

TBILISI REPORT

September 29 through October 16, 1995

H. Kenneth Walker MD.

Friday, September 29, 1995

Left Atlanta at 7:55 p.m. on Delta to Frankfurt. Uneventful. I have been taking a class in the Georgian language at Emory this semester and I studied my alphabet. Georgia has one of the world's fourteen unique alphabets--like no other. Squiggles and curls. Hard. And I was always poor at languages.

Saturday, September 30, 1995

Arrived in Frankfurt to rain, temperature mid-forties. Met up with Andro Kacharava. Andro is an MD/PhD who has worked in cardiovascular research in our department the last two years, now is going to become a regular house officer. He has to travel back to Tbilisi and then fax the entry stamp on his passport to ECFMG so they will give him the necessary visa to be a house officer. He was furious to almost the point of being inarticulate, which is highly unusual for the very verbal Andro. The German consulate in Atlanta has placed an "A" instead of a "B" in a box on his visa, and this prevented him from entering the lobby and baggage retrieval area in Frankfurt. He could merely go from the plane to the other plane, and not collect his baggage. Air Georgia assured him they would pick up his luggage, but Andro and I both will believe this when we see it in Tbilisi. Andro introduced me at the airport to Gia Kancheli, a famous Georgian composer who now lives in Antwerp. Written about in *Time* recently. Returning to Tbilisi for a celebration tomorrow night of his sixtieth birthday. I accepted his invitation to attend.

From Frankfurt I have taken Air Georgia. Russian Tupelov, about 300 seats; three jets, like the Tri Star. This will be my seventh trip, and I have learned to fly business class. Coach has people packed in like sardines. About two inches between your nose and back of seat in front of you. Seat belts unusable. Vodka, smoking, collegiality among the traveling Georgians to the point of mania. Business class similar to coach on U.S. airline.

Arrived at midnight and had the usual one plus hours wait to clear customs. Met by Archil Kobaladze, the director of our office here, professor of medicine at the medical school. Delivered my luggage to Betsy Haskell's guest house, and then on to Andro Kacharava's family for his homecoming. I delivered a toast where I said in the bible the prodigal son came home and the

fatted pig was killed. In this case, I said, the difference was the fatted pig had come home¹. This was well received by everyone except Andro.

Finally to the guest house, where the electricity had gone off and I had to unpack by candlelight. Collapsed in bed 22 hours after leaving Atlanta.

Sunday, October 1, 1995

Got up at 9:30, renewed acquaintance with the staff of the guest house. Wonderful people who take really good care of me when I am here. Archil picked me up at 10 a.m. and we went to our office. I gave \$5000 in cash that I had brought for our library project. Then we had a meeting with Lado, the Vice Minister of Health. We reviewed all our projects from the Ministry point of view².

¹Andro has put on some weight since being in the U.S.

²We have ten+ projects, in varying from projects that are well along, and others that at this moment are ideas: (1)Health care reform: faculty from the Public Health School will spend almost sixteen weeks in Georgia the next twelve months, working to help set up financing and procedures for a top to bottom restructuring of the health care system along modern lines; (2)Maternal and child health: pediatric faculty singly and working with the World Bank are planning and will implement a thoroughgoing project beginning with tiny village clinics and going up to a national perinatal center; (3)EMS training center and Library learning resources center: the Woodruff Medical Library is setting up a library connected to the Internet and western electronic data bases, and training Georgians in searching techniques; the EMS training center will open Oct. 23rd, and turn out 100 paramedic types a month; (4)Preventive medicine and health promotion: Virgil Brown of Medicine has visited once and is planning, probably with World Bank funds, teaching Georgia how to mount an anti-smoking campaign and work on other aspects of preventive medicine; (5)Mental health: the Emory psychiatric department will work with the senior psychiatrist of Georgia on a visit in November to Atlanta, and begin to think about tacking the severe mental health problems-
-drugs in the young, severe stress in adults; (6)working with Georgia to establish a nursing school, health care administration school and new medical school at Tbilisi State University; these projects are *in utero* at the moment,

- The project to set up a library connected to the Internet is going well. The renovations are under way, the Ministry has promised \$13,000. This coupled with \$5000 I brought over will do a lot of the renovation although not all of it. The cost of bars for the windows (a necessity) is not covered, and individual heating units impervious to the electricity being up and running is not covered. We estimated about \$8-10,000 more would be needed.
- The EMS training center renovation is part of the same area for the library, and we have enough to finish that and open it in three weeks.
- City Hospital #2, the hospital we are working with, is stalled because \$600,000 designated for it comes from a European Community fund, and the government has to negotiate with EC to get their agreement to use it in this way. That is occurring, and we should know shortly. The World Bank people have just left, and will be back in November. I had talked earlier to Al Brann, of our Department of Pediatrics, who is the World Bank consultant for the Maternal and Child Care project, and he tells me everything is on target. About \$1 million, and Emory, in the person of Al Brann and other faculty in pediatrics and ob-gyn, will be involved.
- Another part of the World Bank project occasioned a lot of discussion. The World Bank will fund the complete renovation of one hospital in Tbilisi. They insist it be a general hospital that has all specialties,

although Georgia State and Grady are moving ahead rapidly with the nursing school; (7) student exchange project: Georgian junior medical students come to Emory every six months, and two or more Emory seniors go to Tbilisi in May, each with a project; (8) Outreach projects with LaGrange Sister City people and western Georgia: Poti, Kutaisi, Zugdidi and Batumi; (9) bringing leaders in Georgian medicine to Atlanta for two to four months, and faculty members who are clerkship directors for two months; (10) publishing translated U.S. medical articles in Georgian; (11) establishing a western academic medical center in City Hospital #2 in Tbilisi.

including especially pediatrics and obstetrics³. They had earlier rejected the hospital we are working with, City Hospital #2, saying the building was newly constructed and was not up to the standards of the old buildings built decades ago. They chose City Hospital #1, but recently have decided to reject it, too. Now the decision is totally up in the air. Lado, Archil and I decided we would propose to the Minister that he and I jointly write a letter urging the World Bank to put their money into City Hospital #2, since the Government was putting money there, and it is the hospital we are working with. We will talk later to the Minister.

I was taken to see the new World Bank office which is in the Ministry of Health building adjacent to our current office (the new one will be in the same area as the library and EMS projects). The smell was new⁴, the renovation expensive. It cost \$75 per square meter. Our renovation project, on the other hand, cost \$25 (but only after some bloody haggling).

We then visited the renovation project. This is an area I chose when I was here in May and June (outlined in my report then) for three of our needs: offices; EMS training center; and Library project⁵. The walls had been torn

³Pediatric hospitals and Ob hospital ("maternity houses") are separate facilities here, just as they are or were in many other parts of the world. The World Bank is very insistent on the concept of general hospitals, maintaining women especially have many other potential ailments, and need to be in a total care environment.

⁴I can tell any building in Tbilisi with my eyes closed, by its particular smell: musty, old furniture, etc. I can do the same in the U.S., for that matter. I inherited this from my father, and it reminds me of Lewis Thomas' writings on the import of the nose to the evolution of the human race.

⁵As Indicated at some length in the May report, we are building a library that will have books and journals, CD ROMs and other modern electronic teaching aids in medicine, and be connected to the Internet. We will train the librarians to search electronic data bases, such as MEDLINE of the National Library of Medicine, and also set up regional libraries connected to the main one, just as the US model. We are using about \$100,000 of US AID funds for

out, the floor is being redone, the walls painted, etc. The EMS training center will be opened in a big ceremony attended by Washington officials on October 23rd. I crossed my fingers and accepted assurances it would be ready to be opened. I was quite impressed. The space when completed will be impressive. When I was here in June we chose this site. I was stunned by the work that had been accomplished since then. When I visited workers were all over the place, painting, replacing flooring, working on the ceiling, redoing the bathrooms.⁶

Then lunch with Lado and Archil, and a friend of theirs who directs one of the resort sanatoria (with enemas and other GI goodies) in the mountains. Turns out his brother-in-law has been instrumental in getting a propane gas company over here. They have discovered a gigantic amount of gas near Tbilisi, and it will go on line in a month. The hope is this will avert problems with electricity in the winter, since the electricity generators at the main plant can run on propane.

Back to Betsy's hotel where I met her, and she filled me in with her perspective on the politics and economy of Georgia. Just yesterday a new currency was put into use, the *lari*: \$1 USD = 1.30 lari. The Government is determined that everyone use this currency and stop using dollars and rubles, so has put into place two years in jail if you don't do your business in it. The elections are scheduled for one month for President and all of Parliament. A new constitution, that is modeled after the U.S. one. Today Shevardnadze met the press and pointed the finger for the recent assassination attempt on him to the former Minister of the Interior,

the equipment, administration and training, and coming up with about \$30,000 otherwise for renovation of the old space. Carol Burns, Director of the Woodruff Medical Center Library, is directing the project, and visited here for two weeks in July. The EMS training center will train 100 or more firemen, policemen and other similar people per month in on-the-scene resuscitation.

⁶Bathrooms in public buildings are simply open spaces in the floor, surrounded by tile. (Private bathrooms in public buildings, e.g., the Ministry, are Western style.) At the request of some of the staff from the Emory Library we are putting in a sit-down bathroom.

Giorgadze, and said he was in cahoots with right wing members of the Russian military and political parties. Archil had told me there was a recent law enacted that said no one could have guns. The police confiscated gigantic amounts of guns. Now there is no one on the street with a gun, people walk the streets all night long, and crime has declined precipitously. Everyone agrees that economic conditions have improved significantly, and crime has diminished to an incredible degree.

At 6 p.m. Andro Kacharava and his father picked me up. His father is an engineer who is trying his hand now at banking. The father is going with me to meet a number of Georgians he thinks will contribute dollars to our library project. We discussed that at some length. Then we went to Gia Kancheli's concert. The symphony hall is beautiful. Shevardnadze attended, along with a lot of people. I enjoyed the music, especially a viola concerto.

Back to Betsy's and a dinner table discussion with Betsy, Don, Kenny and Jeffrey Steele. Jeff is from the Congressional Human Rights Foundations, a Washington group that got \$500,000 from AID to set up Internet for Parliament here, under the belief that providing Parliament access to Western information would increase the chances of stable democracy. He and I had agreed several months ago that they would provide us with some sort of Internet access for the library project, but AID put our access on hold several months ago. He and I will meet with AID this week to see if we can't solve that problem.

To bed, still on U.S. time (eight hours earlier). Went to sleep to the sound of dogs barking, awakening to the roosters crowing. Tbilisi is supernaturally quiet at night, except for the two sounds. No cars. Voices on the street until about midnight, then no discernible movements.

Monday, October 2, 1995

At 10 a.m. we went to the U.S. Embassy where the new U.S. Ambassador, William Courtney, held the first of monthly workshops between Embassy staff and the NGOs (non-governmental organization), the rubric which fits us. This is a meeting which will be held at 10 a.m. The first Wednesday of each month. About forty people present, representing CARE, United Methodist Committee on Relief, etc. We all introduced ourselves. The wife of the new

ambassador is Paula Feeney. She has also been working in U.S. AID for many years, and is now the Director for AID of Georgia. She knew all about the Atlanta-Tbilisi Health Partnership.

