

THE **Bradley** HERALD

Creative Self Expression

Omar Khayyam is Alive in the Hearts of People

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Kayvan Mashayekh, the American film director of *The Keeper: the Legend of Omar Khayyam* is one of many people for whom the Persian poet and astronomer Omar Khayyam is still alive. "I chose Omar Khayyam because he personified all the great qualities of an intelligent man, who was able to balance the concept of reason and faith. Persian history has many such men, but the combination of a scientific mind and soulful poetry made him an attractive candidate for a movie," said Mashayekh about his choice of the main character.

In order to understand the wise choice to film in Uzbekistan, you need to know the plot. According to the Internet Movie Database website (www.imdb.net), *The Keeper: the Legend of Omar Khayyam* is a family friendly action/adventure epic about a 12-year-old boy in the present day, who discovers that his ancestor is the 11th century mathematician, astronomer, poet of Persia, Omar Khayyam. The story takes us from the modern day to the epic past where the relationship between Omar Khayyam and Hassan Sabbah (the original creator of the sect of Assassins) and how their mutual love for a beautiful woman, Darya,

separates them from their eternal bond of friendship. The film takes the viewer on an unforgettable journey along the famous Silk Road to the magical and ancient palaces, madrasas, and lush landscapes of Samarkand and Bukhara.

In fact, Omar Khayyam was born at Nishapur in Khorassan, but present day difficulties in Iran made it impossible to shoot a movie there. Another option was Uzbekistan with its rich architectural heritage, represented in the ancient cities of Samarkand and Bukhara. I agree with the director's wise decision. It was thanks to Denis Ergashbaev '02, who'd heard about the film work first, that I applied to be a member of the film crew, as well as an interpreter and personal assistant to the Costume Designer Jane Robinson. In these capacities, I had to suggest shooting locations and went through the movie's hardships and joys along with other crewmembers.

Our crew of 120 and cast of ten came from ten different countries. Moreover, the movie was made in part with the help of the Turkish film studio "Panfilm," and from the American side, "Guide Company Films." One might ask what did Uzbekistan have to offer American filmmakers besides the beautiful landscapes and architecture? In fact, professionals from

Uzbekfilm provided numerous services. Staff included line producers, production managers and another hundred people working in each department. In addition, our main offices were situated at Uzbekfilm.

During the preparation weeks, each day brought new producers, managers, accountants, the director and his assistant, directors of photography, designers, make up artists, and electricians from the U.S., England, Italy, Ireland, Spain, Serbia, Turkey and India, who came to Tashkent to make final preparations. Moviemaking



Emiliya Asadova '02 Takes a Break with Popular German Actor Moritz Bleubtreu who Plays Malikshah in *The Keeper*.

FUTURE LEADERS EXCHANGE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

Contents:

1-7 **Theme of the Issue:**

Creative Self Expression

Omar Khayyam is Alive in the
Hearts of People

Letter from the Editor

Everyone is Creative

Between Reality and Dreams

I Blog, Therefore I Am

Contrast in Life and Songs

Poetry

Ambassadors for Life

Camera is My Eyes

8-9 **Alumni Beat**

10-11 **More Creativity**

The Wind of Change

Saying it with Your Eyes

Breaking Free

12-13 **Bradley Bits**

Individual Alumni Success
Stories

14 **Essays**

Try Yourself as a Fiction
Translator

Language of Dance

15 **Profiles**

Laurentiu Hadirca '98
Chisinau, Moldova

Denis Savelyev '95
Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy,
Russia

Valentina Goloborodko '95
Odesa, Ukraine

Letter from the Editor



Dear Alumni,

This "Creative Self Expression" issue of *The Bradley Herald* has resulted in eye-opening discoveries about the talents of FLEX alumni. For the first time, we specifically went out in search of alumni who create. Here we share the stories, artwork and photos of alumni photographers, painters, writers, poets, actors, dancers, athletes, TV and radio show hosts, sculptors... The list goes on. As several alumni authors contend: we are all creative; it is just a question of how, when and where we express that creative energy. Enjoy what you read and see - maybe it will even get your creative juices flowing!

In the process of putting this issue together, I corresponded with a number of alumni who expressed interesting ideas about the place of creativity in our lives. Without making simplified generalizations about the left and right hemispheres of alumni brains, allow me to propose that the majority of FLEX alumni are apt to be more "left brain" oriented, tending to develop language and analytical skills over the "right brain" visual and artistic skills. Whether you have chosen to be economists, auditors, lawyers, fiction writers, performers or entrepreneurs, you no doubt want to integrate all these skills to the maximum. Richard Florida, Hirst Professor at the School of Public Policy at George Mason University and a non-resident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution, explores the rise of the creative class, as well as the global battle for this talent in a series of books. (Learn more about him and his books at <http://www.creativeclass.org/>). He explains that these "creative professionals" are defined by an ability to "produce new forms or designs that are readily transferable and broadly useful---such as designing a product that can be widely made, sold and used; coming up with a theorem or strategy that can be applied in many cases; or composing music that can be performed again and again." No doubt that to be successful in the marketplace today, you need to develop and apply your skills, and the more you have the better.

As Alexey Bulokhov '96 writes, "If one of the FLEX long-shot goals is to breed political and business elite in the former Soviet Union, it shouldn't overlook the cultural elite because it often leads all the other leaders." He also suggests an alumni poetry contest, an almanac of alumni poetry/fiction, an art exhibition or a concert tour/CD/DVD of alumni singer-songwriters as fantastic ways to raise the program's visibility. What do you think? If you like these ideas and want to help organize such efforts, let us know.

Looking ahead, soon the '05 FLEX alumni will be returning home. Please welcome them! Contact your American Councils office to sign up for a PDO alumni panel or a re-entry seminar this summer.

The next issue of *The Bradley Herald* will focus on graduate studies. We ask alumni who are pursuing or have obtained Master's and PhD degrees to describe graduate studies experiences at home and abroad, as full-time students and in conjunction with full-time jobs. If you have something to say, write to bradleyherald@actr.ru by June 30. The issue following that will be on fundraising. An appeal to those of you who are professional and volunteer fundraisers: please share your experiences in securing financial support for your organizations and projects. Tell us how you attracted sponsors and donors. If you've won grants, write about the process. Many of you have attended (and led!) grant-writing seminars, but in this issue we will compile strategies, advice, and your individual success stories.

Thanks to all who responded to FLEX alumni assistants' requests to update contact information this spring. If you haven't done so, it's not too late! Write to us at flexalum_db@actr.ru.

Best wishes,

Mary Shea

Everyone is Creative

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You probably won't believe this, but EVERYONE IS CREATIVE. I bet if you've ever taken a class in drama, painting or pottery, and despite your best effort, couldn't make the final result match your expectations. You may as well have thought "I don't have a creative bone in my body!" Let me assure you now, you have it!

I've gone through that dilemma many times in my life. When I was ten I started art school. My first drawings weighed about two kilos each - I put so much paint on the paper. But when I turned 13, I started making progress, won several youth art awards and instantly became one of the most promising students in my class. In high school I started my journalism career. Oh, I will never forget the words of one of the newspaper editors, to whom I sent my first article. "Son," he said with a sad grin, "journalism is not for you. Anything but journalism." Five years later, as a second year



Pavel Vorotilin '01 Entertains Viewers as TV Host of Belarus Channel 1 Teen Show.

student at Minsk State Linguistic University, I became the editor-in-chief of the university newspaper *Alma Mater*. In that position I won the first prize for "an exceptional description of student life in Mass Media," and *Alma Mater* was ranked the third best university paper in Minsk.

Today I host a teen TV show on the Belarusian Channel 1. A show with an eight-year history. A show with the second-best ratings after the daily news-coverage programs. A show that is a National Television Awards nominee. The toughest moment I have faced ever on TV was at the very start of this season. September 3. The Beslan hostage tragedy. BT went live broadcasting the whole event of firing and the subsequent storming

Omar Khayyam is Alive in the Hearts of People from p. 1

requires many people and working from the beginning I had the wonderful chance to meet new people every single day at the office. All 13 interpreters worked for the production office. Good fortune struck one day when I was asked to work with two wonderful women - Costume Designer Jane Robinson and her assistant Beatrice Gianini. Their huge room was filled with drawings of costumes and meters of different colored fabrics from which the actual costumes would be made. A team of talented seamstresses did the difficult job of turning the designs into actual costumes.

Now we have come to the most interesting part. Actors. Who are they? In this case Kayvan Mashayekh used an international principle. Omar Khayyam was played by Spanish actor Bruno Lastra, Hassan-English actor Christopher Simpson, Darya-French actress Marie Espinosa, Malik-German actor Moritz Bleibtreu, Imam Muaffak-Croatian Rade Serbedjija and Ali Ben Sabbah- American singer Andy. We also had some children acting who added a bit of something kind and funny. They were two English actors Daniel Black and Yasmin Paige and a boy from Bukhara Farruh Grezov.

