

TBILISI REPORT
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H. Kenneth Walker M.D.
Professor of Medicine
Department of Medicine
Emory University School of Medicine

Atlanta-Tbilisi Partnership Activities Fiscal Year 1995

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We have heard a street rumor that AID has decided to increase substantially the money given to us for fiscal year 1995. The Save the Children organization is a grantee from AID to manage a \$5 million grant aimed principally at women and children. AID suggested to them that they might want "to work closely with the Atlanta/Tbilisi partnership." In addition the UN Humanitarian Appeal and WHO has indicated they would like to work with us on proposals to spend money they have that would fit in with our activities and plans. We will know certainly about funding by the end of Jan./beginning of Feb.

1. Become Emory University Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). The Minister made the point to me he would strongly like for this to happen, if possible, and for me to be in charge of it. He would then like to get with Jim Baker and George Schultz and others who are close to Schevardnadze and steer all U.S. Funds for Georgia to our NGO. We would continue to participate fully with AIHA just as previously. This will enable us to set up the Maternal and Child Health Program (MCH) in such a way as to get money as a subgrantee from AID, as well as other organizations such as Save the Children, the UN Appeal Fund, WHO and others. Emory Public Health School is said to have done this in the past, and it is a simple matter.
2. Move the Tbilisi office to a more suitable location where a generator can be installed to give power at all times, as well as other amenities. The Minister has suggested this might be in or near a new Center for National Health that he is setting up in a few weeks (I met the new director). We also need more space if we expand our activities, e.g., MCH. We have \$3000 to buy a new vehicle. If we expand as seems likely we might need another one, perhaps a jeep type suitable for the Georgian environment, since there will be a lot of activities that need to be monitored throughout the country.
3. Recruit a new director and associate director (who will be hired if we get the MCH program and who will work principally with it) for the Tbilisi side. We need to come up with a Work Plan for 1995 as soon as possible if we get more funding. One possibility would be to contract with someone to come down to Atlanta for two weeks, then go out to Georgia for one month or less, and come up with the Plan. This would give that person an opportunity to see all the details of the job, and us an opportunity to evaluate her/him. Hire a new associate director in Atlanta whose duties will be these: MCH; explore and constantly monitor new sources of funding on the U.S. side by trips to Washington, etc.; work with Paul Klever in other partnership activities. A piece that I suggest we add to the office is Outcomes Research, headed if possible by David Baker in our department. He would work closely with Jim Setzer (Health Care Reform) and the MCH project. The changes occurring in Georgia offer an unsurpassed opportunity for this sort of research, and would also add a valuable piece to our activities that we need.
4. Maternal and Child Health Care/Reproductive Health Project. Susie Buchter and Al Brann will be in complete charge of this activity. One or both will go to Tbilisi on Jan. 6th and work closely with: Save the Children (which is the grantee from AID of \$1.5 million, and which has been instructed by AID to "work closely with the Atlanta/Tbilisi partnership); UN Humanitarian Appeal; WHO; other organizations as appropriate. All of these organizations are congregating in Tbilisi for two weeks beginning Jan. 8th to put together funding. We envision coming up with a comprehensive proposal that will cover the entire country, and be a fairly complex combination of funding from a number of sources. We hope to finish this proposal in the next three weeks and be funded through Sept. 1995 by the beginning of February, with the necessity of beginning work immediately. There is a significant likelihood of the AID funding being extended for fiscal 1996 according to Save the Children; will know in a few

weeks they say.

5. Health Care Reform. Jim Setzer of the Public Health School will be in total charge of this part of the project. The Ministry Task Force on Reform wants him to come over this month to help them, as well as to prepare for the next conference in May 1995. We have heard that \$300,000 (less AIHA cut of about 28% or so) will be given to the Partnership for this activity in 1995. There also probably will be World Bank funds for this activity, some perhaps in combination with the MCH project.
6. Outreach activities: the AID term. They would like for us to use the new money to extend our efforts to other parts of Georgia. I spoke with the Minister about this and he listed: Kutaisi (the center of Western Georgia); Poti; Zugdidi (nearest Abkhazia, and politically very sensitive; Georgian government wishes to establish all sorts of initiatives there that will encourage people in Abkhazia to see Georgia as their future, not an independent Abkhazia); Telavi (center of Eastern Georgia). He would like for Kutaisi to be viewed as a regional center second only to Tbilisi, with training facilities, specialized health care facilities, etc. He has just met with the Health Minister of Turkey, and they mutually agreed to develop in Tbilisi a Transregional Health Care Center that would serve as a center of care especially in ophthalmology, neurology and cardiology for Turkey and Central Asia; Shevarnadze and the Prime Minister of Turkey met recently and gave their strong support. The Minister would like our help in planning this. We also need to get LaGrange involved with Poti. I feel the physicians in LaGrange will be strong participants.
7. Assessment Team for Health Care Administration School. Georgia desperately needs such a school. It would speak to health care managers, including business aspects and Public Health aspects. The Minister made the point that everyone who trains over here (e.g., George Kickinidze for two months in our Public Health School) is being given top assignments in health care. My view is to establish a school, and let it give a variety of types of courses, ranging from one day workshops to degrees. We would help them set up the school. We would send rotating faculty over for one+ months, with one person being totally responsible for the entire operation. Satellite center(s) would be established in Kutaisi and perhaps Telavi. Ultimately there would be a substantial Georgian faculty who would engage in productive scholarly research as well as teaching. I talked with Sherry Carlin of AID, and she liked the idea, and suggested we begin with an assessment team that would spend 3-4 weeks in Georgia and explore in depth how to go about doing this. I would see Emory Public Health, Emory Business, and perhaps Georgia State Health Administration (caveat about this) as the people to make up the assessment team. I consider this a top priority.
8. Assessment Team for Nursing School. Same concept as above. Faculty from here would work with them to set up the school. Begin with assessment team. Judy Wold of Georgia State has already started work on this, and we need to get Emory Nursing involved with her and Laura Hurt at Grady.
9. Assessment team for Mental Health. Mrs. Schevardnadze, the Minister of Health and Jabba Joseliani said drugs in the young were one of their most pressing problems; one that has exploded after the Abkhazian war, and caught them totally by surprise. Second is stress. The Minister made the interesting and new (to me) point that the "politicization" of the population (Gamsurkurdia etc) of the population has greatly increased the stress level. He said the same has occurred in other countries of the former Soviet Union, and suggested this was something worthy of study. Then there is the problem of schizophrenia, etc. So three problems. Some assessment work has already been done by others (e.g., UMCOR last year; we participated) as Michele Lipner pointed out to me. We need to ask Alan Stoudemire if he would plan the team and either lead it or find someone who is interested. This would eventually lead to a major project in Georgia, perhaps with collaboration of the Carter Center. The Acting Director of the Psychiatry Institute is to spend one month with us in the spring, and his agenda needs to be worked into this project.

10. 911 System: the Minister wants urgently to set up a 911 system in Georgia, with policemen, paramedics and firemen being trained in CPR. Pointed out in the former Soviet Union the decision was made to concentrate this training in clinics, in contrast to U.S. We already have some plans about this, and they need probably to be extended to where we set up a training center in Tbilisi and Kutaisi. Gail Anderson is planning on a trip later this winter.

The Minister said they have had a lot of experience with military medicine recently (!), and would like to get with U.S. Colleagues and compare results.

11. Hospital Library: I think City Hospital #2 is going to be completed to a workable degree by summer (see below). Beverly Allen and Morehouse will continue to work with this project.
12. Internet Library Project: I met with the rectors of Georgian Technical University, Tbilisi State University and the Medical Institute, with Jabba Ioseliani and the Minister about this project. The first step is an Internet connection that would go from the main node (Mimosi Hard current choice) to Georgian Technical University, where the file servers, etc., would be; Georgian Technical University would maintain this part. Then there be an initial electronic library somewhere in Tbilisi (opinion varies on where: new National Center for Health Care (Minister and I think myself, since his support is vital); National Library (Ioseliani); one of the universities (rectors)). This initial library would not have to be large, and would be a pilot to get everything going. Its functions: anyone could come in to search (health; science; other); training librarians in informatics; starting a union catalog; starting the process of digitizing Georgian material of use and interest to rest of the world (Ioseliani emphasized this point, saying there are many documents related to early Christianity, etc., of great value). The next step would be to establish satellite libraries in other places in Tbilisi (the universities) and in regional centers using the telephone system and microwave technology when appropriate (Poti; Kutaisi; Zugdidi; Telavi, etc.).