Ambassador Courtney began with a thumbnail description of the status of Georgia with respect to the assassination attempt. This occurred on August 29th. Shevardnadze has just gotten into his car in a motorcade to go sign into law the new constitution, when the car behind him blew up. His aides rapidly pulled him out of his car, and a few seconds later it blew up. This attempt had been preceded during the few months before then by the killing of two of his main supporters. Shevardnadze held a press conference yesterday in which he fingered a man named Giorgadze, who was head of Minister of State Security until fired just after the assassination. The tale is Shevardnadze wanted someone else for that post, but Moscow insisted on Giorgadze, who was also supported by Jabba Ioseliani (see my Dec-Jan journal for my dealings with Jabba).⁷ Shevardnadze also said Giorgadze was responsible for two assassinations of prominent political leaders in the past few months. The Ambassador pointed out that the current investigation was like the CIA being said to be responsible for the assassinations, and the statements were coming from the FBI who was investigating it (over here the MKVD vs. the KGB; Giogardaze was head of the KGB). He presented all of this in a highly articulate fashion, exquisitely threading several fine diplomatic needles. An impressive performance.

The next subject was the introduction of the *lari*. Today was the last day one can use any other currency. The NGOs were quite concerned. E.g., the agriculture NGO (Tri Valley from California) were taking delivery of several thousand pounds of seed that day. The price had been agreed upon in dollars, and the seller expected dollars, but the law now says *lari*. The Ambassador said the law of the country had to be obeyed. But a sharp gentleman in the

⁷ Jabba is a member of parliament, was a criminal and in Russian jails for many years in his youth, then got a PhD, taught in a university, and became involved in politics. Head of the *Mehedrioni* ("horsemen"), young men who initially organized to provide relief after the great earthquake in 1987, then became a guerilla force during the fighting leading to the revolution and later coup against the president. Persistent rumors identify Jabba as being involved still in the mafia.

audience (obviously a businessman) asked what the U.S. Embassy was going to use to pay its Georgian employees. Answer: dollars. "We have to be concerned with morale, and we have diplomatic immunity." The perceived hypocrisy of this was promptly pointed out.

After the meeting we went with Jeff Steele to his operation. Jeff is with the Congressional Human Rights group, and they have a \$500,000 contract from AID to establish Internet for the Georgian parliament, the theory being the chance of success with democracy will be greater if there is free access to information from the West. Jeff and I have been in contact for a year now, since we have asked if we can be given access free to the Internet through his grant. This is currently up in the air, for two reasons: the private company they have chosen, Mimosi, gets to sell commercially whatever is left over, and they of course want as much as possible; the man in charge in Washington doesn't believe anyone except parliament should get it free. A decision will be made later this week. We badly need the access free, since it is almost impossible to get funding agencies to pay for this kind of access (they see it simply as money going down the drain), and we work with straitened finances, to put it mildly.

We were impressed with what Jeff has accomplished. He showed us the Home Page for parliament (WWW.Parliament.ge), and to our surprise they our home page for our project, and had a link to it.

We then took Jeff over to see our renovation project, and he in turn was impressed. The area is 9,000 sq. Feet. Old building (about 1910 or so) made of marble, tall ceilings (twenty-odd feet or more), very spacious, very light with many windows, etc.

Then a trip to my favorite Georgian "fast food" place. A hole in the wall that three nice women have. Pots and pans all over the place, wonderful smell.

Andro Kacharava and his father joined us, and we went again to the renovation project. Andro's father, Gogi, is an engineer, and he has offered to help raise money and use his knowledge to help with the project. We discussed the pricing, heating and wiring. He is going to see what he can do especially about the steel bars. There are 26 windows that are all accessible to thieves, and we will have a lot of highly portable equipment, namely

computers. On the other hand, each window is 3.25 sq meters, and the best price we have come up with is \$6000 for the bars. We don't have this--and perhaps it doesn't make sense to come up with an even cheaper price if we don't have anything at all, but at least we will know what the target is!

I went home with Archil and we worked on my agenda for the next two weeks while I am here. A list of about thirty names to meet with, and it usually grows every day.

As I was leaving I saw some graffiti, and to my great pleasure was able to read it! (** = G.D.). I felt I was beginning to accomplish something!

Back to dinner at Betsy's, where she and I had a long discussion of the current political and economic situation. Betsy with some other investors is setting up a dinner club for business people. She has to put \$17,000 of her own money into it this week, and she would dearly like to know what is going to happen to the lari before committing herself.

Tuesday, October 3

I met this morning with the cellular phone people to discover how much it would cost to activate my phone. \$60 connection fee, \$60 every three months, \$1 per minute. I decided not to do this, of course. They have 100 subscribers, and at the moment don't want any more.

At 10 a.m. we went to visit Stan Music, the CDC person, in his home/office combination. A wonderful old house in the old style: lot of wood; stucco; cool in summer, warm in winter; many trees. He is training epidemiologists for surveillance of disease here. He has just chosen six diseases to train them to build a database of: diphtheria; TB (a huge and growing problem); COPD; breast cancer; hypertension; nutrition. Maternal and Child Health is not one of them clearly, and neither is cardiovascular or cerebrovascular disease. Georgia has over twice the death rate for cardiac disease as the U.S., but Stan says there is a limit to what he can train people for, and the choice was determined by him and the Minister. The current statistics are completely unreliable, and obviously the data base needs to be built, and individuals trained. A slow but rewarding process.

He then described at my request the diphtheria crisis in some detail. Two hundred fifty cases in Batumi this summer, and not even diphtheria season. Stan says everyone under sixty in the former Soviet Union is at risk. The explanation for this is they had 23 different reasons one could use for avoiding vaccination, and there was a tradition of being suspicious of vaccinations. In addition there were never any boosters given. In addition, Georgia is highly vulnerable because of all the displaced people (about 500,000) due to the recent ethnic warfare in Abkhazia, and the arrival of Russian soldiers with the potential of importation of new toxicogenic strains. He told an anecdote to illustrate the problem here. The "warlord" of Batumi, one of the southern cities that borders Turkey, saw reason to encourage his people to get vaccinated, even though the number of cases there is quite high and increasing, and large amounts of vaccine had been supplied. So, a meeting occurred at the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi with the Turkish ambassador, the American ambassador and Stan. The danger to Turkey was made clear in no uncertain terms. A day later a very high official of the Turkish government had a meeting with the warlord, and implied how Turkey would feel if vaccination did not occur, and Turkey was at risk. Turkish trade is the lifeblood of Batumi, and the Turks are not known to be squeamish about force, etc. (e.g., the Kurds).

The CDC recommended to the warlord that he mount a huge public campaign stressing the danger to the populace, and encourage them to be vaccinated. What actually happened is there was a huge campaign stressing there was no danger, and everything was fine (Stan likened this to what the warlord of Martha's Vineyard would do if summer tourist trade were threatened). However.....at the same time squads of police and nurses went door to door in the entire city (well over 100,000) and vaccinated *every single individual*.⁸

Stan then gave his reading on the future directions of U.S. AID, a topic of great interest, since the huge majority of our funding comes from them. The Ambassador yesterday had stressed mightily the new emphasis of the U.S. Government: NGO's do aid best, and the government is going to give most of

⁸William Osler and diphtheria in Odessa. KW to check this. **

its funds to these private organizations⁹. He says the directions will be: energy; agriculture; business development. Health will not be funded, as director of AID here in Georgia (Paula Feeney, the wife of the ambassador) has said pointedly over and over again. My own perception is that health to AID means humanitarian aid. I personally agree the time for humanitarian aid is coming to an end. But health to me means a food chain, if you will, that begins with a high school student deciding whether or not to go into medicine, and extends through college, medical school, and academic medical centers to individual services to patients. This is the infrastructure that is solely lacking in Georgia and must be improved, just as the infrastructure of some many other areas is lacking. The challenge is how to get this across to AID officials and Newt Gingrich.

Stan gave some valuable information. The new Health Advisor to the Director of the World Bank is a close friend of his, Richard Feachem, former Dean of the London School of Tropical Medicine. In some way we need to get to know Dr. Feachem, and encourage him about the directions the World Bank might take about health in developing nations, and Georgia in particular.

Then a visit to the paging people, where we bought a Motorola pager for Archil (code 1800. Numbers to call for operator to send message: 93 14 25; 93 30 11; 98 08 21; 98 87 43). It reaches over all the major cities in Georgia.

We then went to City Hospital #2, and met with Ilia, the chief doctor. I am very fond of Ilia. About 45, general internist, dealing with him since 1992. The hospital has a new building, one-half finished, that has been unchanged since my first visit in August 1992. The real reason we chose #2 with which to be associated, because we could influence the design of the hospital. Just today the funds for its finishing had been approved (\$500,000). I visited a

⁹The Ambassador stressed how the situation here was quite different from the Marshall Plan, where the people of Western Europe after WW II were not as well educated as the people of Georgia. I was tempted to point out the Georgians were in fact much better educated than the people of the U.S.: Literacy is 100%, and virtually all of them are fluent in two languages with two alphabets. An increasing number is mastering English, and thereby a third alphabet.

new outpatient center they had renovated themselves, and saw the ECHO machine given by Crawford Long Hospital, along with the cardiologist who had spent several months with John Merlino at CWL. A beginning.

