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Russia and USA: A View From Chicago

Россия и США: взгляд из Чикаго

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Настоящее учебное пособие, составленное на основе сочинений успешного американского бизнесмена Марвина Роберта Странка, направлено на формирование и развитие языковых компетенций обучающихся по направлениям «Лингвистика», «Педагогическое образование», «Филология» и «Международные отношения».

Имеющийся текстовый материал, предлагаемая система упражнений и ключи к ним стимулируют умение продуцирования лексически и грамматически корректного творческого высказывания, что приобретает особую важность для осуществления успешной коммуникации в контексте иноязычного общения.

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Посвящается Марвину Странку / Dedicated to Marvin Strunk



Marvin R. Strunk (1923–2018)

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От составителей

Настоящее учебно-методическое пособие предназначено для студентов бакалавриата, обучающихся по направлениям подготовки «Лингвистика», «Педагогическое образование», «Филология» и «Международные отношения». Целью пособия является глубокое и интенсивное изучение особенностей культуры речевого общения на английском языке в контексте иноязычной коммуникации. Знание английского языка и культурологических особенностей его употребления увеличивает конкурентоспособность выпускника на рынке труда и является неотъемлемым качеством специалиста-профессионала.

Пособие представляет собой подборку сочинений успешного американского бизнесмена по различным аспектам деятельности современного человека и его интересных наблюдений, основанных на многолетнем профессиональном и жизненном опыте. Мы, его читатели и друзья, сохраним искреннюю признательность и глубокую благодарность Марвину Странку за предоставленные материалы и возможность их публикации.

Пособие представляет собой систему аутентичных текстов в сфере социальных и профессиональных контактов, а разработанная система языковых и речевых упражнений обеспечивает возможность использования этого пособия для различных целевых аудиторий и направлена на создание и развитие навыков и умений профессиональной деятельности, необходимых для ее успешного осуществления в иноязычной среде. При ответственной работе по выполнению заданий цели государственной программы по образованию в области иностранных языков, по глубокому убеждению авторов, будут достигнуты. При этом задания могут варьироваться в зависимости от степени языковой компетентности обучающихся и иметь формат аудиторных или самостоятельных занятий.

Владение английским языком и навыками социокультурной и межкультурной коммуникации обеспечивает адекватность социальных и профессиональных контактов и может быть использовано для повышения мировоззренческого, общекультурного и профессионального уровня овладения профессией.

Учебное пособие построено по принципу компетентностного подхода к обучению иностранному языку, что предполагает профессионально-ориентированную комплексную организацию учебного материала и придание деятельностного характера преподаванию, нацеленному на решение коммуникативных задач.

Желаем Вам успехов!

Marvin R. Strunk and Family

Marvin Robert Strunk was born and raised in Missouri, a state in the United States. He graduated from Northwestern University and later received his Master to Business Administration degree at Harvard University.

During World War II, he served aboard a US destroyer in the Pacific theatre. After completing his education, he entered business at Marshall Field & Co., a quality and large retail store in Chicago. Although the retail business was interesting, after ten years he accepted a position in the banking business with Madison Bank & Trust Company. Mr. Strunk held a number of positions and finally became President and Chief Executive Officer at Madison Bank. He introduced a number of new ideas at the bank, such as extended hours (8 a.m. to 6 p.m.), a distinctive type of checking account, gifts to depositors, etc. He retired in 1988.

Since retirement he had headed several community service projects, such as Chairman of the Commuting Committee of a new US aircraft carrier (the USS Abraham Lincoln); chairman of the board of the Winnetka Bible Church.

Mr. Strunk had traveled extensively. He had made several trips to Russia and had been to Asia and South America.

His family consists of three grown children, thirteen grandchildren and now great grandchildren. He was pleased he was a Christian and active in religious affairs.



Part 1

In my years, I have been privileged to participate in many activities, experience varied situations and events and have been blessed with dedicated parents, an exceptional and loving wife, fine children and the enjoyment of thirteen grandchildren. During these long years there have been great moments, both triumphal and bitter, and many opportunities to learn, observe and grow first as a youth, then as an adult as a parent and business leader. Now in later life it is time for enjoyment, reflection and satisfaction.

These brief statements or admonitions are some of the observations and things I have learned. I have enjoyed placing them into words and I hope you will find them interesting and helpful.

As an Adult, It is a Lifetime of Service

I would tell the Sunday School class of young college graduates that in their school days and growing up everything was provided to them. Food, schooling, clothes, etc. However, with college days over they were entering into a lifetime of service to others, family, church, etc., and if they look upon this as a privilege they are on the road to being happy, satisfied adults.

I really believe this. I have received so many benefits and satisfactions from my varied service endeavors. Whether it is family, social organizations, church or simply being a help to a sick person, a problem laden friend, or an invalid parent, the result is often unexpected but usually rewarding. Of course, family and children are always present and work is a never ceasing, time consuming need, but the real good comes from serving others in a loving, often sacrificial manner.

We Are Being Molded

Our thoughts, desires, needs and dreams are being molded every hour, day and year. This is good because it demonstrates we are alert and aware of influences around us, some good and some bad. We must choose. No one wishes to remain the same as time and events occur. We want to keep our journey, to reflect life as it is being lived.

We are constantly bombarded with advertisements, new ideas, influences from friends, etc. This is from the outside. Within us our emotions, trainings, prejudices affect our thoughts, desires and beliefs. This change will be positive if we have firm roots that are able to hear and sift new ideas and properly evaluate them. There is also a danger to stay in past mode and not to be willing to hear ideas or the opinions of others. Change does occur as in the examples of racism, cigarette smoking, etc.

Also, I am often amazed at the influence children have on the attitudes of their parents. The children will go to college, meet students from other cultures and economic backgrounds, return home and espouse a different set of values other than learned at the foot of the parents. Often the new idea is rejected when first introduced, but maybe a year or so later, I will hear the father or mother present the argument as their own.

Success from Failure

This seems to be a strange result, but often true. Very seldom does one learn real lessons from success, work and achievements. It is often when we experience failure, does the evaluation, contemplation and learning occur. Usually the winner of the race enjoys his triumph, while the loser tries harder, learns a new technique, trains better, etc. for the next race. This is true in so many facets of life. A mistake is made and you say, "That won't happen again." I realize there are many times when failure occurs through no fault of anyone (an automobile accident, an untimely sickness, etc.). However, often we can learn from the failure and do better and succeed the next time. The crucial point is to keep your head up and not to let others assess blame, but to take a positive attitude. It works! I know, I have done it!

We Can Do More Than We Think We Can

I am constantly amazed what a human body can absorb, how it can change and strike out in a new direction or be receptive to new challenges or difficulties. Somehow we muddle through or glory in a new path. We have the inbred genes. This is why I preach we can do more and different things than we

sometimes originally think and from this experience we grow in confidence, knowledge and become an incentive to others.

Although I worked at one bank for 33 years the experience was full of new thrusts, such as organizing two new banks on my own impetus. The trips to Russia are another example. By trying new endeavors, life becomes more interesting, exciting and rewarding and we learn about new areas, such as countries, technical advances, new friends, etc. However, the point is – we have to try, make the initial effort and that is where the fun and challenge comes. Not all new actions are going to be successful, some will fail, but at that stage we gather up our ego and think, it will be different next time!

Education Is the Key

The process of being educated elevates one's thoughts, ambitions, knowledge and sense of understanding the World around us. Education also opens the door to the future. It is well established that college educated people earn more money than those without college experience. Sometimes people question the value of a liberal arts degree versus a more technical course. Initially, the technical course wins easily but in later years as advancement occurs a person will be judged also on his ability to converse and discuss intelligently different subjects other than technical problems.

People with varying intellectual abilities will not be able to advance in education as some brighter students, but the need is to proceed as far as one's talents carry them. Also, education is much more than college grades, it is the development of the individual and most of this occurs outside the classroom. Reading, understanding the arts: art, music, drama, etc., participating in discussions, learning from others, realizing and utilizing one's talents are all part of the education process. I dislike seeing young and old minds being understimulated by overindulgence on TV, video games, sports talk. There is a balance and the saying "Moderation in all things is wise" is appropriate.

I admit to being a little prejudiced on the matter of education. Growing up in a college professor's house, there was never any question about my going to college. It was just understood. Also, I was fortunate to attain good grades and

that opened doors for me. My education occurred during wartime so I was able to attend Northwestern and Harvard Universities courtesy of the United States Navy. Following the war I completed my studies at Harvard.

But education doesn't stop at the conclusion of schooling. By engaging our minds and stimulating our thoughts we continue a lifetime of education. Observe what you read, be inquisitive about new things, ask questions, participate in discussions to learn and have your thoughts and ideas tested. Don't be satisfied with the status quo in your life.

Learning Activities 1

Exercises

Reading for Details

I. Answer the following questions:

What is the road to happiness according to Mr. Strunk?

Where does the real good come from?

What influence do children have on their parents?

In what way is a failure beneficial?

How one can make life more interesting?

II. True / False:

Mr. Strunk believes that one must be selfish to be happy.

Mr. Strunk believes that we can do more and different things than we sometimes originally think.

Education is restricted only to receiving grades.

Mr. Strunk dislikes seeing young and old minds being understimulated.

Education stops at the conclusion of schooling.

III. Complete the following sentences:

Often the new idea is rejected when first introduced...

It is often when we experience failure...

Mr. Strunk is constantly amazed what the human body can absorb...

By trying new endeavors, life...

Mr. Strunk's education occurred during...

Word Study

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the followings words and expressions:

impetus; to preach; to assess; liberal arts degree; technical course; indulgence; courtesy; to mold; to be aware; to have firm roots.

V. Give the English equivalents for the followings words and expressions:

врождённый; развитие / продвижение; сотрудник; предостережение; старание; бомбардировать; в жертвенной манере; любознательный; начеку; жизнь, посвящённая службе другим.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

having or showing an interest in learning things;

a thing that motivates or encourages someone to do something;

providing satisfaction, gratifying.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to be all part of; at the foot of; problem laden; to espouse a different set of values.

VIII. Give synonyms:

to achieve; attainment; to sieve; to judge; devoted.

IX. Give antonyms:

to lower; ungratifying; unwatchful; instability; improper.

X. Give the derivatives:

influence; rewarding; to assess; sacrificial.

Follow-up Activities

XI. Thought-provoking questions:

To your thinking, what are the possible ways to happiness? Do you agree with Mr. Strunk?

Do you believe that young people hold the power in their hands to change not only their parents, but also the world around themselves? Why?

Do you believe that education of any kind is vital? Why?

Part 2

Yes, There Really Is a God!

I have never really doubted there is a God, my God. All during my growing years, I believed and just accepted that God was real and looking after my welfare. This has manifested itself in later years in so many ways: in answers to prayers, in avoidance of accidents, in life's direction, in actions in the family, my life as a widower, and in health. He has always been there for me, even in times when I haven't been there for Him.

One of the reasons I enjoy our Lookout Mountain ranch in Colorado is the peace and closeness to God that I feel, especially when I am alone. After an hour of Bible reading, a prayer time and reading other Christian or inspirational book I feel a special presence of Him. It's the same feeling I have after a two hour prayer meeting at church. Then I look up to the snow capped Flattop Mountain only eight miles away and sense the peace, security, strength and majesty only He can give. Yes, I believe!

There have been so many examples in my life where he has intervened and answered my need. I knew I was not living a lifestyle pleasing to God when I first started working. I knew I needed a companion, a wife. He brought the most wonderful, loving woman to me and we enjoyed 34 glorious years together. While advancing slowly at Marshall Field's, I knew I was not in a good position to succeed to higher levels of management for a variety of reasons, such as age of the Vice-Presidents, lack of growth of the company, etc. I needed to make a change. Once again, the Lord provided an open door at the

Madison Bank where I was happily employed for 33 years and became President and CEO. Following the untimely death of Ruth, he has blessed my years as a widower and opened new doors and vistas to me that have made these years educational, interesting and productive. These are just three of many examples how the Lord has helped me on life's journey. With this evidence I can state, "Yes, there really is a God, my God."

Jesus Came to Earth as an Example to Live and to Redeem Us

One of the highlights on my trip to the Holy Land was sitting beside the Sea of Galilee and reading Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. He clearly brought to Earth a new message of love, peace and relationship with our fellow man. As I recently reread his famous sermon I was taken aback how far we have deviated from these marvelous principles. If we followed His teaching this would be a different world and our interdependent relationships would rise to a new level. Instead we are turned aside by actions of the world and follow the world's criterion. Christians instead of demonstrating Jesus' love and concern are focusing on side issues that divide and alienate rather than bring people closer to Jesus. I am guilty of the same thing also. The standard is there and with the help of the Holy Spirit we should dedicate ourselves to following Him.