There were many funny stories with actors, but let me tell you about the singer Andy, who was a good friend of the director. Andy came to Tashkent and had a concert where he gathered thousands of his Uzbek fans. I first met him there and we hardly could get backstage because there was a huge line of crazy fans trying to see their favorite star. Later when we had shot in Bukhara, Andy arrived followed by his trail of fans. Some asked me to get them a signed photo or just a chance to see him. At the time my work included taking photos of the costumes, which I in turn had to have printed in local Bukhara photo studios, where, people asked me to let them print the pictures with Andy. Photo whizzes were showing me pictures of Andy on calendars and photos they had edited to show fans with the singer.

I give credit to the local Uzbek citizens, who always found a way to be "there" when and where they didn't need to be. Maybe that's why every foreigner learned the Russian word for "quiet" - "TIKHO" and they were yelling it all the time, even more often than "action."

Such productions always generate funny stories and *The Keeper* wasn't an exception. Once we lost our horses, which were supposed to be in

the desert, but for some reason went to another location. Per usual our Unit Production Manager Misko Stevanovic solved the problem very fast. Another time we were shooting at Bukhara-Chor Bakr, a very sacred site for Muslims - and as it turned out for our filmmakers too. Our camera fell from a crane...and of course it didn't break. I witnessed another funny story at the Chorsu bazaar in Tashkent. The Assistant Costume Designer Beatrice Gianini and I went to the bazaar to buy fabrics for the costumes and took our Director of Photography Matt Cantrell with us. When were walking down the rows of the bazaar all the salesman were shouting and pointing at Matt. Why? Because he looks exactly like the American actor Chuck Norris. They kept screaming: "Oh, look, we have Chuck Norris at our bazaar." His likeness to the actor didn't help him get low prices, just the opposite. Everyone doubled their prices. Then we made a bet that he would get us some fabric at a much cheaper price and we didn't believe he could do it. But he succeeded and it turned out that some Americans have the oriental ability to bargain, too.

You are probably asking what is going on with the film and when can I see it, because the shooting was completed in December 2003. For that I contacted our Director Kayvan Mashayekh for the latest news. "The film is currently in the late stages of post production. In the next two months we will be completing the visual effects, sound mix and the music for the film. The picture edit will be completed in the next month. And also a work print VHS of the film will be submitted to the Cannes Film Festival in two weeks for consideration in the festival. But the film will not be shown anywhere prior to Cannes submission. However, we will be doing some Private Distributor screenings in early May before the festival. Once again there is no guarantee we will be accepted, so we are doing our best to make the film the best it can be before submission. And finally in June we will aggressively market the film and send it to other festivals for consideration worldwide," he wrote me in e-mail.

Well, I wish good luck to *The Keeper* and hope that in a couple months it will be shown in Tashkent, where there are lots of interested Uzbeks who worked on the film and so many people who are waiting for this movie. ■

Everyone is Creative from p. 2

of the school. And I was to host the broadcast, as it was just the time for "5x5" to start. Fifteen minutes until airtime and I did not have even a basic script of the program. But we all managed to do our best. As well as the special forces in Ossetia. Live video from Beslan was commented on by our guests in the studio, and there were thousands (millions I think) of phone calls. It was the hardest broadcast ever, but only after it I understood the importance of putting everything you can in what you are doing. Creativity included.

There's no argument that the world is full of highly talented and creative people. When I walk down the street, I see creativity in everyone passing by. It's just that we have to open the creative door of our soul, and it's really not that hard to do. Try studying the lifelines of creative and influential people, including novelists, playwrights, composers, scientists, Nobel Prize winners, stage and film actors, humanitarians, economists and philosophers. I am sure you will come to just one conclusion: true creativity, in any realm, requires the same skill set: dedication, hard work, actively seeking new challenges, boldness, and the willingness to follow your creative endeavor to the very end, wherever that may be. And these are skills we all can master. Most of us won't build towers that shape the skyline, or write novels that capture the pathos of our times. But trust me, we all are capable of original contributions and of making our lives more colorful. And that is what we should strive for today. ■

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TeenSpeak looks forward to hearing from you.



Between Reality and Dreams Case Study of the Photographer Diora Ziyaeva

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Sometimes I have dreams. Dreams that take me to places I love. I wish I could capture moments that I see in my dreams like episodes of the world within me. But I have daydreams as well, moments I can capture with my camera...

Photography for me is an ultimate revelation. My world is built from little pieces: disillusion and delights, solitude and overwhelming joy of surroundings, and the people, who make places you come to worth returning to.

It is hard to capture a moment that squeezes itself in between dreams and reality. Making pictures is like dreaming and being awake at the same time. You are in your mind, yet the second you photograph is real. Your eye becomes a constant picture frame; it "crosses" reality and shapes it in the form of a fantasy. These moments are precious to me; they come as a flash, reflect the way I feel, and what I am going through.

But the process of creation doesn't end there; step two – the darkroom, where magic happens... The moment you step in this little red-lit, chemically infused world, where the doors separate you and free you from the outside world – at that moment time ceases to exist and you dip yourself into this infinite marvel. The physicality of it draws you in. You are the magician, the creator, the only one who can determine how much light or shadow, tonality, filtration this shot must have to capture EXACTLY what you intend.

Photography is very personal. That is why you can never find two identical pictures. The private contact with your work can never be replaced by digital techniques – you literally watch the picture being born in front of your eyes, by your hands – it's your child. What's more, photography becomes your emotional outlet. There is a life you can present in one picture.

The camera has been my long-term-friend for a while now. It's been five years since my first photo shoot in the fall woods of Connecticut during my FLEX exchange year. Then nature inspired me to work on color. Hours in the darkroom and lots of wasted paper. I hated it at



Photo by Diora Ziyaeva

first. I somehow always thought that if you are good at something then you are good from the moment you start. In actuality it is quite different. It took me time to learn how to be honest in my art. Photography can lie. But it is able to show the artist fairly and clearly, and at the same time gives enough space for strangers to communicate. I speak to my audience through my works. But what they don't know is that while looking at my photography, they are reading the pages of my life.

Making art and expressing oneself through photography is like keeping a journal: once you learn how to do it, you are addicted. You no longer look at things in the same way. You are constantly looking beneath the human nature surface, even if at first it might seem that there isn't anything to be seen.

My photography becomes a reminder to myself of who I am. Sometimes I want to cry out or yell, but words cannot quite do it.

There are moments that a lot of people miss or can't see. Or they don't have time to stop and listen to words. But when a picture cries or smiles or hurts – they pay attention.

I truly believe that there is no greater feeling than to know that your work 'touches' people, frees them to explore new horizons – even if it is one person. And then the feedback I get after my exhibitions encourages me to work more. It becomes a cycle of inspiration.

p.s. There are two alumni who have influenced me greatly, but whose impact on me has been very different. Zhenya Voevodina, thank you for being the wonderful critic and providing me with feedback. I have learned how to look out for myself. Katya Stolyarova, my best friend, without whose faith the Berlin Exhibition would never have been possible. I give ya'll my sincere gratitude. ■

Photo by Diora Ziyaeva

I Blog, Therefore I Am

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Are you in love? What is your passion? What do you like to do the most? What eats your insides, begging to be let out, cherished, nurtured, released? Is there something that people around you and the world should know, something that is new and original or maybe as ancient as sorrow and joy and happiness, but still original, because it is yours, uniquely yours? If you know what I am talking about, then you can be a Nobel prize winning writer or... a blogger!

When I typed the last word of the previous paragraph, the Word processor underlined it with red. Yet the word "blogger" was named word of year 2004 by the famous Merriam-Webster dictionary. So, who are these bloggers? If you have never heard about them, don't despair: neither has Microsoft Word. "Blog" is short for "weblog". There are millions of us. Do you want to know more? Go to Google.com or any other search engine and type in the word "blog." You will get thousands of results.

Basically, weblog is your own web site, where you post your thoughts, pictures, links you find interesting, etc. It is a lot like a diary. I started mine about half a year ago. It was quite simple: I read an article on blogging in a men's magazine and thought, "Hmm, if that's what's going to make ladies swoon, let's try it!" Well, I am afraid I'll have to disappoint you. It doesn't. However, there are a lot of other benefits. You know how

we guys are: always trying, never complaining. Now I have a legitimate excuse not to try and an ample opportunity to complain. Here is how it goes: I hear about Yushchenko's "fight for democracy" and run to the computer and dash off an entry about the impossibility to fight for democracy by disregarding more than half the nation's opinion! I read a Chinese proverb, something like "Man who run in front of the car, gets tired" (bad grammar intended), and my readers are the first to know!

Joking aside, blogging provides you with something you may not have otherwise. You get a voice. You become part of newsmaking. You create a media resource. Do you know who was the first to make known the details of the Bill Clinton scandal? A blogger, Matt Drudge. And here is the miracle: since most of the serious bloggers and blog readers of the world are American, you will be able to influence American public opinion!

I personally am rather indifferent to politics. I am more inclined to seek the meaning of life rather than the meaning of U.S. foreign policy. My Coffee Talk is the place where I share my thoughts with my readers, where I can always count on a listening ear from someone far, far away, someone I have never even seen in my life. This is the place where I can develop new ideas, ponder them over time and get feedback from my readers. As a matter of fact, I am considering publishing online a *povest'* (mid genre between the short story and the novel) I wrote.

They say that the Internet, and consequently blogging, has no rules. This is true, however I set up the following three for myself, to be

more successful with my writing.