We have interacted with Jeffrey Steele of the Congressional Human Rights Foundation. By this summer they will have established an Internet connection (Mimosi Hard company as base) that goes to Parliament, and we will get the equivalent of a 19,000 baud connection to it. I would like to do the following:

- a. Buy a full (\$7000/month) or half (\$3,500/month) Internet channel and pay for it out of partnership funds for an experimental period. We will immediately approach the Soros Foundation for continued funding for a period of 2-3 years. I think this will have a decent chance of success with the help of John Crow and his contacts, and given the fact that initially is all we will ask them for. We can consider asking them to fund some or all of the satellite libraries, especially outside Tbilisi. I think this would have a strong appeal to them, since it will include health, science and general library functioning, along with training of librarians in informatics.
 - b. Get funding from a variety of other sources (MCH project; Health Care Reform project) to buy the furniture and provide initial U.S. Technical assistance for the pilot/initial library. The library will be highly useful to MCH and Health Care Reform, so this is defensible, I think. Al Brann and Jim Setzer will need to include this part in their proposals, and indicate the additional funding from partnership funds.
 - c. Send out an assessment team (headed by Carol Burns, who will be the main person on this project) in the next few weeks to come up with detailed plans.
11. Georgian Leaders in Medicine. This project might now be funded by the Partnership totally. In the Spring the Minister has proposed and we have agreed to have the following come over: Director of Neurology Institute; Acting Director of Psychiatry Institute; new Director of National Center for Health Care (Amiran Gamkrelidze).

12. Tbilisi State Medical Institute. We now have the following programs: four students every six months (we have chosen the ones for end of Jan. Already); two to four faculty members each year (second set of two identified, coming in spring); two of our students going there in April, where they will teach the Georgian faculty how to set up and give a “Kaplan course” to prepare their students for USMLE exams. The student travel portion now is paid for by the students. We might consider adding this on both sides to the partnership funds. At the moment I feel this is sufficient for the Institute. We do need to fund some additional faculty travel, e.g., Jack Shulman, to help them with revising the entire curriculum, and also for equivalent people to come over here.

13. City Hospital #2. The Minister said he will come up with a decision about how to proceed with this project by Jan. 30th. I suspect it will be to partially fund the completion of the new building so outpatient diagnostic work with our new equipment can begin, thus bringing in money and beginning to fund the rest of it. He gave me to understand he did not think it feasible to scratch City Hospital #2 and find another hospital, and I basically agree. The International Monetary Fund froze all construction spending just at the time the Prime Minister was instructed by Shevardnadze to take over personally the construction. I think they will decide to sell public stock to finance about \$200,000. I expressed skepticism that anyone would buy, but the Minister said the magic of our help with equipment and technology was a potent force .

Sunday, Dec. 18th

Left Atlanta last night at 5:45 p.m., arrived in Hamburg, Germany about 10 a.m., immediately caught a puddle jumper to Cologne in order to take Air Georgia to Tbilisi tomorrow. Just as I arrived and experienced the really cold weather I discovered I had forgotten my overcoat. This trip, for the first time in my life, I meticulously made a list of every thing I needed to pack. Only problem is I forgot the overcoat. The proprietor at the Hotel Bristol has kindly lent me an old coat, which will be lifesaving. Cologne is shut down tighter than a hatbox on Sunday, and I leave before the stores open, otherwise I would buy one. Don't see any prospects of buying one in Tbilisi. Live and learn.

Dato, husband of my secretary Tamuna, and his friend Levan are to join me here tonight (they got a \$500 student flight to Frankfurt, compared to my \$1400 one, and are driving to Cologne). They are doing this just so I will have company and be taken care of to and from Tbilisi. After the overcoat incident I have decided I clearly need help.

Monday, Dec. 19th

Last night Dato Shengelia arrived in Cologne with his friend Levan, to go down to Tbilisi with me. We got up early and went down on a Germania flight. Germania serves a lot of Europe, is a German company that has some sort of joint arrangement with Georgia, and flies Boeing 737s. Clean, on time, a pleasure. Much superior to Air Georgia (old Aeroflot fraction) that goes out of Frankfurt. Downside is flying from Hamburg to Cologne, staying overnight. But it is definitely worth it.

Arrived at 5:30 p.m. in Tbilisi to some surprises. I was met by Giorgio Rurua, who spirited me from the airplane ramp to a Mercedes, with instructions that everything would be taken care of. Giorgio is the brother of Nick, who came to Atlanta several months ago with his wife Sophia. Nick is one of the chief lieutenants of Jabba Ioseliani, who is the most powerful and notable individual in Georgia outside of Mr. Shevardnadze. Nick had suggested I meet with Mr. Ioseliani, and I had agreed, but had not expected to be met at the airport. I was also met by Archil Kobaladze, our chief partner in Georgia, by Rima and Giorgio, the two faculty course directors who spent two months in the fall at Emory, by Irina Chanturishvili, the librarian (and mother of Levan Vasadze, who lives with me while going to Emory for an MBA) who spent four months at the Emory Medical Library, Roman Melia, the Mayor of Poti, and Dr. Zangaladze, father of Andro who is in Atlanta working in Neurology. I was told the Mercedes and a driver would be totally at my disposal during my two week stay in Georgia. I gratefully accepted, since it is the only Georgian car I have ever been in that has seat belts.

We went to Betsy Haskell's hotel. Betsy has been known to us since we met her the first Georgia visit, in Aug. 1992. Her husband worked for one of the computer companies, died at a young age, and Betsy became the economic adviser to the Republic of Georgia, and has lived here the last two years. Just bought an old house with many rooms, and converted it into a hotel. I always stayed at the Metechi Palace Hotel, but the American ambassador has declared it off limits to U.S. citizens due to violence there recently. Betsy has this old house with beautiful floors and furnishings. Reminded me of a fine old home in the mountains of North Carolina at Highlands or Cashiers. Fine Persian rugs, wonderful antique furniture, a warm and cheery atmosphere. Also, and very importantly, complete with generator and kerosene heating, and gas hot water. All the amenities, Georgia style.

I met with Archil and the Mayor of Poti before dinner. The Mayor has invited me to come to Poti for three days of business and relaxation. He has chartered a flight for this--Poti is five hours and many potholes and ice/snow from Tbilisi. I accepted with pleasure. One day will be business, one day fishing and beautiful Georgian women in the evening (!), and one day at Kutaisi on business, then flying back to Tbilisi the fourth day. The conversation regarding the women was instructive. Statement by the Mayor: "...and one evening there might be beautiful young Georgian women."..pause.. My reply: "Georgian women are very beautiful." The Mayor: "Then there will be beautiful young Georgian women." We also discussed the rest of my schedule, which is formidable.

I retired with a kerosene heater glowing warmly by the bed, something that reminded me of my

childhood in U.S. Washington, Georgia.

Tuesday, Dec. 20th

I awakened to snow and a penetrating cold. When I was here in February my feet suffered the most, so this time I brought fleece-lined boots, thin socks to put on followed by thick ones. My feet stayed warm all day, and I discovered if they stay warm so does the rest of me. When I dressed for the day I carefully took a small pocket flashlight with me: a necessity when one goes to a completely dark bathroom without electricity!

My car and driver, a lad named Goucha, arrived punctually at 9 a.m. and I went off to our office on the fifth floor of the Ministry of Health building. Began by meeting Archil and discussing my agenda for the next two weeks. Two big issues will be the future of our partnership in the coming years, and what to do about the new building project for City Hospital #2, the hospital we are working to turn into a modern western diagnostic and medical education center. There has been no work on the new building for over a year now, and the government has no money for the project. With respect to the partnership, we have been discussing extending it to the port city of Poti. Archil says Poti has become a free trade zone now, and is the main port for Georgia, Armenia and Central Asia. The World Food Program has bought diesel locomotives and rolling stock and installed a computerized control system for the railway, in order to expedite the shipping of food inland. Poti can process 5 million tons of commodities a year, and the Mayor gets \$2 per ton. We decided Paul Klever and I need to begin to work with LaGrange to extend the partnership to Poti--LaGrange is the sister city of Poti, and has done a lot of work already with them.

