saw the grave of Fredrick the Great. Potsdam was formerly in East Germany and we were shown many

examples of communist buildings, destruction of churches, buildings that had been magnificent but were used as KGB/Stasi HQ. The bridge on which prisoners were exchanged with the west is a poignant reminder.

Walked in renovated Dutch quarter and stopped for a cup of rich and (expensive) chocolate at the **Chocolate Cafe**. It was chocolate bar melted into our cups! Some of us had fish soup instead. Back in Berlin via the S Ban, we walked in an **old Jewish quarter**. A plaque shows where a lovely synagogue used to be. An hour's stroll down Unterden Linden brought us to the Brandenburg Gate and around the corner to the restaurant where we met the rest of the group for an evening meal with the FF from Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. However, that group was over an hour late and the rest of us were becoming very impatient as we have to get up around 5 a.m. for our early flight. Finally the Rio group arrived. After our soup course, the entre took forever (curry-worst or chicken kebab) so we and our hosts left with our desert as it was an hours ride home. There, we had ice cream, packed up, set the alarm for 4:52 a.m. and went to bed. Deiter and Christa are wonderful hosts!

Tuesday, Oct. 7 – Frank Parker

Flight to Istanbul

It was an early morning. Cool and damp. Rudy (Eckert's host) came and drove us and the Eckerts for our ride to the airport – traffic moved well so we arrived a bit early. Once everyone had gathered at the Berlin airport we had to wait until 8:10 for check-in. Check-in was a problem because the computers all had to be redone to accept our tickets. The flight to Munich was fast and smooth. It was above the clouds so not much land detail was available. Glimpses as we went showed that the farm harvest was underway. Crops were being cut and combined. As we approached Munich it also became much greener.

The change of planes went well. We were soon on our way to Istanbul. Again, it was overcast with fairly thick clouds below the plane to limit the views of the landscape. The ride was fairly smooth. A tasty meal was served about half the way along, chicken, carrots, peas and rice. It was bright and sunny on the approach to the Istanbul airport. Our side of the plane had a great view of the Bosphorous with a huge city on both sides and dozens of ships at anchor in the harbor. The ships were all waiting for a turn to travel through the passage into the Black Sea.

Our guide was waiting as we came out of the airport customs. Once gathered and loaded we were treated to a scenic 20 minute ride to our hotel, the Golden Horn. It was an attractive place with rushing helpful fellows to move our luggage. After a rest and cleanup we headed to the commercial street for sightseeing, food and water.

The street was ablaze with lights, busy with people and full of noise and activity. Our chosen restaurant was recommended by two ladies from Vancouver. The food was tasty and filling. On our return we enjoyed all the window shopping and activity of the street. Then with a large jug of water in hand we walked back to the quiet area of our hotel. A good day was had by all.

Wed. Oct. 8 – Roy and Katherine Harper

We awoke bright and early (mostly early) to the *Islamic call to prayer*. We had a super meal from the penthouse of our 5 story hotel. From our breakfast table we had a first class view of the Sultan Ahmet (the famous blue mosque) and by turning our heads 30 degrees to the left the Ahy Sophia – another beautiful mosque about one block north of the Blue Mosque.

We started the walking tour at 9:30 a.m. Saw many monuments – one 3500 years old (**Obelisk Theodosius**) stood over the buried hippodrome – buried by erosion. 30,000 people died in a sports riot in 523 AD and most of the city was burned (after a chariot race).

Next we walked to the **Blue Mosque**. The mosque took 7 years to build fro 1609 – 1616 AD. It was built by Sultan Ahmet – the only mosque with 6 minarets. Over 2 minarets, etc. means it was built by royalty. We had a full explanation of Muslim faith and prayer. Next we walked to **Hagia Sophia** – first used as a church in AD 537. The dome was the largest unsupported structure in the world until the 15th century. In 1453 the structure was changed to a mosque for 900 years. At the present time the building is under renovation. We then walked to the **Topkapi Palace** – completed in 1478. After a very good lunch we were able to tour (on our own) some of the palace areas – kitchens which catered to 5000 daily, Chinese porcelain, costumes, arms, treasury, jewels, art (Sultan photos). We then walked along a street with apples on the trees to the **Balasia Cistern**. It is huge – 336 columns each 9 meters high. The cistern holds 100,000 tons of water, has fish in to keep the water fresh. The columns came from many areas of Turkey – as it was built in one year. Two pillars had Medusas head carved on them at the bottom. In 1876 – 1909 it underwent restoration. Reconstruction took place again in 1955 – 60. It took 50,000 tons of mud to make the walking platforms in the cistern. We returned to street level, said goodbye to Mecit – made plans to meet at 9 a.m. tomorrow. Walked home to rest – evening free.