Be true to yourself. You must also have noticed multiple times that when you write about something that is of importance to you, suddenly all the right words come to your mind, the images become fresh and clear, you acquire eloquence that you never thought you had. And the reader feels it. If I want to keep my readers interested and willing to come back, I will never lie to them.

Get to the point. From my blogs surfing experience, if a post does not catch me within the first paragraph, I click away, and this is something I try to keep in mind when I write for mine. However, if you have a certain established audience who know you and trust your content, there is no reason to always keep your entries short. It is my longer posts that spark interesting discussions and make me and my readers closer.

Have fun with it! This is by far the most important rule for me. I often remind myself that the reason why I started my blog in the first place was not a desire to shape public opinion or be a pundit political analyst, but plain curiosity. I wanted to explore this new means of expressing creativity, and have come to realize that this is probably the best way to speak and be heard.

Are you interested, but do not know what to begin with? It is extremely simple. Go to www.blogger.com, www.blogeasy.com or www.blog-city.com, register and start blogging! Good luck, and you are always welcome to visit my Coffee Talk at <http://mishasweblog.blogspot.com/> and join the fun! ■

Contrast in Life and Songs

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Our band CH/B just celebrated its second anniversary. Three people organized it: I, Yulia Molodtsova, another vocal singer Svetlana Erina and musician, guitar player and simply talented young man Vladimir Erin. Originally the band's name meant Black and White but soon we got so used to the abbreviation that we think of ourselves simply as of "ChehBeh" now.

We found each other on the musicforums in the Internet while looking for people with the same musical passions and desire to do music seriously. I actually always thought of myself as a solo singer, but when we met and joined our songs together, we realized it could be a very interesting and original project for

Russia - two female singers and a small band. We now have five people in the band - our musicians are a guitar player, drummer and bass guitar player. Sometimes we use electronic effects in some of the songs during concerts, and always while recording.



During these two years we achieved some things we are proud of, though we are still in the early stage of promotion: our songs were released on several popular rock collections and distributed in Russia on CDs and tapes. We had several rotations on Moscow regional radio stations, in Yekaterinburg and on Samara's "NASHE" radio. We participated in contests and festivals, and we give regular concerts at Moscow clubs. We now have about a one-hour concert program, and about 17-20 good songs we perform. People call at least three or four of these songs "hits."

Most songs in the group are created by our guitar player and me. Svetlana writes lyrics to some of our songs and has recently written three of her own songs. We compose sincere songs about our life and world, feelings and senses, about life with all its colors. We love contrast in life and songs. We are always open to everything new. We inhale life and bring it

Yulia Molodtsova '98 Performs on the Moscow Club Circuit

Contrast in Life and Songs from p. 5

out in our music. We have ambitious plans - to become famous, to be able to share our music with more people, just to release a good CD, and to compose good music as long as we can and ...it is needed.

Some recordings of our music are at the web-site www.realmusic.ru/chb We also have a fan-site, where there's information about our concerts and events, our photos and lyrics, good links, and all our news - www.ch-b.narod.ru.

In thinking about my favorite lyrics, here are lines from the song that still has two names - for pessimists and optimists - *Izlomanniy* (Unhinged, Broken) and *Lubimiy* (Beloved). They are not rhymed, just a translation:

1. You know much more than I,
You know most of my secrets
And you are suprising me
Your voice is so sad again...

And now there is no warmth in your eyes,
Your palms make me cold,
You know much more than I,
But I know that you are unhinged and broken.

R: My dear, unhinged/broken by everybody
And gently loved by me.

2. No, you are not hiding your eyes,
And you are not look at my back,
We need to return back
To the place where we simply loved each other.

There was very much love there,
There simply wasn't so cold,
You remember all that,
But I know that you are unhinged and broken.

R: My dear, unhinged/broken by everybody
And very gently loved
My dear, unhinged/broken by me
And very gently loved. ■

*** **

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Watch me closely while I'm near,
I will soon be gone.
Like a star will disappear
With the light of dawn.
Like a quiet summer breeze
I will blow away.
You'll just hear the echo cease
Whispering my name.
You'll forget what I looked like
What I sought or feared,
But sometimes a thought will strike:
«Something's missing here».
Something small, but something dear,
Though it's been so long...
Something used to be so near,
Now forever gone.

Humdrum Conundrum

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Some days it seems,

- For every sheep there is a pack of wolves.
- For every wolf there is a few Little Red Riding Hoods.
- Everyone is a hunter. Everyone is out to get someone else.
- Everyone is hungry for anything other than what they had yesterday.
- Everyone is a dreamer of bright beautiful dreams.
- Everyone is haunted by the nightmares they're living in.
- Everyone wants to believe in something pure, simple and true.
- If I don't believe in myself, can I believe in you?
- Everyone is sorry for everything they are.
- Everyone feels bad for everything they're not.
- Everyone feels awful about the way they feel.

How do I break away? How do I become me?

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Maria Guzenko

You, who said I had no chance,
Watch me way up high!

Shook your head when I commenced.
Now you can't defy.

Thought I couldn't stand the load,
Thought I would break down.

Never knew that down the road
I would get my crown.

Didn't think I'd start anew
After crash and burn.

Now I'm looking down on you,
Now it is my turn.

Spring

Translation of Poem by Mikhail Isakovsky
(1900-1973)

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The meadow's green again, the snow is gone.
Again the carts are crossing the wooden bridge.

And sparrows are excited seeing the sun,
And blooming apple trees are swinging in the breeze.

In every home, in every yard
And everywhere we can hear spring.
The shepherd's on the lawn trying hard
The peasants' cattle into herd to bring.

The spring has come, the air is full of it,
All sounds and all smells are filled with spring.
And on the very housetops the roosters sit
And all the people can hear how they sing.

The breeze is blowing through the opened windows,
And children are so glad to see the sunlight,
The vapour's curling in the river willows,
The elder men are brooding on the life.

The Fragrance of love

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Every day's the same:
Breakfast, work and school.
There must be something else,
Something bright and cool.
Something that tastes so good,
Something that smells so sweet.
I guess it should exist
Baby, what is it?

I'm walking down the street
My mind's extremely full
I think about the meetings, business, money...
I am a fool...
A fool that just forgot
That there's some more to it,
Something that I don't know.
Tell me what is it?

Last night on TV
It was a soap opera I guess.
They were talking about love,
He was longing for her kiss
I looked at them and thought
Maybe that is what I miss
Baby, I think this is it
Oh, please, show me what it is...

Nov 23, 2004

Ambassadors for Life

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Recently, Lithuanian Christian College (LCC) in Klaipeda, Lithuania, at which I am a first-year student, gathered its students, who represent more than 20 countries from all over the world, to celebrate the school's international community. I consider it a privilege to be one of the students who contributes to this international community as an individual and as a representative of Belarus.

In February, LCC announced an international student competition. Students were to present their countries to fellow students, professors and the college community. The winner(s) would be awarded the title "Star of LCC."

I volunteered to represent Belarus. I had one

week to get ready and then February 4th finally came. It's hard to say whether I was driven by personal ambition and a wish to become an LCC "star" or whether it was the pride I feel for my country and a desire to share this feeling with others, but when I walked onto the stage carrying the Belarus flag, I felt how proud I was of my country. I realized at that moment that I was doing more than laying out statistics or giving a lecture on Belarus. It was my opportunity to demonstrate concretely those Belarusian values that I, a representative of this country, have internalized and communicate the uniqueness of my homeland to the audience.

The lights went down as I waited in the wings of the stage and Belarusian folk music started playing. The PowerPoint presentation we had arranged began to flash images on the screen. In a traditional Belarusian red-and-white costume I entered the stage carrying a "rushnik"

-- a handmade Belarusian towel -- and "hle b s solyu" -- bread and salt. I bowed and welcomed everybody in Belarusian. Then I sang a folk song called "Kupalinka" and danced a polka with a friend. It's difficult to express how much joy I felt at this moment.

The first round was over; I wasn't nervous anymore. I sat in the audience and enjoyed the other performances by representatives from Albania to Uzbekistan. I was glad Belarus was the second one on the list to be presented. It is my favorite number, and my luckiest one, too! While I was thinking how much I appreciate my country, we were called on the stage again to announce who'd made it to round two. The Belarusian flag was raised, mean-

ing I'd made it to the second round!

The second round was tough. Four LCC students and I were put to the test with historical or geographical facts about our respective countries. It was at this point that I was silently thanking my geography teachers throughout school. A student from Macedonia, an Irish student, and I went to round three.

At that point I wasn't struggling for first place or recognition or an LCC star. I simply wanted to open wide the borders of my country and tell everyone that Belarus is unique, beautiful and that I am so proud to be part of it.

In the third round I was asked to make a spontaneous presentation on the topic "How my culture shapes my identity." I was given one minute to think. Sitting in the audience were more than 400 students, parents and friends, LCC professors and staff members. After taking a deep breath, I told them about my feelings of coming back home when I returned to Belarus after the year I spent in Utah on the FLEX program. I described that day when I touched the ground, fingering the soil of my homeland, and believed myself to be the happiest person in the world.

Belarus won the contest for being the best-presented country at LCC. For me the most valuable lesson was understanding that my country won the competition through my expression of it as one citizen.