I then met with the faculty from the Medical Institute of Tbilisi: George Gurgenedze; Rima Berishiavilli; Levan Metrevelli. The first two spent two months with us in the summer; they are course directors. Levan is a young anatomist whom I have met each time I have come over, and who has just been named "Director of Foreign Relations" (sic) for the medical school. We planned a meeting later with the Rector and faculty. They described the current situation with respect to the pool of students who might come to Emory: not many. The ones in the sixth year are studying for the USMLE. The fourth and fifth years are composed of many students the state in communist times forced the school to admit, and they are not of the highest quality. We ended up agreeing I would meet with the entire study body and try to persuade more of them to apply, and that I would interview applicants from the fourth year also. The school will give them oral and written examinations on Friday, and I will interview each Monday. I decided I would pretend to be a patient with a chief complaint, and let them interview me accordingly.

I then met with Nino Doidjashvili. She is the associate director of the computer center at the Georgian Technical University. She is the close colleague of Gia Bokuchava, who has been with us at Emory since September 1, helping with the planning for the Internet and library project. We are planning for her to come to Atlanta also.

The Mayor of Poti then came to the office, and informed us he had made arrangements for us to fly to Poti next week. He has also spoken with Manana Shevardnadze about beginning a television production of the Atlanta-Tbilisi project, beginning here in Tbilisi next week, continuing in Poti and later Atlanta.

I went to the Embassy and met Sherry Carlin, who worked as the director of our office here until September, in her new role as head of U.S. AID for Georgia. We had a productive luncheon, talking at some length about the Internet project.

Back to the Ministry and a meeting with Lado, the Deputy Minister. We talked about the Maternal and Child Project Al Brann is planning. Sites for various parts of it have been selected, and I will visit them later in the week. He said infectious diseases are a big problem. I knew about tuberculosis. But there have been 91 cases of Botulism so far this year, with four new ones today. Many of them came

from smoked fish from Armenia, of which 2.5 tons have been destroyed. The others are from canning that families do in order to have food in the winter. Pharmaceuticals are still a big problem, but a bit less than last year. Insulin continues to be one of the biggest problems. He spoke at length about the PVOs (private voluntary organizations) who are working here. Said our Atlanta-Tbilisi project was exemplary; we worked closely with the Georgians, and it was a collaborative enterprise. Many of the others have their own rigid formulae about what they plan to do, usually developed in other countries such as Africa, and applied without any flexibility to Georgia. He stressed how each country was quite different, and projects had to be tailored. He was quite frustrated. He mentioned the priority being given to the necessity of training health care managers, and also nurses. Said they still had not found a key nursing person who could be the leader here, and who speaks English. They have their eye on a young M.D. they hope might fill this role.

I then went to the medical school and spoke to about 50 students. Stressed importance of improving themselves maximally, and encouraged them to apply to come to Emory. Then I met with two applicants for our house staff training program. Both in their late thirties with low scores on their USMLE tests. Clearly not viable candidates.

Archil and I went to the Embassy Club for dinner. Had a long talk in candlelight (no electricity) about our projects. As usual he gave me a lot of insights and ideas.

Wednesday, Dec. 21

Began the day with a talk with Larry Kerr, the acting U.S. Ambassador (Kent Brown is in Washington for several weeks). As usual the talk was informative and authoritative. Kerr said the Embassy is quite impressed with what is occurring in health care reform, which he said "is leading the way for the transition in Georgia." He mentioned our efforts very favorably. I told him about the Internet and library project. He asked me where we were looking for funding and I said we would start with the Soros Foundation. He encouraged me to apply to U.S. AID, which he thought might be quite receptive. I was quite impressed by him.

I was able to get some background information on Jabba Ioseliani, who is providing me with the car and driver, and who I perhaps might meet. Jabba is clearly a legend in his own time: bank robber; burglar; ardent anti-communist who was imprisoned fifteen years; got out and got his PhD in art history, became a professor; started an organization called the Mehedroni (The Horsemen) that became heavily involved in earthquake relief here, then evolved into a fighting force during the Gamsurkurdia period and Abkhazia; now the most important politician after Shevardnadze, and his main supporter. It has been said of Jabba that he is "someone who still wears a gun tucked into his belt at the small of his back, and who clearly is comfortable around dangerous men."

I then had a long meeting with Avto Jorbenadze, the Minister of Health. He was excited: he had presented the new health care reform initiatives to the Cabinet of Ministers today, and they had unanimously agreed with them. Mr. Shevardnadze is to sign the decree tomorrow, and next week Parliament will begin to take them up. Some comments:

- The Health Fund: money under the control of the Minister to finance the health care program. Employers contribute 3%, employees 1% of their salary. Not a lot of money he said, but enough to work with. He feels when people give 1% of their salary for health care they will become serious about it.
- The privatization program is quite important. Beginning with pharmaceuticals and dentistry, then bring rest on. Some services will be private, others state.
- World Bank will be back in Jan. Looks like \$20 million, perhaps more.

City Hospital #2 is a big problem, he said. (This is the hospital our partnership is working with. Part of the project is a new 180 bed inpatient and outpatient facility that has been two-thirds complete for about two years, without any further progress.) There is no state money to continue with the

construction. He and I must talk at length about what to do. One possibility is to sell stock in it. He sees the following possibilities:

- American money. \$1.2 million
- World Bank money. He is reluctant to do this. Wouldn't be available for one year. Not sure the Bank would be agreeable.
- Internal resources such as insurance or private.
- Scrap the new building. But old buildings are totally unsuitable, so he doesn't think this is a viable option
- Move to another hospital, keep concept and goals. The Minister was unwilling to accept this. He didn't think that would be appropriate.
- Finish the diagnostic part only, for about \$100,000 or so, and get the project going.

We left this subject with the idea we had to do a lot of talking and thinking about it.

Avto said he particularly appreciated Al Brann's activities: they were important, and he liked Al very much. One of his priorities is to create a health care managers' school, and he wants to discuss this with the partnership. He is also thinking a lot about the development of medical businesses in Georgia.

I had lunch with three university rectors: Georgian State University (30,000 students); Tbilisi State University (30,000); Tbilisi Medical University (4,000). The subject was the Internet and the library project. The rector of Georgian State is intensely interested, and wishes for his university to be the connector to the Internet, and to do the computing and technical side of the project. He will give space and people. I had proposed in a paper I gave them earlier that the main medical library be in the Ministry of Health building next to our office. There was a lot of strong comment against this, mainly due to territoriality I thought. I told them the main electronic library should not be beholden to any institution, but should be separate. We agreed to discuss this later. The important point was that the four of us agreed to build upon the proposal Carol Burns of our Medical Library and I, working with Gia Bokuchava, had come up with, and jointly do the project. I had an idea this was the first time these three institutions had worked together on a project. I was very pleased with the result. We will all get together again before I leave.

I then met with Dr. Aberadze, who is in charge of the prison health system. He wishes to come to Emory and learn more about: prison health (will get him in touch with one of our graduates, Jim Hipkens, who is in charge of prison health for the state of Georgia); firemen and police providing emergency first aid; health care for the military and police. He has a central staff of 1700 in Tbilisi, a 170 bed hospital here, and polyclinics (outpatient clinics) in the major cities. Prisoners are 7,000, total staff under him plus their families 50,000.

I then met with the Health Reform Task Force of the Ministry of Health. They are working like crazy and quite excited. By this coming Monday they have to have the final plans for accrediting and licensing all medical facilities. They are planning on moving many of the facilities to self-financing, and are finishing the plans for this. They are also working on developing a new accounting and bank system for health care. By the next week they must have papers out on the new rules, and begin educating all the health care workers. We talked about our next workshop that will be held over here in Borjomi after May 15th. Topics:

- Human resources, and how to deal with excess physicians
- Medical manpower resources of Republic of Georgia
- Quality of medical care in Georgia: what is promised and what is delivered
- Quality of medical personnel in Georgia

They would like Jim Setzer of the Public Health School to come here in Jan. if possible, to aid in beginning the new program. They see this as the directions they want to take and would like our help

with:

- By-laws and other similar documents of U.S. medical institutions
- Levels of medical care, and how they are licensed and accredited by level
- Cost accounting
- Cost of procedures, such as white blood counts, etc., and how this is arrived at
- How to analyze the medical market

We agreed to meet again before I leave. I went back to my hotel and reviewed the documents they gave me about health care reform.