In the evening we had a very pleasant stroll down Divan Yolu to a fast food restaurant and shopping. Looked a lot but bought very little. We went to bed early after a brief play with our email. Most of our group ate at the same place.

Thurs. Oct. 9 – Roy and Kay again

After another sumptuous breakfast at 9 a.m., we walked down the hall to our bus and after we traveled about one hour on a road by the Sea to **Kariye museum**, a former mosque. It was very crowded. The frescos told the story of Jesus – his life from birth, and the Virgin Mary. Then – we had a long bus ride through very plugged streets to the **Grande Bazaar**. Mecit explained in detail how not to get lost. The bazaar was 4000 stalls and sells almost everything. We could shop and change money at a good rate. Two hours were spent there and flew by very quickly. Many of us parted with a few liras and a good time was had by all. Another bus ride took us to a restaurant for lunch. Salad, pastry, a main course-egg plant and a beef stew – with sweet honey cakes for dessert. Once again we rode the bus – and Mecit walked us about 2 blocks to our hotel. Some of our group attended the **Whirling Dervishes** in the evening at the train station of the Orient Express. Tomorrow we meet at 9 a.m.

Although I could not hear the guide's description, this is my description of what we had seen at the **Kariye Museum**. It was built by the Romans in the 6th Century AD. They developed the Byzantine Culture. It was initially decorated (and is a fine example of) frescos that depicted many of the significant events in the life of Jesus Christ, his family and his teachings. When Islamic peoples conquered the site, they covered the frescos and defaced the artworks, especially the human faces. More recently attempts to restore the frescos have been made. It is presently an excellent museum for the preservation of its artistic description of development of the Christian church.

Friday, Oct. 10 – Helmut Nikolai

We woke up to a light rain this morning. And after another tasty breakfast we met Mecit for another interesting and exciting day in Istanbul (both on the European side and the Asian side of Istanbul).

By 9:30, after a short drive, we found ourselves at the most opulent and extravagant palace so far on our trip. **Dolmabace Palace** was built between 1843 -1856 under the order of the empire's 31st Sultan (Sultan Abdulmecid) in a basically western style blended with Ottoman traditional art and design. It is the biggest palace in Turkey with 285 rooms, 44 halls, and 68 toilets in this massive and extravagant display of excessive wealth and power. The palace was home to 6 sultans beginning in 1856 and the summer home to Mustafa Kemal **Ataturk**, the founder of modern Turkey who died here in 1938.

By 11:30 we found ourselves back on the banks of the **Bosphorus** where we boarded a tour boat for a 1 ½ hr cruise from the Marmara to the Black Sea. The trip spanned 32 kilometers and we witnessed the historical strategic importance of this very important stretch of waterway that has always been the gateway to Europe, Asia and the Middle East. There were signs of the early Byzantine - Christian period, the crusades, the capture of Istantinople by the Muslims in 1453 and signs of modern military significant from WW1 to the present period. Overall the cruise was enjoyed by all.

By 12:45 we were moored on the European side of the Bosphorus at the mouth of the Black Sea. This was our 2 hour restaurant spot. The Gulistan was an obviously favorite fish restaurant with a large number of tour busses parked in front. The large windows looked out to a display of many fishing boats that spread their nets out for a plentiful catch and we watched a continual line of ocean tankers and container -ships as they passed by from the Black Sea on their way to the Sea of Marmara. The meal was a 2 hour experience in gastronomic delight with an appetizer including couscous, tziki, anchovies and feta with spinach. Barbequed mackerel was the main course followed by a large slice of watermelon for dessert.

At 4 o'clock we found ourselves in Asia after the 9th largest suspension bridge in the world and shortly found ourselves on the summit of Camlica Hill; one of the 7 hills that Istanbul is built on. From here we had a magnificent view of the European side of the city and the vast expanse of the Bosphorus with clear evidence of its importance as a major commercial and transportation hub.