I think many of us FLEX alumni truly appreciate our national heritage when we share our culture and values with others, as we did during our year in the U.S. For me it has become one of the most important things I took away from my experience as a participant and through my continued involvement with the alumni program, even from a distance. We'll never stop being cultural ambassadors. ■



Irina Kripinevich '03 Named Star of Lithuanian Christian College

Camera is My Eyes: Thoughts from a Budding Filmmaker

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It is amazing how a camera makes our world look different. From one angle it maybe full of colors, bright and shiny, and then it may turn black and white or even grey. I found the video camera to be my real eyes and a channel that connects my inner and outer worlds. The camera makes me look at very casual, day-to-day things differently and see something unique, touching and unforgettable that I had probably never thought about before. However the camera is not my eyes, only but it is my speech and a means of expression that makes my opinions and views clear and understandable.

Last summer I became a real film operator, cutter, sound designer, and even director. The "One Minute Junior Workshop" that took place in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan opened me to the very expressive and meaningful world of camera and moviemaking. During the four day workshop, youngsters from all the countries of Central Asia and Caucasus learned how to handle a digital camera, edit video materials on the computer - and make professional video! For these four days we had it all: learning, work, fun, laughs, talks, discussions, games - everything but sleep. We decided to make HIV/AIDS and drugs addiction issues the topic for the videos. So

we wrote scripts, chose actors among ourselves, made speeches, costumes and rocked to the stage...

In my video I expressed my view on a drug addict's pattern of life. In my film a young boy makes a boat out of paper and sends it for a trip; the boat travels on a stream of water, starting from a tiny little spring, then a rainy lake, then a fast river and finally getting flushed down a toilet. In my opinion drug users, just all other people, start life from a little clean spring and then as they grow up, are led into fast flowing rivers. It is life's obstacles and temptations that make them give up, misusing time and finally disappearing as wasted lives.

The "One Minute Junior Workshop" was held within the framework of the one minute video international competition for the best one-minute film. My film was nominated, but not awarded; however I was lucky and proud again when my film was recognized by BBC experts and broadcasted via a BBC winter movie blast and then on Finnish and Dutch television.

Below I presented some of the websites where you can take a look at the junior one minute videos and get some hints that may lead you to become a filmmaker. And if you have something to talk about, the camera is your way out to the public. Finally, who knows, maybe we will see our FLEX people at the Hollywood Oscar ceremonies!

<http://www.theoneminutesjr.org/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/films/oneminutemovies/>

http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction/takeaction_1690.html ■

Alumni Beat

Whether alumni are working to address local community needs or developing their alumni associations, they add creative new elements to the programming. Take note of the entrepreneurial approaches to fundraising. Bishkek alumni identified an unmet need in the business community and made them a "win-win" proposal. By offering their services as New Year's party planners to local businesses, they raised money in support of needy local children. Tbilisi alumni took their fundraising to the streets. They asked Georgian celebrities to contribute items to their street "flea market," which resulted in contributions of over \$2000 to help the Gldani Orphanage House. Agree that it pays to be bold!

Armenia

English Language Teaching in the Regions

Project Leader Anna Blurtsyan '95 received financial support to conduct English language and American culture trainings in 14 different regions of Armenia during September and October 2004. While alumni have offered English language training annually since 1999, Anna and her team incorporated two new elements into this year's effort. Trainers introduced their pupils to American art, including painters, architects and the art collections of New York City and Washington, D.C. Organizers also selected teaching sites located further from Yerevan, focusing on places from which few or no students had previously participated in the FLEX program. Alumni trainers traveled to more isolated regions, such as Ijevan, Stepanavan, and four remote villages. Trainers reported that by sharing facts about their U.S. experiences, they broke down negative stereotypes that their pupils had developed by watching too many American gangster movies.

Azerbaijan

Exchanges to Internships Project

U.S. Embassy Public Affairs Officer Neil McGurty, Country Director Shane Austin, and FLEX Alumni Coordinator Nargiz Hajiyeva launched the "Exchanges to Internships" project as part of International Education Week in November 2004.

At an introductory meeting, Nargiz Hajiyeva '99 and Khalida Nurmetova '00 shared their experiences interning at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They then described the new project, designed to provide alumni with public sector internships at government ministries in Azerbaijan. In the next phase, the organizing team of U.S. Embassy and American Councils staff interviewed 23 alumni-internship applicants in December. Ten alumni and four alternates were selected for internships at five

different ministries: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Ecology. The decisions were made based on written essays, resumes, and personal interviews. The following alumni were finalists: Nargiz Akbarova '03, Rishad Aliyev '04, Ruslan Asadov '04, Aysel Aslanova '03, Mamed Bayramov '04, Togrul Gahramanzada '02, Fuad Guliyev '04, Farida Hasanli '04, Tamerlan Mammadov '02, and Govhar Yagublu '03.

Belarus

Election Breakfast

On November 3, 35 active FLEX alumni from Minsk and other cities were among the honored guests at the election breakfast hosted by U.S. Ambassador George Krol. Together with representatives of the U.S. Embassy, Belarusian politicians, and staff and students of the International Affairs Department of Belarusian State University, alumni listened to Ambassador Krol share his thoughts on the issue of democracy. He also presented the U.S. election system to the group. Alumni watched the final results of the 2004 U.S. presidential election and had the chance to talk with U.S. Embassy representatives.

Georgia



U.S. Ambassador Krol with FLEX Alumni at Election Breakfast Gathering

Shardeni Street Charity Action

On December 19, St. Nicholas Day, American Councils and the "Shardeni Group," a coalition of students and recent graduates from various higher education institutions, held the annual Shardeni Street charity drive action in Tbilisi. They raised \$2000 by selling items to support the Gldani Orphanage House. Items for sale included artifacts, photos, books, CDs, DVDs, and Christmas presents, donated by individuals and organizations. Thousands of people attended the event, including young people from Tbilisi, government officials, and representatives of the international community. Musical performances, exciting games and refreshments made the event even more entertaining. Sopo Balavadze '96, Ketii Botchorishvili '98, Shota Gvaramadze '04, Irina Kvlividze

'03, Irinka Rekhviashvili '03, Sopo Tabatadze '04, Salome Tsereteli '00, and Gigi Vashakidze '02, as well as Eurasia Undergraduate Program alumni mobilized more than 70 other alumni to help organize the day.

Kazakhstan



Tbilisi Alumni Nino Matiashevili '04 and Nini Panjikidze '03 at Shardeni Street Charity Drive

Shark Tale Outing

Twenty-five Almaty alumni organized a movie trip for children from Oblast Orphanage #1 on November 14. During the parliamentary election campaign season, many representatives of political parties visited the orphanage. For this reason, alumni decided to would be especially exciting to take the children on a city outing. Aslan Abzhakov '02 and Lena Norakidze '99 successfully negotiated a 66% discount with the managers of Silk Way City Cinema for tickets to the popular children's film *Shark Tale*. They also agreed on discounted bus rental with the transportation company Aeris. With these discounts, they brought 70 orphans for the exclusive show! Alumni purchased soft drinks, snacks and candies for the children to make the outing even more fun. Children enjoyed seeing the exclusive show, and alumni enjoyed seeing the happy smiling faces of the children!

Kyrgyzstan

Donation Deliveries

On January 19, Bishkek '04 alumni Jyldyz Ismailova, Diana Mamtova, Joldoshbek Osmonov, Elena Sharomova, and Ksenia Tsoy visited the Children Rehabilitation Center, Child and Family Protection Center, Petrovka and Voynaya Antonovka orphanages. The delivery team brought donations of warm clothes and shoes that they purchased with money collected during New Year celebration fundraising projects. They also played energizing and critical thinking games with residents, and then watched a Christmas movie. Already a traditional New Year's fundraiser, clever alumni developed an approach that offers a service to the business community, while also giving the businesses the opportunity to contribute to a good cause. Six companies hired alumni to perform New

Alumni Beat

Year's programs for employees' children. In turn, alumni raised \$600, which allowed them to support many needy children.

Moldova

Second Alumni Congress

On October 23, FLEX alumni joined alumni of other U. S. Government-sponsored programs for the Second Alumni Congress. During the first part of the event, U.S. Embassy Alumni Resource Center Director Natalia Graur '00 and Alumni Board President Viorel Margineanu initiated the election campaign for the new members of the alumni board. During the second half of the day, alumni worked in nine groups to develop action plans for 2004-2005. Congress results included election of a new alumni board, which contains the following sections: business and economy, agriculture, social assistance and health, agriculture, public administration, science, culture and education, civic society, and human rights. Ala Ursu '02 was selected secretary of the alumni board; and Olga Demcenco '04 was chosen to serve as web coordinator for the Alumni Bulletin, published on a regular basis by the Alumni Resource Center. <http://ac.iatp.md/>

Russia

Kirov "Job-shadowing Day"

Fifty tenth-graders participated in the "Job-shadowing Day," which was organized by Vladimir Gordeev '98 and fellow Kirov alumni, in cooperation with Vyatka Humanitarian Gymnasia during November. Vladimir, who participated in such a program as a FLEX student in the U.S., found the experience decisive in his choice of a medical career. He recruited both senior and younger alumni to find Kirov professionals who would host students at their work places. The goal of the project was to help children choose a career path and stimulate their interest in higher education. Alumnae Elena Bakulina '98, Natalya Nagaeva '02, and Ekaterina Skopina '96 were among those who hosted the schoolchildren at their work places.