The second purpose of his short time on earth was to redeem us, or "save us from our sins," and prepare a place for us in heaven. What a glorious promise! At my age, I admit, I covet the promise to be with Jesus and our loved ones in heaven when I die. Sometimes as Christians we place total emphasis on the "saving" portion and neglect the example Jesus gave us. The pulpit of my church in Cape Girardeau had engraved "Preach Jesus."

However, in spite of the criticism and rejections, the coming of Jesus has been the most significant event occurring on this earth in the last 2000 years. People have tried to destroy his image, influence and redeeming nature all during this period, yet he still stands paramount. Thank you, Jesus.

Learn to Listen

One of the key lessons I received from the retail business was to listen to what the customer was saying, in other words, what was her or his request.

People often have strange ways to describe their wishes. Think of how you describe a car problem to an auto mechanic. Listening was especially important when adjusting complaints. The request could often be clothed in anger, dissatisfaction, blame and “just make it right.”

When I entered the banking business, I discovered the employees serving customers, especially complaints, didn't know how to listen. They often took the approach that the bank was always right, we usually were, and all was the customer's error. Also, they wanted to “protect” the bank from a customer wrongdoing. Thus, instead of hearing the customer out, they would inject their thoughts and solution prior to the customer “getting it off his chest.” Disagreements were magnified when a little listening would have solved the problem.

Naturally coming from an atmosphere where the “customer was always right” I was shocked and set about the change of which 90 % was just listening! We found personnel who are prepared to listen and a big customer service problem was solved.

Listening to what others are saying is a common problem because we are more interested in expressing our opinion than hearing others. Maybe with text messaging the problem is alleviated because one is forced to read the other's message. So, learn to listen to others; it is sometimes difficult. Sometimes we are all guilty of planning what we are going to say and when an opportunity arises we don't listen to the speaker. Maybe our statements are so important that everyone should be listening to me and my “superior” thoughts and what others have to say is not important. I doubt if that is the case.

Here's why listening to others is vital. We can learn from other people opinions and suggestions. Second, other people's experiences are often interesting (even if it takes a long time to tell about them). We can gain new knowledge on subjects we are uninformed. Example: proteins in cells and their growth. I knew nothing about this part of our bodies and found the subject very enlightening. Three, listening is a good way to build relationships. People enjoy telling about their experiences, new things they have learned, plays they have

seen, etc. But not everyone is prepared to listen, and the speaker will respond to an interested hearer.

Example: a friend of mine had been diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. I asked him about it and he responded with a generalized brief explanation. Then I asked him a follow up question about the disease, he responded by saying "Since you really seem to be interested I will tell you." Then he launched into a detailed explanation of how it occurred, the symptoms, what the doctors are prescribing, and the cure. I learned a good lesson!

Maybe one test as to whether we are a good listener is: Can we listen to a friend tell about a subject we know nothing about and couldn't care less about learning?

Learning Activities 2

Exercises

Reading for Details

I. Answer the following questions:

In what way according to Mr. Strunk did God help him?

In what ways did God intervene in the life of Mr. Strunk?

What are the two purposes of Jesus' life on earth as interpreted by Mr. Strunk?

What was one of the key lessons Mr. Strunk received from the retail business?

II. True / False:

Mr. Strunk doubted the existence of God.

As he reread Sermon on the Mount he was taken aback how far people have deviated from the marvelous principles exposed in it.

The employees serving customers often took the approach that the customer was always right.

Everyone is prepared to listen.

III. Complete the following sentences:

One of the reasons I enjoy our Lookout Mountain ranch in Colorado is...

Christians instead of demonstrating Jesus' love and concern...

Listening to others is vital because...

Instead of hearing the customer out, the employees...

One of the ways to test whether you are a good listener is...

The speaker will respond to...

Word Study

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions:

snowcapped; to redeem; vista; sermon; interdependent relationships; anointed; pulpit; key lesson; highlight; to manifest itself.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

высший; просвещающий; жизненно необходимый; белки; выслушать клиента; доказательство; когда появляется возможность; мне совершенно безразлично; принимать позицию.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil;

make someone feel isolated or estranged;

to long to possess something.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to be clothed in; to reach out to; side issue; to be turned aside.

VIII. Give synonyms:

to enlarge; to finish; noteworthy; well-being; to drift.

IX. Give antonyms:

to create; praise; absence; well timed; acceptance.

X. Give the derivatives:

error; avoidance; to grow; close.

Follow-up Activities

XI. Thought-provoking questions:

To your thinking, is the good humor of Mr. Strunk's essays connected with his faith in God?

Why is it so hard to be a good listener? How to improve the situation?

Is it important to be eager to listen to others?

Part 3

Be an Encourager – Be Enthusiastic

I was married to a woman who among her many diverse talents was the world champion encourager. She was able to put a positive twist on every situation – good or bad. If there was criticism it was always preceded by a compliment. I can still hear her say to the children as they were departing for an assignment, job interview or just school, “Be enthusiastic!”

This testimony has been a guiding light for me all these adult years. Maybe it was natural to me but was certainly amplified by Ruth's example. It is a lot more constructive to compliment and encourage than be a negative influence. After a disappointment or failure who wants to hear, “you should have done it this way.” There may be time for constructive criticism, but a little positive reinforcement is called for after an event. Of course, the encouragement must be a little realistic. After a football player has failed to catch three touchdown passes, it is incongruous to say, “That was a nice 10 yard pass you caught.”

Enthusiasm can be contagious. People enjoy following a positive leader and an ardor for the work, company, project, aim, etc. People respond to people, especially to those with an enthusiastic approach to the task and future. Also,

generally associates, employees, etc. usually react more positively to compliments than criticisms. I once had a boss who was just the antithesis of this principle. If you were successful in a project, he said nothing, but if I failed, the criticism was loud and harsh. Thankfully most management techniques emphasize positive reinforcement.

Learn to Reach Out – to Engage Others

When a young person, high school or college age, is unable to begin a conversation or introduce themselves it hinders their social activities. When the same hesitancy is present in adults it is unfortunate. Yet, I observe this situation many times in many situations. Being able to engage others in conversation is something that can be learned. I know.

People often comment that I seem to be able to walk up to anyone and initiate a conversation or when meeting people for the first time I am able to engage in a conversation. It is a matter of giving attention to the person and ascertaining something interesting about them that can form the basis of a comment or question.

Before I entered the banking business, I, too, had difficulty in meeting people. I didn't know what to say. When forced to talk about the weather you may have lost the opportunity to have a meaningful encounter. In the course of my daily activity I met customers, employees, prospective customers, acquaintances, and people for the first-time.

Finding something to say was a learning process, but because of my position I was forced into many conversations with friends and people I just met. Over the years I learned to reach out.

The key element is to have confidence in yourself. This will give you more courage to introduce yourself and make comments that a timid, or a doubting person would not make. Also, the banking business taught one about a variety of businesses and financial situations, so after an initial introduction, I can usually find some common thread to mention. Another help is to be observant of the person and the surroundings. Is there something about him or his clothing that one can safely comment on? Often the situation opens a door.

Perhaps a friend is introducing you and that opens a wide area to initiate “small talk”.

But the most interesting is to reach out to a total stranger because you may meet some very engaging people. While standing in line at a restaurant, or sitting next to someone at a baseball game or waiting at a doctor’s office it is fun to make a comment and see what happens. Don’t expect success all the time because some people will reject any overtures, but if there is a response you may learn something new and perhaps encourage someone.

I am making these comments in dealing with men and talking to men. With women a different set of rules is applied. I won’t elaborate except to say with my white hair and my age I find many taboos are avoided. However, there are enough man to man and woman to woman situations to explore and enjoy.

Don’t Be Disappointed in Others, or if Recognition Doesn’t Come

We all have expectations of ourselves and often expectations of others. We wish relatives and friends would see the need in their lives to be more giving, achieve more, use their talents better and in general “why can’t you be more like me.” Of course, if we look inwardly, maybe the “me” is not all that attractive. This is normal because we see life from only one perspective, our own. It is amazing how heritage, genes, education, problems and other influences can affect one’s wishes, ambitions, love and viewpoint of the present and future.

All of this is normal, but when we attempt to evaluate others by the standards that we feel are important, through our experience or background, we run into conflict and disappointment. Why can’t they see what they are doing is a disaster? Why don’t they do it another way? Can’t they see what needs to be done? Why don’t they listen to my advice? My expectations are not the expectations of others! If we express our thoughts, they are rejected. If not expressed, it can lead to frustration and inner turmoil within us. Thus, people are different and as we say in church, “leave it with the Lord!”

Another area of disappointment is when accolades or compliments we feel are deserved are not forthcoming. An act of kindness, a project around the

house, an achievement, a well cooked meal, a change of appearance, etc. We are pleased to perform these acts, but all we expect is a little recognition. But reciprocating is not forthcoming. Our level of expectation is not met and disappointment, angst and even anger may follow. Once again, people see things differently and “leave it to the Lord!”

Learning Activities 3

Exercises

Reading for Details

I. Answer the following questions:

What special talent did Mr. Strunk’s wife possess?

In what ways did God intervene in the life of Mr. Strunk?

What hinders social activities of people?

How is it possible to learn to engage others in conversation?

Why do we run into conflicts and disappointments?

II. True / False:

Mr. Strunk’s wife did not contribute to his enthusiastic nature.

People usually respond to those with an enthusiastic approach to the task and future.

Most management techniques emphasize harsh criticism.

The ability to engage others in conversation is innate.

You must expect success all the time.

III. Complete the following sentences:

After a disappointment or failure nobody wants to...

People react more positively to...

People often comment that Mr. Strunk seems to...

When you engage complete strangers in conversation...

When our level of expectation is not met...

Word Study

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions:

antithesis; guiding light; associate (noun); turmoil; accolade; small talk; to reciprocate; ardor; overture; taboo.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

утверждение; заразный; придавать особое значение; потенциальный клиент; препятствовать; быть уверенным в себе; значимая встреча; общая нить (разговора); сквозь призму нашего опыта; признание.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

the state of being unsure, or slow in acting or speaking;
the things and conditions around a person or thing;
to develop or present (a theory, policy, or system) in detail.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to put a positive twist on smth; to reach out to; to see life from only one perspective; to engage others in conversation.

VIII. Give synonyms:

inconsistent; to estimate; to find out; standpoint; shy.

IX. Give antonyms:

to lessen; avaricious; on the outside; final; success.

X. Give the derivatives:

encourage; fortune; observe; initiate.

Follow-up Activities

XI. Thought-provoking questions:

To your thinking, why are many people unable to begin a conversation?

Does enthusiasm facilitate life?

What can we do to stop getting disappointed all the time? Is it important?

Part 4

Health Is Often Heredity, but Take Good Care of Yourself

Why do some people seem to go through life with little or no sickness, when others have difficulty going through a year without sickness or congenial health problems? Obviously, there could be many reasons, but one salient fact is that heredity and genes have a great influence on one's general health. If cancer is in the parents and grandparents makeup, it may reappear in the children. If the father and grandfather had heart problems this infirmity often will strike the children, specially the males. All the above are well known facts and we can be thankful for health we have knowing heredity plays a large part.

Fortunately, my generation and especially younger people are embarking on a path to improve their health with proper eating, exercise and being alert to potential health problems. I realize there are large numbers of people who eat too much and the wrong kind of food, receive no exercise and live a life style leading to dissipation and ruin. Fortunately, no one in my family, adults and children, are guilty of such debilitating behavior.

We have no control over the heredity portion except to be aware and react quickly when these signs appear, but a healthy life style is something we can control. We all fail at some time or another in our eating and exercise routines, but it is the steadfastness that is important. Not through any great wisdom or plan, but I have enjoyed good health partially from a heredity standpoint and from my actions. My father died of a stroke when 81 because he helped push a friend out of a snow bank. Although he was a diabetic for a number of years, it was kept under control through a daily injection of insulin. My mother had a small number of problems such as, gall stones and diverticulitis, but no heart or cancer concerns. She died at 88.

As a youth I was active in sports and Boy Scout activities such as camping and hiking. Later in college I played in the tennis team and boxed in the St. Louis Golden Glove boxing matches. During my Navy days I had opportunities to keep myself in "shape" while in school. However, aboard the

destroyer there was no opportunity for exercise, unless one could count swimming alongside the ship while in port with a boat manned with armed sailors to keep the sharks away.

