

Update 13 ó written May 28, 2012

Some final thoughts from Mom-

Stuff they have that we don'tí Ka-vass At one of the homes we visited we were invited to try this ancient Russian drink. I did not care for it but Google told me that it means Old East Slavic and is well known in many countries that were/are influenced by Russian culture. Back in the time of Peter the Great (1682-1725) it was the most common non-alcoholic drink (less than 1.2 % alcohol) in every class of society. This fermented drink is often flavored with herbs or fruits but made from dry or toasted black or rye bread. When offered a sip, June declined making some comment about the taste of dirty socks.

í Styrofoam molding & plastic ceilings ó Back in Oregon, I checked at Home Depot to see if we too have it. Nope I didn't find any but don't say I didn't tell you about it. This is the molding you put on the walls & it is great for them since most all the walls are of stone or concrete & have irregular surfaces. Just hot glue this decorative molding on the wall & paint over it if you like. You can also get Styrofoam ceiling tile. A new option for ceilings a tinted suspended stretched plastic. Styrofoam molding is hot glued to the wall & holds the stretched plastic. A hole is for the ceiling light & bingo you have a tight shiny ceiling! I wonder about plaster falling onto it & the effects of heat & cold. Time will tell.

Didn't expectí Confusion - We spent two days using public transportation to get around Kiev. That involves going up & down stairs, up & down escalators, on & off buses, walking long distances, catching the underground metro, following the signs & being totally confused. How can you figure out which way is where underground? As I worked my way thru the large airports in Frankfurt & Seattle on my way home I felt like I was back in Kieví .up, down, on, off, in, out, following signs and being confused. With the airports growing larger every time I pass thru, the experiences seemed very similar.

Gratefulness - It was impressive to see how quick the pastors were to let June know how appreciative they are for the Vacation Bible School supplies that you folks have sent them. Thank you!

Mine too! - I found it bothered me leaving Ukraine before I know all the patients we had seen were well or better. I apparently had also taken some ownership in their recovery even though I had no part in their treatment. Fortunately I can keep track of myøpatients through June!

Fun surprise -When June & I arrived in Kiev a few days before my departure our driver dropped us off at the point to catch the metro into the city for some sightseeing. I understood this was the purpose for him stopping & us getting out of the car but he had stopped right in front of McDONALDS! At that moment I realized WHY I appreciated them being there...it wasn't just for the flavor of their food it was ALOT MORE for this American! I knew their motto & it held true no matter where they were located. A Big Mac & fries - finally, something I totally understood!

MY GREATEST JOY is the same one I experience on every mission trip. ..To see how God has gone way before us to prepare the way. It is no coincidence that what that patient needs is already in our bag, or that the cost for the event is exactly what is received, that the phone call comes at just the right time, that the delay made things better than planned..... some call it luck, whatever that means. I call it God's ever present love & care. I delight in seeing how creative He is & how far ahead He was working for this moment. He is always doing this for us but it is easier to recognize when we are in a setting where we cannot have control of the situation.

Carry each other's burdens.
-Galatians 6:2

Good bye - I remember how the empty hit me from last time, so I gave myself a pep talk before I walked back into my apartment after getting home from Kiev. Weaving guests into the fabric is fun but weaving them back out is not so much. Another pair of hands to help, someone to share the day with is that and more. When someone takes the time to walk my road, smell my world, taste my table, feel what I experience is that they have given me a huge gift. A present of their time, wrapped with better understanding, taped together with shared experiences and tied with a bow of sacrifice. Short term teams, interns & family have all given me this gift. And, mom you gave it again in a wonderful way! Thanks for coming!

Zaparoshja & Berdansk: Our trip to visit the other clinics was intense. At least for me it was. First there was the huge load of supplies we were moving. Mom and I had already worked nearly a week on getting things organized. God covered us with His mercy during our travels and the trip went well. While the police stopped us, thankfully there were no investigations of our 35 box load. Not that we were doing anything illegal, but you don't have to be here to have problems.

Second wearing the hat as missionary, guide and translator kept me hopping. Business meetings and seeing patients occupied hours of my time thus for long stretches, mom had to go along with not fully understanding before I could get back to her with the translation. Frustrating and it calls for patience on all sides.

An unexpected blessing for me was to attend the regional medical student meeting. I shot all kinds of questions at them and it was fun to hear their thoughts of the Christian Medical Conference for students that took place a couple weeks ago. Although God gave funds for this event through my ministry, I hadn't been able to attend myself. First hand feedback from the students was the next best thing and I was very pleased to hear their praises of organization, good workshops and spiritual speakers. If you are interested in reading more about the conference, I've attached the summary newsletter written by a Ukrainian student on the leadership team.

A little break: The Vacation Bible School (camp) supplies have been sorted and distributed. Done. The medical supplies in all three church clinics have been sorted and the ostomy patients have received their supplies. Done. The most critical village visits have been made. Done. More

than half of the funding has been given out for this summer's outreaches to kids & teens. Done. Whew ó a lot has been crossed off the April/May project list!

Now as everyone else surges forward to prepare for the tourist season and summer outreaches, I get to take a short break before I start going out to visit camps. Desk work needs catching up on, putting fruit up for fall, getting back out to clinic in Premorski and attending a friend's wedding are in my immediate plans.

Visa: Celebrate with me! God did a miracle! I have my required Temporary Residence Permit in hand! I admit to "sitting on a needle" (as they say here) this week nervously wondering what was going to happen as the last of my 45 day window dissolved on the calendar. May 25th was day 45.

Meaning, by the 25th I had to have completed all the document hurdles and have my permit. On the afternoon of May 25th Pastor Nicholi called to tell me the great news. I believed him but needed to hold it in my hand before I let myself get excited. Today, Monday, he brought it over and as I looked at it a bunch of feelings jammed my circuits.

Brain conversation ó

õAll that work for this?! I mean 7 months of work and this is all it looks like? (a gray cardboard folded paper with a criminal looking photo of me inside). For all the stress, time, effort and money poured into this pup, it should be white with gold edging and laminated!ö

õIt would have been one thing if I had done the bulk of work (the driving around, waiting in lines, repeat visits to offices, phone calls, dealing with the personal, trotting off to get still another copy of something). I did a lot but there was much I could not do. My Ukrainian friends did the bulk of the work ó God bless ãum. How humbling! that they would spend their time on me.ö

õThis little goofy looking document is a gift from God. A gift because it wasn't to be had without His intervention. A gift in the way He chose to speak, a "proof" that I am where He wants me.ö

õThat "dark formidable mountain with its jagged heights" I wrote about in January now stands behind me. My "mustard seed" faith kept my eyes on the problem solver. Thank you Lord for Who you are in my life. Thank you, also, for all the friends you have blessed me with. You and yours really do move mountains. õ June