Yekaterinburg

"The USA: Know It All" Project

Alumni organized the contest "The USA – Know It All," December 6-15 as a continuation of International Education Week. The project was meant to increase high school students' awareness of U.S. history, culture, economics, and politics. Vera Aminova '03 prepared questions about the U.S. to be answered by the students. The questions varied in difficulty, and some were in English. The students were able to consult secondary sources to obtain

the answers, and more points were given to those who answered all the questions correctly, including those in English.

Alumni in other regions have developed similar contests, using the Yekaterinburg model.

Tajikistan

New Year Celebration at the Orphanage

Dushanbe alumni and friends continued their support for Orphanage #2 in the Leninski District. On December 25, they celebrated Christmas and New Year's with the children, complete with a decorated tree, Father Frost (a.k.a. Dmitry Frolov '02) and his granddaughter "Snegurochka," (played by Parvina Gafurova '01).

After the celebration 75 orphans received Christmas presents. In another holiday effort, when alumni learned from the orphanage's



Orphans Try on their New Coats and Pose with Father Frost and Alumni Friends

deputy director that ten newly accepted orphans didn't have winter jackets, Mohira Kurbanova '96 took the initiative to donate new coats.

Turkmenistan

Balkanabat Region Book of the Month Club

The first meetings of the new book club took place in October. Yuliya Hayrutdinova '04, Minara Ismailova '04, Alina Penjiyeva '04, and Kristina Razahova '04 were among those who began reading and discussing *The Lord of the Flies*. A Public Affairs Section Alumni Coordinator's Small Grants Program grant funded the purchase of 10 sets of 10 American/British classics. Peace Corps volunteers are leading one club in Balkanabat and one club in Turkmenbashi. Originally, six participants, including five English teachers and one person from the community, joined the club. This club aims to prepare advanced English students for university-level work and English teachers for advanced reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. In November,

Balkanabat participants worked on *Circuit* and *Tales of the Fourth Grade Nothing*.

Ukraine

Kharkiv AIDS Awareness Presentation

Nine Kharkiv FLEX alumni organized a presentation and film screening at a local theater on December 1 to educate the public about AIDS in the world and Ukraine. U.S. AIDS expert George Friou, who has done HIV/AIDS work for over 20 years, spoke to an audience of 80 people about the AIDS epidemic in Ukraine. Catherine Apio from Uganda also spoke about denial of the problem by Ukrainian authorities, as well as the general population. After the speeches, the group watched the touching and informative movie *A Closer Walk* and then discussed it.

Lviv Alumni Meet U.S. Congressional Delegation

Fourteen FLEX alumni in western Ukraine met with U.S. Congressional representatives Roscoe G. Bartlett (R-Maryland), Maurice D. Hinchey (D-New York), Darrell Issa (R-California), Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio), Dana Rohrabacher (R-California), and Adam B. Schiff (D-California), who were visiting Ukraine in conjunction with the Ukrainian presidential elections on December 20. They discussed Ukraine's integration into the West and its involvement in international organizations, Russian-Ukrainian relations, the U.S.'s stance on the Ukrainian elections, new international security systems, threats to both Ukraine and the U.S., and the important question of funding cuts to exchange programs.

Uzbekistan

Sharing Theater with Children and the Elderly

During December, 13 alumni took 65 children from the Republican Children's Poliomyelitis Hospital to the Youth Theater of Uzbekistan to see "The Party of Misbehavior" in honor of International Day of Disabled People and Constitution Day. Later that month, alumni brought performers from the National Theater of Uzbekistan and the Russian Drama Theater of Uzbekistan to help them bring joy to the 180 elderly residents of the Tashkent Veterans House before the New Year. The performers sang songs from the residents' youth, and many members of the audience were moved to tears, while others danced. The alumni had decorated the clubroom, which added to the festive atmosphere. Following the performances the alumni led the residents to the cafeteria for sweets, tea, and cake, and personally delivered food to those who are unable to walk or have serious diseases.

The Wind of Change

Nadezhda Stepanova '02
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"Hey, lady, would you get out of the way? Respect people's work! would you please?" screamed the worker, spreading hot, smelly asphalt. But a girl was running, leaving holes from the heels of her shoes in the hot asphalt that seemed to be breathing with the hot vapor. Things around didn't exist for her at that very moment – some other thoughts soaked up her attention. The girl didn't answer to the comment of the worker in the orange vest – just automatically turned back, strangely smiled and kept going.

It was a rainy, dark day - the kind of a day that is most common in the city of London. The raindrops were constant and started becoming annoying. But the girl in the black, unbuttoned coat didn't notice it – some other overwhelming thoughts invaded her mind.

It was autumn. Yellow, red, orange, and still green leaves of the now already naked and kind of embarrassed standing trees humbly descended to the ground – their flight was over.

Any inconspicuous stranger would have noticed the paper our heroine was holding. She was holding it close to her heart, even though it was almost completely torn apart from being wet and too tightly held by the shaking hands.

The mysterious girl headed towards the old park. As soon as she reached a bench, she sat on it, almost falling down, as if she was a tired animal racing away from a predator and now had a couple seconds to restore the panting breathing. The girl's mimicry changed unpredictably. One moment it seemed - she cried – the other – she smiled. But she never let the piece of paper out of her hands.

Little birds were jumping around, making funny noises, competing for the closest place to the bench. These tiny, cute sparrows were used to being fed by the visitors of the park. They weren't afraid of her and even started becoming obnoxious. The girl looked at them with the glass-like eyes of obvious indifference, but her lips shaped

into a strange smile that revealed pain, suffering, and hopelessness. Whatever.

The wind blew more and more, frightening the damp birds and causing their jumping away to safer places. The figure of the girl remained immovable in the persistent wind. For a second, the sitting figure smoothed the shrunk piece of paper and looked at it.

On the wrinkled paper there was an image of a person, drawn in black ink. The lines of the face had bled into a stream, collecting in the wrinkles' pits. She stared at the face, refusing to believe that the cold smile of the portrait didn't change its shape. The person in the portrait looked alive - the warmth and light the eyes still possessed. The girl had drawn the picture two days ago. The day after she got news that her friend died. The portrait lied – there was no light in the eyes – there was no person alive. The wind disheveled the edges of the paper, making a rustling, asking, crying sound, bringing back the familiar voice of the friend.

Suddenly clenched hands let go of the portrait, letting the wind carry it away. She let it go. The girl didn't stop it –it's been said deeply inside. "Farewell." It's been hard not to cling to the memory. The girl sat all alone in the populous park – wet – damp dead leaves were stubbornly clinging to her bare feet.

It was already quite dark. The weather was warm but windy, although the darkness seemed to cut the eyes with the sharpness of the bright stars. The dark silhouette of the trees seemed to hide the sound of the birds' beating wings. It was nearly impossible to see the snags of the benches. Walking on this ground almost seemed to be subconscious to the girl because she couldn't see where she was actually stepping. Her mind didn't care about that because the absence of exact space and time had dissolved into her current thoughts - that feeling of caring about nothing was something that girl tried to achieve with all the cells of her mind for a long time – though, it might have been just an accidental cage of emotions that she fell into. Everything she needed was gradually penetrating the tired mind- nothing, nothing. Nothing she needed. She fed the sick cells of her heart with the virtual reality of imagination. No people, no "snags" of memories, just drops, drops, drops. From her eyes. ■

Saying it with Your Eyes

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Photo by Ekaterina Dremkova

Some people can say everything about a person just by looking at him/her; others need to get to know this person better before saying anything. But there are not many people who can tell what kind of person you are just by looking in your eyes.

Some time ago I realized that people can control their behaviour, facial expressions, and language, but they cannot change their eyes. These two little things, which some people think of as vision devices, and others as objects of beauty, can say not only what kind of person you are, but also what you feel and think about at a given moment.

Ancient Egyptians worshipped the Sun and they showed the Sun as the eye. "Your beams make the eyes of all your creatures" – these are the words from the Egyptian hymn to Aton, god of the Sun. This proves that even at that time, eyes played a great role in people's lives.

In one of the stories of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle about Mr. Sherlock Holmes, this genius detective tells his companion, Doctor Watson, exactly what he (Doctor Watson) is thinking about just observing his eyes for some time.

I am sure that every person at least once saw eyes full of love and felt that love in their heart.

In this 21st century we have so many possibilities to express ourselves: our feelings, our love and attraction to those we love. Why not do it with our eyes? Because if we say it with our eyes then we will say it with love: eyes cannot lie!

Look into each other's eyes and talk not with your mouth, but with your heart! ■

Breaking Free

It's a movie, it's a dream, & the dream is coming true.

Kamilla Sultanova '00
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Moviemaker Kamilla Sultanova '00

The moviemaking happened thanks to YPMN (Young People's Media Network) UNICEF workshop in Reykjavik, Iceland in October 2004. There were 20 youngsters ages 14 - 20 from all over Scandinavia: Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, the Aaland Islands and Denmark. It was a great experience to be the only "non-Scandinavian" and represent both Denmark and Uzbekistan. Oops, to present myself, I am Kamilla Sultanova from Uzbekistan, studying in Denmark.