When working at Marshall Field's I was able to find guys to play basketball or football. These were the days before health clubs and workout equipment. Some sort of team sport was the only exercise available. I also played much tennis and, fortunately, Ruth enjoyed tennis also. We enjoyed tennis throughout our life together. We also played indoor badminton and became amateur skiers. I still play tennis regularly and skied until when I was 84. Twenty years ago I started walking and still try to walk three miles each day.

I mention all of the above to demonstrate how one can find activities and in my generation it usually was some form of sports. Today, my children and grandchildren receive most of their activity via the weight room. I know the use of various type of equipment in the weight rooms assist in developing a number of muscles, etc., and thus strengthens the whole body. However, even if we didn't workout on a machine to develop our "abs" I wonder if we didn't have more fun and also increased the general tone and temper in the entire body. Anyway, organized sports for adults usually don't exist and it is fortunate an alternative is available.

One last jab. Playing badminton improves your quickness and increases the hand-eye coordination. What weight room machine does that?

Don't Be Afraid to Try New Things, Actions and Adventures

If variety is the spice of life, then that can be a motto for this section. To make life more interesting we need to explore and try new avenues of thought, sports, arts, etc. Most of the time we are absorbed in our daily routine: work, family, church. This is how it should be because we have responsibilities and our families depend on us. When I received an invitation to join the Madison Bank, the way had been prepared by a series of events that the decision was a no-brainer and not a step of faith or courage. However, while there I introduced a number of banking innovations by having the courage to try something different. I initiated 8 am to 6 pm banking, serving coffee to customers in the

morning, giving commuters a plastic cover to protect their paper railroad ticket, etc. These were just a few of the promotional gimmicks.

In the family it was always fun to go camping although Ruth had never spent a night outdoors, but she also was willing to try something new. She came through the experience like a true camper! Because she was willing to experience something different we have enjoyed many years camping with the family.

This statement of trying new things may seem incongruous to my 33 year employment with Madison Bank, but in fact, I experienced countless new things during that time. In my long career I had many job changes and was permitted to introduce a number of promotional events and new banking ideas.

Following Ruth's death and my retirement three years later I was able to embark on new adventures and events when the opportunity came. The first was the Russian experience. This has led to a rich relationship with Vladimir Kalmykov over twenty years. Tutoring algebra in the Chicago public schools is another example. I had never tutored anyone, much less minority, slow performing students. However, I enjoyed the experience and it was rewarding to see the student's face light up when the student finally understood a math principle. Perhaps the largest step was assuming the Chairmanship of the commissioning of a giant aircraft carrier, the USS Abraham Lincoln. I was within five months of retiring from the bank and was exploring several outreaches. I had several ideas in the consulting area and others in community service. Although I had never been chairman of a program of this magnitude, when the offer was made, I accepted it! With the assistance of a number of fine people, we raised a large sum of money and the commissioning of the ship and the program was an outstanding success. But first I had to say "yes."

Through these and other efforts my life has been exceptionally enriched. I met a number of wonderful people, some are still my friends, and learned much about a number of different areas of the World.

Beauty Is Everywhere – Look for It

Like most teenagers, I was interested in doing things and not observing. If someone said “beauty” I immediately thought of a pretty girl. My Mother was an avid gardener with a variety of flowers and raising roses was her specialty and love. Did I appreciate the tender folds of the bloom, the delicate colors or the tightly wrapped buds prior to the unfolding of an inspiring bloom? No, I only saw the thorns, the plants to be weeded and the need to bed the plants down for the winter. I was too interested in my life, my sphere, my friends and my needs.

When did the change occur? Actually, I always saw the beauty in so many ways in my wife, Ruth, but the real appreciation of beauty occurred with the birth of our first child, Nancy. For the first time I marveled at the structure of the little fingers, the first emergent smile and the pleasure I felt looking at her: the eyes, the tiny mouth and everything, although small, was perfectly made. This was real beauty. I felt the same way when Tom and Jane entered this world also.

Through camping the natural world became real and a source of enjoyment and I could see the beauty in nature. The organization and arrangement of flowers, trees, mountains, clouds, lakes – all add to a sense of beauty. However, it is at Lookout Point Ranch in Colorado where beauty really comes alive. I became interested in the wildflowers, each with their distinctive flower shape and color. The nighttime sky is a marvel of thousands of twinkling lights moving across the blackened Colorado sky. The snowcapped mountains are always present in their stately, majestic beauty. As an aside, I tease my teenage grandchildren who climb Colorado’s glorious mountains and never observe the wildflowers or animals en route. Their objective is to reach the pinnacle and achieve their goal. Not a bad objective, but they miss out on the flora and fauna along the way – they miss some of the beauty.

Over the years I have come to appreciate the beauty residing in people. In fact, the city is a place where we will find that beauty. Buildings are designed for people to live or work and in the mind of the architect I imagine they are structures of beauty, but for most of us it is just a building. The same is true with

streets, museums, parks, etc. There is beauty in all of them but it is people that add the spice, energy and diversity to the city. In this there is beauty as we observe and see people in their various lives.

Chicago has a summertime extravaganza called “Taste of Chicago.” It takes place on the lakefront and features all different kinds of cuisine as only a city diverse in nationalities can provide. However, it isn’t the food I enjoy, it is seeing the people, and especially young people flock to the lakefront to taste the food, but mainly to have a good time and see other people. I enjoy the anticipation on their faces and eagerness to participate in something different. There is beauty in their actions as they enter the scene. Maybe the look as they leave may not express pure love. Older people with their interest in food of the heritage and nationality also approach the area with eagerness, and this too is beautiful.

Go to a Chicago Cubs baseball game and see the excitement on the faces of men and women of all ages. The young boys with their ever ready fielder’s glove, the older couple with the man keeping score and his wife who was conned into attending and freighting interest. Then the hometown hero hits a home run and regardless of age, knowledge of baseball, men and women all stand up and cheer as if they had won the lottery. There is beauty in all of this.

The point I am making is we can find beauty everywhere. We should just look for it. For many a symphony orchestra playing a Beethoven masterpiece, a visit to an art museum, a boat ride on Lake Michigan is beautiful. Others see beauty in a well run factory or an inspiring church service, but behind it all are people using their abilities, talents, and energy to make things happen, and this I think is beautiful.

Some reading this will think of a dozen other ways in which beauty is portrayed and I agree, but I have listed a few and hope the reader will be encouraged to enlarge their scope and variety of beauty.

Learning Activities 4

Exercises

Reading for Details

I. Answer the following questions:

What is the main factor influencing one's general health?

How did Marvin R. Strunk use to keep fit in the youth? How does he do it now?

What are the ways to make life more interesting? What is Marvin R. Strunk's idea about it?

What is Marvin R. Strunk's approach to beauty?

When did the real appreciation of beauty occur for the first time in his life?

II. Complete the following sentences:

Some people seem to go through life with little or no sickness, when others...

Fortunately, my generation and especially younger people are embarking on a path to...

Playing badminton improves your...

In my long career I had many job changes and was permitted to...

... met a number of wonderful people, some are still my friends, and learned much about a number of different areas of the World.

The nighttime sky is a marvel...

Some reading this will think of a dozen other ways in which beauty is portrayed and I agree, but I have listed a few and...

Word-study

III. Give the Russian equivalents for the following expressions:

to raise money; appreciation of beauty; emergent smile; to miss out on flora and fauna; eagerness to participate in something different; snowcapped mountains.

IV. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

выдающийся успех, источник наслаждения, чувство красоты, наследственность, расширять кругозор.

V. Give synonyms:

dissipation, salient, to introduce, to enrich, to assume, to portray, to marvel.

VI. Give antonyms:

to embark, stately, avid, steadfast, incongruous.

VII. Give the derivatives:

diversity, cheer, courage, observe, assistance, various, influence, control, regular.

Follow-up Activities

VIII. Thought-provoking questions:

How can you define the concept of “beauty”?

What is your idea of a healthy lifestyle?

Do you agree with the saying “Variety is the spice of life”?

Part 5

Sometimes Silence Is Golden

Often we feel we have to express an opinion on every subject under discussion. True, we may have something very meaningful to add to the deliberation. I have been in meetings where a member feels compelled to express an opinion of every issue even though he or she may not be informed about the subject. I often have to hold back because my experience, age and knowledge will tend to stifle participation of others who will find it healthy and beneficial to voice their views. An example is a Bible study where an issue is being discussed with different conceptions being expressed. Maybe some views are not well Biblically founded but the discussion has value. Since with this group I have superior Biblical knowledge and with my age and experience,

expressing my viewpoint, without being asked, will end the discussion. Of course, there are times when the direction must be challenged because of the direction the discussion has taken. But once again, sometimes we need to keep silent to encourage others.

Then there are times we need to “bite our tongue.” Being critical is a big temptation for all, especially in family gatherings and situations. We have the tendency or wish to “straighten them out.” But usually the comments will only antagonize or debilitate a person to whom the aspersion is directed. In my case, too often an apology is required after the event, so I have learned to keep my comments positive.

Say “Thank You” and “You’re Welcome”

This little act of courtesy is so often not given, forgotten or ignored. Too bad. Whether it is a simple act of holding a door for me or someone else to enter or a more meaningful effort such as cooking a meal, giving a ride, etc. a response of Thank You is appreciated or even expected. Over the years, my grandchildren have learned to say “thank you” for little courtesies and what a pleasure for me to respond with a “You are Welcome”. They are not always perfect and neither am I in response, but usually very thoughtful. Two of my grandchildren are very careless about this response and I have to be careful not to let this lack of response affect my relationship with them.

A little note about the “You are Welcome” response. Twenty or thirty years ago, the culture gave a response of “No problem” to a simple “Thank you”. The connotation of this response is “I am doing this because it doesn’t require great effort on my part” rather than “I am pleased to help, appreciate or provide a little or large courtesy to you.” Fortunately, “no problem” has been dropped in the last twenty years to “You’re Welcome”.

Self Stimulus Is Better Than Outside Hearing from TV

When I was growing up our influence, stimulation and education came from books and radio. I am not speaking of influence of parents, teachers and friends, which remains basically the same. Our usual source of knowledge came from books, lectures from travelers, explorers, etc. We also had radio, but ever

here the background and situation had to be imagined, such as, horses' hoofs, rain, and people coming and leaving. A man would return from a European trip and lecture about what he saw. Trips overseas were that rare in the 1930s. Photography was still not able to project magnified pictures on a screen. A book gave us a word description of a scene, building, person's clothing and facial expression, etc. But the actual mind picture came from one's imagination. This was healthy because it forced us to think through the process from words to word picture!

Today, much of the information and needs in our life is presented to us via TV, the Internet, Google, etc. TV and movies give us a dramatic presentation of the situation of events unfolding in the story. All we have to do is sit and listen! Why read and imagine the scene when all we have to do is turn on the TV or select the movie from the current list and it is all presented for us. We read books, but today people listen to "books on tape". I maintain reading skills are much lower today than previously.

All this adds up that internal thought processes are not being developed or stimulated as they were in years past. Of course, the argument is the information is there when we want or need it, or the ability to add a column of figures is not needed since we have a calculator nearby. This is true, but our reasoning skills are not developed and because information is not stored internally can one carry on a conversation with a traveler or foreigner as successfully? Maybe, but I think not.

Try to Be Fair-Minded

Being fair minded is easier to say than do because we accumulate viewpoints and prejudices, either from past influences or current activities and friends. My parents came from a meager financial but morally strong background and some of the prejudices associated with this period were not present in our household. Through my own experiences I felt the pressure to absorb attitudes regarding race, riches, poverty, class of people, etc.

I believe I have come through these diverse influences with my thoughts, ideals and actions relatively free of prejudices, but none of us are perfect. The

point is to continue to try to be fair-minded in all of our thoughts regarding others and their actions.

Growing Old Can Be Good Also!

To younger people growing old seems to be terrible, and to some degree this may be true, however, there are real blessings and delights in being past the mundane cares of younger years. I must preface this by saying poor health can trump many positive thoughts about growing older. Think of the daily work, responsibilities, family, meeting the wishes of others that largely pass when the golden age rises from the horizon.

The freedom to engage in different and new activities can be invigorating, educational and service to others. It can be fun also. Volunteerism is great because the endeavor is of your choice and often can be dropped when the enthusiasm wanes. Also, there is a big world and travel can beckon with other seniors.

Perhaps best of all is time to “smell the flowers”. The must do pressures of working and family daily life are behind and with the slower pace the enjoyable and pleasurable part of life can emerge. Taking time to visit the shopkeeper, encourage a grandchild, view the integrities of a rose bud, leisurely reading a book – these are some of the things that can come with growing older.