On our way back to Europe Jim thanked our bus driver for his skill in ensuring that we all managed to survive unscathed in the hectic traffic of the city of 15 million. We were also assured that Mecit would meet us for the last leg of our trip after our home stay in Izmir. We were delighted!!

From 5 – 6 o'clock we stopped at the "New Mosque" and spent an hour in the **Spice Market**. We were witness to an amazing display of colors, odors, and an assortment of every kind of spice, herb, plant and nut imaginable, carefully stacked in stalls along narrow, crowded streets. The item that caught our eye, however, was the "**Turkish Viagra**" that assured the users would 'get up to 5 or 6 times a night'. We noticed that Carl displayed a keen interest as well as a fair bit of time on this item. We are not certain whether there was a transaction or not, but when asked how the sale had gone, Carl had a big smile on his face????! In any case we now know why Columbus was so eager to reach the Orient (for spices) back in 1492.

Sat. Oct. 11 – Enid Nikolai

Flight to Izmir and FF Karsiyaka Bay

"Gulegule Istanbul!" That is 'goodbye' and we were all a little sad to leave Istanbul but we all noted that Carl had a smile on his face. We left the hotel at 8:30 and walked to the bus following Omar. We walked along a different road to meet the bus at the location where the Hippodrome had been. We reached the airport about 9:30 and went through security at the front door and again after we got our boarding passes. Omar made the process easy for us as he had all our boarding passes in one bundle.

The flight was only 40 minutes and we arrived in the "friendliest" atmosphere we could imagine. The Friendship Force of Izmir whisked us off to a "Welcome lunch" with food prepared from their homes. We took a ferry as did the Harpers into the other side of the Bay. Most of the rest of the group were on the same side of the Bay as the party, Karsiyaka Bay, and drove to their host's home to become acquainted with their "Host family". Many of the group were staying with and rekindling the friendships they began in Edmonton. We are excited about the prospect of a wonderful week in Izmir.

Sunday, Oct. 12 – Barbara Harvey

After a wonderful welcome by the Karsiyaka Bay FF and our lovely host Armagan Tutum we had a good night in Armagan's large home. At the gate are 2 guard dogs (German shepherds) they are tied up each time we enter and leave the house as they like to jump on strangers. Breakfast was huge as are all meals, Gevrek (bread), Turkish cheeses, scrambled eggs, and fruit. We attended a 40th anniversary school reunion with our host. Saw members of both FF groups mingling with the graduates. Lunch was a bbq with fresh salads and desserts, lots of chocolate and ice cream. It was interesting to see friends smiling and hugging as they reunited, no alcohol needed for such a joyful celebration. There were many performances on stage, some famous, others very talented former students. This concert was in a natural amphitheatre, surrounded by mature trees. On our way to Armagan's **summer home in Cesme (cheshmee)**, we had Turkish coffee at a sea side café. The seaside is beautiful along the coast of the Aegean Sea. We traveled through an area of mountains much like our foothills only barren and rocky. Arriving at a small village near Cesme we had a gathering of FF at a "fish restaurant" where we were served yet another meal and much visiting with all our ambassadors who we missed in our few hours of separation. We ate "Ripro" which means 'fish from the bottom of the sea'. Our host is lots of fun and has taught us to read messages from the bottom of our Turkish coffee cup. -Lots of laughter at the Ildiri Balicis Restaurant as we left for our overnight stay in Cesme.