Along with 20 students there were three girls from the European Cultural Foundation, Holland, to assist with editing the movies. UNICEF Coordinator Chris and staff of the UNICEF office in Reykjavik were taking care of our stomachs, transportation, leisure, etc. The most remarkable thing in Iceland is swimming in outdoor pools filled with water from natural hot springs. The temperature of the water in the pools ranges from 25 to 44 degrees Celsius. You have to go and experience this. Imagine that the temperature outside is -5 and you are in an outdoor pool!

Workshop

We were there for five days: making scenarios of our movies, shooting, editing, presenting and experiencing Iceland. The topics of movies were to be anything regarding youth issues, be it youth discrimination or participation in the society, voting rights, or child abuse, etc. The length of the movies had to be precisely one minute.

I chose the subject of young girls' issues in Uzbekistan. It was actually a self-portrayal fighting for my rights to live as an independent girl. Since many Uzbek girls are not educated and deprived of right to work, and as a result many get married and live like baby-making machines. But, this trend

is changing (a tribute for example to all alumni girls!) and I want to show hope and the positive side by making this movie.

My plot in brief.

Malika is washing dishes when her Mom walks in. Malika enthusiastically asks her Mom if she could go to an interview and gets a negative answer. Angry Malika goes out. Later she contemplates two scenarios for her future: one future is living with a husband and expecting a child at an early age. And the second future is when she is an office representative, educated, and works with people and goes on business trips. She reaches her dream. That is why I call the movie *Breaking Free*.

Making it happen. We were four on my crew. I was an actor and a director, Michael from Sweden was an outstanding operator, Frederick from Greenland was assisting Michael with equipment, and Amanda from Sweden was a watchdog for people coming into UNICEF so we were not interrupted during the shootings. The process of filming was fun. The most fun was when we were in this -5 cold outside Reykjavik city airport. We drove there to shoot an airplane taking off. It was so cold, and we hopped in the car. Suddenly we heard the airplane roar, Michael jumped out, but at that time we saw the flying machine too far off in the sky waving to us "bye bye kiddos."

Oh my, the next airplane was in one hour. So we came back again (thanks to our driver Anna from UNICEF), this time shaking outside the car. I couldn't stand straight, because I was fighting with the wind. Time goes by; we were becoming icy statues. But all of a sudden out of the cloudy snowing sky, we hear the airplane flying out, Michael holding camera, runs after the plane and I could hear he was cursing. "My fingers are frozen. I hardly pressed the Rec button." But we got some shots and luckily didn't have to return again to the airport!

Then the Dutch girls edited the movies as we wanted. And on the fifth day we had 20 one-minutes and the Icelandic TV Channel RUV filmed us for their documentary and we all were shown on Icelandic TV. It was rewarding and fun. We were all proud of our productions. It was a lot of communication and cooperation in this workshop. I was the oldest in the group but I managed to have fun with them and be one of them. There was a big discussion about Uzbekistan, since majority hardly knew where I am from (like in the USA, I was re-asked Pakistan?!). And I was glad I was patient enough, to again tell the stories of my Farawaystan-Uzbekistan.

And this workshop gave me so much knowledge not only about Scandinavian countries, people, Iceland, and moviemaking, it gave me knowledge about myself too. It was the time I could observe my "personal development" from where I was and where I am now.

Opportunity for Alumni:

There are workshops which are held in Central Asia and Russia, as well as the Balkan region. Conditions apply. Please check out the website www.theoneminutesjr.org. Even if you have your videos send them in and win an award and be shown on BBC.

To see the movie URL: http://www.theoneminutesjr.org/mmmcms/public/index.php?thissection_id=10&country_id=13 or www.theoneminutesjr.org and search by my name. Quicktime required. ■

BEST YOUTH NGO OF THE YEAR 2004

Tel/Fax: (3741) 56 87 86
E-mail: yfa@yfa.am
13/2 Khanjyan St., Yerevan, Armenia
URL: <http://www.yfa.am>

In February 2005, "Youth For Achievements" Educational Non-governmental Organization was recognized as the Best Youth Non-governmental Organization of 2004 and granted the "Haykyan 2004" award. The ceremony is an annual event organized by All Armenian Youth Foundation. The "Haykyan" award, which has a five-year history, is bestowed on the best

key players and projects in the youth field. We are proud to acknowledge that our ten-year devotion to the betterment of Armenia and empowerment of youth activity has achieved recognition. We believe that this success is a unity of commitment of our members and staff, assistance of our partners and donors, and the result of joint undertakings of friends and supporters of YFA.

Formed in 1994 by a group of young enthusiastic graduates of the FREEDOM Support Act Future Leaders Exchange program aspiring to dedicate their efforts towards development of Armenia, YFA serves the mission of promoting ideas of democracy, freedom and humanism and providing assistance to our country. As a leading youth organization, YFA has committed

its resources and supported initiatives aimed at youth empowerment and raising a generation with increased civic consciousness and public engagement. We implement a variety of projects covering such a wide scope of human activity as education, arts and culture, community development, entrepreneurship and human rights and will continue contributing to the development of Armenia and remain true to our mission and beneficiaries.

For additional information please contact Ani Hakobyan '00, Public Relations Officer.



The FLEX alumni network is only as strong as you make it! Please help us share your news with fellow alumni. Send news and updates to bradleyherald@actr.ru.

Class of '94

Kazakhstan

Yulia Serova is a program associate for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Judicial Systems Development Project in Central Asia. jmaliyeva@iris.kz

Russia

Grigoriy Ivankov (Yekaterinburg) published an English language guide to Yekaterinburg, which offers addresses of hotels, entertainment centers, and diplomatic services. He also organized an English language club within "Poliglot" language courses. kalamatsupa@mail.ru

Uzbekistan

Dildora Akhmalalievna is working as an office manager/accountant at the Fergana office of the International Secretariat for Water's Rural Water Supply Project funded by the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development. radp@vodiv.uz

Class of '95

Russia

Ekaterina Timofeeva (Saratov) defended her Candidate of Science dissertation in sociology on the topic "International Connections of the Regions as the Factor of Socio-Political Development of Modern Russia" at Saratov State University in 2004. ktimof@mail.ru

Class of '96

Russia

Alexey Kononov (Yoshkar-Ola) is working as an associate at the U.S. law firm White and Case LLC in Moscow. alexey_kononov@mail.ru

Julya Polustrueva received a Bachelor's degree in political science from Lincoln University College, Buenos Aires, as well as Licenciatura in Humanities from National University of San Martin, Buenos Aires, Argentina. She recently began working for a British talent search company, and writes "I hope this info can help me to reunite with some of my friends from the past." jpolustrueva@hotmail.com

Ekaterina Prokoshina (Blagoveshensk) moved to Novorossiysk, Krasnodarskiy krai where she has started a company that sells international literature and opened a bookstore called "Polyglot." polyglots@mail.ru

Class of '97

Armenia

Arpine Avetisyan works as the director of career placement and the counseling center at the Yerevan State Agricultural Academy. aavetisyan@armenia.com

Tajikistan

Safar Sultanov began working as an audit assistant at KPMG in Bishkek in March. safar.sultanov@gmail.com

Uzbekistan

Aziza Maksudova (Tashkent) works as an assistant attorney at the Tashkent City Bar Association. aziza_maksudova@pochta.ru

Class of '98

Belarus

Dmitriy Basinski is working as logistics manager at Pan-Invest, a company trading in furniture fittings and accessories. He graduated from Minsk State Linguistic University in 2003. basinski_d@yahoo.com

Kyrgyzstan

Nataliya Stolyarova works as public relations and advertising manager for "Seitek" trading center in Bishkek. nataliya@freenet.kg

Ukraine

Svitlana Buko (Kyiv) graduated from St. Petersburg University of Humanities and Social Sciences with a major in art management and a minor in personnel management. She completed her studies with the help of a Soros Supplementary Grant in 2002 and returned to Ukraine to pursue a career and graduate studies at the Ukrainian Academy of Science. She currently works for IREX-Ukraine as a coordinator of Ukraine Media Partnership Program, developing professionally managed Ukrainian media outlets that produce objective news and reporting. sbuko@kyiv.irex.org

Class of '99

Azerbaijan

Dilara Jafarova works as monitoring and evaluation specialist at the World Bank's Azerbaijan Rural Investment Project.