American Democracy

The American democracy is alive, strong and functioning. However, it has taken over two hundred years. We have survived a civil war, several devastating economic upheavals, growth from a small group of sparsely populated states bordering on the Atlantic Ocean to a population of almost three hundred million and stretching three thousand miles to the Pacific Ocean, absorbed emigrant peoples from diverse countries in Europe, South America, Africa and Asia.

The original basis of the republic was thirteen colonies of England who fought for their freedom successfully. In trying to exist after the war, each colony recognized it could not exist independently, so cooperation was assumed from the beginning, but hard bargaining was part of the unifying process. The

large states wanted more power, but the smaller states possessed economic advantages needed by the large states and so compromises were achieved to make the country come together and a constitution was written and adopted. Also, men involved in the establishment were men of stature, patriotism, and willing to put country again of personal or regional desires. Names, such as Washington, Franklin, Adams, Jefferson, etc. were active in the Constitutional Convention. Washington became the first President. These men are still revered today.

Thus, the people were determined to make democracy work. Remember at this period 1787–1789 and after, England represented the only functioning democracy (a King in title only) and the experiment in France a few years later resulted in disaster.

The greatest test to American democracy came when the southern states in the United States succeeded from the Union over the slavery issue. President Lincoln refused to let this happen saying they didn't have the right to leave the union and a bloody war was the result. This established the principle of one nation with all states involved.

A second period of difficulty was connected with economic downturns, particularly in 1929–1936. With large numbers of people unemployed, many hungry, etc. a number of democratic countries succumbed to the pressures and became dictatorships or ruled by an elite group. The USA was able to survive this period.

The United States has always had two political parties representing different points of view regarding government. Today they are called Democratic and Republican. In the last fifty years we have had Democratic administrations 25 or 30 years and Republican has been the balance. Over the years some politicians had tried to establish a third party but after obtaining a small number of votes have been absorbed into the established parties. Each of the two parties has groups with diverse opinions about certain issues but stay under the group's umbrella because that is the only way their viewpoint can be listened to.

I will not go into the organization of the United States government, except to state their three pillars: executive, legislative and judicial. Each has a function and we call it “checks and balances” so that no one branch can take power by itself. And it works. The President can veto laws passed by the Congress (the legislative) and the Supreme Court (judicial) determines if the laws passed are legal under the Constitution. Of course this works because we have a two party system to keep the party in power honest and law abiding. If one party controls everything, then democracy doesn’t function properly and leads to excesses. England also has a functioning two party system and their democracy is eight hundred years old. Politicians don’t like opposition but it is necessary for democracy to operate and prevent one-person or one party control.

Learning Activities 5

Exercises

Reading for Details

I. Answer the following questions:

Why it is sometimes better to keep silent?

What is the difference between the concepts “No problem” and “You are welcome”?

Where did the influence come from when Mr. Strunk was young?

Why can’t many people nowadays carry on a conversation with a foreigner as successfully as before?

Why is it difficult to be fair-minded?

II. True / False:

You must never “bite your tongue”.

All grandchildren of Mr. Strunk say “thank you” for the little courtesies.

In the 1930s photography was already of a very good quality.

Reading skills are much lower today than previously.

Mr. Strunk’s parents were prosperous.

III. Complete the following sentences:

There are times when the direction of the discussion must be...

People learnt about far-off lands by means of...

TV and movies provide...

Growing old provides real...

Over the years some politicians had tried to establish ...

Word Study

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions:

convection; to debilitate; to be dropped to; to maintain (herein); to store; fair-minded; mundane; to trump; upheaval.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

озвучить своё мнение; требовать больших усилий; с моей стороны; придержать дверь для кого-то; подбросить (до дома); источник знаний; увеличенная картинка; словесное описание; действие разворачивается; воодушевляющий.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

to grow or cause to grow and become more mature, advanced, or elaborate;

to decrease in vigour or extent; become weaker;

to long to possess something.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to hold back; to bite one's tongue; to straighten smb out; to rise from the horizon.

VIII. Give synonyms:

discussion; to smother; to oppose; impetus; scanty.

IX. Give antonyms:

voluntary; disadvantageous; to have no influence over smth; external; biased.

X. Give the derivatives:

to mean; to tempt; benefit; a fold

Follow-up Activities

XI. Thought-provoking questions:

To your thinking, what are the keys to success in a conversation?

Do you agree that nowadays people have become less intelligent?

Do you fear growing old? Why / why not?

Part 6

Ethnic Diversity

The United States has always been a country of immigrants. Although the original settlers coming to our shores were primarily from England, other small groups originated from France, Spain, and Holland. After 150 years building the 13 original colonies, or states, independence was established and the United States of America was organized. As the country grew, opportunity was abundant, immigrants flocked to America. These people came from many European countries. They brought with them their language, customs, religion, talents, and beliefs. As one can imagine this influx of many new people brought richness to society as well as problems. Three neighbors with their own language, ideas of government, social conventions, etc. These neighbors adjusted to each other because they needed to, but mainly they wanted to become “Americans.” They were prepared to leave their Old World behind and become citizens in the New World.

In my opinion, wanting to become citizens in the new world and Americans has been the secret of ethnic diversity in the United States. Many use the term “melting pot” to describe the results of the transformation. Some like to use the term “salad bowl” to picture this process and in many ways this is correct because many nationalities keep their special holidays, dances, traditions and in many cases language, particularly in the first or second generation.

However, by the third generation this is diminished. My grandmother and grandfather came from Germany in 1840–50 and settled on a farm in Missouri in the Midwest of the USA. Most of their neighbors were immigrants from Germany so their customs and practices were continued. Their children, my father and mother, were educated in the public schools learned English, American history and government. Through their jobs and business, moving to other non-German areas they receded from the Old Days and became thoroughly American. I never learned German as a language and my parents never spoke it except when they had something we children didn't want to know about, such as, Christmas presents.

This process of integration has continued for two hundred years often with different groups coming from different countries than before. In 1890–1910 large settlers came from Italia, Russia, China, Serbia, etc. After one generation they again became part of the melting pot. In recent years new people have arrived from Asian countries, Africa, South America and of course, Mexicans. In the last thirty years there has been a large influx of men and women coming from Mexico, the country south of the United Sates. Many of these people have come into the country illegally, some by swimming the Rio Grande River, which is the border between Mexico and the United States. Although this large group has begun to integrate, the process is slower partially because with the number of Mexicans in the country they are not forced to learn English rapidly and thus integrate with others. They have Spanish speaking TV and radio stations, etc.

One large group has until recently not been permitted to become part of the melting pot. It has been the negro population. They were brought to the US as slaves and continued that way until 150 years ago when they were freed. However, they were largely uneducated and possess limited skills other than those used in farming. Because of their “color,” lack of skills and education and other reasons they were decremented against and segregated. Some integration occurred in northern US cities but in the south, where most of the black people lived, discrimination prevented any integration. In recent years this is changing.

The ethnic diversity of America will continue to evolve as long as people view the opportunity in the United States to be better than in their home countries and the US remains open to new residents. It should be noted many countries do not permit any immigration. To many people of the World, the United States is still the land of opportunity!

Young People's Problems

First I should state I am no expert on the problems young people in the US face although I have three married children and thirteen grandchildren. These observations will be from a limited viewpoint and someone detached from the intimate knowledge of the mind of young people.

In general, young people in the US face the same problems as young people in other developed and semi-developed countries: learning to make one's own decisions, separation from parents, sexual desires, what career to follow, finding a life mate, etc. However, young people in the US do face these and other concerns.

Although the United States is a large country, people and specially young people are very mobile. Thus they travel throughout the country, go long distances to attend colleges and universities, visit friends in cities away from their home, etc. This opportunity to be mobile gives independence to the young and opportunity to explore nature, develop new interests away from their home location. In general auto and air transportation is readily available and cheap. This mobility applies to visits, education and careers and job location.

Many have financial resources to follow their interests and desires as listed above. Travel is easy, cheap and safe. Thus financial and travel restrictions that may be present in some other countries are not a hindrance in the US. However, this excess of money can be good and bad. It can lead to excessive freedom and lessened influence of the parents when the young people may need direction and discipline from their parents.

Mass Media

Mass media could be defined in several ways, but I consider it to be all forms of public communication, such as, newspapers, radio, television, mail,

meetings, etc. There is a large growing and very influential communication in semi-private internet via blogs, Facebook, etc. In fact, people and businesses are using email on the internet as a means of communicating rather than telephone or mail. Of course, businesses, organizations, politicians, etc. also use this method to influence people.

Returning to the original definition of mass media, this industry is very influential and powerful in the United States. Newspapers are readily available and read by a majority of the people. Also a number of young people do not subscribe to a newspaper, many receive this same information via TV since the newspapers all have “web” sites where most of the info in the newspapers is repeated. Newspaper editors and owners have traditionally taken a position on civic and political controversies through their editorials in an attempt to sway the opinion of its readers.

Since readers and listeners are influenced by newspapers, radio and TV, the politicians use these media to publicize their position on various issues. Hence, a news conference, or position statements, or one-on-one interviews to announce or argue a position or rebut an argument – these are normal actions.

The mass media holds a powerful position in the United States, because people are and want to be informed, listen or read extensively and because of this widespread reception politicians are very attuned to the market as represented by the media. Another reason for the power of the media is that it is free from restriction and censorship. We have long talked about the “freedom of the press” and media people and the general public fight a real or imagined attempt to coerce or hinder anyone from publishing or airing a story about a government action, politician errs or civic cover-ups. Knowing of this freedom gives credence to the validity of the news reports and statements.

Although not really considered “mass media,” talk shows and call-in programs are very influential in the radio and television scene. These programs can have their focus to be political, sports, women interests, etc. In sports programming several experts, usually former players, will express opinions and then listeners will call the station, be “on the air” and express a thought which

may or may not be in agreement with the opinions of the experts. This can make for a lively program. Leaders of the political talk shows will have a bias that is generally well-known to this program's audience. The discussions will usually concern the current political "hot" topic with the leader expressing an opinion and the listeners will add to or disagree with the stated viewpoint.

One program, the "Oprah Winfrey Program" was on the television for twenty five years with a large listening audience primarily women since the show was aired in the morning. She dealt with current social problems, new ideas, recommended books to read, invited celebrities to be interviewed by her. Except for social or racial issues, she generally avoided political issues. Her influence and audience was exceptionally large and although not mass media, her influence on issues was great.

Although not as widespread or prevalent, religious programming usually by radio is very effective to the audience the religious organizations are trying to reach. In Chicago, the evangelical Christians have radio stations featuring Bible studies, talks by Christian leaders and, of course, call in talk shows. Christians will listen to this station and receive encouragement, teaching and advice on raising children, work problems, etc. The Catholic church has a similar outreach as others do.

The use of TV, radio and newspapers during elections is very interesting. Ads prepared and sponsored by organizations representing a particular candidate will run these ads showing the candidate in the best possible light and conversely they may contain information detrimental to the opposing candidate. It is called negative advertising. Since the content of the ads is not regulated the opposing camp can say anything within reason. These 30 to 60 second ads can be very effective.

The newspapers during election times are used to present more lengthy, reasoned arguments in favor of a candidate. These generally will be ads not interviews and press conferences. Newspaper reporters are intelligent enough as not to be taken in by candidate's words without backup information.

Radio is also used in a different manner. There are few negative ads but mostly extolling the virtues of the candidate sponsoring the ads. TV advertising is very expensive, so many people running for office will use the radio to get their message across. Of course, talk shows are very vital because it gives the candidate an audience to express his views, but also, those opposing the candidate can voice their opinion as well. It makes for an interesting program.

Learning Activities 6

Exercises

Reading for Details

I. Answer the following questions:

What is the secret of ethnic diversity in the USA?

How did Mr. Strunk's parents use their native tongue?

What is slowing down the process of integration of the immigrants?

What are the advantages that modern young people enjoy in the USA?

Why mass media is considered to be a means to publicize someone's opinion?

II. True / False:

The United States has always been a country of immigrants.

As soon as people moved to the USA they forgot the traditions of their own culture.

There are no illegal immigrants in the USA.

In general auto and air transportation is expensive.

People are not influenced by mass media.

III. Complete the following sentences:

In the last thirty years there has been a large influx...

One group that has not been permitted to become part of the melting pot...

The excess of money can lead to...

The politicians use mass media to publicize their position on various issues due to...

The mass media holds a powerful position in the United States because...