I decided to talk a bit to Ilia under the rubric of leadership. Over the years we have worried considerably about this, since we in effect are putting all our hospitals into one basket: City Hospital #2, and that inescapably means Ilia. He has not "taken off" in the way we would like. In all fairness, he has had severe obstacles (the question is whether the word *insuperable* should be put here): no money; economic chaos; an "old guard" of ancient physicians who are concerned only survival, which is defined solely as maintaining the status quo. I said our vision for #2 is that it would in the final analysis be the most important part of what we were trying to accomplish in Georgia. It would be the end of the food chain of health that began with the high school student.....and ended with the academic medical center, #2. The hospital would be the place where medical students were educated, house staff trained, patient given exemplary care and clinical research by the Institutes¹⁰. I then asked him to look out the window, and then to look around the room. Outside it was a dreary day, overcast with rain; inside the

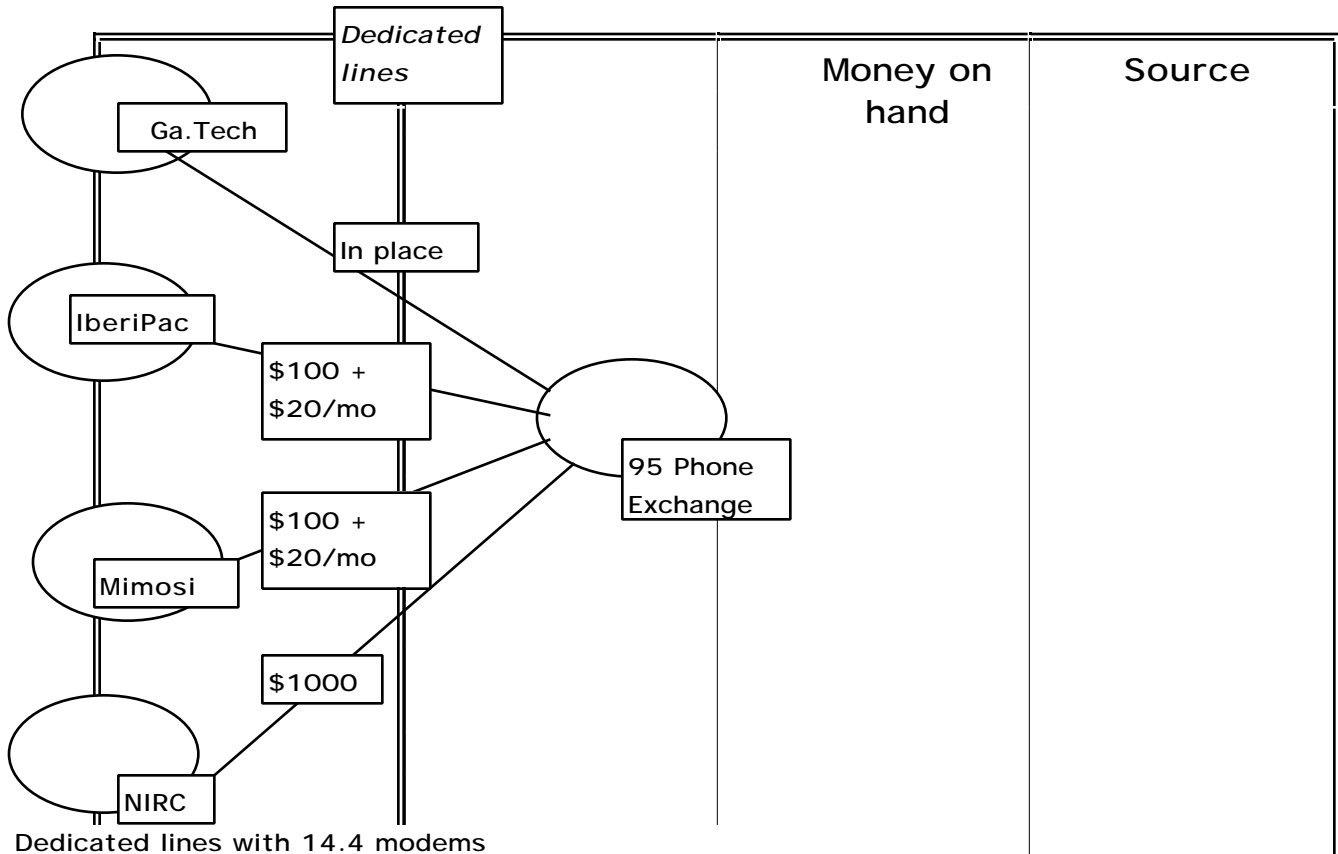
¹⁰Georgia has a mini-NIH, with all sorts of institutes. Eg., the Institute of Neurology, the Cancer Institute, the Institute of Trauma, etc. The question is what to do with them. During the Soviet years they were huge, and important clinical centers. Viz., the Institute of Neurology was one of only four or five centers for surgery of epilepsy in the entire Soviet Union. But a small independent republic as Georgia is today clearly doesn't need and cannot afford these huge institutes. I feel that with careful individual planning at least some of them can serve useful purposes. The Director of the Institute of Neurology, a very able person, is coming to Emory in November to spend time with Mahlon DeLong, Chairman of Neurology, and a leader in the current approach to the treatment of Parkinsonism with carefully directed (by neurophysiological means) stereotactic surgery. My idea is this would be ideal for the Institute of Neurology, given its tradition of epileptic surgery, which is based upon the same careful mapping of the brain and then surgery. Georgia might conceivably become the center for that type of surgery in this part of the world. The surgery would be done at #2, since that is where all the equipment will be. The Institute will be closely associated with a medical school, perhaps as the department of neurology.

surroundings were drab, post-war Soviet (even worse than early Holiday Inn, if that is believable). I said it took an unusual individual to be in these circumstances but still look down the road a few years and see what could be done with #2. The question, I said, was this: was he the one or not? If not, he needed to get out of the way and help find someone who could.

Ilia took up this bait and behaved very appropriately after one paragraph of what I call whining. I pointed out to him that what enabled Regan to be perceived as a great president, whether or not he was, is that he *behaved* like the American people felt a president should behave in every way: posture; what he said and did not say; mannerisms, etc. I said Ilia needed to remember the lesson of Regan, and whining¹¹ definitely did not fit into people's concept of the leader of #2.

We then went to our office in the Ministry of Health building, and took up the knotty problem of financing our new space for the Library, EMS center and office. The equations look something like this:

¹¹Archil, who was translating, assured me there was a Georgian word for *whining* that got the point across.



	Cost	Money on hand	Source
Renovation	\$28,000	\$8,000	AIHA
		5,000	Donations former house staff
		12,000	Minister of Health
Furniture for EMS	2,000	2,000	AIHA
Steel bars	3,240		
Heat	1500		
Wiring for computers	2500		
Total	37,240	24,000	
Difference	-\$13,240		

We also need a 50 kilowatt generator so the center will be independent for heat and electricity. In winter the electricity is often off for days at a time. I am going to try to get this donated. The heating method is interesting. Each room has old radiators. Each one will be closed at both ends and filled with transformer oil. An electrode will be placed in each one and the oil heated. In the U.S. we have this in the portable radiators, and the method is used extensively in Armenia. Once heated they give off heat for a long time.

We next reviewed the status for the furniture of the EMS center, which will open with a lot of fanfare and dignitaries (Jim Smith from AIHA in Washington, people from Grady, the Minister, Paula Feeney from AID, etc.) just 20 days from now. We need the following: 50 chairs with arms for writing; 30 regular chairs; a podium; a blackboard; 6 desks; 8 tables for mannequins. We have \$2000 to get all of this. Archil assures me we can get all of it used for this amount. I say nothing, but am waiting to see.

We then went over the status of the Learning Center with Otar Zumburidze, the professor from Georgian Technical University who is working with us. The connections amongst four components are shown. IberiPac and Mimosi are companies that provide access to satellites. Whether or not we will have access to Internet through Jeffrey Steele's project is a concern. Dial-up access with a 19.7 modem is at least \$1200 a month, money which we don't have. And if the satellite companies are the ones who set the fees, they are likely to be even higher. A decision apparently will be made Thursday.

I then had dinner with Sherry Carlin. She was a cardiology ICU nurse at Emory, then her MPH at Emory. When I was looking for someone to run our project in Tbilisi in 1993 she was recommended. She came over here, ran our project for about 14 months, then was hired by AID to run their operations in Georgia. She and I discussed the politics of Georgia, AID and the money situation, etc. She plans to leave here sometime in the future, and get a fellowship in Johns Hopkins, or go to work in another country.

Wednesday, October 4, 1995

Awakened today to my 59th birthday¹². I view them with the pleasure of having survived another year successfully. Just after my 39th birthday I had cancer of the colon, and after I beat the odds of 60% five year survival I determined that from then on birthdays would be greeted with joy.

Andro Kacharava and his father brought a man who makes steel bars for windows, and we all went to the Library project. Our earlier price was \$6000. This man gave us a price of \$3240. Illustrates what can be done if someone like Andro's father, with all his engineering contacts gets involved. The only problem, of course, is that we still don't have the money.

Went to the Ministry of Health and met Avto, the Minister. He is the third Minister I have known since August 1992, and he is superb. We decided we would meet most of the day on Saturday, and have dinner together, and discuss everything that is happening.

To the Georgian Technical University¹³, where we talked with Ramaz Khouradze, the Rector. He has become a close friend as a result of our dealings with the Library project. About 50, I would judge. A very able administrator and leader. We reviewed where we stand with the Library project, and had champagne to celebrate my survival of one more year.

Back to our office, where we tackled the challenge of signage for the new quarters. We will have the Library, EMS training center and our partnership offices. Signs in both Georgian and English. Two weeks hence, so not long. We decided how we wanted everything, then visited two places who make signs. I had thought we would go to a store similar to the trophy stores in Atlanta, where bronze plaques are made. Turns out there are no such things here. The first place etches signs on glass. The second one had two elderly gnomes who laboriously and lovingly cut letters out of metal. We estimated it would cost upwards of \$1000 to get our signs made, and would probably take

¹²Born in Washington, Georgia, at 10:30 a.m. When I was young I worked in the hospital and succumbed to the temptation of reviewing my birth record.

¹³30,000 students, equivalent of Georgia Tech. Later I will go to Tbilisi State University. Same number of students, similar to University of Georgia.

months. We decided to tackle the problem tomorrow.

To Betsy's hotel, where Eugene, the head of the U.N. In Tbilisi, sought me out with two other people. Eugene and I had a fine conversation at dinner a couple of nights ago. One of his friends was Chahryar Adle¹⁴. I had a fascinating talk with him. He is a scholar in Iranian art (he is Iranian, as is Eugene). Several months ago UNESCO asked him to come to Georgia and survey their art. He arrived and went to the art museum, Sh. Amiranshvili Museum. To his absolute amazement he discovered 500 oil paintings from the 16th through 19th centuries of Iran. The existence of the collection was totally unknown to the rest of the world. He said it was much superior to what is in the British Museum, the Metropolitan museum, and even in Iran itself. They have five paintings that are matchless. He said the director of the museum in 1910 and a few years thereafter bought them, and was clearly a genius. He recognized their importance and value fifty years before other art scholars did. He bought all of them for virtually nothing. Chahryar prolonged his stay another week, and furiously catalogued the collection--he estimated he only had five minutes per painting. About one-half of them are fakes, but he says they are just as valuable, because they contribute a lot to the history faking. When he returned to Paris his bag with the notes pictures he had taken of every painting were stolen! He spent the next two months, after excitedly letting all his scholar friends know of his findings, trying to find money to return. He could not find any, so decided to fund himself. He is staying in the home of someone he got to know, and working hard every day. Says he can only work 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.: these are the hours the museum workers actually do work (they do come earlier and leave later, but it clearly takes them some time to get up to speed and then to wind down). I asked him why didn't he insist. He replied as it is they are extraordinarily helpful, and if he forced them to do something they did not want to do, they wouldn't things such as say "here are some paintings we discovered this morning while rummaging around the basement." Smart man. I asked for and graciously received an invitation to go to the museum and see his work this Friday.

A birthday dinner at 8 p.m. Archil, Noona his wife, Betsy, Andro, Ramaz Khouradze, Temuri Khouradze (his brother, who is provost of Tbilisi State University), Nata (works in our office; graduated from the pediatrics faculty

1419 Ruz Cépré, 75015 Paris, France

two years ago, trying to decide now what to do with her life), Malhous who is Andro's father-in-law and whose daughter Salome works in our office at Emory. Many toasts, much fine food.