Georgia

Mariam Gabedava is working on a Master's degree in political science at Central European University. gabedavam@hotmail.com

Moldova

Mariana Stratulat graduated from the Department of English Language and

Literature of the State University of Moldova in June 2004 and became president of the charity foundation Mission without Borders. mariateol@yahoo.com

Russia

Anton Zhukov (Ryazan) is now the head of the tax and legal department at Advocacy Bureau #1 in Moscow, dealing with tax compliance, corporate law and arbitration. He will graduate from the Higher School of Economics this spring. zhuckov@nm.ru

Ukraine

Anna Opanasyuk (Kyiv) is employed by the AIDS Foundation East-West as a regional communications specialist for Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, and the Baltic States. aopanasjuk@yahoo.com

Class of '00

Azerbaijan

Lala Huseynli is employed as dean's office assistant of the School of Law and Social Sciences at Khazar University. lhuseynli@khazar.org

Georgia

Keti Vardigoreli works at the United Energy Distribution Company of Georgia as a commercial cycle monitoring specialist. vardijn@hotmail.com

Nino Kemoklidze was one of 41 successful candidates selected out of 2200 applicants at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has taken up her first diplomatic job as an attache in the American Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia. ninimima@yahoo.com

Russia

Yelena Babkova (Chelyabinsk) won the Education in the U.K. contest organized by the British Council and did a three-month internship at the University of Aberystwyth in Wales. Yelena was also awarded the Chelyabinsk governor's scholarship. elenababkova@aol.com

Turkmenistan

Tatiana Khan (Dashoguz) works as a secretary - interpreter at the Ukrainian oil and gas pipeline company E/S Petro Gas Asia. She currently lives in Nebitdag. tina35@rambler.ru

Ukraine

Oxana Nesterenko (Kyiv) participated in the Northern European Youth Forum 2004 in Stavanger, Norway. Oxana moderated the Media Team. The topic of the forum was Millennium Development Goals in Action. In 2004, Oxana received a FLEX alumni grant to partially cover her travel expenses. She was also accepted to the Economics Education

Bradley Bits

and Research Consortium Master of Arts program in Economics at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy. oxana_nest@hotmail.com

Anastasya Ryabchuk (Kyiv) spent March-May 2004 as an intern at the Population Research Laboratory of the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada, and conducted a research project on homelessness, as a winner of the Ukraine-Alberta Scholarship Program. Since fall 2001, she has been working with the homeless in Kyiv, most recently as the coordinator of a Meals on Wheels program for the homeless which is coordinated by the youth group of St. Alexander's Roman Catholic Church (English-speaking community). A sociology major at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, she plans to have her diploma paper on homelessness published as a book this spring. ryabchuk@iatp.kiev.ua

Class of '01

Armenia

Ashot Margaryan, who maintains a 4.0 GPA in the Yerevan State University Immunology Department, was awarded a scholarship to study in London for three months. ashotmarg@yahoo.com

Russian

Elena Pokrovskaya (Krasnoyarsk) was awarded a scholarship from the Vladimir Potanin Charity Fund. She was one of 20 Krasnoyarsk State University students competitively selected for this award. Students must have excellent grades and demonstrate outstanding business and leadership skills and creativity. leka1801@mail.ru

Ukraine

Dmytro Say (Mykolayiv) started a charity campaign for orphanage children and organized two New Year's concerts for the orphans of Mykolayiv. dimitrious2002@yahoo.com

Class of '02

Tajikistan

Timur Rakhimov participated in the Ethnic Diversity and Conflict Management Training of Trainers Program in Budapest, Hungary and became a certified trainer. The program was designed for participants from eastern and western Europe by the Managing Multiethnic Diversity Program of Open Society Institute Budapest, but Timur's outstanding achievements impressed the organizers and he was accepted to the program from Tajikistan. timajon001@hotmail.com

Russia

Pavel Alashev (Samara) worked for the U.S. company I-Documents while in the U.S. on the

Work and Travel program in summer 2004. He has become a junior developer at this company, and after returning home was able to keep his previous position and now works remotely. pashaalash@hotmail.com

Tatiana Haikina (Chita) took part in the Council of Europe training course in Irkutsk in October, the aim of which was to strengthen cooperation between non-governmental and governmental key actors in the development of youth policy in Siberia. In February 2005, she took part in the First Youth Forum in the Zabaikalye region and was chosen as a delegate to the Zabaikalye region Youth Parliament. tanya2000@hotmail.ru

Ukraine

Nina Borysova (Odesa) was selected for a three-month internship at Presidential Classroom, which is a workshop organized for high school students. bnina@ukr.net

Maryna Chornaya (Kharkiv) became vice president at the Kharkiv AIESEC. AIESEC, the world's largest student organization, has a global network of 50,000 members across more than 83 countries and territories. marinachornaya@yahoo.com

Class of '03

Azerbaijan

Narmin Orujova has been working as a translator/interpreter at Washington Group International-Azerbaijan branch since October 2004. narminfsa10@yahoo.com

Kyrgyzstan

Bekzat Madanbekov works as editor and designer for *Investments Now* Kyrgyz business magazine. madambekov_b@mail.auca.kg

Kazakhstan

Zhibek Karamanova won second place at the Jessup Moot Court mock court debates that were held among Almaty university students in January. zhibektiger@hotmail.com

Kyrgyzstan

Shamamed Seitmuradov volunteers at AKI Press (Agency for Commerce Information). seitmuradov_s@mail.auca.kg

Russia

Viktoria Mun was one of only 20 high school graduates in St. Petersburg who received the governor's certificate of academic excellence. Viktoria is now a first-year student at St. Petersburg State University's Department of Sociology. She started singing professionally during her FLEX year and now has participated in concerts at the State University Auditorium. vikausa16@yahoo.com

Class of '04

Turkmenistan

Minara Ismailova (Turkmenbashi) received a grant from the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy to hold a series of presentations about the pollution of the Caspian Sea over a ten-month period. minaraismailova@yahoo.com

Ukraine

Stanislav Edel (Kirovohrad) won a photography contest and his astronomy photographs now adorn the walls of the Kirovohrad Kollegium conference center. kvazar200388@mail.ru

Uzbekistan

Igor Gubin (Nukus) was offered the position of basketball coach at Youth Sports School of Nukus. He became interested in basketball while he was in America, and would like to popularize it in Karakalpakstan. The coaches of the Uzbek Army Basketball Team have also noticed him, and say they might invite him to play on their team. Gubin_igoryok@yahoo.com

Kamoliddin Norbaev is creating an IT center with professor Kim Hyonkgi from South Korea. The center will open soon for students and teachers of Tashkent State Agrarian University. kamjal2001@yahoo.com

All Classes

Belarus

Anna Tretiakova '01 and **Yulia Zenkovich '02** were chosen as class presidents in their respective universities – Belarusian State University and Minsk State Linguistic University. annatretjakova@hotmail.com and z_yulya@yahoo.com

Uzbekistan

Atabek Rimbaev '01 and **Alexander Solohin '04** cooperated with three PiE and TEA teachers in Nukus to organize a chess and checker tournament for disabled children in December 2004. atahanim2003@yahoo.com (**Rimbaev**)

Karina Chupina '97 of St. Petersburg, Russia (travelmind21@yahoo.com), **Fariz Ismailzade '96** of Baku, Azerbaijan (fariz_1998@yahoo.com), and **Raihan Izimbetova '98** from Turtkul, Uzbekistan (rizimbetova@yahoo.com), traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in the Civic Education Week for current FLEX students February 27-March 5. In addition to communicating with FLEX students, they shared their post-exchange program accomplishments with State Department officials and Congressional representatives.

Essay

Try Yourself as a Fiction Translator

Alyona Bocharova '98
St. Petersburg, Russia/ Badger, MN
btfaith@mail.ru

Literary translation turns out to be not that different from just writing, as you create a text of your own. It is good practice for those who always dreamt of becoming a fiction writer, as well as for professional translators who are not satisfied with boring technical translations that the contemporary managerial world offers them.

I am not sure how I came to this. First I worked as a translator for cultural institutions such as the Pro Arte Institute and the British Council. And then there was this strange but inspiring offer to translate the whole novel *Altar Ego* by Kathy Lette from the Red Fish Publishing House, now a part of the Amphora Publishing House. On a general level there is nothing mysterious in such a literary translation, as it is a typical romantic comedy with a soap-opera plot and chicky girl-talk -- no Leo Tolstoy or John Fowles. Yet when you are done with the book you get a strange feeling. You look at the Russian text and you know every word of it as if you wrote it yourself, not merely translated it.

Then there was the second novel of the same type, but written by a guy, Mil Millington, that is due to come out in May 2005. Amphora's texts in the romantic comedy series are the kind of texts that you can find in glossy magazines, only much longer and with a basic plot. So if you have experience writing for such publications and possess a fine

Language of Dance

Alexandra Markova '03
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markova_sasha@mail.ru

When I saw the theme of the next *Bradley* the first thing that came to my mind was one of my greatest experiences in the United States. I thought, "Oh, wow, it exactly fits the topic!" While in the U.S., I had an experience of telling people very important information about a very hot topic in a nonverbal way. It was a topic about tolerance and being tolerant. So many words have been said, so many plays have been staged, so many pictures have been painted on this topic. I decided to also do it creatively: I showed my thoughts through dancing.

On January 19, 2003, on the day when Mt. Spokane High School celebrated Martin Luther King Day, a group of American girls, my Finnish friend Eija-Uusi Tarkka and I presented our project, which we had been preparing for a couple of months. I suggested that Eija help me make a performance that would consist of three dances: Russian, American (cowboy) and Latino-American samba. The idea was to show the students that the culture and origin of every country is unique and different, and at the same time it's beautiful and amazing. More over these cultures can stand together and create an excellent mosaic. In our show the energetic Russian "kalinka" was followed by American cowboy jumps. Then the very popular nowadays hot samba hip moves finished the scene. The explosion of applaude broke out! We presented the dance for 1300 people and had a great success. I think we fulfilled our main goal and showed everybody how particularly beautiful the culture of every country is.