I went back to the hotel where the computer students of Nino from the Georgian Technical University came and met with me. There were four of them. It came out during the conversation that each of them had walked five plus miles in the bitter cold to come and meet me. I was amazed, to put it mildly, not to mentioned discomfited. We talked about their aspirations and studies. The university has 30,000 students, is the equivalent of Georgia Tech, and has 150 computers, mostly antiquated. They were quite knowledgeable about U.S. computers, and I thought would be able to hold their own in the U.S. without difficulties. I decided to do all I could to get them more computers when I came back. I also asked what I could do, and after computers they wanted books. They gave me a list of books I could get for each one of them. I was quite impressed with their motivation, intelligence and presence.

I then met at his request with John Marks, the Regional Director of Save the Children, based in Yerevan. He told me they were going to be the manager for AID to give about \$5 million to Georgia, and they wanted to explore with the Atlanta-Tbilisi Partnership the possibility of us submitting proposals. The possibilities for our Maternal and Child Health/Reproductive Health proposal sounded exciting, and I readily agreed to meet the next day with Martha Campbell, a consultant for them.

Thursday Dec 22

I had breakfast with Martha Campbell, and outlined our program for her. She told me AID plans to give the money to Georgia, and they were soliciting proposals. She said the donor community (new code words I am becoming familiar with) was interested in longer term and comprehensive programs in reproductive health. Save the Children is interested in taking the following directions:

- 1. Reorganization and management of health care services
- 2. Reorientation of care to where it is more patient centered
- 3. Privatization of health care services, especially supply
- 4. Increased education of the public, I.e., mothers

Particular areas of emphasis include: primary care; cost recovery; packaging of services; pricing; pilot projects involving clusters of institutions (hospitals, clinics, etc.). She will turn her draft report in to the Connecticut office of Save the Children by Jan. 2, 1995. She will turn it into: Ahmed Zayan M.D., in the Westport office.

I then went to City Hospital #2 and met with the chief doctor, Ilia. I viewed all the containers we had sent over that arrived a couple of months before: still in their containers, unopened, because of fear of thievery. There was still no space for a new laboratory (they agreed no point in Vroon visit now; they will let us know), and the new building facilities (in the process for about four years now) had not been touched since I was here six months ago. It turned out later that Shevardnadze and his wife had personally agreed that it should be completed, and the Prime Minister had taken charge himself. But the International Monetary Fund had frozen all assets of the state bank to control inflation, and the money was not released. I then visited Lado Shengrelia, who has just spent two months with our GI people. He proudly showed me the endoscopes and TV monitor Emory and CWL had given him, and threatened to use them on me (which was appropriate, since I almost get an ulcer whenever I have to deal with the failure of the new building).

I then visited the Central Diagnostic Centre of George Kikinadze. George was in Atlanta studying at the Public Health School for two months, and I got to know him. He is an anesthesiologist, about 30, and is the chief operating officer. A close friend same age is the CEO. There are about 60 physicians, average age about 40. Inpatient and outpatient. Devoted to concept of privatization, and were basically given the hospital by the Minister to experiment with. I was very impressed with their efforts. Still a long way to go (no heat, no generator, often without electricity), but all that is in the plans. They have a computer center, which I did not have time to see. I have promised myself to do everything we can to help this hospital. They want us to help them instead of City Hospital #2, pointing out our efforts there are completely stalled at the moment, while they are vigorously pushing ahead. I was warm and supportive, but of necessity noncommittal (to my regret).

Then the medical school and an address to about 40 students from the fourth, fifth and sixth years. Goal was to try to get more of them to apply for our program.

A dinner then at the home of Gia Bokuchava's parents. Gia is a PhD computer associate professor (age 30) from the Georgian Technical Institute, a friend of Andro Kacharava's, who we brought to Atlanta Sept. 1. He is working closely with us to establish Internet and an electronic library network in Georgia. His father is a professor, and a grand old man type. I was charmed by his wit and erudition. Mother same. Gia's sister and brother-in-law Vaso Kacharava were there. Vaso has just been named deputy ambassador from Georgia to the U.S., and will leave in about one week. He is a professor of history in addition to being a State Department person, and has written a history of prohibition in the U.S., among other works. About 40, highly intelligent, warm and a person of broad knowledge and understanding. A wonderful Georgian dinner.

At 10 p.m. went to the Ministry of Health for my first long session with Avto. I met the new director of Avto's new brainchild, a think tank and analytical center for the Ministry, the National Center for Problems in Health Care. They are already working on guidelines for asthma, rhinitis, pain, etc. (or plan to; I was not clear). Avto said that yesterday Shevardnadze and he had gotten the agreement of the Council of Ministers on the decree for health care reform (details later). He was quite excited. The Cabinet gave their unanimous support. He said this was the cornerstone of future health care in Georgia.

Avto said the World Bank would be back in Jan. (due to leave Jan. 21), and we all needed to go through their aide memoire and figure out how to work with them. Next step will be phase II for the Bank. In Jan and Feb. he and the Health Care Task Force will work with us to decide on the details of the May conference in health care reform that we and Georgia will put together (our fourth joint conference if my memory serves me right). He said the new Ambassador from Georgia was a close friend of his, and would work hard and cooperate with us and Avto in getting U.S. help for health care in Georgia (he later told me Emory could view the Embassy in Washington as our help in any way we needed).

Friday Dec 23

Went to our office. Met Dr. Guadze, a pediatric surgeon/endoscopist from the 2nd Pediatric Hospital. Applied for SABIT period of study to U.S. which did not come through. Question now is whether to fund him through the partnership. Adequate English, would be acceptable. Will speak with Paul Klever.

Then I met with Dazmir Jojua and N. Nutsbidze, the Ministry people working in maternal and child health, who are key people for Al Brann and his MCH project. The Save the Children initiative and money was news to them (!). They had participated in Save workshops last week, and had not heard a word. The workshops were on training, service delivery and supplies. The one on service delivery focused on the organization of peri-, pre- and neo-natal services in Georgia. They outlined for me how these services were organized. They start with primary care in the villages, which have ambulatory stations staffed by midwives; nurses are also present. The midwives are the first point of contact, and their role is expanding.

We then visited Pediatric Hospital #3, which along with the adjacent Maternity Hospital #5 Al Brann has chosen as key institutions. The chief doctor was about 45, and had planned and oversaw the gutting and complete renovation of the facility in 1988. Clean, beautiful. No electricity, no heat, four patients, kerosene heaters. Pathetic. Totally due to lack of electricity basically. Also, of course, a lack of modern technology to any degree. The chief doctor was quite depressed. He had moved all the patients out of the ICU just last week due to lack of heat.

Then a visit to the maternity house. About 3000 deliveries a year; used to be much more (birth rate in Georgia now negative). Keep mother in hospital four days. Not as new and clean as the pediatric hospital, but workable. About 20 new babies, many of them two to a bassinet. I asked if this were God's economy (= twins) or theirs; theirs. The mothers were cheerful and happy. Delivery rooms lined with floor to ceiling glass, so everything about delivery was visible; one in progress.

Archil and I then had lunch at a Georgian "fast food" place. Hole in the wall, absolutely wonderful food. We went there several times, and it became a favorite of mine. Two ladies, good people.

We then went to what used to be the Railway Hospital, now the Central Diagnostic Clinic. An eye-opener. An MRI for a starter. All the latest technology. Young and eager physicians, mostly postgraduate training in Moscow and/or Germany. Proud of their place. Only out-patient now, but they showed me 25 rooms they had just about finished that exemplified the U.S. hospital-as-hotel concept. They plan to concentrate on vascular surgery; any surgeon can bring patients there. All patients must pay. The brain child of the chief doctor (didn't meet; in airport), who got financial support from the railway. Highly impressive. The kind of thing we are trying to do with Hospital #2.

To the hotel and some talking about the MCH proposal. Then a welcome shower (no electricity or water in morning).

Dinner at the Vasadze's. Levan, their son, lives with me as he gets his MBA degree at Emory (May 95). Dinner at his grandfathers. His mother, Irina, spent four months with us in Atlanta this summer, learning U.S. medical library techniques: searching Medline, databases, Internet, etc. A wonderful dinner. His grandfather is former chair of the geophysics department of Tbilisi State University; a grand old man. I took him a new book on ancient Georgian history--500 b.c to 500 a.d.--knowing of his interest.