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Thursday, October 5, 1995

This morning I had breakfast with George Lolashvili, physician, age 34, wants to come to U.S. for training; passed USMLE part I with score of 79. Speaks English well. I was noncommittal, merely telling him to talk to me after he passed part II, and emphasizing to him his score was the important factor.

Then I had one hour of lesson in Georgian from Salome, Archil's daughter. Slow going.

Six students picked me up at ten. They are students who spent six months with us at Emory¹⁶ and we went to Eastern Georgia to visit the wine country around Telavi. (Fifteen miles or so from Chechnya, which thankfully is across huge mountains from where I was.) Aka's father is president of the wine growers' union. I met with him the last time I was here, and he commented on the difficulties they were having: no fuel; no insecticides; no money to buy good plants; no fertilizer. Production down to 12 million tons of grapes per year vs. 500 million in 1991. He pointed out how the communists in the 1950's decided what was needed was quantity, not quality, and no first rate Georgian wines had been seen since. We first visited a winery that produce Stalin's favorite wine, a sweet red wine. Visited their underground caves where the wines are aged. Then visited an entertainment place on the mountainside, where the communist bigwigs cavorted in fine style when they visited this part of Georgia, Khehetia. We then visited an ancient church, about 1100 a.d., and climbed its belfry and looked out over the countryside.

¹⁵A question I have wondered about was answered at the table. The Georgians have a fetish about clean plates. I have sat down at a Georgian table with a stack of seven dishes in front of me. The hostesses are very attentive to taking away the top, dirty dish, at frequent intervals. I was told in old times it was inadmissible to serve fish on the same plate as the beef, consequently the plate was changed. Similar to the Jewish practice.

¹⁶Aka, Eka, Temuri, Zaal, Sandro, Michael.

Reminiscent of the country in the Napa Valley in climate and looks. Huge numbers of grape vines, valley surrounded by the Caucasus mountains in the distance, many small and some large plots of land. Many wagons filled with dried vines (sugar cane or what we call "high gear" in Wilkes County, which is roughage used to feed cattle in winter) coming out of the fields and on the highway. I saw very few youths. Mostly middle-aged or older people, skinny (saw absolutely no fat ones), black a favorite color of their clothes, weathered faces.

We then went toward Telavi. The water pump on our car--belonging to one of the students--broke. The other car belonged to the government (father of one of the students works in equivalent of IRS) was clearly equipped to deal with a common problem: a rope was promptly brought out and in a matter of fact fashion the car, full of people, was towed to Telavi. There another water pump was purchased and installed in fifteen minutes. Cost about \$14 I was told.

We visited the Tsinandavi winery. It had belonged to a poet around 1800, who was very wealthy and owned a huge tract of land. Connected by marriage in some way to Napoleon. Brought the Emperor's death mask to Georgia, and it is now in a town called Zugdidi. Huge house, surrounded by about five acres of formal gardens. A bit like the Biltmore estate in North Carolina.

A Georgian table was of course all set up for us in a beautiful large room of the winery. Food and of course the toasts. About fifteen men around the table plus us. The student's father who was the winegrower's president was of course close to all of them. Telavi is the center of eastern Georgia, about 30,000 people. A former intern of ours, Gela, came from here, as well as Nick, a former student who stayed six months with us. They were both well known ("Everyone here knows everyone else," according to Aka).

The toasts proceeded, and I was once again struck by this tradition that is so entrenched for so many years in this culture. First I was toasted, then the U.S., then presidents Clinton and Shevardnadze. The women, the dead, the children of Georgia, the future, Love, Holy Places, etc., all in a time honored sequence. I was asked to give a toast about four times. My first time I gave it in honor of Aka's father (winegrower's president), and spoke of seeds falling close to trees, etc. The next time I gave it to the Georgian table

("food good, wine better, people around this table best of all"). One very fascinating exchange involved one of the men who was a refugee from Abkhazia¹⁷. He spoke emotionally of the problems of the refugees, and of his fleeing with all his family killed, without belongings. A sophisticated educated individual, obviously of substance in Abkhazia. After his toast each member of the table gave a complementary toast, speaking of their sorrow at what had occurred, offering him sympathy and friendship. The Georgians use this toasting tradition as the place to bring up and publicly display deep emotions and sentiments. It is the place where it is acceptable--even required--to do this. The table is a forum for points to be made that are done awkwardly in other circumstances. A really good way to go about it. Clearly serves a vastly important societal function. I often have wondered how it began and evolved.

Left about 9 p.m. and hurtled amongst the potholes back to Tbilisi. Had a late evening conversation with Mike Hornbrook, who is the Canadian Broadcasting Company's person in Moscow. He had an interview today with Jabba Ioseliani. Found him charming, urbane, seemingly undisturbed by what appears to most of us to be a sudden disastrous change in his fortunes. A widely told tale going the rounds is that Shevardnadze's police raided Jabba's office and told him they found 25 machine guns. "Twenty-five!" he yelled. "There should be twenty-eight!"

Called the office in Atlanta tonight. Learned about the hurricane with 70 mph winds today. Power out, streets closed. Toby called my neighbor, who is looking after my house and dogs. She said a tree had fell on the fence, but that was not serious, and nothing else occurred. I spoke to Paul Klever, and we set about seeing if we could wring anything out of the budget to help with the funds deficit. Perhaps.

Spoke with Bill Casarella. He had gotten both GE and an Israeli company to

¹⁷The region in Western Georgia where there was a bloody battle. Ethnic warfare just as in Yugoslavia between native Georgians and Abkhazians. Latter have lived there for hundreds of years, and wanted to have their own independent state. Supported by Russia, truce signed about 18 months ago. Resulted in 500,000 Georgians fleeing the region after huge amount of bloodshed, neighbor killing neighbor. Still a festering problem.

agree to give a CT scanner two City Hospital #2 two years ago, and now I told him the time had come. He is going to ask the companies again, and tomorrow I will fax the plans for where the machine will be located to him. Construction will start next week, is planned to be finished in four months. I believe when you see it concept, however.

Friday, October 6, 1995

This morning I had breakfast with three people who will visit us at Emory as part of our "Georgian leaders in medicine program:" the director of the health policy institute; the directors of the institutes of neurology and psychiatry. They will each spend about three weeks with us, seeing how our academic departments work, and perhaps fashioning some future collaboration.

Then I had lessons in Georgian. Hasn't gotten any easier.

At 11 a.m. a visit to Tbilisi State University and a meeting with the rector, Roin Metrevelli, and the provost, Temuri Khouradze. We discussed their desire to set up a medical school, and any possible way in which we could help. We had discussed this on the last two of my visits. What is now the state medical school, Tbilisi Medical Institute, had been the medical school of Tbilisi State University until 1930, when across the entire former Soviet Union all medical schools were dismembered from the universities and made separate. The university has a division of biological sciences which includes physiology, immunology, biochemistry, etc., so the foundation for the basic sciences is very much present. The deputy minister had told me earlier this visit that the university people had joined forces with the directors of the various institutes (the "mini-NIH"), and he felt they were becoming a force to reckon with. Tbilisi State University is the most powerful educational institution in the Republic, and there is now doubt but they could put up a strong medical school. They are also working with our partners at Georgia State University to set up a nursing school.¹⁸

¹⁸The psychiatric director this morning had told me the lack of psychiatric nurses and psychiatric social workers was a severe problem.

I spoke of how modern medicine had begun with the hospital medical schools in France in the early 19th century, and pointed out how the leadership in medicine had switched to Germany in about 1850, solely because German medical schools were part of the universities, and were not free standing hospital medical schools. I said the next major development was what William Osler had done at Johns Hopkins. This, I said, had lead to the modern excellence of U.S. medical education.¹⁹ I pointed out that medical education in the U.S. had even evolved significantly in the last decade, and spoke a bit about problem based learning. I said that further the U.S. medical education was not just slightly better than medical education elsewhere in the world (here I sketched with my hands a skyline with a slight bump), it was gigantically better (a skyline with a huge bump). I said it would be tragic if the rector chose to model his new medical school after european models, because they were not nearly so excellent. The rector was like Picasso, sitting in front of a blank canvas. It was he chose, what strokes and pigments he used to create a masterpiece.

I remarked that there were two ways, simply put, that one could view physicians. The first is that they were tradespeople, the second that they were members of a profession. One needed to focus upon the high school graduate when thinking about future physicians. The goal was to turnout an educated human being, and not just a tradesperson.

We then visited what was obviously one of his pride and joys, a new chapel that had jus been opened, modeled after a church King David the Builder had constructed in the eleventh century. After I had admired this, he turned to his provost and instructed him to have a long meeting with me and work out the details of how the new TSU medical school would be modeled after the medical school of Emory University. This pleased me a lot, since I think we can be very helpful, and we will have the first European medical school

¹⁹I am leading up to an important point. At the dinner for my birthday Temuri Khouradze had mentioned TSU has a relationship with Saarbrucken University in Germany. I suspected that left to themselves without any encouragement from me they would model their new medical school after german ones.

modeled after an American one²⁰.

The rector said he was leaving later this afternoon to visit Iran for one week. I promptly told him about the Iranian oil paintings, and suggested he find out more about them, and keep in mind the Georgian museum (Amiranshvili) badly needed financial support for the project. The rector turned the business of getting more information over to his principal assistant.

I then went back to the guest house and received a call from Levan Vasadze in Moscow²¹. I am planning on spending several days with Levan when I travel to the U.S. from here. We had talked one week ago. His firm has an important client, a Mr. Nazdratenko, the governor of the Russian province of which Vladivostok is the capital--Primorski. Levan had forwarded me his medical record several weeks ago, and I had shown them to John Merlino at Crawford Long. John agreed to see him as a patient. The firm wants its president to go with Mr. Nazdratenko to Emory on October 16th, and Levan wanted to know if this could be arranged. I assured him it could be.

I then went to the museum. I was first shown the preparation for a show they are having in a week of a famous Georgian primitive artist who lived around the turn of the century. I loved his paintings. Similar in some ways to Gauguin. Then we saw the Iranian collection, beginning with some fascinating water colors. Then the five unique oil paintings, with a description of what made them unique. I asked Chahryak how he had come to be interested in 18th century Iranian art. "Long family tradition," he replied. "I collected my first shard at an archeological site at age four."

We spoke at length to the Director of the Museum, which (1)has some wonderful works, and (2)is in a sad state of disrepair. I told him about our

²⁰I have been fascinated for many years that the U.S. and are, to my knowledge, the only two countries in the world where medical students must go to college first.

²¹Levan is a young Georgian lad who lived with me two years while getting his MBA at Emory. Graduated in May of this year, turned down an excellent job with Coke in order to work with a small and very aggressive investment bank in Moscow.

library project, and a proposed project with the National Archives²². I explained to him the concept of a Home Page, and suggested we help the Museum set one up, and in particular highlight its Iranian collection. He was fascinated, and we agreed to do business.