Word Study

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions:

to flock; melting pot; to be decremented against; to subscribe; to rebut; one-on-one interview; to be attuned to; to run for office; prevalent.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

поселенцы; обычай; приспособливаться к; этническое разнообразие; развиваться; спутник жизни; финансовые возможности; рекламировать; сдерживать; погрешность.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

relating to a city or town, especially its administration; municipal;
making a certain situation or outcome likely or possible;
a person who applies for a job or is nominated for election.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to take a position on; to sway the opinion of; to hinder someone from; to be on the air.

VIII. Give synonyms:

to withdraw; to merge; to be isolated; obstacle; partiality.

IX. Give antonyms:

to increase; impartiality; attached; immobilized; unfavorable.

X. Give the derivatives:

to reside; evolution; mobile; bias.

Follow-up Activities

XI. Thought-provoking questions:

To your thinking, is the situation with immigrants in Russia similar to that in the USA?

What are the general problems of young people in Russia? Are they similar to those in the USA? Why?

What are the similarities and differences between mass media in the USA and Russia?

Part 7

Immigration

As noted in a previous essay, America is a nation of immigrants. Everyone has come from a foreign country to the United States. The incentive to emigrate will vary from time to time and is often driven by unsatisfactory conditions in the native country. For example: the potato famine in Ireland in the 1870s and the failure of an upheaval attempt in the government in Germany in 1848 caused a number of Germans involved to come to the United States. The pogroms in Russia caused many Jews to leave their homes in Russia and Poland.

However, the overriding reason has been the opportunity for economic advancement, freedom and a dream for a new and bright future. In my case, my ancestors stated they left Germany because they were tired of their “boys” having to fight in senseless wars. Also, I believe the stories relayed from friends living in the US regarding landownership, education for children and economic opportunity had a convincing effect.

Occasionally, men were brought into the country to perform necessary but difficult tasks. During the building of the transcontinental railroad in 1960s workers were required to cut through mountains in dangerous terrain in California, so Chinese men were imported to accomplish this task. When completed, they chose to remain so today California has a sizable group of

Chinese. Proceeding from the east the route was fraught with physical and severe weather hazards, so workers from Ireland were enlisted to conquer these obstacles. Again, these imported workers chose to stay and a number of our Eastern cities have large Irish populations.

Immigration Figures

Immigration has been and is a source of talented, aggressive and educated individuals who want to use their ability in a positive area and thus achieve recognition and advance economically. America has always been open to hardworking people with new ideas and willing to compete. Many of the new inventions, life changing ideas have come from men and women who brought their talents to the United States.

Our fine university educational system has also been a source of talented immigrants. Many foreigners enter US universities to receive a super, often technological education. They become researchers and elect to remain in this country. I am sure the parent countries are disappointed with this action, but the US is the benefactor.

Political unset can also lead to immigrants. The Jewish persecution in Nazi Germany led to an immigration of many scientists.

Although we are all immigrants, sometimes the established immigrants resent and look down on more recent arrivals. Instead of assisting new comers, they place roadblocks in their way. They may be discriminated in where they can live, jobs, and community affairs. This is the attitude of “I worked for my position with no help, now I am not going to make it easy for you”.

This is especially prevalent in today’s political atmosphere regarding the Mexican illegals. For years Mexicans came into the US by simply crossing the border with Mexico. Employers were looking for low wage workers and although the wages were low by US standards, they were high compared to Mexico. Thus, the employers encouraged the flow of workers and the government lent tacit support to the idea. During the Reagan administration these illegals were given the opportunity to become US citizens after passing citizenship tests. The last few years the flow has increased and suddenly people

objected to this process and demanded a stop to illegal entry into the United States. The long, 800 mile, border has been strengthened and when discovered, illegals are returned to Mexico. Attempts by some politicians to solve the problem by legislation have been met by angry opposition.

People enter the United States from many countries and generally are welcomed because these immigrants bring enthusiasm, freshness and a desire to advance economically. The US admits several million immigrants legally each year. Several millions in addition are admitted on student visas and more are given work permits authorize the entry for a short period of six months or even several years. Some try to overstay their permit and hope to become permanent residents. Most are eventually caught and returned to their native country.

Development of Society

A better title may be “Changes in the established society and its practices”. All groups, races, clans, nationalities and countries develop their own system of ethics, accepted behavior and standards for the group. This criterion will vary from group to group, but some standard is known as the norm. Of course, in large groups, such as countries, different groups will arise and they may establish their own ethics and standard of manners, customs and admission to the group. The aristocracy of England and other European countries is an example. India with its caste system is another.

But societies are never static and changes can and do occur. Usually some overt change will speed the transition. This may change due to wartime needs, radical changes in government, economic upheavals, etc. To these one must add the influence of communication from TV and now “social” communication, level of education, different ideas from younger generations and the recognition that drawing closer to other societies through travel, business, education and interfacing affects people’s thinking. We may not be one world, but the customs, beliefs of others bring us closer together and thus changes the way groups operate, believe and progress.

Learning Activities 7

Exercises

Reading for Details

I. Answer the following questions:

What is the main reason for emigration?

Why are there so many Chinese in California?

America has always been open to hard working people, hasn't it?

Do established immigrants help new comers?

How many immigrants does the US admit each year?

II. True / False:

America is a nation of immigrants.

The overriding reason for immigrants has been the opportunity for economic advancement, freedom and a dream for a new and bright future.

Women were brought into the country to perform necessary tasks.

Imported workers decided to return to their country.

People enter the United States from many countries and generally are welcomed.

III. Complete the following sentences:

The incentive to emigrate will vary from time to time...

During the building of the transcontinental railroad in 1960's...

Although we are all immigrants...

Several millions in addition are admitted on student visas...

To these one must add the influence of communication from TV...

Word Study

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions:

an overriding reason, an ancestor, a source of talented immigrants, to lend tacit support, citizenship test, economic upheavals, famine.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following expressions:

картофельный голод, попытка сместить правительство, бессмысленная война, маршрут был чреват опасностями, политические гонения, дешевая рабочая сила, в соответствии с законодательством.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

a very big change that often causes problems;

a situation in which a large number of people have little or no food for a long time and many people die;

a large group of families that often share the same name.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to cut through mountains, an immigrant, low wage workers.

VIII. Give synonyms:

pogrom, an overriding reason, persecution, to make it easy for smb.

IX. Give antonyms:

ancestor, to bring into the country, imported.

X. Give the derivatives:

communication, to operate, recognition, to invent

Follow-up Activities

XI. Thought-provoking questions:

Do you want to emigrate from your country?

What country will you choose if you leave your country? Why?

Can you add your own reasons why people enter the USA?

Part 8

Russia Trip 2009

Interesting to see the changes over the 20 year period I have visited Russia. Due to jet lag problems my trip was shortened and six days was not long enough, but some changes immediately become evident.

I have visited Nizhny Novgorod, where my good Russian friend and English professor, Vladimir Kalmykov lives, each time. This city is the third largest in Russia and is an educational and manufacturing center. It produced tanks, jet airplanes, trucks and nuclear submarines during World War II.

Ten years ago Russians had severe inflation, no jobs, food was available but was very expensive and the citizens were very discouraged with life and especially with the introduction of capitalism. With oil money Russia is now enjoying, attitudes, hopes and life are dramatically different. People seem to have money, the newly opened malls are busy, stores are well stocked and food is plentiful with good selection although expensive. One store I visited had the same variety of fresh fruits one would find in Chicago, although at a higher price.

Although I understand corruption is rampant, the government seems to be using the oil money wisely. Three examples. While visiting five years ago, the city began to extend the subway line across the Oka River with an accompanying automobile bridge. The stump of a bridge extended only 100 feet from the shore. I thought at the time with the slow way Russians build things it would take ten years to cross this wide river. This year driving from the airport we crossed the bridge which had been opened ten days before. Since Moscow controls all things, someone opened the spigot. My hosts credited the governor of the district, now appointed by Moscow and not elected as before, with the effort. Oil money!

Second, Vladimir's friend and neighbor, a retired civil engineer, said his pension had been increased. Oil money! Third, Vladimir lives one block from the bluff overlooking the two rivers, the Volga and Oka. This esplanade

previously was a nice place to walk along a black top path. Now, the area has been landscaped with a low stone wall, picnic tables, and places to sit and enjoy the scenery. Usually destitute governments don't spend money on beautification projects. Oil money!

Six days is too short to judge but people seem to be happy. I will describe my lectures to the students later, but I asked them, "How would you rate the future of Russia: poor, fair, good, very good. The answer was good! Five years ago I asked the same question and the answer was poor and fair. People seem confident and pleased with the actions of the government. Officials seem to have learned a few techniques from the USA. The mayor of the city was on TV with a call from the citizens. He answered a wide range of questions in a seemingly responsive manner.

However, the contrasts of the past and the future are evident everywhere. The Orthodox churches with their unique onion domes have been remodeled, painted and the domes golden hues glisten in the sun light. New apartment buildings are rising without any zoning regulations. This is apparent because next to the modern building are old wooden houses built over a century ago. These weather-beaten and unpainted one-story houses are occupied by one or more families who occupy them with rights that make it difficult to force or pay them to move. One technique has been to have a fire!

My friend, Vladimir, lives in a five floor apartment building located in a fine neighborhood a block away from the wonderful views and sights of the Oka and Volga River. They have been given ownership of the apartment and though very small, particularly by US standards, it serves their needs and they enjoy the convenient location. This and other nearby buildings were built in 1960 at the height of the Communist regime. Although only 49 years old, the poor construction is evident in the exterior and interior spaces. The concrete stairs are cracking and in places uneven and outside windows are required to be replaced. Most of these problems are because of poor maintenance since in the USSR days people did not own their apartments, they didn't care. But that is changing. In previous visits ice on the sidewalks would remain since salt was not used.

Now, the walks are cleared of ice and snow, still no salt, and walking is not a precarious experience.

Nizhny Novgorod is home to a number of universities. The three largest, all state supported, are: Technical university, 10,000 students, a Liberal arts (USA term) university, 10,000 students and the Linguistic University, 6,000 students. Vladimir tells me there are 20 other universities in the city, including a music school. Most are privately funded and owned. If a student is qualified, attendance at a state supported university is free. If under-qualified private schools are available and tuition is paid. Since most of my interaction with the Russians was via the students I will describe my reactions.

The students asked about democracy in America and what I thought about democracy in Russia. I was able to respond that evidence of democracy working in the US was our election of a black man as President. I couldn't resist commenting that Russia has a law about a president serving only two four year terms, yet Mr. Putin is still very much involved. No one challenged me on this statement.

Russian students are alert and based on my brief reaction intelligent. 80 % of students in the foreign language school are girls. Incidentally, in the technological school, 80% of the students are men. Russian girls are pretty and with the lack of sun and sugar in their diets enjoy a fine complexion, and of course, there are very few non Russians. So few that exceptions are very evident. One girl with an Asian look had a Korean mother and Russian father. This is so common in the USA but rare in Russia.

Five years ago, only a few students possessed computers, now everyone I asked owned one. Incidentally, most have computer with a dual language keyboard, Russian and English. Cell phones usage is universal and students have adjusted to their use in that no cell phone rang while I was lecturing. This was not the case on my previous visit. These tidbits are not earth shaking but do demonstrate the forward adjustment of students.

The students are interested in the United States and many questions were related to that interest. Questions regarding the financial crises, crime, death

penalty, our government, our new president indicated they had knowledge of the USA. They were also interested in my thoughts about Russia, its youth, schools, etc. They did not question me about our government or its relation to the Kremlin. In my last visit, there was a barrage of inquires and negative comments about the Iraq war.

One man asked me if alcohol was a problem in USA. I responded that we had some alcoholics but not nearly the problem as in Russia. This is a major concern in Russia and in spite of several campaigns to reduce the drinking the problem continues. Part of the problem is the long winters, lack of meaningful jobs, and poverty. However, in my opinion, part of the problem is in the lifestyle of the Russian family. There is very little entertainment outside the family. Movies are poor and not attended. Few sporting events, theaters, concerts, etc. for people to attend, thus the socializing takes place around the dinner table and drinking is pervasive. Russians enjoy their meal and sit at the table for several hours, talking and drinking. They drink their vodka in a shot glass and drink its contents in one gulp. Over the years I have been privileged to be a guest in a number of families in Nizhny Novgorod and the pattern is usually the same. Families enjoying each other and drinking vodka.

Ten years ago the presence of the commercial interests of the USA was very evident. McDonald's had opened several restaurants, the US government maintained an information office to assist businesses, both local and American, to ease the way to do business in Russia. An advertisement on the side of the street cars and buses advertised "New York Pizza". Five years ago I attended a special program hosted by the local government honoring the 10th anniversary of the USA information office. The US ambassador attended and it was a great thrill to hear "Stars and Stripes Forever" sung in Russia.