Saturday Dec 24

Began by going to the Metechi Palace hotel and buying some Scotch for gifts. Johnnie Walker Black \$55, etc. I formerly stayed there on every visit, but due to a lot of violence there the Ambassador has made it off limits to Americans. Then to a fancy private restaurant for a dinner given by the Rector. All the chairs of the medical school were there. Many toasts. The rector had some facial trauma that he said was due to an auto accident; one of the faculty later told me privately five masked men had broken into his house, he had fought with them, and they had been frightened away by something. I saw his son Levan, about 18, who is studying at high school equivalent in England. Promised to take his CV and see whether Emory or similar place would accept him after graduation. Personable and bright lad.

Then I went to Levan's friends for dinner. About fourteen of them. I had gotten to know them when I was here with him in the summer. One of them, Irakly, visited Levan and me in Atlanta a few months ago. They are all college graduates, and have partially and (to them) quite unsatisfactorily solved the problem of jobs. George, whose father's house we were in, works with his father in construction. Just back from two months in Kazakstan. Irakly is studying economics in Prague under Soros foundation grant, hops to go to England to Oxford to study economics next year. One is a television producer. They are all bright, hardworking, highly motivated, and desperate to find their way to other countries, mainly the U.S., for further education, and then come back to Georgia. I intend to help George (engineer) and any of the others I can. They are singularly free from drugs,

etc., and are really super people.

Sunday 25 Christmas Day

Archil and I had brunch. Then I met with Stephen Vance, consultant to Save the Children, who is putting together what they will do for the money from AID. About thirty, lot of experience in this sort of thing, bright, interesting. Lately working on “affordable housing” in Chicago; before then AID contractor in Africa designing projects and managing them. He told me Save the Children had just been instructed to work closely with the Atlanta/Tbilisi Partnership in coming up with proposals to spend \$5 million AID has designated to be spent in Georgia during 1995. The money has to be spent by the end of Sept. 1995, so we have to get to work with the proposals. He had reviewed in detail Al Brann’s concept on the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) program Al wants to do in Georgia. He gave a lot of details about what we needed to do. We agreed Al would come over here in the middle of Jan. And work with Steve on the proposal.

Dinner at Archil’s house with Tamaz Kereselidze, a Georgian who is WHO director here. Talked at length about what we are doing that WHO might fund. He wants us to work with him and WHO to come up with proposals to submit to the UN Appeal Fund. He went over all the possibilities. We agreed he would work closely with Al Brann when Al comes to town.

Monday Dec 26

Went to Tbilisi State University today. Founded early 1900’s; equivalent to Univ. of Georgia; 19 faculties; 30,000 students. Rector specialist in post-Roman history, knows Carol Burns husband Tom, who is same (I had dinner with both of them in Atlanta some months ago). Fits well vision of president of large European university (my concept, anyway): scholarly background; focuses on scholarly activity; not much at money matters; excellent administrator; cracks the whip.

Then I to the medical school where I interviewed 16 medical students, to choose four for the next group at Emory beginning in one month. About 15 minutes each. I pretended to be a patient (they knew in advance): headache; jaundice; melena; chest pain; abdominal pain, etc. They had to interview me. The sixth year students did acceptably, given the circumstances. The first two met with me as we were being filmed for a movie being made about our activities in Georgia. Stressful for both of us. I greatly enjoyed doing this, and found most of them had poise and equanimity under these circumstances. Tentatively picked four, will review them with George Gurgenzidze later.

I also interviewed some faculty for our faculty program: two faculty course directors every six months to see how that course is run at Emory. The basic science one will be Levan, a young anatomy teacher especially interested in neuroanatomy. The Rector has proposed an older faculty member in internal medicine for the clinical slot. He is not a course director, and I had a lot of questions. Turned out he is head of the curriculum committee on the teaching of internal medicine, and is head of a commission to propose the future postgraduate training of specialists in internal medicine, ob-gyn and surgery in Georgia. Also the author of several textbooks. I have met him on several occasions. Last June he gave me an old physical diagnosis book written by a man named Walker. Scholarly, influential. I decided we needed to go ahead and accept him, and plan carefully his agenda while at Emory for two months.

That evening I had dinner with the first four students we had at Emory, who came one year ago. Tina, Natia, George and Nick. I had told them before they returned from Atlanta they would have a culture shock, and they talked about it at length. E.g., after returning they had their final oral exam to graduate from medical school. Nick had questions on a patient with renal failure. He answered a la U.S., and of course that wasn’t right. He enumerated at some length the misconceptions present in his examiner. They are all trying to study for USMLE, but have no heat, no electricity. They each spent the pocket money we gave them on textbooks, and so they have some of them. They were all highly ambitious to return for further training. I told them we regarded them as a very special group, and would basically do everything within our power to help them in the future. I cited books, etc..

Ended the night with another meeting with Stephen Vance to discuss how to write proposals that would enable us to participate in the AID money for Georgia.

Tuesday Dec 27

I had breakfast with Michele Lipner, who is head of the UN Department of Humanitarian Relief. Had been head of United Methodist Committee on Relief here for the last year, then went to Ethiopia for three months. A close friend of Sherry Carlin's, and I had heard a lot of good things about her. She and I talked at length about how some of the funds she oversees might also be a part of our proposal for Maternal and Child Health. She gave me a lot of really good pointers about the world of governmental and non-governmental relief.

Then to the airport for a plane to Poti. The movie crew that is filming our activities went with us. Manana Shevardnadze is chief. The director is Nino, a brightly vivacious redhead. Formerly pediatrician. I had a rush of adrenalin as we did our approach to Poti. All the pilots over here were trained in the military, and fly the plane right down to the ground, in contrast to U.S. pilots who let it float down. A windy day with lot of veering as we approached the ground just over the Black Sea at what seemed to me to be great speed. Then the usual Georgian table. We are staying at the resort the Mayor built in 1990 especially for the European water skiing championship. Other than no electricity and no heat it is a splendid looking place.

We visited a maternity hospital. I sniffed the sterilizing solutions for towel holders and other instruments, expecting to find lysol or some such: plain water. They don't have anything else. I also discovered there is not one ultrasound in all of Poti.

Then a visit to the Sailor's Hospital. Old building, antiquated equipment, water instead of sterilizing solution, etc. Twenty-five patients. I asked to have the diagnoses read to me and was impressed. E.g., Raynaud's phenomenon. I asked for details, and was told the patient was thought to have an autoimmune disease, perhaps systemic sclerosis. Viral meningitis. Congestive failure.

Went to the Mayor's office, where I was made an honorary citizen of Poti. The Mayor said when I was there in June I had asked to go to the bathroom, and that had caused a great deal of consternation: no heat, no water, no electricity, not up to their standards for a guest (I remembered the bathroom, but nothing else). This time he showed me proudly a modern, clean bathroom. I dutifully used it.

Then downstairs to an auditorium where all the doctors of the town had assembled to hear the Mayor and me. The Mayor began with a talk about the Partnership, reform and his hopes for better medical care. I began my talk by telling them about us having the Mayor in Crawford Long Hospital in July. When I was in Poti in June, I noted the Mayor clutched his chest whenever we went up stairs. He told me he had an infarct when he was 40, and his doctors had decreed him to be a cardiac cripple. This was puzzling to me, since he was 50 and had no risk factors. So I talked with John Henry the CEO of Crawford Long, and Roland Ingram, the Chief of Medicine, and when the Mayor came over to visit Sister City LaGrange in July, we put him in CWL. Result: no heart disease at all. A slight case of duodenitis with *H. Pylori* infection. The next day he went water skiing in Callaway Gardens, the first exercise in 10 years. So I began by telling the audience of the New Yorker cartoon that showed Lyndon Johnson getting out of bed, flexing his muscles, and saying "Here I come world, ready or not." I told them perhaps we had not realized what we were doing when we turned the Mayor on the world, alive and without heart disease. The doctors liked that. I suspect the Mayor does behave with them just as Lyndon did. Then I reviewed our projects. I said I had concluded it was often better to have people from the U.S. come over here and help them, rather than sending physicians to the U.S. for a month or two. I cited OB, and said us sending over two ultrasound machines, and an obstetrician coming over for one month to teach how to use them would be a lot more productive than one or two of them coming over. At this point a young gynecologist stood up and said she thought people going to the U.S. was a total waste of time, but she was captivated by the idea I had put forth, and she would

wholeheartedly support it. In fact, she said, she liked it so much she had a present to give me. She came up and gave me one of the dolls within dolls, and kissed me. I decided we were on the right track.