Dinner tonight at the home of Dr. Tcitchivili. About 75; very famous literature critic, world known. I had dinner at his home the last time I was here. Long discussion about elections, *lari*, economy, etc. Many toasts. Thoroughly enjoyable, but I was exceedingly weary at the end.

Called Atlanta again, told about the devastation from the hurricane. Tried to call my housekeeper, but couldn't get her.

Saturday, October 7, 1995

Had breakfast this morning with Temuri. Twenty-two, spent six months with us. He made very high scores on the NBME shelf exam in medicine, but he has less confidence in himself than he should have. I asked him his plans, and encouraged him to take the USMLE tests for foreign graduates as soon as possible.

Georgian lesson. Beginning to be able to recognize a few characters and even words without thinking. Working hard on the *-kh* sound, which is devilishly difficult.

Went out and rode *Peplum*, the four year old Arabian horse that was given to me on my last visit. He won a 16 meter race last week. Lasha, who runs operation, asked me to see if I could find used tack, etc., in the U.S. They have great difficulties finding anything, and this has become a critical problem.

I had a great time riding. I had a horse Bill for about twenty years, who was constantly full of himself. Always wanted to run. I have ridden a lot of horses since Bill died, and most of them are plugs. Their concept of work is to stand

²²We are going to provide them with space and equipment in our library to digitize ancient Georgian documents, and make them available on the Internet to scholars in the West.

still. Not Peplum. First of all, he is quite intelligent. He constantly looks around when we ride, curious about everything. Then, just like Bill, his concept of being ridden is to run headlong constantly. I had to ride English style, which I never do at home. Always feel insecure when I do, since I am accustomed to a Western saddle (the Georgians call them "armchairs."). Another problem is I did not bring my boots--to much trouble to bring on the plane. I had hiking shoes. These are dangerous to ride in, especially a horse like Peplum. The shoes are broad, and easily catch in the stirrups. If you fall and your shoes don't leave the stirrups it is the end. I paid a lot of attention to barely getting my toes into the stirrups, and this even more difficult. But I really enjoyed it. Rode two hours. Arranged for a longer ride later this week.

Back to Betsy's guest house, where I learned Amiran, with whom I had breakfast yesterday and who is coming to Emory for three weeks, had a great tragedy last night. His 20 year old son and his fiancée had been killed by a huge truck that had a flat on one of its front tires, and had gone out of control and had run into their car and crushed them. I am not at all sure I could handle this kind of loss were I in his place. Levan Vasadze in Moscow told me yesterday he had been jumped by three thugs in his apartment building the night before. He had fought them off. Caused me to give some thought to staying with him a few days in Moscow. No question about it, this part of the world is as dangerous as southwest Atlanta.

Several weeks ago I gave Grand Rounds at Crawford Long on what we are doing in Georgia, and noted I had almost no decent slides that give a visual concept of the city of Tbilisi. So this afternoon Archil and I went to the mountains and hills above the city to get some good views. We went first to the mountain where the TV transmitter is. It is guarded by troops²³, but

²³Archil told me that when Shevardnadze decided to take the guns away from the *Mehedrioni*, or horsemen, the first thing he did was to remove the transmitters for their pagers from this tower, effectively dismembering their communication with each other. I asked Archil who were Shevardnadze's close advisers, i.e., the people who would think of clever things such as this. "Who do you think?" he asked. "He is his own close adviser. He was a Major General in the KGB, was Minister of Security for the Communist government of Georgia. He doesn't need anyone to tell him these things."

Archil talked them into letting me (but they wouldn't let him) into the compound ("*American professori*" I heard him say). Then we went to the finger-like promontory that has the "mother of Georgia" aluminum state, much like the Statue of Liberty. It was late afternoon, and there was a fabulous golden light over the city. I hope to have gotten some excellent pictures.

We talked as we walked and took pictures, about the proposal for a new medical school at Tbilisi State University. We are having a dinner and meeting with Temuri Khouradze, the provost, on Tuesday night, so we want to have some ideas already in our minds for this session. After picture taking we went to one of my favorite places to sit and talk and drink beer, the veranda of the Metechi Palace Hotel, overlooking the river and Tbilisi.²⁴

I then went with Archil to his house to examine his fifteen year old son, Serge, who had the onset of episodic positional vertigo the day before. I discovered he had upper respiratory symptoms a few days earlier, and had no other manifestations. Probably a viral like vestibular neuronitis.

Dinner at Betsy's. The American Ambassador and his wife came. I ate with Betsy and an English economist who is here several months assisting in the privatization process.

Sunday, October 8, 1995

²⁴We decided at this initial discussion the following points:

- A steering committee of people from Emory and Tbilisi needed to be set up. The Tbilisi members would be Archil and Temuri.
- A written commitment to model the school after the West, and specifically Emory, would be the initial beginning. A letter would go from the President to Emory requesting advice and consultation.
- A college degree would be required of applicants. They would be required to have this degree and a core cluster of pre-medical courses, just like the U.S.
- Applicants would have to take an admission quiz, either the MCAT or similar one.
- There would be a reasonable limit to the number of students, e.g., 100.

Breakfast following by Georgian lesson. Today we got into the alphabet letters that English does not have. One or two of them don't even have the English sound equivalent! Then some grammar. The concept of the "verb to be" has departed me long hence!

Met with Archil and over Sunday brunch at Betsy's had a long dissection of our finances for the National Learning Center. Steel bars for the windows at \$3240 are the most pressing problem, after \$3000 to complete paying for the renovation. Andro's father has suggested the Minister and I send out what Archil with some asperity describes as a "begging letter" asking for donations. We agreed to discuss this later. Another proposal is for me to be interviewed on television and tell of all the partnership projects, highlighting the Learning Center, then two weeks later for an appeal to be made. Archil says the people have to be convinced the money is going for a good purpose, and not just into someone's pocket.

After lunch Andro joined me and the composer Gia Kanchelli met us and we went to the Institute of Therapy where I had agreed to see a close friend of Kanchelli's, Sulkan Nisidze. He is also a Georgian composer, and Kanchelli had persuaded him to go to Germany for a CABG operation one month ago. Just after cardiac catheterization he collapsed unconscious for some minutes and upon regaining consciousness was mute. He was then taken to the operating room and had a five vessel bypass. In Kanchelli's words "I helped his heart, but caused him to lose his brain."

The physician on duty, known to Andro, met us. The patient's son Vanno (a population geneticist at Tbilisi State University with a PhD from Moscow) and his wife were present. I reviewed his medical record (German, translated into Georgian, read in English by Andro). He had been in good health until March, when he had a large anterior myocardial infarction. He then apparently did okay, with a decrease in exercise capacity and apparently some weight loss, but the decision was made to be further evaluated in Germany. The physicians there described atrial fibrillation and by ECHO a large mural thrombus. Then the catheterization, stroke and CABG. One disturbing feature (apart from the immediate CABG after his stroke) was the discovery in Germany of a right bloody pleural effusion with a note that "there may be something in the right hilum." There was no further workup in the chart. He

had been discharged from the German hospital last Friday and immediately come to the one in Tbilisi. They had tapped him again (based on physical findings; had not done a chest film) and had gotten off two liters of bloody effusion. I asked about the work-up, including chest film: none. I examined the patient at some length. A Wernicke's aphasia with some comprehension. I asked them to write down a few notes of music and see what he would do. He promptly pointed out the notation was incorrect: the key had not been specified. I asked for an ophthalmoscope: "We do not have one in the hospital (over 250 beds; the major internal medicine hospital in the Republic of Georgia). Ophthalmologists do not come here." I asked for a reflex hammer: "We don't have one. Neurologists don't come here."²⁵ The only available instrument was a stethoscope (tube about four feet long; no bell). I went over him as carefully as possible, and found only a left Horner's syndrome (in Germany had a left subclavian thrombosis I presume secondary to a central line). No liver, no nodes. I then had a talk with the family and Mr. Kanchelli and told them what I thought was appropriate under the circumstances: his speech would recover to perhaps a decent extent over weeks to months; his heart was as good as it could be and the physicians here were doing a good job (various appropriate medications); he needed a workup of his pleural effusion within limits. I did not tell them of the concern about a cancer, because I did not feel without seeing the chest xray that was warranted.

This experience really brought home to me the difference between medical care in the U.S. and here. I did not expect to have any laboratory findings. The ECHO etc. from Germany was icing. But no instruments; no chest film; no cytology on the effusion, etc. I personally would be totally unwilling to practice medicine under such circumstances, *because I know how it can be done*. That brings up the fact that if we plan to be doing anything useful in educating Georgian physicians in the U.S., we must help to create an environment over here in which they can practice what they have learned. I have always understood this, but the experience today really brought it

²⁵None of this was surprising to me. Andro had pointed out to me when he came to the U.S. that internists did not examine eyes in Georgia: that was the ophthalmologists' job. Similarly, physicians are never taught to do a neurological exam unless they study to be neurologists. From medical school they only learn to examine the organ they specialize in. There are no physicians, as nearly as I can tell, who 'specialize' in the whole patient.

home.

Then we visited the family of a Georgian physician in Atlanta, Marina Demetrishvili. Two youngsters, age five and seven, both already proficient in English. As nearly as I can tell virtually everyone in Georgia these days is learning English.

A visit then to the home of the Ruruas. Their son Nicholas is in Atlanta, married to the sister of Andro's wife Salome. This is the home where I have had dinner twice in the past with Jabba Ioseliani. They expressed his regrets that he was not present this time: "He is feeling very badly because some of his people, without his knowledge, were involved in the assassination attempt on Mr. Shevardnadze." I could see this.

Then to the home of Gia Bocuchava's parents. Gia has been in Atlanta for a bit over a year now. A computer scientist from Georgian Technical University who has been involved deeply in planning for the Learning Center. He found a job with a company in Atlanta that is involved in Internet and networking, and is going great guns. His parents are two of my favorite people here. His father is a professor at Georgian Technical University, an authority on grinding and abrasives, and on what determines hardness of materials, such as diamonds. Author of many texts, a number in English. Sixty-eight. The last time I had dinner their son-in-law Vaso was present; an historian ("*The American Experiment with Prohibition*" of all things) who is now deputy ambassador to the U.S. The father is a wonderful conversationalist. Very erudite, sophisticated, the perfect example of a wise older academic. He asked me to be sure to be here next year for my sixtieth birthday, when he will share a bottle of sixty-year old cognac he has been saving.