Today, the information office is closed, McDonald's is the only America fast food operation and there is little evidence of US products in the stores. Toothpastes displayed Colgate and Aquafresh and the remainder were European or domestic brands. In the clothing stores I saw no US labels.

I realize there have been a number of events discouraging American business interests, such as a takeover of foreign investments, a devaluation, etc. Also, the attitude of the US and Russian governments has been often antagonistic and I am sure this has thwarted business investment.

However, interest in the United States remains high. I cite two examples. I was scheduled to lecture to one of Dr. K. classes of about 20 students and he was introducing me when the fire alarm sounded. It was a drill but everyone had to leave the building. The lecture was scheduled for the next day. I expected only ten students to be present but over sixty showed up. The word had sounded that an American businessman was going to speak. Two days later I spoke at another university and again sixty five people were in attendance. Their attendance and questions indicated a real interest in America.

Second, the local TV station wanted to interview me. The interview took place as we walked to the university where I was to give a lecture and answer questions. The Russian questioner spoke excellent English and the interview continued into the classroom. That night the interview did not run, so I thought it was not significant enough, but several days later the interview aired. I cite this to demonstrate the interest that remains in Russia about the USA, its people, customs, government, etc. I am pleased President Obama is seeking open relations with Russia.

A comment about cars and pedestrians. Twenty years ago there were only a few cars on the streets and all transportation was via street car (tram) or bus. In 2009 cars usage has exponentially increased and even an occasional traffic jam occurs. Formerly pedestrians could cross the streets almost anywhere because car passage was infrequent, but today pedestrians try to follow the outdated procedure and drivers of car feel they have all rights. As a consequence, Russia has 30,000 traffic deaths, including pedestrians, each year. This compares with the USA total of 40,000 and we have at least ten times as many cars.

One day I visited a grocery store four blocks from the apartment with Vladimir's wife, Galya. We traveled the route she had taken for years. This included crossing a small plaza where several streets intersected and following

her usual path she crossed at the widest part of the intersection. Cars passed on both sides as we waited in the middle of the intersection until an opening occurred. In the USA, pedestrians would be required to cross at the side of the plaza with a cross walk or traffic signal. Change will come but in the meantime each group is inserting their “rights.”

Russia’s history, traditions, transformation from a feudal society to a modern nation, its semi detachment from Europe, yet so similar in many ways, the seventy years of communist rule, the harsh climate and the geographical size of the country are all factors in my making Russia fascinating and different. And it will continue to be so. I feel it has been a real privilege for me to be a witness to some of the changes and to admire and enjoy Russia and its wonderful people.

Learning Activities 8

Exercises

Reading for details

I. Answer the following questions:

What was interesting for the author when he came to Russia?

How had Russia changed?

Whom did he visit?

Was it interesting for the author to communicate with the students?

Did he enjoy his journey?

II. True / False:

The author came to Russia for the first time.

Nobody came to listen to his lectures.

The Russian students are interested in the United States.

The author thinks that there is no alcohol problem in Russia.

It was a real privilege for the author to be a witness to some of the changes and to admire and enjoy Russia and its wonderful people.

III. Complete the following sentences:

Ten years ago Russians had severe inflation...

While visiting five years ago...

My friend, Vladimir, lives in a five floor apartment building ...

The students asked about democracy in America...

Few sporting events, theaters, concerts, etc. for people to attend...

Word Study

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following expressions:

to walk along a black top path, to spend money on beautification projects, weather-beaten and unpainted one-story houses, to be based on smb's brief reaction intelligent, a barrage of inquires, exponentially increase.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

Смертная казнь, двойная раскладка (клавиатуры), православная церковь, высокая инфляция, инвестиции, девальвация, пожарная тревога, враждебные отношения.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

an economic and political system in which businesses belong mostly to private owners, not to the government;

a small but interesting piece of information, news;

a lot of criticism, questions, complaints etc that are said at the same time, or very quickly one after another.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

To be discourage with smth, to remodel, a precarious experience, a great thrill.

VIII. Give synonyms:

Destruction, advertisement, a barrage of inquires, rampant.

IX. Give antonyms:

a poor answer, fair, poverty, to be pleased with, qualified.

X. Give the derivatives:

To attend, to describe, to entertain, to paint.

Follow-up activities

XI. Thought-provoking questions:

What do you think about the changes that happened in Russia?

Do you agree that evidence of democracy in the US was their election of a black man as President?

Why do think there are so few American products in Russian stores?

Keys

Learning Activities 1

I. Answer the following questions:

1. According to Mr. Strunk, if a person looks upon service to others as a privilege, he is on the road to being happy.
2. The real good comes from serving others in a loving, often sacrificial manner.
3. Children influence their parents' attitudes as they go to college, meet students from other cultures and backgrounds with a different set of values.
4. Failure is beneficial because we can learn from the failure, do something better and succeed the next time.
5. By trying new endeavors, we make our life more interesting, exciting and rewarding.

II. True / False:

1. Mr. Strunk believes that one must be selfish to be happy. – **False.** He believes that we must help others to be happy.
2. Mr. Strunk believes that we can do more and different things than we sometimes originally think. – **True.**
3. Education is restricted only to receiving grades. – **False.** Education is much more than college grades, it is the development of an individual and most of this occurs outside the classroom.
4. Mr. Strunk dislikes seeing young and old minds being understimulated. – **True.**
5. Education stops at the conclusion of schooling. – **False.** People continue a lifetime of education, they read books, watch TV programs, travel.

III. Complete the following sentences:

1. Often the new idea is rejected when first introduced, but maybe a year or so later, I will hear the father or mother present the argument as their own.

2. It is often when we experience failure, does the evaluation, contemplation and learning occur.

3. Mr. Strunk is constantly amazed what the human body can absorb, how it can change and strike out in a new direction or be receptive to new challenges or difficulties.

4. By trying new endeavors, life becomes more interesting.

5. Mr. Strunk's education occurred during wartime.

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the followings words and expressions:

impetus – толчок, импульс;

to preach – проповедовать;

to assess – оценивать;

liberal arts degree – степень в области гуманитарных наук;

technical course – техническое образование;

indulgence – снисхождение, послабление, потворство;

courtesy – вежливость;

to mold – формировать;

to be aware – знать;

to have firm roots – иметь твердые корни.

V. Give the English equivalents for the followings words and expressions:

врождённый – congenital; развитие / продвижение – promotion;
сотрудник – employee; предостережение – caution; старание – effort;
бомбардировать – to bombard; в жертвенной манере – in a sacrificial manner;
любопытный – curious, inquisitive; начеку – on the alert; жизнь,
посвящённая службе другим – life devoted to serving others.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

having or showing an interest in learning things – inquisitive;
a thing that motivates or encourages someone to do something – impetus;
providing satisfaction, gratifying – rewarding.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to be all part of – all the things belong to;
at the foot of – at the beginning;
problem laden – having a lot of problems;
to espouse a different set of values – to think that other things are important.

VIII. Give synonyms:

to achieve – to gain – to reach;
attainment – achievement – acquisition;
to sieve – to sift;
to judge – to assess – to evaluate;
devoted – dedicated – faithful.

IX. Give antonyms:

to lower – to raise;
ungratifying – pleasing;
unwatchful – attentive;
instability – stability;
improper – appropriate.

X. Give the derivatives:

influence – to influence, influential, influenced;
rewarding – unrewarding, reward;
to assess – assessable, reassess, assessment;
sacrificial – sacrifice, to sacrifice, sacrificing, sacrificial.

Learning Activities 2

I. Answer the following questions:

1. God was looking after the welfare of Mr. Strunk.
2. He manifested itself in many ways: in answers to prayers, in avoidance of accidents, in life's direction, in action in the family, in health. God helped Mr. Strunk to find a wonderful, loving wife, helped him in his career and so on.
3. There are two purposes of Jesus' life on earth: the first purpose is to give us a new message of love, peace and relationship with our fellow man and the second one is to save us from our sins preparing a place for us in heaven.
4. One of the key lessons Mr. Strunk received from the retail business is that listening to others is vital. We can learn from other people, gain new knowledge, besides listening is a good way to build relationships.

II. True / False:

1. Mr. Strunk doubted the existence of God. – **False**. He never really doubted there is God.
2. As he reread Sermon on the Mount he was taken aback how far people have deviated from the marvelous principles exposed in it. – **True**.
3. The employees serving customers often took the approach that the customer was always right. – **False**. When Mr. Strunk entered banking business, he discovered the employees serving customers, especially complaints, did not know how to listen. They often took the approach that the bank was always right and all was the customer's error. In addition, they wanted to "protect" the bank from a customer wrongdoing. Thus, instead of hearing the customer out, they would inject their thoughts and solution prior to the customer "getting it of his chest."
4. Everyone is prepared to listen. – **False**. Listening to what others are saying is a common problem because we are more interested in expressing our opinion than hearing others.

III. Complete the following sentences:

1. One of the reasons I enjoy our Lookout Mountain ranch in Colorado is the peace and closeness to God that I feel, especially when I am alone.
2. Christians instead of demonstrating Jesus' love and concern are focusing on side issues that divide and alienate rather than bring people closer to Jesus.
3. Listening to others is vital because we can learn from other people opinions and suggestions, gain new knowledge on subjects we are uninformed, it is a good way to build relationships.
4. Instead of hearing the customer out, the employees would inject their thoughts and solution prior to the customer "getting it of his chest".
5. One of the ways to test whether you are a good listener is to listen to a friend tell us about a subject we know nothing about and couldn't care less about learning.
6. The speaker will respond to an interested hearer.

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions:

snowcapped – заснеженные;

to redeem – искупать, спасать, освободить;

vista – перспектива;

sermon – проповедь;

interdependent relationships – взаимозависимые отношения;

anointed – помазанный;

pulpit – кафедра (проповедника), деятельность проповедника, проповедь;

key lesson – ключевой урок;

highlight – выделять, придавать большое значение;

to manifest itself – проявляться.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

Высший – paramount; просвещающий – enlightening; жизненно необходимый – vital; белки – proteins; выслушать клиента – to hear the customer out; доказательство – evidence; когда появляется возможность –

when an opportunity arises; мне совершенно безразлично – I couldn't care less; принимать позицию – to take the approach.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

the action of saving or being saved from sin, error, or evil – redemption;
make someone feel isolated or estranged – alienate;
to long to possess something – covet.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to be clothed in – to be presented in the form of;
to reach out to – to try to communicate with a person in order to help;
side issue – unimportant question;
to be turned aside – to be rejected.

VIII. Give synonyms:

to enlarge – to expand, to magnify;
to finish – to complete, to end;
noteworthy – notable;
well-being – welfare, prosperity;
to drift – to move.

IX. Give antonyms:

to create – to destroy, to break;
praise – blame, criticize;
absence – presence;
well-timed – inopportune;
acceptance – refusal, opposition.

X. Give the derivatives:

error – errorless, to err, erroneous, erroneously;
avoidance – to avoid, avoidable, avoider;
to grow – regrow, growing, growth, grower;
close – closable, closely, closeness.

Learning Activities 3

I. Answer the following questions:

1. He was married to a woman who among her many diverse talents was the world champion encourager.
2. When a person is unable to begin a conversation or introduce himself it hinders his social activity.
3. To engage others in conversation is something that can be learned through your confidence in yourself and observation.
4. When we attempt to evaluate others by the standards that we feel are important, through our experience or background, we run into conflict and disappointment.

II. True / False:

1. Mr. Strunk's wife did not contribute to his enthusiastic nature. – **False**. She often said, "Be enthusiastic!" This testimony has been a guiding light for Mr. Strunk.
2. People usually respond to those with an enthusiastic approach to the task and future. – **True**.
3. Most management techniques emphasize harsh criticism. – **False**. Thankfully most management techniques emphasize positive reinforcement.
4. The ability to engage others in conversation is innate. – **False**. It can be learned.
5. You must expect success all the time. – **False**. You can't expect success all the time because some people will reject any overtures.

III. Complete the following sentences:

1. After disappointment or failure nobody wants to hear, "you should have done it this way."
2. People react more positively to compliments than criticisms.

3. People often comment that Mr. Strunk seems to be able to walk up to anyone and initiate a conversation or when meeting people for the first time he is able to engage in a conversation.