Back to the resort, where the room was icy cold. I gratefully put on my heaviest thinsulate, the kind designed for conquering Mt. Everest. In spite of this I had an uncomfortable night of severe wet cold.

Wednesday Dec 28

Up to continued cold. I asked if I could have a kerosene heater, and one was put in the room. (But that night it ran out of kerosene at 9 p.m., and there was none to be had. Only the next day did I get two kerosene heaters that kept the place warm. But by that time the weather had abated--50's--and it resembled the kind of southern seashore weather I had expected (like St. Simon's Isle in Georgia, USA).

I had asked to go by the telephone station, wanting to have some idea of the ability of the phone system to participate in a countrywide network of libraries. Fascinating experience. In one room there were six operators, all plugging in numbers just like Grady Hospital switchboard in 1960. In the adjacent room there were huge stacks of switching equipment, and you could hear the switches slowly going through the process of hitting the digits. Then the next room. The most modern telephone system available anywhere in the world! Alcatel from France. Rows of computers. Young men sitting at terminals that had understandable commands and requests in English. All the instructions books in English (when I asked about a French company printing instruction manuals in English I was told in effect English was the *lingua franca* of the entire world in everything technical now, even in France). It turns out this system had just been installed in Poti, Batumi, Kobaleti, Kutaiesi and Tbilisi, and was due to go online in two weeks. They communicated amongst towns by microwaves at 4 megabytes per second. A citizen of Poti could purchase a new telephone installation for \$250 (later I found out this was \$900 in Tbilisi), and have the latest capabilities: fax, digitized information at 4 megabytes per second (I think I have the figures and units right). I could see immediately that when we establish a library connected to Internet in Tbilisi it will be simple to beam it to Poti and the other principal cities.

We then went to the port of Poti and went fishing in a boat about the size of a tugboat. Belongs to the State, and the crew fishes every day. A wonderful trip. Fishing mostly by net. Large amounts of small fish. They were cooked on board for a lunch that was out of the world (gained about 8 lbs so far, I estimate). The movie crew filmed all day. Afterwards to Poti's art gallery, which had many good paintings, and is one of the Mayor's favorite places. All the artists were there, and I took pictures of each standing by his or her favorite painting. I was given one of a beautiful sunset as a gift.

Back to the resort, where the Mayor, who loves to swim, announced we would have a pool party. Archil and I assumed we would swim, then eat. No. We had a huge Georgian dinner, complete with vodka, wine, etc., etc., then retired to the pool. Olympic sized, used in the competitions. I had not brought a swimming suit this trip (who would ever think of taking one to Tbilisi in the middle of winter), so faced a difficult choice. I was clearly expected to swim, and it was apparent it would be a discourtesy to the Mayor not to do so. The suggestion was made, seriously, not to bother about clothes. I did not think I was up to this. Finally stripped down to my thinsulate and swam, then retired gratefully to the sauna. I had met my diplomatic obligations. (This reminded me of another similar time in the Philippines. I was asked to be the judge at a regional agricultural school there. The professor of agronomy, a PhD from the University of Michigan, came to my house and preceded me in his car. About halfway to the school, out in the country, he suddenly stopped and walked down the ditch by his car. I had no idea what was happening, so I got out also. Turned out he was urinating in the time honored tradition of the Philippines. He looked up and saw me, suddenly realized I was an American, and became embarrassed. I did what was a diplomatic necessity: I followed suit. Perhaps one of the few times in the history of the world that urinating was an act of diplomacy!)

I left the sauna early, and returned upstairs, where I found the young people who surrounded the

mayor having an uproarious good time. They included the bodyguards, the president of the tea company (my official host), and the mayor's son-in-law, Dato. A number of emotional toasts with arms intertwined were given, to America, to the Partnership, etc. Each time someone entwines their arm with yours, with a glass of vodka held by each, protocol requires that the entire contents be downed. Thus you are at the total mercy of anyone who does this to you, having to drink everything or else be indescribably rude. I made it my business to leave while still afoot (but afloat, too) after several of these.

Thursday Dec 29

Left at 10 a.m. for Kutaisi, a fascinating city. About 300,000, the second largest city in Georgia. One of the oldest continuously occupied cities in the world, having been founded around 1300 b.c. Relatively wealthy. A bright and aggressive young mayor (early 40's) named Temuri (**). A rising young Communist, then became a rising young democrat after the uprising and independence. We met in the Mayor's conference room, where he had assembled the leading physicians of the town. He started with a long discourse about the town, himself, health and physicians. Vice Mayor a woman, gynecologist.

Then my time to give what I am beginning to think of as "The Speech." I outlined our projects in Georgia, one by one. This was followed by the ritual of each of us giving the other gifts (each visit requires about 20 gifts, and choosing them is difficult; this time I took 1995 calendar appointment books, which are virtually impossible to get in Georgia, and are much appreciated).

Then we visited several medical institutions. The first was the Diagnostic Centre. The chief physician and owner was an anaesthesiologist, about 40. His father was wealthy and funded the center. All patients pay. ECHOs, Dopplers, etc. Even a Russian MRI, I think only the second in Georgia (other Railway Hospital I visited earlier). But, it has never worked! Bought three years ago for \$330,000. Just as the company was about to do the programming the war began. Now the company demands an additional \$10,000 to come do the programming, and the center cannot afford it, and feels they are being ripped off. Clean, a lot of pride. Even do cytogenetics.

Next we went to a 250 bed general hospital that serves the automobile plant (making cars is one of their big industries). Old but clean. Intermittent electricity. Fair number of patients, no refugees. I visited the ICU and saw three cardiac patients. EKGs demonstrated acute infarcts. No complications. Each however was being kept in the hospital several weeks. They had just recruited a cardiothoracic surgeon, a Georgian who had been practicing elsewhere in the NIS. But no capability of doing cardiac surgery.

Next door is the Pathological Institute. Run by a wonderful person, a woman of about 50. During the Abkhazian war she and her husband were the only physicians willing to work with all the bodies, restoring them to some identifiable semblance for their relatives. She documented this with videotapes. A huge spacious building. I asked to be taken to the morgue first. I had not seen one before in Georgia, and had begun to wonder if one existed. In Poti, e.g., I was told all the autopsies were done in one place. There was one body, a patient from a tuberculosis hospital. I was told they took no special precautions to protect the pathologist who did the autopsy. (TB has become a huge problem in Georgia: malnutrition; stress; cold, etc. They have very few reagents to make the diagnosis, and fewer drugs. Many cases are not reported because there is nothing that can be done.) Then the rest of the facility. Sparsely equipped. But I had the impression with good equipment it could become a top notch diagnostic center. I asked to see the records of the biopsy reports, since it is the surgical center for all of Western Georgia. They were all handwritten, so I asked and was told there was one typewriter in the entire place of several hundred people. One computer that as nearly as I could tell was not used. I was told software was not available

We then went to one of the famous places of Georgia, the Gelati Monastery. Founded in 1106 A.D. by King David the Builder, the greatest of the rulers of Georgia. Most of the buildings are standing

still. One was the Academy, where he assembled a university of scholars that was famous throughout the Caucasus. The founding scholars had been kicked out of the Mangana Academy in Constantinople for their neoplatonist beliefs. The curriculum consisted of: geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, music, rhetoric, grammar, philosophy, Greek and Latin. There was also a school of painters. Manuscript illumination, gold and silver forging were done. I tried to leave a donation in the main cathedral. A scrawny priest asked my religion, then said only orthodox christians could give donations. David decreed as a sign of humility that he wanted to be buried in the main entranceway. I saw the grave, and stepped on it. The slab has this inscription: "This is my place for all eternity. I own only this now."