Monday, October 9, 1995

Breakfast with the economic consultant in privatization from Deloitte and Touche in London. He taught me the rudiments of privatization. The first step is the writing of laws, then the picking of private firms (in this case the AgriBank of Georgia) to provide the data entry, etc., of the process ("privatizing" the privatization process, he said). The Government then picked about 800 firms to be privatized, with 800 more to be added shortly. This is the total number that will be privatized in the near future. Includes

everything but defense industries, airplane companies, utilities ("They will eventually do that also.") The companies were valued at the last value put on each of them during Soviet times (each enterprise was valued once a year, to my surprise). Then each citizen was given one voucher, which the government said was worth \$30. They arrived at this by dividing the total assets under the old Soviet valuation by the population of 5 million (so a paper value of \$150 million). However the next day the market value dropped to \$5. The workers of each company can bid to buy the company ("tender offers") and can own 51% or more of it. They buy it with vouchers. Or they can sell their vouchers on the street. Another option is to buy into an investment company with vouchers, which then diversifies its investments. Investment companies have not been successful, because a lot of them failed in Russia. Russia in 1992 had a spectacularly successful privatization, 90% of Russian enterprises now being privatized. Due to gross undervaluation of the companies. They were afraid foreigners would "buy all of Russia," but to the surprise of the Russians--but not of us Westerners--people from the West did rush to buy up Russia.

Over to Archil's for my Georgian lesson. I have become intrigued with how they form their letters. They say they have a cursive form of their alphabet, but I have never seen it used. They all print, and given how their letters are formed I can hardly see how they could do otherwise.

A visit to the Soros Foundation here in Tbilisi. I met with them the last visit, and Carol Burns interacted with them when she was here in July planning our Library project. Three of them, and the nicest most interested people around. Archil and I took them over to see our building, and they were quite impressed. It is in an old building about 80 or so years old. Marble, solid as a rock, lofty ceilings, huge windows, filled with light, very spacious. We are going to work closely with them, putting in a grant application for \$50,000 in two weeks, and applying to them for a smaller amount to help us get our windows secured and the like.

To Nata's home for lunch. Nata is about 27, graduated from the Pediatric medical school (separate from the "adult" medical school), and has worked in our office for two years. I have encouraged her to take the USMLE. She comes from a very old Georgian family with a strong medical tradition. The table was presided over by her grandfather, 78, pediatric surgeon, the grand

old man of pediatrics in Georgia: dean of the pediatric faculty, chairman of the department of surgery, revered by his colleagues and students. His wife, Nata's grandmother, studied in the Tbilisi School of Tropical Diseases (no longer in existence), and spoke at length about a huge malaria epidemic. Nata's mother is a cardiologist, and her father an environmental health physician in Moscow. I asked them if a new medical school were started in Tbilisi, should four years of college be required--a totally new concept to most Europeans. The old man was against it, but his wife was very much in favor: "They are too immature when they finish high school." We discussed this at length, followed by the question of whether there should be one medical school that combines the four or five medical schools that exist now under one roof: adult medicine; pediatrics; public health; military medicine. A wonderful meal and discussion.

A mid afternoon visit to the Tbilisi State Medical Institute, the medical school we have had a relationship with for the past three or four years. The rector and us have had various disagreements, and we can see little change in the curriculum in spite of faculty from both sides spending time with each other. The rector is about 50, very determined. I had decided carefully in advance to be all sunshine and cordiality. The rector will see anything we do with Tbilisi State University as aggressively adversarial, so I was not going to bring it up. It was clear to me from the beginning that he, also, had decided in advance our meeting was going to be of good cheer. He talked to me about their recent 65th anniversary celebration (to which I was invited), showed me the medical paper edition of the celebration (in which the relationship with Emory was displayed prominently). About three-fourths through the conversation he suddenly asked me how my conversation with TSU had gone several days ago. I had learned earlier from someone else that the meeting had been featured on the nightly television news (the video photographer I had thought was filming for the school archives was obviously a journalist, in retrospect). I thereby embarked upon a long tale about Iranian oil paintings, and how I had suggested the rector of TSU take up financial support with the Iranians, etc. I brought up nothing about a medical school, and neither did the rector.

Dinner with the students who have spent six months at Emory. Twelve of them have, and eleven were present (one is in New Haven, where her husband, who was one of our interns last year, is in neurology residency).

This dinner with the alumna of our program has become a staple of my visits, and much enjoyed by me. I was appointed the *tamadan*, or toastmaster. I gave a number of fulsome toasts about their potential, and how they needed to study and pass the USMLE and be trained in the U.S., etc. They spoke to me about the incredible difficulties of preparing for the test here, where a library of modern medical texts is nonexistent. They spoke of how much they had enjoyed their stay at Emory, of how different the medical education is there, etc. One of them, Eka, spoke movingly about first time she had been called "doctor" by a Grady patient, and how this kind of clinical training was unheard of over here. Another one, Michael, asked if we could bring Grady patients over here (all their hospitals are filled with refugees from the Abkhazian war, and since hospitals have no medicines or technology the patients stay at home anyway), saying "that will help both places." I left the meal imbued once again with a strong determination for our partnership to continue its help.

Tuesday, October 10, 1995

Breakfast this morning with Eric Griffith (about 30, from London, studied geology in Aberdeen, single, loves to travel, here about two weeks out of every eight), a geologist with a British oil company that has the drilling rights to large areas of land in Georgia, offshore in the Black Sea, and other parts of the former Soviet Union. There are oil fields, many of them near Tbilisi, that have been drilled for some years. His company is now "rehabilitating" these fields, and are cautiously optimistic that they will be able to get substantial amounts of oil. In about six months they will start moving on the unexplored areas. They are discovering the geology is causing difficult drilling, and of course the logistics of getting equipment and supplies over here are daunting.

He spoke at some length about the drinking habits: vodka at ten a.m., drinking in the fields and having accidents. He told of a young worker in one of their fields in Western Georgia who was drunk, fell into a hole, and fractured his femur. The femur was pinned under insufficient local anaesthetic with the man screaming. I realized he associated with the workers in the fields, and my perception that there was not much alcoholism might be solely the case with the professionals with whom I associate. He

also spoke about the smoking. Their offices are firmly non-smoking, and the Georgians find this novel.

Met with the Minister of Health. He is the third minister we have dealt with, and the longest one--two years. He is really outstanding. About 38, background in public health and military medicine, bright, determined, politically very astute. He began by saying on Saturday the final agreement was reached with officials of the European Union, and \$1 million was now in his account. "This will solve the problems of financing City Hospital #2." We then talked at some length about the plans for the hospital: making it a modern western educational medical center; having U.S. faculty spend one month at a time teaching Georgians; complications of having two medical schools relating to one hospital, etc. We then reviewed the status of our other projects. We agreed we need to make some movements on mental health. He thinks the money can be found.

He asked me to see a patient tomorrow, a 32 year old man who was Minister of Defence, and had an assassination attempt in Moscow about one year ago. We will do this tomorrow. He is also going to try to set up a luncheon meeting with the two of us and the American ambassador and his wife, Paula Feeney, tomorrow.

To the U.S. Embassy and met with Paula Feeney, Director of US AID for Georgia, and wife of the Ambassador.

George Keshlava, one of the students who came to Emory for six months, and his father, a professor of Iranian history at TSU, took me to the State Museum to see Georgia's "Golden Collection:" artifacts from archeological sites. The oldest item in the museum was a golden figure of a lion from 2600 B.C. About two inches long and one and one-half high. Exquisite workmanship, very finely done. Many other fascinating pieces in an exhibit that was arranged to cover every few centuries. I was stunned by the intricate detail in small pieces of jewelry, done 1000 to 500 b.c. I had no idea the art of jewelry-making was at such a level so very long ago.

George and I then went to the home of Lado Guuidoashvili. I described his home on my last visit. A famous Georgian artist, contemporary and friend of Picasso's, who died in his eighties after a long life of constant painting. His

son-in-law Dato is an archeologist who studies sites one to two million old in Western Georgia. I love to sit in the great room of this home, ceiling about 50 feet high, surrounded by literally hundreds of paintings, watercolors and wicked caricatures of the Soviets.

A visit to the National Medical Library. The visit carved images in my brain that are probably ineradicable. First of all, over one million books. Secondly, they are on the floors, on staircases, piled high on desks, windows, every conceivable place. Thirdly, they all look to have been printed around the time of Gutenberg. I took a picture of the chief financial officer sitting with her abacus. I will send this to the National Library of Medicine. There is apparently one computer. There are a few shelves of medical books and journals in English, virtually all of them years old. No new acquisitions from Russia, where all of their books came from, since the breakup in 1992. And good people who are working hard with what they have. Carol Burns of the Woodruff Medical Library had spent time with them in July, and had a very high opinion of their struggles. A memorable visit.

Temuri Khouradze, provost and vice rector of TSU, then had me to late lunch to discuss the possibility of a U.S. type medical school at TSU. Archil is sick today with the flu, which is hitting everyone in Tbilisi, so I went only with Nato as translator. Temuri brought along Vaktang Cheishvili, CEO of the Rustavi Iron-and-Steel Works²⁶. Temuri told me Mr. Cheishvili and his company had recently given over \$100,000 to TSU, and stood ready to help with the medical school. I instantly recognized that I was being taken to lunch with

²⁶This is apparently the largest factory in Georgia, and was started in 1944. Employs 12,000 workers according to Mr Cheishvili. They usually produce 1.5 million tons of steel products a year, mostly steel tubes ranging in size from 15 mm to 377 mm. They are now at 10% of production capacity because the war in Checynya has prevented trains with raw materials from reaching here. They still employ the 12,000 workers, who have 38,000 family members, because otherwise they would all starve: "We are behaving like communists, but trying to survive in a world of capitalism." He told me the site of the factory was chosen because archeological evidence indicated it had been the site of metallurgical works, so to speak, many thousands of years ago. They have begun joint ventures in video equipment and other items with Japan and Germany.

TSU's Mr. Woodruff, and decided to be on my P's and Q's. I was asked to give a "vision" of what the medical school could be like, and I complied. I pointed out the importance, in my opinion, of a college education beforehand, of exceedingly high quality students, small classes, U.S. type curriculum with interweaving of basic science and clinical, an intensive clinical experience in clerkships in a hospital such as we hope City Hospital#2 will become, etc. We then discussed a letter that might go from the President of TSU to the President, Vice President and Dean at Emory, asking if it would be possible for the two schools to explore the possibility of TSU setting up a school modeled after Emory and other U.S. medical schools. Just as we finished the driver came in and informed Temuri that a large fire had broken out in the university, and he rushed away. Nato and I stayed another hour and had a fascinating discussing with Mr. Cheishvili.

At Betsy's I met with Vano Tsutskiridze, a graduate of the medical school here who wishes to study in the U.S. He is related to a woman who works with Stan Music, and Stan had asked I see him. I told him the brutal facts of pass the USMLE first. I admire the determination and motivation of these graduates, given the gigantic obstacles that face them in trying to take and pass the USMLE²⁷.

An evening conversation with Jeff Steele and Melissa, who is the AID representative, answering to Washington and not AID in Georgia, visiting over here about Jeff's Internet project. The decision about our access, whether free, reasonable, or exorbitant, will be decided in Washington and not here. I have a lot of trust in Jeff's doing everything he can for us, and I was impressed by Melissa's cooperative spirit.