4. When you engage complete strangers in conversation don't expect success all the time.

5. When our level of expectation is not met, disappointment, angst and even anger may follow.

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions:

antithesis – противоположность;

guiding light – путеводная звезда;

associate (noun) – партнер;

turmoil – смятение, суматоха;

accolade – похвала;

small talk – светская беседа;

to reciprocate – отвечать взаимностью;

ardor – пыл, рвение;

overture – инициатива;

taboo – запрет.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

утверждение – testimony; заразный – contagious; придавать особое значение – give attention to something, emphasize; потенциальный клиент – prospective customer; препятствовать – hinder; быть уверенным в себе – to have confidence in yourself; значимая встреча – meaningful encounter; общая нить (разговора) – common thread; сквозь призму нашего опыта – through our experience or background; признание – recognition.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

the state of being unsure, or slow in acting or speaking – hesitancy;

the things and conditions around a person or thing – surroundings;
to develop or present (a theory, policy, or system) in detail – to elaborate.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to put a positive twist on smth – to turn the situation in a positive way;
to reach out to – to try to communicate with a person in order to help;
to see life from only one perspective – to have a firm, non-alternative point
of view;
to engage others in conversation – to make people participate in a
conversation.

VIII. Give synonyms:

inconsistent – contradictory, incompatible, uncoordinated, inappropriate;
to estimate – to evaluate;
to find out – to ascertain;
standpoint – point of view,
shy – timid.

IX. Give antonyms:

to lessen – extend, expand, enlarge, increase;
avaricious – generous;
on the outside – inside, inwardly;
final – initial;
success – failure.

X. Give the derivatives:

encourage – encourager, encouragement, encouraged;
fortune – misfortune, fortunate, unfortunate;
observe – observed, observer, observing, observation, observant;
initiate – initiated, initiative, initiator.

Learning Activities 4

I. Answer the following questions:

1. Heredity and genes have a great influence on one's general health.
2. As a youth, Mr. Strunk was active in sports and Boy Scout activities such as camping and hiking. Later in college, he played in the tennis team and boxed. He still plays tennis regularly and tries to walk three miles each day.
3. To make life more interesting we need to explore and try new avenues of thoughts, sports and arts.
4. We can find beauty everywhere. We should just look for it. For many a symphony orchestra playing a Beethoven masterpiece, a visit to an art museum is beautiful. Others see beauty in a well run factory or an inspiring church service. People are using their abilities, talents, and energy to make things happen and this is beautiful to his mind.
5. The real appreciation of beauty occurred with the birth of his first child, Nancy. For the first time he marveled at the structure of the little fingers, the first emergent smile and the pleasure he felt looking at her: the eyes, the tiny mouth and everything, although small, was perfectly made. This was real beauty for him.

II. Complete the following sentences:

1. Some people seem to go through life with little or no sickness, when others have difficulty going through a year without sickness or congenial health problems.
2. Fortunately, my generation and especially younger people are embarking on a path to improve their health with proper eating, exercise and being alert to potential health problems.
3. Playing badminton improves your quickness and increases the hand-eye coordination.

4. In my long career I had many job changes and was permitted to introduce a number of promotional events and new banking ideas.

5. I met a number of wonderful people, some are still my friends, and learned much about a number of different areas of the World.

6. The nighttime sky is a marvel of thousands of twinkling lights moving across the blackened Colorado sky.

7. Some reading this will think of a dozen other ways in which beauty is portrayed and I agree, but I have listed a few and hope the reader will be encouraged to enlarge their scope and variety of beauty.

III. Give the Russian equivalents for the following expressions:

to raise money – заработать деньги;

appreciation of beauty – оценка красоты;

emergent smile – неожиданно возникшая улыбка;

to miss out on flora and fauna – не обращать внимание на флору и фауну;

eagerness to participate in something different – стремление участвовать в чем-то другом;

snowcapped mountains – заснеженные горы.

IV. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

выдающийся успех – outstanding success, источник наслаждения – source of enjoyment, чувство красоты – sense of beauty, наследственность – heredity, расширять кругозор – to enlarge one's scope.

V. Give synonyms:

dissipation – scattering, ruin;

salient – notable, outstanding;

to introduce – to present;

to enrich – to improve;

to assume – to accept;

to portray – to depict, to draw;

to marvel – to admire.

VI. Give antonyms:

to embark – end, finish;

stately – insignificant, ordinary, unimportant;

avid – generous;

steadfast – unstable, weak, changeable;

incongruous – suitable, harmonious, compatible.

VII. Give the derivatives:

diversity – diverse, diversify;

cheer – cheerful, cheerfully, cheerfulness, cheered;

courage – discourage, encourage, encourager, courageous, courageously;

observe – observer, observation, observant, observational, observatory, observably, observance;

assistance – assist, assistant;

various – vary, varied, variable, variety;

influence – to influence, influenced, influencer, influential;

control – controlled, controlling, controller, controllable, controllability;

regular – irregular, regulation, regulative, to regulate, regulator, regularly.

Learning Activities 5

I. Answer the following questions:

1. Sometimes we need to keep silent to encourage others, to let them voice their views.

2. The connotation of the response “No problem” is “I am doing this because it doesn’t require great effort on my part”, the connotation of the response “You are welcome” is “I am pleased to help, appreciate or provide a little or large courtesy to you.”

3. When Mr. Strunk was young the influence, stimulation and education came from books, lectures from travelers, explorers. They also had radio.

4. Many people nowadays can't carry on a conversation with a foreigner as successfully as before because our reasoning skills are not developed and information is not stored internally.

5. It's difficult to be fair-minded because we accumulate viewpoints and prejudices either from past influences or current activities and friends, we absorb attitudes regarding race, riches, poverty, class of people, etc.

II. True / False:

1. You must never "bite your tongue" – **False**. There are times we need to "bite our tongue" and sometimes silence is golden.

2. All grandchildren of Mr. Strunk say "thank you" for the little courtesies. – **True**.

3) In the 1930s photography was already of a very good quality. – **False**. Photography was not able to project magnified pictures on a screen.

4) Reading skills are much lower today than previously. – **True**.

5) Mr. Strunk's parents were prosperous. – **False**. His parents came from a meager financial but morally strong background.

III. Complete the following sentences:

1. There are times when the direction of the discussion must be challenged because of the direction the discussion has taken.

2. People learnt about far-off lands by means of radio and books.

3. TV and movies provide a dramatic presentation of the situation of events unfolding in the story.

4. Growing old provides real freedom to engage in different and new activities that can be invigorating and educational.

5. Over the years some politicians had tried to establish a third party but after obtaining a small number of votes have been absorbed into the established parties.

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions:

convection – перенос;

to debilitate – ослаблять;

to be dropped to – отпадать;

to maintain (herein) – утверждать;

to store – хранить

fair-minded – беспристрастный;

mundane – мирской;

to trump – превосходить;

upheaval – переворот.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

озвучить своё мнение – to express an opinion; требовать больших усилий – require great effort; с моей стороны – on my part; придержать дверь для кого-то – to hold a door for someone; подбросить (до дома) – give a ride; источник знаний – a source of knowledge; увеличенная картинка – a magnified picture; словесное описание – a word description; действие разворачивается – the event is unfolding; воодушевляющий – invigorating.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

to grow or cause to grow and become more mature, advanced, or elaborate – to develop;

to decrease in vigour or extent; become weaker – to wane;

to long to possess something – to covet.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to hold back – not to do something, often because of fear or because you do not want to make a bad situation worse;

to bite one's tongue – to stop yourself from saying something that you would really like to say;

to straighten smb out – to improve in conduct or character;

to rise from the horizon – to appear on the horizon.

VIII. Give synonyms:

discussion – deliberation;

to smother – stifle;

to oppose – resist, antagonize;

impetus – stimulus, incentive;

scanty – scarce, poor, meager.

IX. Give antonyms:

voluntary – forced, obligatory;

disadvantageous – beneficial;

to have no influence over smth – to influence, to have an impact on smth;

external – internal;

biased – fair-minded, impartial.

X. Give the derivatives:

to mean – meaning, meaningful, meaningless;

to tempt – temptation, tempted, tempting, temptable;

benefit – to benefit, beneficial, unbeneficial, beneficiary;

a fold – to fold, folded, folder.

Learning Activities 6

I. Answer the following questions:

1. Ethnic diversity in the USA is strongly connected with the history of the country: original settlers coming to shores were primarily from England, other small groups originated from France, Spain, and Holland. As the country grew, opportunity was abundant, immigrants from many countries flocked to America.

2. Mr. Strunk's parents used their native tongue when they didn't want their children to know about something, such as, Christmas presents.

3. Mexicans are not forced to learn English rapidly and thus integrate with others because they have Spanish speaking TV and radio stations, etc.

4. The most important advantage is that young people may travel throughout the country, go long distances to attend colleges and universities, visit friends in cities away from their home so it gives independence to the young and opportunity to explore nature, develop new interests away from their home location.

5. Since readers and listeners are influenced by newspapers, radio and TV, the politicians use these media to publicize their position on various issues. Hence, a news conference, or position statements, or one-on-one interviews to announce or argue a position or rebut an argument – these are normal actions. Mass media is a tool to achieve the goals.

II. True / False:

1. The United States has always been a country of immigrants. – **True**.

2. As soon as people moved to the USA they forgot the traditions of their own culture. – **False**. These people came from many European countries. They brought with them their language, customs, religion, talents, and beliefs.

3. There are no illegal immigrants in the USA. – **False**. Many people have come into the country illegally, some by swimming the Rio Grande River, which is the border between Mexico and the United States.

4. In general auto and air transportation is expensive – **False**. In general auto and air transportation is readily available and cheap.

5. People are not influenced by mass media – **False**. Readers and listeners are influenced by newspapers, radio and TV, and the politicians use these media to publicize their position on various issues.

III. Complete the following sentences:

1. In the last thirty years there has been a large influx of men and women coming from Mexico, the country south of the United States.

2. One group that has not been permitted to become part of the melting pot is the negro population.

3. The excess of money can lead to excessive freedom and lessened influence of the parents when the young people may need direction and discipline from their parents.

4. The politicians use mass media to publicize their position on various issues due to a powerful influence of mass media on people's minds in the United States.

5. The mass media holds a powerful position in the United States because people are and want to be informed, listen or read extensively and because of this widespread reception, politicians are very attuned to the market as represented by the media.

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions:

to flock – стекаться;

melting pot – плавильный котел;

to be decremented against – быть приниженным;

to subscribe – подписываться;

to rebut – опровергать;

one-on-one interview – интервью один-на-один;

to be attuned to – быть настроенным на;

to run for office – баллотироваться на должность;

prevalent – преобладающий.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

поселенцы – settlers; обычай – custom; приспособливаться к – to adjust to; этническое разнообразие – ethnic diversity; развиваться – evolve; спутник жизни – a life mate; финансовые возможности – financial resources; рекламировать – publicize; сдерживать – restrain; погрешность – err.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

relating to a city or town, especially its administration; municipal – civic;

making a certain situation or outcome likely or possible – conducive;

a person who applies for a job or is nominated for election – candidate;

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to take a position on – to agree with a point of view;

to sway the opinion of – to change the opinion;

to hinder someone from – to prevent someone from doing something;

to be on the air – to be broadcast.

VIII. Give synonyms:

to withdraw – remove; recede;

to merge – integrate;

to be isolated – to be segregated;

obstacle – barrier, hindrance;

partiality – bias.

IX. Give antonyms:

to increase – decline, decrease;

impartiality – bias;

attached – detached;

immobilized – mobilized, flexible;

unfavorable – fortunate, auspicious, advantageous.

X. Give the derivatives:

to reside – resident, residence;

evolution – evolve, evolutionary, evolutional;

mobile – to mobilize, immobile, mobilized, mobilization;

bias – biased, unbiased.

Learning Activities 7

I. Answer the following questions:

1. There are many reasons for emigration such as the opportunity for economic advancement, freedom and a dream for a new and bright future.

2. During the building of the transcontinental railroad in the 1860s workers were required to cut through mountains in dangerous terrain in California, so Chinese men were imported to accomplish this task and when they completed, they chose to remain.

3. Yes, it has. America has always been open to hardworking people who are willing to compete and may create new ideas.

4. The established immigrants resent and look down on more recent arrivals. Instead of assisting new comers, they place roadblocks in their way.

5. The US admits several million immigrants legally each year.

II. True / False:

1. America is a nation of immigrants. – **True**.

2. The overriding reason for immigrants has been the opportunity for economic advancement, freedom and a dream for a new and bright future. – **True**.

3. Women were brought into the country to perform necessary tasks. – **False**. Men were brought into the country to perform necessary tasks.

4. Imported workers decided to return to their country. – **False**. When imported workers completed their task, they chose to remain.

5. People enter the United States from many countries and generally are welcomed. – **True**.

III. Complete the following sentences:

1. The incentive to emigrate will vary from time to time and is often driven by unsatisfactory conditions in the native country.