We then went a few miles to the Motsameta Monastery, a spacious building sitting on the edge of a high cliff on a wild and beautiful valley with the Tskhaltsitela River down its center. There has been a church on this site since 300 A.D. The curator, Father Gagi, had me crawl under the tomb of the two brothers who were killed by the Arabs and were made saints (Motsameta means martyrdom). We then went into the house, and I was astonished to see a Georgian table laid. This is where the town was giving its official dinner for me. We went out on the balcony, which overhangs the ravine in a way that wouldn't help anyone with a fear of heights, and were offered a drink by the Father. He is about 85, full of appetites, a physician at one time, and a noted scholar. He played beautifully on the piano. I expected the drink to be alcohol of some sort, but my taste buds were horrified by the taste. Turned out it was his elixir, which he said cured everything from lymphoma (he used this word) to impotence. It had 19 herbs in it, with aloe being one of them. I immediately decided to have no more. Archil however, no doubt as a result of the sexual properties ascribed to it, immediately drank his and asked for more. Nino, the movie producer with us, actually took a liter home. The Mayor arrived, and toasts began.

The dinner lasted until about 10 p.m., then we went to the home of a physician who is an artist. He takes wood, shells and stone and makes various beautiful objects. Famous throughout Georgia. A beautiful studio with fantastic objects d'art. I took many pictures.

We then went to Magda's home (a physician who took a two month Public Health course with us, and I got to know her. She was responsible for the Mayor inviting me to Kutaisi). It was after 10 p.m., and as soon as we entered to my horror I saw we were about to have the real dinner of the evening. The other one had simply been the official function. All the people from the first one were there, including the Mayor, plus the senior physicians from Magda's hospital (the automobile plant one). About thirty people. The table groaned under the food. Toasts began, plentifully lubricated with vodka, wine and champagne. Archil told me the bus that had brought us (preceded along the 60 mile journey by two police cars with blue lights flashing) and the police had to leave at 10 p.m. Because their shift would be over. I could see we had to last through the dinner, so simply dug in my feet and refused to consider leaving. So the driver and police were added to the table. I sensed an undercurrent, especially in some of the Mayor's toasts, of some negative feelings towards outsiders and the West. So I gave a toast in which I said it was the duty of every red-blooded Kutaisian to wring every drop of aid that could be obtained from foreigners. They all sat up at this, and I could tell from the expressions I was resonating with them. I enlarged for some moments on this theme, then developed the idea that the Kutaisians were also members of the global community, and that while they needed aid, they also had responsibilities over the long haul to be citizens of the world in addition to citizens of Kutaisi. It sounded fine at 1 a.m., although in the light of this day the element of pure bull is pretty overwhelming (true of most toasts!).

Back to Poti, arriving somewhere around 3 a.m. They Mayor and some of his cronies were waiting, and had been for several hours. Archil said he hated everyone and everything (had a cold), and went to bed. So I dutifully went over and made some more toasts for 30 minutes, then collapsed into bed, feeling I had more than done my duty.

Friday, Dec. 30

A late morning, thankfully after the late night. Breakfast, a saunter down to the Black Sea seashore

(one-half mile), and an inspection of the water skiing facilities. The 1992 European Championship held here, and another scheduled for September of 1995. The Mayor, who designed and built the complex, waxed eloquent over his dreams. Wants to build a golf course and attract wealthy tourists. Etc.

I worried about when we were to go to the plane, which I supposed would land, pick us up, then leave immediately. Nothing was said, and I was left to wonder whether this was due to lack of knowledge or the “we will take care of that sometime” attitude. We went to the Mayor’s for another Georgian table for lunch. He has a beautiful house, with constantly changing (on my two visits) paintings, reflecting his love and support of his town’s artists. Beautiful vases, furniture. To my astonishment my Tbilisi driver, Gaucha, was present. He had been sent down on the plane to accompany us back. After lunch the plane’s crew (a 737 equivalent) appeared, we went to where the plane had been waiting for us whenever, and our small party was ferried back to Tbilisi.

Just before lift off I was told I was to meet Jabba Ioseliani that afternoon. I had planned what I wanted to say to him and how I wanted to approach him. Turned out the meeting was a Georgian dinner at the Rura’s. Nickolas Rura is in Atlanta with his wife, and I like them a lot. His brother George is the one who arranged the car and driver. The father is a professor who among other things designs jackets for books. Showed me some impressive examples. The Minister of Culture was present, with his wife and daughter. About 35, also professor at Tbilisi State University, is in charge of all the ancient buildings (such as Gelati) throughout Georgia. Many young men joined us for dinner, and this turned out to be true every time I went to the Ruras. They are the center of a large number of young men who revere Jabba. Jabba started the Mehedrioni (the “horsemen”), with the initial goal of helping the victims of the Georgian earthquake (about 1988 or so). Then they became fighters in the uprising against the Communists, in the revolution against Gamsukurdia, and in the Abkhazian war. Apparently at the moment there are a number of disparate and perhaps unconnected components that all go under the name Mehedrioni, one of which is very concerned with natural disasters and who also are interested in our “911” system of resuscitation.

Jabba arrived with a beautiful young woman. Dinner was replete as usual with many toasts. Most of them revolved around Jabba and the Mehedrioni. He gave a number of toasts. I gave one about the Abkhazian war that I had modified from a tale about the Israelis and Arabs. Although I sat at his right, we had little individual conversation. He said he wanted to see me in his office the next day, where we would talk about our activities in Georgia.

Saturday 31 Dec

I had breakfast with Stephen Vance of Save the Children. We discussed again how our Partnership with Al Brann needed to work with him in coming up with MCH proposals. Michele Lipner of UN Humanitarian Appeal Fund came in. We all agreed that Al’s visit and working with the two of them and various other organization was going to be a crucial and hopefully highly productive visit.

I then met with George Gurdenidze and we finalized the four students who would come to Emory at the end of January. I was concerned about the hardship that might be imposed upon him by choosing one particular student, Zaal. He is about 30, has a wife, works at the Embassy Club Restaurant while going to school in order to support his family. He had gone to engineering school and during that time had decided he wanted to be a physician. However the state required him to spend four years as an engineer before he could go to another school. Hence his age. Very mature, straight A average. But I was concerned that giving him this highly sought after opportunity would impose an impossible burden. While looking over his credentials I discovered he was from Poti, and a solution immediately came to mind. We had him meet with the Mayor, who happily agreed to help him financially (paid for his ticket) in return for Zaal coming to Poti to practice. Political advertising for the Mayor, opportunity for Zaal. Both were happy.

Then to the medical school for a discussion with the rector. One of the problems was that only one woman who had the grades had applied to come to Emory as a student, leaving three men and her.

This is a problem in the Grady dormitory, where if you are rooming singly you have to have a roommate, and you never know who that will be (usually Georgia State students of x-ray technology, etc.). With the male/female mix two of the students would have to have transient roommates. The other choices were to take someone with low grades, or take only two. The rector made the point he liked them having american roommates--exposed both groups to more of the other, he said. I was surprised that the rector came up with this, which I agreed had merit. So we went ahead with the 3:1 group. Another problem we discussed had to do with the fact that one student of the present group is going to marry one of the Georgian interns, and she wants to continue here as a student. The rector and I agreed that would send the wrong message, that she had come over under Partnership auspices, and she needed to return to Georgia, then return as a wife. I said Jack Shulman and I did not think we wanted to set the precedent of letting her continue as a student since she had married over here, since that would open the gate to any Georgian student coming here, not just the ones who came under the auspices of the partnership. We all agreed on this.

Another problem was of the second faculty member to come to Emory in the next month or two. We had already agreed on the basic science one, Levan, of the anatomy department. The rector proposed Dr. Tatishvili, a distinguished internist, author of a number of books, and highly respected. I had wanted a course director type, so asked the rector to defend his choice. Dr. Tatishvili is chair of the curriculum committee on internal medicine, and also chair of a commission to determine postgraduate training in internal medicine, ob/gyn, and surgery. He wants to see how we do the curriculum and training. I decided this was legitimate, and in fact quite an opportunity for them, and for us to show them our postgraduate training. So I agreed to sound out Jack Shulman on the choice.

Dr. Kipiani, the pathophysiology teacher and associate dean, impressed upon me that it was vital to repair the Morehouse CDROM that was damaged when it was unloaded on Beverly Allen's visit. I agreed to see what could be done.

The rector proudly gave me his E mail address. I am looking forward to trying it.

I made a comment to them about "Soso" Jugashvili (the Georgian name of Joseph Stalin). His great grandson had been born the day before in Tbilisi. We agreed I would go and visit the Stalin museum in Gori the next visit. It had been closed when I went there last year, with the townspeople not being sure they wanted to do anything to commemorate Stalin. They have finally decided to leave it open. Natia, one of the first students we have, had introduced me to her father, who is the rector of the university in Gori. I am looking forward to doing this. Gori is the only place in the world that now has a statue of Stalin: in the square.