I gave a long report on the phone Archil about today's events, then called home and spoke with my office staff, Paul Klever and Carol Burns.

²⁷They have studied in a curriculum that is poor in the first place, and not designed with the USMLE in mind; no books; no heat or electricity in winter time; the necessity to try to wrench out a living in an inhospitable environment while still spending many hours a day studying; paying \$500 or more to take the tests, which is a monarch's ransom to them; little or no optimism about passing; the necessity to take the test in Turkey or Moscow.

Wednesday, October 11, 1995

I had breakfast this morning with Linda Quick, a pediatrician who is an EIS officer with CDC, over here to investigate the diphtheria epidemic. She said several questions about the disease might be answered over here because due to two different localities (Tbilisi and Batumi on the Black Sea) being involved, with different supplies and philosophies of treatment, there are no problems with what amount to controls. She is going to spend today fashioning how to set up the statistics on them. She gave another example of the subspecialization: from birth to 15 years old children are taken care of by a pediatrician; from 15 to 17 by another physician; from 17 on by adult physicians. She is intrigued by discovering the chief intensivist at the infectious disease hospital has records of diphtheria dating back to 1955.

Then went to the Embassy and continued the briefing of Paula Feeney on our program here, what we have done, and what we are planning to do.

The Minister of Health and I went for me to examine one of his closest friends, a 33 year old man, Gia Karkarashvili, who was Minister of Defense here until an assassination attempt in Moscow seven months ago. Four bullets, the most significant of which was to C₄. Treated in Germany for three months, now here in his home. Question is whether going to U.S. for intensive rehabilitation will be useful. He was lying on a chair, mentally very bright, and, I thought, not depressed but giving the impression of having it all together. Quadriplegia, more marked on right side. He can use his left hand well enough to type, and is left handed. Sensation intact, although he has some hypesthesia on the left, and significant formication in all extremities at time. Flexor spasms partially relieved by Lioresal. Spontaneous urination, no catheter, can tell when he has to urinate. Fairly primitive wheelchair that doesn't serve his purposes. Intensive physical therapy exercises twice a day. Family apparently wealthy, in some way close connection with George and Barbara Bush, who have pledged their support in whatever way necessary-- e.g., plane transport to U.S. I said I would come up with a list of what were regarded as the best rehabilitation centers in the U.S. and Europe for his type of problems.

Lunch at a new restaurant, Tamarioni, with the Minister, Sherry Carlin, Archil

and Andro. Large old house, big courtyard, surrounded by small rooms for private parties. I asked the Minister if he thought City Hospital #2 should be a general hospital (i.e., with pediatrics and obstetrics, which is not their style, but which the World Bank is pressuring them to do all over). It became clear this question would be answered after the elections Nov. 5th, at which time also the new rules about credentialing and licensing of health care institutions and workers will be promulgated.

Then to the funeral bier of Amiran's son. Amiran is the head of the National Health Policy Planning Center, one of the young (40's) leaders in health care, and known to me for two years; coming to Atlanta later this year. I had breakfast with him last week, and two days later his 22 year old son and his fiancée were killed when a truck had a flat front tire and went out of control. The body is in state in the family home (in this case the grandfather with whom he lived) for 4-6 days, then the funeral which will be tomorrow. A horrible tragedy.

Went to the office, where we composed two letters to the Soros Foundation. One giving our vision for informatics in Georgia, the other outlining our discussions with TSU about the possibility of a medical school. Soros is having a meeting of his chief foundation executives in Belfast in two weeks, and the Soros Foundation here asked for these two letters. I hope they will pave the way for future cooperative efforts between us and them.

Over to Andro's house and spent time with his brother Levan, who is one of my favorite people. About 26, gifted painter as young man, now a young executive in a small group of young people who are real entrepreneurs. E.g., they have two ships on the Black Sea that carry all sorts of cargo, and are setting up a huge all-purpose store in a shopping mall. Met one of Andro's friends, who is going to St. Petersburg to learn about cardiac intensive care in pediatrics, in order to work in the new pediatric surgery hospital being established here by the Heart to Heart people.

Thursday, October 12, 1995

Breakfast, followed by work on "talking points" on health sector problems that Paula Feeney had asked me to prepare for the ambassador. Last night I called my secretary and got her to read to me the statistics from my slides

from Grand Rounds at CWL recently. I was exceedingly thankful I had them, otherwise there is no way I could have prepared anything. Below are some of the more notable facts I am giving to the ambassador:

"Talking Points" for Ambassador

Oversupply of Resources	Hospitals
<p>Georgia per capita is one of the most resource intensive countries in the world when personnel and hospital beds are considered, without respect to quality. E.g., compared to the State of Georgia in the U.S.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Filled with refugees or empty because without drugs and technology the people stay at home to die • Institute of Therapy (=internal medicine) has about 300 beds and 600 physicians; this week has 10 patients
<p><u>Republic of Georgia</u>: 4.8 million Number physicians: 24,727 Physician: people 1: 197 Hospitals 341 Hospital beds 47,150 Beds: people 1:102</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average occupancy rates 1-30% • Hospital stays much longer than west, in some hospitals average 45 days • Patients must provide their own drugs, linens, syringes and other supplies, such as x-ray film
<p><u>State of Georgia</u> 6.773 million Number of physicians 12,84 Physician: people 1: 527 Hospitals 199 Hospital beds 35,224 Beds: people 1:192</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% more staff than needed • 50% built before 1940; no maintenance since 1989; equipment 8-15 years old • Physicians and hospitals highly subspecialized. Go into the Institute of Therapy (as I did last week to see a patient) and they do not have ophthalmoscopes or reflex hammers ("ophthalmologists and neurologists don't come to this hospital, only cardiologists").

<p>Women and Children</p> <p>50,000 live births 45,000 abortions Dilation & curettage main form of birth control Great increase in home deliveries Maternal mortality 8 times European community Hemorrhage accounts for 37% of deaths</p> <p>Causes of Death</p> <p>Cardiovascular disease: 73% Due to prevalence of smoking, untreated hypertension, stress levels and diet</p> <p>Compared with U.S.: U.S. has 378 deaths per 100,000 per year from cardiovascular disease; Republic of Georgia has 676.</p>	<p>Medical Education</p> <p>Separated into several schools: adult medicine; pediatrics; public health; military medicine.</p> <p>About 28 new medical schools have sprung up in last two years, like mushrooms after a spring rain. Proprietary. Quality abysmal--offshore Caribbean medical schools incredibly excellent compared to these. Incentive is tuition payments of students, just like in U.S. at turn of century.</p> <p>At Tbilisi Medical University 2400 students. 5000 students in country, as an estimate. Gross oversupply, on top of current severe oversupply of poorly trained physicians.</p> <p>Students are not taught to examine eyes or nervous system or any other system they are not going to specialize in. No physician examines the whole body, but concentrates totally on his or her system. Don't know how to examine others.</p>
<p>Infectious Diseases</p> <p>Diphtheria epidemic: get from Dr. Stan Music</p> <p>Well over 100 cases of botulism last year</p> <p>Few or no hepatitis or AIDS testing kits for blood for transfusions</p> <p>No sterilization capabilities in hospitals.</p> <p>Syphilis: 2000++ new cases</p> <p>Tuberculosis: a giant problem, that is increasing. 3,000 new cases at least. This number is under represented, because there is therapy, so no incentive for physicians to report cases. Estimated 12,000 chronic cases. Probably very low estimate</p> <p>Widespread drug abuse in young, without disposable needles and syringes.</p> <p>Cholera: 288 cases</p>	<p>Mental Health</p> <p>Tremendous explosion in drug abuse in young about 3 yrs ago</p> <p>High stress levels for entire population, especially about 500,000 displaced people from Abkhazia, who have lost everything: family, friends, homes, belongings.</p> <p>15,200 patients with chronic psychoses such as schizophrenia are hospitalized, often only with pajamas and minimum food each day. Men and women gathered into large wards.</p> <p>Orphanages: 89 of them. 12,100 children in them, 50% of whom are retarded or disabled in some other fashion.</p>

Irina Chanturishvili and her husband took me to the new flat they are building, which has a room for me. Their son Levan, who I am going to Moscow this

afternoon to stay with a few days, lived with me two years while getting his MBA at Emory. He graduated in May and has been working with an American investment bank in Moscow since July. I first saw the flat on my June visit. It is now within two weeks of being ready for occupancy. I will probably use my room there, at least in the near future, as an office of sorts while in Tbilisi. The other people who stay at Betsy's hotel are too valuable a resource to do away with. E.g., I have done substantial business about our Internet project while there this time.

Back to Betsy's and I finished my talking points for the ambassador. Then Andro Kacharava came and kept me company while I packed. A dreaded chore, since I always have a lot of letters and other material to take back to Georgians in Atlanta. I have learned, however, about all the heavy gifts I get: wine, cognac, books, pictures. I leave them in a special place at Betsy's, and will furnish my room in the flat with them.

At noon Andro and I went to his father's for a Georgian table. His father is helping with advice on the library, as I think I mentioned above. An engineer by education, now setting up a bank. A very smart man. His house is filled with pictures painted by his friends--all of them very eminent Georgian artists. He gave me one of the Georgian countryside two years ago by one of the artists who came to dinner. It hangs in the place of honor in my office. About eight of Gogi's (father) friends came. Artists, engineers, owner of a brewery, the top passport official of Georgia, etc. Many toasts. Several to Andro as the son. I gave a toast in which I said I was riding along Rousteveli (main avenue) yesterday and I saw a dog lifting his leg and decorating a tree. I noted he did it flawlessly, and had done so since youth, even though he did not receive lessons. "Why does the dog do this?" I asked myself (much as the book by Comroe--I think--*Why is the Sky Blue?*). I decided: His genes command him to do it. In a similar fashion I said, Andro had come to the U.S. and had revealed himself to be outstanding. Why? Commanded by his genes to do it, I said, and "there they are!" pointing to his father. It tickled me immensely to pair Andro in a felicitous fashion with a dog pissing.

Then a rapid visit with Levan, Andro's younger brother, and Andro to the place where Peplum is, and where Levan has three one year old Arabian stallions he just bought. They were beautiful.

Back to the hotel, settled the bill, and out to the airport. One hour wait, and now I am on a 3 jet Tupelov Aeroflot plane on my way to Moscow and Levan, with some trepidation. Everywhere I hear about crime in Moscow: my friend's mugging in his apartment; everyone in Tbilisi I know; even the Frequent Flyer magazine I brought from the U.S. and read on takeoff has a section about crime in Moscow!