Monday, Oct. 13 – Muriel

Once again, in Turkey, we woke up to fresh air and sunshine. We were venturing forth on a day of exploring the **Aegean Seaside**. Our hostess Armagon, and the 2 of us, were invited out for breakfast in a lovely home overlooking the Sea. We were treated to another meal which included exotic Turkish cheeses, sausage in tomato sauce, fried eggs sprinkled with cheese, fresh breads and an excellent cinnamon bun covered with sesame seeds (Karaburnum). There were, also, fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, olives which our hostess preserved, and jams with whole fruits in them – also prepared by our hostess. During the breakfast we were served tea which is very strong and made in a small pot. To it is added boiling water, when an approximate third of a cup is filled with strong tea. When we sat and visited after the meal Turkish coffee was prepared for those of us who wished to have it. We were served fresh pomegranate for dessert. Everyone left in a timely fashion leaving our host and hostess enough time to close up their summer home in Cesme again. Meantime, our hostess took us back to her summer home in Cesme so Barbara H could change into her bathing suit for her lengthy, healthy, invigorating swim in the Aegean. Armagon and I walked in the waves as they splashed up on the beach. That too, was very invigorating. We walked back to Armagon's lovely summer home where we washed the sand from our feet, Barbara changed, Armagon shut off electricity and water and we left for further adventures, visiting a windsurfing centre, saw new houses being built in the old Venetian style – near the water with boats moored by the front door. We toured an old stone village with an ancient windmill capping this sightseeing venture with coffee in a quaint village restaurant. We also enjoyed a walk through the Golden Dolphin Hotel and grounds. It was truly a spectacular day with the Aegean in sight for the majority of the day – Oh! We had the opportunity to savor a delicious "kumru" a toasted Turkish sandwich with cheese, tomato and sucuks meat. Our new drink was Ayran a yogurt concoction which tasted like buttermilk. We returned home tired but exhilarated and were served a special Turkish Paella, egg plant and meat sauce and bean salad by our very generous hostess.

Tues. Oct. 14 – Marion

Canada's Election Day

Away on bus from Izmir to **Ephesus**, through rich agricultural land, cotton growing – figs – olives and maize. Statue of Virgin Mary above Ephesus where she spent her last years?? Then to her house and holy water. Saw ruins of **Ephesus** *. Had lunch. **Carpet factory** – wool/wool, wool/silk and all silk – a few purchases made. Next stop was the leather factory. (Marj and Jim modeled.) – a few purchases made again. Went back to Izmir after warm sunny day. Shopped at quaint street stalls. Beautiful embroidery at Sirince Village – Anne had figs. Arrived home around 8 p.m. very tired, supper with family.

***Ephesus:** Once a commercial centre of the ancient world – its wealth and patronage supported famous architectural program which was dedicated to the goddess Artemis. Her temple once considered one of the 7 wonders of the ancient world and was rebuilt several times – latest form dates from 3rd century BC. Ruins include theatre, gymnasium, agora, baths, and litany of Celsus.

Wed. Oct. 15 – Anne

11 a.m. – attended local **Karsiyaka’s Farmers Market** held one day a week – very interesting and crowded with local people buying clothes, all kinds of ware – the grocery part was very different with all kinds of vegetables, fruits, olives, cheeses from A to Z. Visited the **Izmir Ataturk Museum** where young man Mastafa Ataturk brought many changes to Turkey. He was called the perfectionist, after War of Independence he declared Youth Sports National Holiday, youth could enjoy all kinds of sports from different parts of the country, also declared the Children’s International Holiday where families host children from different countries, women had equal rights. Turkish people regard him as a perfect leader. Visited **Museum of History and Art** where Archaic Period, Roman and Classical Arts were displayed. Section of precious works and jewelry plus the glass works – Art Gallery which is quite new – as artists were not allowed to visit when Muslims were in power. Later artists traveled to Paris, studied art and painted. There was interesting pottery display which our pottery looks much alike or similar.

Thurs. Oct 16 – Lil

Good morning. Gunidin! I am staying with Kamile Olcer in a flat on the 17th floor in a condo building at Edge Park. This was the pickup place for the bus. Breakfast now at 8:30 then leave by bus 9:15 to meet group at Bostalni Ferry building to go to **Konah Pier**. Saw ships and had coffee. Then walked to Kizlaragasi (which means Chief of Maidens) ancient bazaar built in 1741. Walked in **Keneralti**, which is Turkey’s largest & Izmir’s most colorful **bazaar**. We ate in outdoor restaurant – donairs. It is sliced beef on a plate with stuff underneath. For dessert we had Sanbali. We walked to the **clock tower** – Izmir’s symbol - (situated in a large city square) the tower was built in 1901 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the crowning of Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamit II. Also there was a small mosque on the square. People were washing at the fountains – hands, arms, face, legs feet and neck before entering the mosque. This evening we went to the home of Jessie and Frank’s hosts – Hasan & Mubecel Sarsar for dinner. Approximately 16 people sat down to buffet dinner of lamb stuffed with rice called sura. Many dishes: stuffed egg plant, various salads and desserts. At the bazaar many shopped for pashminas and jewelry. Kamile and I walked home from the dinner as it was near our building and it was a wonderful evening. The Sarsar’s flat is beautiful with the seaside view.