That was the creative way to express myself. I was eager to share what I have been doing for 11 years already. I mean dancing. The body also

sense of humor, you are definitely capable of translating a book like this. Moreover, Amphora and other publishing houses with similar book series are often in need of young translators who know the language and are ready to do the translation quickly and decently. Though I wouldn't say necessarily professionally.

So after two books I moved on to a more serious task, a non-fiction book by Ad Marginem Publishing house. Ad Marginem gained its scandalous reputation throughout the 90s with publications of Vladimir Sorokin's *Goluboye Salo* (Blue Fat), Eduard Limonov, Alexandr Prokhanov (*Mister Hexogen*) and - just recently - Elena Tregubova, its trademark being a blend of highbrow intellectualness and hipness. Yet the book that I am now translating is a bit different. It is a non-fiction book about the TV-series *Sex and the City*, a collection of semi-academic essays on sexuality, feminism and the genre of situation comedy. It is a truly Ad Marginem project with all the marginality and derisiveness that is peculiar to their publications: professors of English and American universities elaborate on orgasms, Prada bags and Manolo Blahnik shoes, fashion journalism and queer sexual practices. It can hardly be called pop-literature, as it is serious and complicated in its language use and deep in content.

So in the end I would say that if you would like to try yourself as a fiction translator go ahead and start off with romantic comedies that are fun and good for practice of translation. Then, upon gaining some experience, you can move on to a more serious project from which you get real joy. ■

has a language and you can show a lot with it: your feelings, fears, wishes and dreams. You can teach people by it. And you can't lie doing this: when you hear the music you suddenly feel free from everything and your inner world comes out and mixes with the rhythmic sounds in the pure sense.

In my view everybody is talented and creative in his own way. One just has to be brave and not to fear to express it. Being very energetic and full of new ideas, I wanted to share it with the people around me. And what I really enjoyed was that people were eager to participate in activities I was proposing. That means that our society is not indifferent, and is willing to be involved. One has to take opportunities that the world is providing for us. ■



Markova and Friends Celebrated Martin Luther King Day through Multi-cultural Dance at Mt. Spokane High School

<http://www.mindglitter.com/contents.htm>

Mindglitter is an e-zine (electronic magazine) devoted to revealing the talent of young writers and artists junior high through college age. *Mindglitter's* goal is to make that talent reachable and evident to the common browser, and potentially be recognized nationally and/or world wide. Because this is a platform for such talent, *Mindglitter* looks for quality pieces. *Mindglitter* is not an editing service--it is a place for you to submit an important piece of finished work that you feel deserves recognition, and to view other pieces of equal importance. *Mindglitter* has high standards for itself as well as the artists and writers who submit their work.

Profiles

**Laurentiu Hadircă**

Home town: Chisinau, Moldova
U.S. City and State: Lenox, Georgia
Year returned home: 1998
Email: Hadircal@hotmail.com

Education: LLB (Bachelor of Laws) in Public Law, with a specialization in Criminal Law, Moldova State University (1999-2003). Graduate Diploma in Political Science, Invisible College of Moldova (2002-2003). LLM (Master of Laws) in Comparative Constitutional Law,

Central European University (Budapest, Hungary, 2003-2004). Currently enrolled for a Master's Degree in International Relations at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia (scheduled for February – July 2005).

A personal achievement I'm proud of: My Master's Degree (with merit) in Comparative Constitutional Law at the Central European University, for reasons of courses' complexity and intellectual challenge.

The global issue of greatest concern to you and why: The prevailing of economic and security interests over declared goals of democracy promotion. The newfound goal of promoting democracy in other parts of the world is (mis-)used by some major powers as a disguise in their pursuit of realpolitik (mainly economic and/or security) interests. To my mind that compromises the otherwise

noble objective of promoting democracy and that of intervening in intra-state affairs for humanitarian reasons; and not only does it compromise such noble endeavors, but through the unilateral means employed it also undermines the pillars on which global order and peace, however imperfect, have rested for the last half a century.

The local issue of greatest concern to you and why: My country being a red spot in an orange sea, as well as remaining Europe's poorest country.

An interesting FLEX alumni activity in which I took part: International Education Week, as it offered me a most welcome opportunity to bring some of my students from the Law Academy to the Alumni Resource Center and have them attend interesting presentations about student exchange programs with the U.S., as well as familiarize them with the resources available at the ARC. Also, I participated in the assessment of some high school students' essays, as part of a competition organized by American Councils.

Right now I'm reading: A. Sajo, *Limited Government. An Introduction to Constitutionalism*.

How I have made use of my U.S. experience: My U.S. experience helped define my character and made me self-reliant and independent. It has exposed me to a different culture and helped me understand the universality of many values. It has also determined me to continuously seek to complete my overall education.

What I'd like to say to fellow alumni: Make the most of your skills, and use that to your country's benefit.

**Denis V. Savelyev**

Home town: Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, Russia
U.S. City and State: Parkersburg, WV
Year returned home: 1995

Email: kamland@inbox.ru

Education: Finished Ohio Valley College in 1999 with a Bachelor's degree in business administration; finished Far Eastern State Technical University in 2000 with a Specialist's degree in business management.

Current place of work and title: Manager of foreign relations the fishing company Sobol, Ltd. and operational manager at Adventure Land Travel Company. The main activity of Adventure Land Travel Company is organizing fishing, rafting, hiking and hunting tours on Kamchatka Peninsula, Russia. Highlights of work at Sobol, Ltd. – Registration of custom declarations and export of seafood to Asian countries, financial control over cash inflows from sales of seafood. Highlights of work at Adventure Land Travel Company – development of relationships with national and foreign travel companies, organization of tours and development of travel itineraries, financial control over incomes and expenses from the operational activities. I can add that Kamchatka has great and gorgeous nature and cannot be compared with anything in the world. People who just once visit Kamchatka fall in love with this land.

Educational, Professional, and Personal Goals: I plan on more higher education, to receive an MBA degree in the near future, and increase my knowledge about running a business. Concerning my professional goals, I want to establish strong relationships with leading American travel companies in order to increase the number of tourists visiting Kamchatka and bring Russia and America closer to each other.

How I feel about the future of my country: I believe that Russia will be one of the leading countries in the world with a strong economy and high social values.

Right now I'm reading: a textbook *Financial Management of Corporations*, edited by Romanovskiy.

How I have made use of my U.S. experience: Many goals that seemed impossible to reach several years ago become easier to achieve now. For me this program was like the door to the opened world. It helped me understand people in America: their language, traditions and customs, their culture, the way of living, and mentality. It is very important for everybody in the modern world to understand each other and know that we all are very much alike regardless on your nationality, status or position. America has become very close to me like Russia because I have met many wonderful people who were willing to help me to succeed and on whose support I could rely during the stay. By giving us the education and understanding the world and people from other countries, the FLEX program opens new opportunities for young people to be successful in life. The FLEX program opens the door for us and after all it is up to us to decide what life path we choose, what we achieve, work for, and how we find the right way by using the knowledge and experience, but it definitely gives us a chance for our development.

**Valentina Goloborodko**

Home town: Odesa, Ukraine
U.S. City and State: Chicago, IL
Year returned home: 1995
Email: tinabg@cal.berkeley.edu

Education: MD, MPH Odesa State Medical University, University of California, Berkeley
Current place of work and title: Physician, City Hospital #3

Educational, Professional, and Personal Goals. Professional: Open a personal private practice and later a private clinic,

facilitate the development of business in medicine. Fight smoking and tobacco companies. **Personal:** See a smile on my husband's face at least as often as I did before the wedding and give birth to at least one child.

A personal achievement I'm proud of: The contribution I made to the Orange revolution in the Ukraine.

How I feel about the future of my country: I feel extremely optimistic both business- and politically-wise. With all the enormous resources fuelled with motivation, patriotism and the respect we've gained internationally, we will economically overgrow Poland very quickly.

The local issue of greatest concern to you and why: It is the health condition of my fellow citizens and the quality of healthcare services that they are getting

today. The condition of hospitals in Odesa is terrifying and so is the economic burden of disease on each individual. A part of the economic responsibility for healthcare needs to be shifted to the State, more and better public health programs need to be implemented and measures are needed to increase the professionalism of healthcare workers.

Right now I'm reading: *Lexus and the Olive Tree* by Thomas Friedman

How I have made use of my U.S. experience: First of all I was able to get a scholarship and receive a master's degree from one of the top schools in the country. Second, it gave me an opportunity to change the attitude of many people in the Ukraine towards the United States in general and the American mentality and politics in particular. This, together with efforts of other alumni, made the Orange revolution in the Ukraine possible.

What I'd like to say to fellow alumni: First, don't listen to your parents much. The difference between our generation and theirs is much greater than between theirs and their parents. We all live in the transition period and our mentality needs to be different from theirs. The way for us to create something new and better is to do things differently from them. Second, people tend to lose more from not doing enough than from risking. Don't be afraid that something won't come out right or you won't succeed. Youth is the time for ventures and taking chances. Hurry up and do as much as you can before you've got family and kids and the responsibility for them. Make one big bright adventure out of your youth! There won't be time for it later – do it NOW!

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