Uneventful flight. Met by Levan. Went to his apartment. Sixteenth floor of one the huge apartment buildings built by the Communists so every worker could have an apartment. One bedroom, kitchen, living room. \$700 a month. Went down to Arbat street at 10 p.m. for a late dinner. Levan doesn't have a car, so we went out to the six lane street by his apartment and he stood with fist closed and pointed down, whereupon a car stopped. Turns out there are very few taxicabs as such in Moscow. The people who serve this function have unmarked cars. You tell them where you want to go, they tell you how much they will charge, and the deal is either on or off. The lad who picked us up by merest chance had picked up Levan one month earlier and taken him to the airport. Vadim by name. At Levan's suggestion we arranged with Vadim to take me sightseeing Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. for \$50, which in view of the other prices in Moscow struck me as quite reasonable. Only downside is he speaks very little English.

Friday, October 13, 1995

The inauspicious date above had escaped my notice, or I would have been even more apprehensive about Moscow! Vadim picked us up, took Levan to his job--small building just behind the "White House," the center of the Russian government and where Yeltsin stood up on the tank during the coup attempt. Vadim and I then took off for a tour. Turned out he is 27, works most of time as the deputy manager for a bank, has a wife and 18 month old child. Very personable.

I have been in Moscow twice before: August 1992 and June 1993. These times were the pits for Moscow: change over of governments just happened; economy chaotic. The city then came across to me as dirty, full of dour people, ugly, and not having much to recommend it. A very different impression this time. A vibrant, bustling, busy city. As clean as Atlanta. Many impressive and a number of very beautiful (mostly historic) buildings. A

lot of people purposefully going about their daily rounds. A distinct contrast to Tbilisi in terms of ambience. Tbilisi, albeit much better than when I first visited it in 1992, is still showing the signs of distress: fewer visibly goal-oriented pedestrians; more people who clearly are down on their luck as well as spirits; gigantic potholes; not nearly as clean, etc.

In the afternoon we visited the memorial to WW II that just opened in May of this year. A gigantic place, several football fields in size. A huge open lawn with numerous fountains, an exquisite replica of a medieval church, a gigantic statue, and a semi-oval building of marble. Absolutely huge. Beautiful materials: pink marble; a lot of wood; a lot of open space. In one huge room there were the names of the 12,000 Russian soldiers who I inferred had received the equivalent of the Congressional medal: "heroes of Russia" they are called. Then a huge museum with islands of exhibits. Each island was devoted to a person, several people (the supreme commanders of Germany and Russia, e.g.), or a particular topic: prisoners of war; medical treatment; brutality (pictures of rows of people hanging from what looked to be clotheslines); types of warfare; valor, etc. And at strategic points large-screens videos with clips from the war. Brilliantly done. Stalin occurred occasionally, but appropriately and was obviously not emphasized. A few American and British generals, but clearly the focus was on the Russian people and their experiences in the war.

I had some misgivings about an all day tour with someone whose English was as scanty as my Russian. But it turned out to be superior to a commercial tour with someone who talked at length about the sights. Instead, I soaked up the atmosphere and was much affected by it. Since Vadim could not talk, we rode. I saw a large amount of the city of Moscow, and formed impressions I would not have had if I had only gone to one historic place after another and listened to a canned lecture. Next time that might be the procedure of choice, but on the basis of a much restructured concept of Moscow, which has now come across to me as one of the great cities of the world.

We went to a book mart and I bought the equivalent of two "blue book" guides to Moscow. \$43, which shocked me, then I reminded myself the prices were what I would pay at Oxford books in Atlanta. The ruble today is \$1 = 4,800 rubles. Up until Nov. 1, 1989 the exchange rate was \$1 = 1.60 rubles! At that time it was devalued by 90%, then in 1992 it was floated on the

world market. I swapped \$100 for 400,800 rubles, which is an astonishing figure for me.

Levan and I had dinner in downtown at Pasta Patio, then walked about for some time. Then a long discussion in his apartment of his work, my work, life, etc. He works for an American put together by some of Michael Milliken's ex-partners. A number of banks and like contributed to its funding. The firm, as I understand it, does two things: buys and then sells Russian firms (remember my earlier comments about privatization in Russia); or it gets all the information on firms and will broker them to foreign firms desiring to buy Russian companies. A lot of wheeling and dealing, analysis of the finances of companies, and the like. Very exciting and stimulating. When Levan graduated from Emory with his MBA he was offered this job and an excellent job at Coke. Although he hated Moscow, he took this job for the unparalleled experience it would give. He works 12-14 hour days and most of the weekends.

One of his company's most important clients and supporters is the governor of Primorski, which is the area--larger than the state of Georgia--of which Vladivostok is the capital. The governor, who is about 40, has been having various cardiac problems. Levan suggested he come to Emory, and he and I have worked this out for next week. I will meet the Governor, the CEO of Levan's company and an interpreter just after I arrive in Atlanta. He will be worked up by the cardiologists at Crawford Long.

Saturday, October 14, 1995

Unusual experience on awakening this morning. When in Tbilisi I mentioned I examined Archil's son Serge who had vertigo, which I decided was a consequence of a flu-like illness that many people had. On the day I left Levan's mom Irina had discussed the same symptoms of episodic vertigo with me, and I attributed them to the same thing. Well, this morning as I was lying in bed thinking about getting up, I turned over and a few minutes later had about a 30 second episode of vertigo. Not believing this had happened, I promptly moved my head rapidly in both directions to see if it would recur: it did. Thankfully went away in a few seconds, although even now, an hour later, I can feel some vestiges of "wooziness." I am confident of the diagnosis, just hope the episodes will be very rare.

The day was blustery, cold and grey, with a howling wind that sweeps you away at the cross streets. I estimate 40° F. And it is October 15th. Levan says it gets down to -40° C in the wintertime.

Had breakfast at the American Bar and Grill. Just like all restaurants in Moscow, it has free copies of the *Moscow Times* and the *Moscow Tribune*. They focus upon Russia, with a lot about the Newly Independent States²⁸ and also really good world news. I was quite impressed with them. Example of a story in today's *Times*:

"Condoms Bounce Back: Four years after independence, and at the second attempt, Ukraine has at last launched production of a key item to dent a foreign monopoly--condoms.....Condoms produced earlier were rejected en masse as supremely uncomfortable, mainly because of their solid construction."

Levan showed me an article in the finance section of a technique devised by his boss, "Loans for Shares," which illustrates some of the intricacies of the privatization process for huge companies deemed vital to the state. In Stage 1, the government auctions off the right to manage shares in a given company. In today's story it was the Siberian Oil Company. Forty percent of the shares were sold for \$100 million. The people who bought them can vote the shares within limits: e.g., they cannot vote to liquidate the company. One year later, in Stage 2, you can sell your shares for whatever you can get. If you make a profit--e.g., you sell them for \$200 million--you get to keep \$30 m and the state gets \$70 m. If you get less than you paid, that is your hard luck. This mechanism lets the government get knowledgeable business people to "clean up" a company and get it profitable. The business people say, however, that 30% profit is not enough. So the theory is there will be an unplanned "Stage 3." The original investors will use their inside knowledge of the company and what it will be worth in a few years to sell it cheaply to "buddies" in a related company with whom they have a financial arrangement. The second investors will buy the company, sell it in a few years for a huge profit, and the first investors will thereby profit to a much greater degree.

²⁸For example, a long article in today's paper about Georgy Karkarashvili, whom I saw earlier as a patient.

As Levan said, it is exciting to be working for a CEO whose latest financial stratagem is at the top of the business news. I am looking forward to meeting Alex Goodwin when he brings the governor to Atlanta next week.

A long walk of about two miles along the streets of downtown Moscow to the Kremlin. We went into the grounds of the Kremlin. I had been several times in Red Square, on the other side, but never inside the grounds. Went to the Kremlin Museum, which overwhelmed both of us. The grounds are colossal. It is late autumn in Moscow, with yellow leaves littering the grounds, and a few autumnal colored leaves left on the trees. Not many people due to the day. Levan estimates the grounds could contain 100,000.

A gigantic building that was a castle, the "Great Kremlin Palace" and Armory Museum now has room after room of fascinating exhibits: tapestry; stage coaches of the czars and czarinas (e.g., Catherine the Great); armor; dresses; equestrian equipment²⁹; plates. Just one gigantic room after another.

The highlight for both of us was a visit to the inner sanctum of the museum, heavily guarded, where the jewelry collection is displayed. Catherine the Great's crown is the most beautiful example of the jeweler's craft I have ever seen. Her scepter has "Arlov's diamond," which the Russians purchased from Iran, and is the most valuable gem in Russia. A gigantic diamond, cut so it looks as though there is another, and darker, diamond inside it.

We walked through Red Square to the GUM department store, that borders the square. I have read about it many times in Western magazines: the world's largest department store. I was prepared for a huge warehouse, much on the scale of Sam's Clubs but much bigger. Instead to my surprise it is a collection of small boutiques, each one specializing in something different, ranging from brand names, e.g., Chanel perfumes, to a specific line of items, such as shoes. Literally thousands of these in one gigantic building. We decided to go back Sunday and spend some more time there.

²⁹There were fully preserved horses with men mounted on them, exhibiting the art of the Kremlin equestrian department, said to be the finest in the world during Catherine the Great's time.

Dinner, home, talk, bed.

Sunday, October 15, 1995

Very little wind today, but temperature a biting 30° F in the morning, dropping further under dark skies as the day progressed. Breakfast at the American Bar and Grill, then the long walk down to GUM at Red Square. Bought several christmas gifts.

We went to the Pushkin Museum for several hours. A remarkable place, clearly one of the great museums of the world. Every artefact of every period: cuneiform script, shards and statuary of sorts from the third millennium BC (a lot of articles from this period); Egyptian mummies and other articles from all the centuries of the Egyptian empires; Roman statuary; the best collection of French Impressionists I can imagine--so many Renoir and Matisses I lost count; many Gauguins; Rembrandts; etc. Huge statues from early Roman times; many Grecian pieces. And so forth. Weeks could be spent there.

Dinner at a poor Indian Restaurant with Lado Gurgenidze, who got his MBA a year before Levan at Emory, and who I got to know quite well during his stay in Atlanta. Now an associate with a large Dutch Bank, has nine people working under him, busily buying and brokering companies, just as Levan's firm is doing. He brought along Mike O'Hara, now a film director in Moscow, who graduated from Emory College along with Lado. A good evening for me listening to casual conversation about Moscow.

Home, packed for 4:30 a.m. wake-up.

Monday, October 16, 1995

Arose early for a day crafted in hell. Airport at 6 a.m., flight to Frankfurt, change planes, arrive in Atlanta at 4 p.m., 20 hours or so after getting up. Then have to go back to Atlanta airport at 8 p.m. to meet the governor from Vladivostok and Levan's boss.

This has been a highly productive trip from the standpoint of what I have accomplished, and I am satisfied. A lot of emotion was present in various forms, such as satisfaction with progress of the library project, and otherwise. Also the kind of trip that takes a lot of physical energy.

I did some planning of the next trip, which will probably be Thursday December 21 through Monday Jan. 1 or perhaps Tuesday. First Moscow on Thursday, then with Levan to Tbilisi on Friday, then back to Moscow the next Friday for a couple of days before coming home. The library space will be finished, and with luck the equipment will be over, although I am not counting on that.