Friday, Oct. 17 – Rose Marie Limberger A Free Day

Nemet and I went over to Kamile Olcer’s for breakfast (Lil’s host), then over to Irap’s – Irene’s hosts mountain home, her mother came also and there were 7 of us. To the ferry from Bostanni to Bckuyunar (same as going to Cesme), then on the highway and left up the mountain. To the east is Godence and Bademler is to the west. The sight of development is called Yakinca – 27 houses and only 3 yrs old. Tonight is the **Farewell Party** with a sit down dinner of many courses and music. We were all up dancing (including all the men dancing with the belly dancer). Poor Helmut! We did our square dancing and then tried to get everyone up square dancing. A birthday cake was brought in for Pat’s Birthday. It was a fun evening after a good week with new friends.



Sat. Oct 18 – Theresa Sarnecki

Izmir to Pamukkale

With many hugs and kisses (some tears) we said our goodbyes to our wonderful hosts. We left Edge Park right on time. We are really impressed at how many types of farming in this country. ie: wheat & grains, trees, many different types of fruits, vegetables, spices and nuts. Mecit could speak for long periods about agriculture. One could see castles on the tops of many high hills. The bus ascended the Marsias Pass into the Marsias Plateau. Had lunch in the town of Anatolia. The ladies were impressed with the “**washing hands**” facility. After lunch we went to **Aphrodisias**. The ruins were outstanding. Saw the coliseum where the Romans had their chariot races and eventually gladiators and lions to kill Christians. A large building that had been a Roman temple became a Bishop’s church and home. In the 12th or 13th century it became a Mosque. It was very warm in the sun when we walked. As we continued our journey we saw a small town with a mosque for every 3 or 4 houses. There were many minarets. Apparently churches were built on farms as a means to beat taxes. As we rode along the road became much rockier. Mining for marble is important as Turkey contains 1/3 of the marble in the world. We arrived at **Richmond Thermal Hotel** in Pamukkale after nearly 11 hours of traveling. After supper many used the large thermal pool in the hotel. -A nice way to finish a long and interesting day.

Sunday, Oct. 19 – Clare Scott

We left at 7 a.m. for the 12 hour drive to **Cappadocia**. Denizli had many textile factories and there were many more along the highway. We also saw many spots in route where marble was cut down into the hills. This marble was white and closer to Cappadocia it was brown and beige (tavestine marble). Turkey possesses 1/3 of the world’s marble. There were small farm plots. As families enlarge the same plot is divided repeatedly. After WWI and Turkish Independence most Christians left Turkey – the Greeks returned to their homeland. In Konya we passed an air force base where the Israeli forces come to train. **St. Nicholas** was born in Konya. We visited the **Meirlana Museum** where the whirling dervishes’ way of the Muslim faith began. It is a way of prayer, started by Nevlana, in 1207 AD. Boys enter in their teens and stay as long as they wish. Next stop was **Sultanhani Caravanserai** built in 1229 on the Old Silk Road to the Orient. Traders stopped here to trade and rest their camels. Textiles are Turkey’s main export product, and next are automobiles. At Akasanay we passed a very large Mercedes Benz truck plant.

Turkish people are more religious as you travel inland. The difference between the Muslim faith and the Christian faith is that Jesus is not God to Muslims and Jesus was never crucified. They believe that Jesus will return as the Messiah.

They harvest 2 crops of wheat. One is planted in October and harvested in June. Crops of wheat, sugar beets, cabbage, corn, potatoes and tobacco, marijuana for medical purposes, trees of apricots, cherries, peaches, olives, oranges, nectarines, and tangerines were seen. On our way to see the Whirling Dervishes we passed the spectacular rock caves where people once lived. The extreme temperature changes and the soluble stone is slowly breaking down these huge formations which were formed from the erosion process of the volcanic ash from 6 – 7 million years ago.

Many Turkish women make rugs during the cold winter nights around Cappadocia. The whirling dervishes repeatedly turn and turn with their arms half raised and through deep prayers they remain balanced. Our hotel in Cappadocia was really a fairytale appearing structure which strongly resembled the areas Fairy Chimneys. Here nature has made its own work of art. We saw places for churches inside the rocky pyramids and later places for early Christians to hide. These fairy chimneys date back millions of years. Volcanic eruptions of two active volcanos formed layers of tufa on land – a stone which is the color of our hotel, beige.