Then a visit to the Ministry of Health about 11 a.m. for a filming for the movie of me, Archil, the Minister and the Mayor of Poti (actual goal of the film seems to be an advertisement of Poti; I have never gotten a clearcut description of the purpose; in fact the Director told me she hadn't figured that out either. I assume Manana Shevardnadze and the Mayor know what they want.) When we were ready to begin the Mayor was summoned to see Shevardnadze, and we waited and waited. I had an appointment with Jabba at 1 p.m., and I announced I would make that meeting no matter what. The others were more inclined to put the movie first, so I had to be unusually explicit about what I was going to do. The Minister arrived with one minute to spare, and we were filmed.

Then a ride to the parliament building, passage through all sorts of guards with machine guns, and the meeting with Jabba. He listened attentively while I reviewed all our projects. He seized upon the Internet Library Project (see later), and became quite excited. He is thinking about setting up a Parliamentary Commission on it, and will meet next week with the rectors. He said he wanted to be involved personally. Everyone had told me of his acute intelligence, and he demonstrated it to my entire satisfaction. I have told many people about the project, but have always only talked about the benefits of Georgians getting information from the West. Jabba immediately grasped that part of it, but immediately saw a second aspect, seen by no one else (but me, who didn't figure it would be seen as important). He pointed out that Georgia has many treasures, such as ancient manuscripts relating to Christianity, that would greatly benefit scholars outside of Georgia. So he wants to begin immediately

a project of choosing the ones to put into digital form, so it can be a two way process. I was extremely impressed.

Then a 2 p.m. dinner at Andro Zangaladze's parents home. Andro has been here for about six months. He is a neurologist that Kelly Jordan, an Atlanta businessman, met while on a Friendship Force visit to Georgia a few years ago. Andro has been working with Chip Epstein in Neurology, and is studying for the USMLE. He wants to bring his wife and daughter over, and we are working on that. His father is a physician who founded a school for various technicians and nurses two years ago. Five hundred students. The entire extended family was present, and we had a good time.

A ride to Schedvardnadze's home, once again guards galore. Two hours with Mrs. Schevardnadze. I presented her with a beautiful scarf of fuchsia and black her granddaughter Tamuna (our applicant secretary) had picked out for me to give. She remarked that "Tamuna knows my favorite colors." We had a long talk about our projects and the problems in Georgia. She said she understands English well, but as she was growing up she never thought she would have to know it. (The Mayor of Poti told me he learned English curse words as a teenager in Poti from sailors, and the KGB had threatened him for knowing English.) An exacting conversation for me. She is highly intelligent, informed about everything, and has her particular concerns: children; drug addiction; education. Dato Shengrelia, Tamuna's husband and a masters in taxation law student at Emory, was with us, as well as Manana Shevardnadze (Tamuna's mother).

Then to Dato's home for a Georgian dinner with his parents. His father is a professor who is an authority on Turkish and Georgian history during the thirteenth through nineteenth centuries. He has published several books translating a number of the original sources. About ten years ago he had a stroke, and Dato had asked me to evaluate whether or not rehabilitation could help him. He had the sudden onset of right hemiparesis and severe dysarthria, was hospitalized for several weeks, and one year later had some sort of operation in Moscow on his left carotid artery (family told it was kinked; I am sure the same sort of thing that was the rage over here about the same time). Try as I might, I could get no TIA history, or any other sort of history. No episodes since. No smoking, no atrial fibrillation, no hypertension. Still has the hemiparesis, though mild, and he is totally functional. Right hand most severely affected; cannot use it at all. Has published several books since then. I told them he was doing splendidly, and I could not figure out the etiology of the stroke, but since ten years had elapsed without recurrence I wouldn't worry about it. Another excellent Georgian meal.

Then we visited Levan's house, Dato's close friend. Levan was brought to the U.S. By Tom Bertrand, and attended Brenau College. Now at High Point College. His mother is a librarian who works with Levan Vasadze's mother. Their life is still affected severely by the death by accidental drowning of Levan's brother in 1988.

Then we went to a private club started by Manana Shevardnadze and Nino, the movie director, for New Year's Eve. In the cellar of a building across from the TV station. About thirty or so people. The Mayor of Poti came. We all listed to Shevardnadze's New Year Eve's address, then listed to everyone in the city shooting off their weapons on the stroke of midnight (dangerous to be anywhere but a cellar). New Year's Eve is the big celebration, not Christmas (which occurs on Jan. 7Th, as they are orthodox christians). I was told the Soviets had discouraged Christmas, so everyone put their emotions into New Year's Eve, that continues to be the case. Every Georgian I knew, except those in the club, celebrated quietly with their own immediate family with a formal Georgian meal at midnight. Then the young people went out and caroused until about noon, ending up with fierce hangovers.

Sunday, Jan 1

I started out with a breakfast with George Gurgenzidze, and finalizing the student selection. He and I both were quite pleased, and I agreed with him and the Rector that my participation in interviewing each student was necessary and very helpful (see earlier).

I visited Sherry Carlin in her new apartment, which is beautiful. Wonderful wood floors (parquet, as are all floors here), excellent view, large high-ceiling rooms, exquisite Persian rugs. We talked at great length about our Partnership, AID, and the plans for the future. A highly informative and useful talk. The work plan at the end of this diary is based largely upon our conversation plus that I had with the Minister on Monday.

I then went to Levan Vasadze's friends and had a wonderful Georgian New Year celebratory meal. In his friend George's home. Fourteen young people, 23 or so in age, were present. They have formed a close group since childhood. No drugs. Intent upon improving themselves in every possible way. I have promised all of them to help in every way I can. Wonderful warm toasts to each other, to me, to the world, etc. They all wrote a long letter for me to take back to Levan. A really good way for me to start the New Year, I thought. A lot of my thoughts and insights about Georgia have come from my meetings with Levan's friends, not to mention living for two years with Levan. My optimism about the future of Georgia comes from these friendships I have established with them, and with the other Georgians: medical students; Andro Kacharava and his wife; Nick Rurua and his wife; all the others who have come here.

Monday Jan 2

A three hour meeting with the Minister of Health, the results of which are at the end of this diary. He proudly showed me Shevardnadze's proclamation on health care reformed, that started the process of Jan. 1. Our partnership was proud to have participated in the meetings that lead to this proclamation, which we agreed was comparable to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, except it deals with health care for Georgia.

Then to the home of the rector of Georgian Technical University for a Georgian dinner, a farewell to me. All the rectors were there. Huge table of food. Many dishes I had not come across before. Many toasts. I compared them to Jack Kennedy's statement about dining with the Nobel prizewinners at the White House ("the only other time there was such a concentration of intelligence in the White House was when Thomas Jefferson dined alone."). I gave a toast to Archil based on C.P. Snow's books about two cultures (science and the public), but talked about the Georgian and U.S. Cultures. Etc.

Another farewell dinner, this time at the Ruras. A lot of young men again. The head of Georgian TV. Mr. Rura gave me an old Colchian coin and a stamp issued in 1917 during the brief period of Georgian independence.

A rush back to the hotel, finished packing, and to the airport. A nice flight on a Boeing 737 to Cologne (Germania or TransGlobe Airlines), and night at the Bristol Hotel in Cologne. I returned gratefully the proprietor's overcoat.

Tuesday Jan 3

Left Cologne on Lufthansa with the Mayor of Poti (who traveled back with me) one hour late, due to heavy snow. Arrived at Munich just as Delta had closed the plane's doors. I literally got down on the floor and begged. (I remember Willis Hurst telling me one time of a trip to New Zealand. He stopped in Hawaii Friday, and was due to leave for New Zealand Sunday. He had been assured a visa was not needed, but in his compulsive fashion he had gone himself to the New Zealand Embassy late Saturday morning, a few minutes before closing, just to be sure. He was told he had to have a visa, couldn't leave the next day without one, and couldn't get one for three days. As Willis told me, "There are times you recognize you have to get down on the floor and beg. I did, and got the visa." I have always cherished the visual image of Willis doing exactly that.) So I begged. A complication was that we did not have a ticket for the Mayor, and they told me it would take two hours. Finally a wonderful woman at Delta arranged for us to get the ticket over the phone, and we were allowed to fly. Some problems had come up at home, and there was no way I was not going to come back on Tuesday.