Comments on the Hot Air Balloon Ride (5a.m.) Sunrise & Champagne!

Lil – “Fantastic to float through the air with unbelievable scenery below formed by volcanoes.”

Marjorie – “The 28 meter multicolored balloon with a 20 passenger basket was professionally maneuvered around the Fairy Chimneys. A fantastic view! 14 from our group went up, up and away.”

Rose Marie – “Fantastic experience floating like a bird with lovely scenery below!”

Roy – “My first hot air balloon ride. I took a way too many photos. Scenery I have never seen before in a place with very long history. It was one of the items on my bucket list.”

Barbara Harvey – “Fabulous! “

Muriel – “Amazing!”

Anne – “First balloon ride was awesome. I can’t describe the view. I am hooked on having another balloon ride. I was carried off the balloon by a man.”

Maid Marion – “Wonder can’t describe what I saw. You have to participate in their excursion to appreciate our life today. **I never thought I’d be carried off in the arms of a young handsome Turk!**”

Pat – “An experience of a lifetime - It was like looking at the moon”

Doug – “Great view of a fantastic landscape. It’s a wonderful feeling - floating through the air.”

Jim - “A landscape that reminded us of pictures of the Moon Wold!”

Herb – “Great, fantastic, breathtaking!”

Kay – “I went under stress, but I loved it! The landing on the tractor was thrilling!”

Ron – You have to see it from the air. It is like the Grand Canyon.!!

Barbara A. – The total silence when floating over the Fairy Chimneys was surreal!!



Monday, Oct. 20 – Irene Moir

After a delicious breakfast we started by bus to see the Goreme Valley outdoor museum. This was from the 11th Century. Each farmer built a temple, some were used, some not. This was to defray the taxes, Church property was tax free. We carried on to a carpet store **Cappadocia Carpet Land** where several members bought carpets. They explained how they teach the women to make the carpets. They supply the materials and the women work at home. We headed off for lunch and when we arrived our guide realized he was a day early. We are having lunch there tomorrow. So he directed the driver to Hanadan restaurant where we enjoyed another Turkish lunch. We next went to see more of the **Fairy Chimneys** as our guide explained more about the erosion and earthquakes. We went on to the Pasahagi Valley and the hidden valley with all the different types of rock formations, stopped at several small outdoor markets and also for some photo shots like the Stone Elephant and the Three Sisters. -More shopping for small souvenirs and back to the hotel. Tonight some of the group are going out to a **Turkish Night Show**. The word is that Frank is really getting good at dancing with the belly dancer.

Tues. Oct. 21 – Carl Eckert

Herb and Kay did their balloon ride this morning. Their smiles are permanent! After breakfast we went by bus at 10 a.m. to **Kimukle Underground City**. On the way we saw an abandoned Greek City and man made hills which was the dirt taken from the underground city. 20,000 people used the underground city in emergency for survival because each group crossing the country had to go through this area and they would either take the men as slaves or soldiers. So they hid when armies were going past. They had 150 meter well shafts which also worked as ventilation systems. Fresh air was important. 14 of our group took the 1 ½ hour tour underground. We went down 5 levels of the 8 levels. There was electrical lighting on the path only. Flashlights helped us see into the rooms. Chimneys were not possible so smoke through the kitchen would have to dissipate throughout. The bathrooms looked like urinals. (Ron and Barbara had their picture taken as they posed, testing them out). There was a morgue, many living rooms where they slept. There was no comfort, just survival.

12 Noon: We watched a man make a plate at the **Frica Pottery place**. All hand made pottery there was done by family artists in an underground building as it is cool and better for drying clay at an even temperature. Our members helped the Turkish economy today! Ron hauled Barbara back inside to buy some plates!!

Lunch at 1:30 in a cave restaurant called Uranos Sarikaya; the menu included soup, salad, spaghetti, pot-kabob and fruit. Too much!! Musical entertainment as we ate.

Onyx & Marble factory: We saw how onyx is cut and ground into an egg shape and polished. Onyx is mined 35 – 75 meters below ground. Jewelry and ornaments were for sale. Barbara A was a good model and got 20% off her purchases. More help to the economy at this store!

We passed the Red River (which is green). We stopped at Pigeon Valley for stamps and ATM machine. People made holes in the walls of the hills for the pigeons. We saw Camel Mountain. **This is Cappadocia - "Beautiful Wild Horse Country"**. **Uchisar Castle**, the top of a mountain was occupied in the 7th century until the Mongols attacked. Then in 20th century used for storage and a hotel. Happy hour was very nice before dinner.

Wed. Oct. 22 – Herb & Kay Holland

We had our final breakfast at Lykia Lodge then left on the **bus for Ankara** at 10:20 a.m. There was frost on the cars this morning so we felt right at home. We left on a bright sunny morning. The guide is still trying to teach us to count to 10. We stopped at Aksaray for washing hands. Ladies – more shopping. On our journey we passed a large salt lake. The water depth may reach 1 – 2 meters deep and the salt turns a pale pink. It is not used for households. Went through a village called Serelikochisar known for its good tasting melons. Then we stopped for lunch at Barin Restaurant.

On our trip to Ankara we passed a few very fertile fields. Upon arrival we noticed a more modern city. We visited **Ataturk's colossal Mausoleum** of Ankara then went to our hotel – "**Ickale Hotel**".

Thurs. Oct. 23 – Kay & Herb Holland

We had Breakfast at 8 a.m. We visited **Anatolian Civilization Museum** which was started in 1943. This museum won the top award in 1997. It is in a big building which was built in 1400 AD. It is very large museum going back in time 10,000 years. Very impressive! The bus then drove to a very large mall called Anka Mall – the largest in Ankara. Then we went for lunch at Hatipoglu Place Restaurant, restored in 1910 AD. We then did some street shopping in the Old City of Antra. We then drove to the hotel, had happy hour and supper at 7:30. We have to get up at 3 a.m. to start home. Enjoy your plane ride.

Friday, Oct. 24 – Pat & Jim Ewing

Heading home!

Up very early. Suitcases outside the room and down to the dining room for breakfast snack at 3 a.m. - On to the bus by 3:20 and off to the airport and flight home. Mixed emotions which I am sure most of us had. It has been a wonderful trip with special friends. Being EDs for this outbound experience – sometime mind-boggling as it was a first time for us to be EDs, but we wouldn't trade it, and looking forward to being asked to do it again someday. Being a member of FF is great, but working on a trip like this and then spending time with "the group" and getting to know them as close friends has been irreplaceable.

We arrived at the check-in to find Laughtansa had no record of us, and after many questions, help from our guide, Mecit (Midget), speaking to the help desk, we had to buy our tickets from Ankora – Munich – London at a cost of \$2,559.44. With little time to spare we joined our group on the other side of security. On boarding the clerk forgot to tear part of Jim's boarding pass off, as a result they had our suitcases but no record of Jim boarding the plane. After offloading some of the luggage, finding our names on the luggage, and matching it up with my boarding pass and a reprimand from the pursers on the plane, we were off to Munich. It was an uneventful flight and no time to say goodbye. Lil, Rose Marie and we ran for the next flight to London. Lil and Rose Marie had their Rica - special Turkish liquor, taken from them as they passed through security and were not "happy campers" either.

Our flight to London was fine. They fed and watered us as usual, and we arrived to find that we had a confirmed flight from London to Edmonton. It was a long flight home, arriving at 4:30 p.m. - 3:30 a.m. Turkish time. We had no problem with immigration, said our goodbyes to Rose Marie and Lil, and we were met by a special friend to take us home. Before the day closed the group would all arrive in Edmonton via Toronto and home to their own cozy- beds.

The highlight for us as EDs was the presentation from our travel group to us of a pair of the most beautiful blue and gold cups and saucers in a deep red presentation case. We loved being EDs – it was a busy, but fulfilling venture, and we wouldn't trade our 'group or the experiences with them for anything. This outbound would not have been nearly as successful , if we had not had the guidance and help from our committee: Frank and Jessie Parker, Ron and Barbara Ashmore and Enid and Helmut Nikolai - we thank them very much and look forward to working with them again, in some capacity within our club. Last, but very definitely not the least, we want to THANK YOU, Marjorie Eckert, for typing our diary for us. At the completion of the diary Marjorie has typed 8,121 words. A very big THANK YOU to everyone!

In sincere friendship,

Pat & Jim