2. During the building of the transcontinental railroad in 1860's workers were required to cut through mountains in dangerous terrain in California, so Chinese men were imported to accomplish this task.

3. Although we are all immigrants, sometimes the established immigrants resent and look down on more recent arrivals.

4. Several millions in addition are admitted on student visas and more are given work permits authorize the entry for a short period of six months or even several years.

5. To these one must add the influence of communication from TV and now “social” communication, level of education, different ideas from younger generations and the recognition that drawing closer to other societies through travel, business, education and interfacing affects people’s thinking.

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following words and expressions:

an overriding reason – первостепенная причина;

an ancestor – предок;

a source of talented immigrants – источник талантливых иммигрантов;

to lend tacit support – оказывать молчаливую поддержку;

citizenship test – тест на гражданство;

economic upheavals – экономические потрясения;

famine – голод.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following expressions:

картофельный голод – potato famine; попытка сместить правительство – upheaval attempt; бессмысленная война – senseless war; маршрут был чреват опасностями – the route was fraught with hazards; политические гонения – political persecution; дешевая рабочая сила – low wage workers; в соответствии с законодательством – in accordance with legislation, by legislation.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

a very big change that often causes problems – upheaval;

a situation in which a large number of people have little or no food for a long time and many people die – famine;

a large group of families that often share the same name – clan.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to cut through mountains – to make a detour across;

an immigrant – a person who legally moves to another country;

low wage workers – people who earn little money.

VIII. Give synonyms:

pogrom – massacre;

an overriding reason – primary, dominating;

persecution – prosecution;

to make it easy for smb – to simplify.

IX. Give antonyms:

ancestor – descendant;

to bring into the country – take out of the country;

imported – exported.

X. Give the derivatives:

communication – communicate, communicative;

to operate – operation, cooperate, operative, operator;

recognition – recognize, recognized, recognizable;

to invent – invention, inventor.

Learning Activities 8

I. Answer the following questions:

1. It was interesting for the author to see the changes over the 20-year period.

2. With oil money Russia seemed to be enjoying new attitudes, hopes. Life was dramatically different. People seemed to have money, the newly opened malls were busy, stores were well stocked and food was plentiful.

3. He visited his good Russian friend and English professor – Vladimir K.

4. Yes, it was. It was interesting to communicate with Russian students because they seemed to be alert and intelligent.

5. Yes, he did. He felt it had been a real privilege to be a witness of the changes and to admire and enjoy Russia and its wonderful people.

II. True / False:

1. The author came to Russia for the first time – **False**. It was not the author's first visit to Russia.

2. Nobody came to listen to his lectures. – **False**. He had expected only ten students to be present but over sixty showed up.

3. The Russian students are interested in the United States. – **True**.

4. The author thinks that there is no alcohol problem in Russia. – **False**. The author thought alcohol was a huge problem in Russia.

5. It was a real privilege for the author be a witness to some of the changes and to admire and enjoy Russia and its wonderful people. – **True**.

III. Complete the following sentences:

1. Ten years ago Russians had severe inflation, no jobs, food was available but was very expensive and the citizens were very discouraged with life and especially with the introduction of capitalism.

2. While visiting five years ago, the city began to extend the subway line across the Oka River with an accompanying automobile bridge.

3. My friend, Vladimir, lives in a five floor apartment building located in a fine neighborhood a block away from the wonderful views and sights of the Oka and Volga River.

4. The students asked about democracy in America and what I thought about democracy in Russia.

5. Few sporting events, theaters, concerts, etc. are there for people to attend, thus the socializing takes place around the dinner table and drinking is pervasive.

IV. Give the Russian equivalents for the following expressions:

to walk along a blacktop path – ходить по асфальтобетонной дороге;

to spend money on beautification projects – тратить деньги на проекты по благоустройству;

weather-beaten and unpainted one-story houses – потрепанные и неокрашенные одноэтажные дома;

to be based on smb's brief intelligent reaction – основываться на кратком, разумном ответе;

a barrage of inquires – шквал запросов;

exponentially increase – показательно увеличивается.

V. Give the English equivalents for the following words and expressions:

смертная казнь – death penalty; двойная раскладка (клавиатуры) – dual language keyboard; православная церковь – Orthodox church; высокая инфляция – high inflation; инвестиции – investments; девальвация – devaluation; пожарная тревога – fire alarm; враждебные отношения – antagonistic relations.

VI. Find the right word in the English text for the following definitions:

an economic and political system in which businesses belong mostly to private owners, not to the government – capitalism;

a small but interesting piece of information, news – titbit;

a lot of criticism, questions, complaints etc. that are said at the same time, or very quickly one after another – a barrage of inquiries.

VII. Interpret the following phrases:

to be discouraged with smth – to lose hope;

to remodel – to reconstruct;

a precarious experience – doubtful, risky practice;

a great thrill – enormous excitement.

VIII. Give synonyms:

destruction – damage, ruin;

advertisement – announcement, commercial;

a barrage of inquires – a lot of requests;

rampant – uncontrolled, galloping.

IX. Give antonyms:

a poor answer – an excellent answer;

fair – unjust;

poverty – richness;

to be pleased with – to dislike;

qualified – incompetent.

X. Give the derivatives:

to attend – attendance, attender;

to describe – description, described, describing;

to entertain – entertainment, entertainer, entertaining;

to paint – painted, painting, painter.

Supplement: Musings on Russia and USA

Russia Trip 1991

When writing about Russia one hardly knows where to begin. There are so many contradictory trends and the country is so diverse, that I came away less certain of my opinions the more I saw and observed. Russia has many resources including a well educated people but they have so far to go to catch up with the industrialized World and I wonder if they will work hard enough to enable them to manufacture the products necessary to trade with the World. They have placed so much emphasis in their military that other phases of the economy are 30 to 50 years behind.

I was invited to lecture in Gorky, now renamed Nizhny Novgorod, and Vladimir on banking and small business. The trip was sponsored by a group associated with the foreign language schools in both cities and organized by Donn Ziebell in the United States. He is a consultant working in Eastern Europe and Russia. Several of my friends have participated in this program so I volunteered.

The opportunity to visit and talk with Russians in their offices, homes, and restaurants was a lure that more than offset the preparation time for the lectures and the time required to deliver them. In Nizhny Novgorod I spoke for four hours in the afternoon and in Vladimir five hours each day for three days. I was privileged to visit with businessmen, school children, government officials, university students, and others. What I hoped would occur was abundantly exceeded!

I arrived in Moscow in the dark and in the winter it is always dark (daylight is from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.). I was struck with the dim lights and somber appearance of everything including the people. My hosts meeting me first removed all baggage tags because they mark a foreigner. Theft is a big

problem and I was pleased I didn't have to walk the streets of Moscow or Nizhny Novgorod alone. Four years ago when I visited Moscow and St. Petersburg, theft was not a problem and I felt perfectly safe walking by myself.

The trip to NN by overnight train was uneventful and I enjoyed the tea they served in the evening and morning. My two companions from NN and I occupied a four bed compartment with one berth used for luggage.

The Russia Hotel, the finest in NN, was my home for the next week and it was satisfactory. The water was hot and the bedding was clean. 1910 plumbing fixtures in the bathroom represented a real culture shock, but this is Russia! I found most of Russia dirty. The shortage of cleaning equipment, rags, soaps, paper, etc. probably creates this situation. The cleaning people in the buildings have a bucket of dirty water, a dirty rag and just wipe up the snow tracks. A one year old building housing an engineering firm looked 10 years old. The people and their flats were clean but building, streets, buses, etc., all looked unclean.

Before we boarded the train in Moscow, we saw a play "The Last Days of the Czar". A story of how the Bolsheviks killed the Czar and his family. It was excellent, the acting superb, well staged, and partially a political play that could not have been presented three years ago since it is critical of the Bolsheviks.

The lectures the first week were in a building formerly owned by the Communist Party to train young communists and now being used for management training and foreign trade development. Thirty-five people attended the seminar. Since most of the audience were bankers we discussed banking in the U.S. and Russia most of the time. The lectures were from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The audience was very attentive, asked many questions about banking, all phases of American life, and particularly about taxes. I faced a large picture of Lenin all during my talks. If he had heard some of the things I said, I would have been shot!

Banks in the USSR are mainly for businesses and individuals use them for savings only. This is a cash society and they have no checking accounts.

Businesses wishing to pay a supplier take the invoice to the bank and obtain a bank check (we call it a Cashiers' Check). No loans are made to individuals, no credit cards, no money machines, no computers. Except for the State Bank of Russia, the banks are newly organized. The bankers are new and the customers are inexperienced businessmen. This is a situation made for disaster. Banks now have some hard currency (dollars or marks). I visited four banks and one showed me their U.S. currency. It was under triple lock and the stack of bills was only one half inch thick although it did contain some \$100 bills. They test each bill for genuineness with a little machine that I never knew existed.

In addition to the lectures in NN and Vladimir, I talked with a number of groups including business, the city administration of a suburb of NN, two stock exchange groups (more about them later), the top regional government administrator around NN and Vladimir, two churches, a group of high school students, met with university students, and visited four banks. It was an enlightening experience to have exposure to so many varied groups.

The new market economy development is filled with young people 25 to 40 years old. Whether business people or city officials, they seem to be trying to make changes, but their inexperience is so great. For example, the official responsible for industrial development and foreign investment in Vladimir (he had been on the job two months) showed me a letter from a well-known foreign construction company agreeing to build a Holiday Inn type hotel in Vladimir. It was subject to four or five guarantees and "when *if*". He had no idea what this entailed or the implications. It was also subject to the Russian Import and Export Bank guarantee. That bank has just announced they will be unable to make principal payments on their debt.

One group hoped to attract American tourists, so I was driven 15 miles to a "resort" they were constructing. By Russian standards, it would have been able to attract some business, but they don't understand the quality and quantity of American resorts, even roughing-it ones, and the intense competition existing

for the tourist dollar. Except for Dr. K., no one had been to the USA and only a few to East Germany and that was with the Soviet Army.

Life in the Russian apartment is very close. I was invited to four flats as a guest. The Russians are very generous and warm in their hospitality. The flats are very small and every inch is used effectively and efficiently. The living rooms are multi-purpose and used for living, eating, and sleeping. For example, Dr. K's flat has a bedroom for their 17 year old daughter, a small kitchen, and a room used for living, eating and sleeping by Dr. K. and his wife. At night the sofa became a bed. In other flats, the in-laws are also living in the apartments. It's all based on the number of people and square meters of space. I don't know the exact rate. The toilet is in a small closet and the wash basin and tub in another. Russians are fond of hanging Oriental type rugs on the walls. I think the reason is to deaden sound and provide decoration. When asked about it, they said everyone has them. They make extensive use of large display and storage units that we would call "breakfronts". Every flat and office contains these units.

Since Dr. K. has a daughter living at home, I asked him how she entertained boyfriends in that atmosphere. He said Russian young people are not expected to entertain at home. They go to plays, movies, or take walks. With no cars and long, cold winter nights it may be difficult, but romance will find a way. Of course, the summers are delightfully long.

A few comments regarding the food situation. There are lines at the stores for almost all kinds of food items. Milk, bread, meat and a few other items are rationed, but not generally available. I observed some lines for these items but at other times people seemed to be able to obtain bread and milk without standing in excessively long lines.

Russia Trip 1993

I found people had adequate food. Moscow is having problems, but through keeping local food supplies local, summertime gardens, and just plain stocking up they agree they will survive the winter. However, prices are shockingly high when compared to their income. Sausage, a staple, sells for 50 rubles per kilo (2.2 lbs.) or 22 rubles per pound in the free market. The monthly pay averages 300 rubles. The stores are not only out of food products, but clothing and other items as well. There are long lines for boots, when available. However, the longest lines I saw were for cigarettes and vodka. With inflation exceptionally high, everyone buys everything they can. One saying goes, "A ruble saved is a ruble lost".

Most of my meals were in the hotel and I enjoyed the food in both the hotel and homes. The suppers I enjoyed in the homes were enjoyable and the food was plentiful and well-prepared. I was a guest and felt a little embarrassed that they would use their precious food.

A little about the menus and what Russians eat. Breakfast is very European. Small quantities of sausage and cheese along with the great Russian dark bread was served at every meal. The dark bread is a closely grained whole wheat type. Other items such as a hard boiled egg, pancake type cake, etc. may also be served. Noontime is their big meal and it begins with an appetizer or salad consisting of small pieces of sausage or other meat, and a vegetable such as beets or cabbage. We had soup with every meal and it was tasty, good, and great. I told everyone the reason I returned to Russia was to enjoy their soups! The main course contained a meat or a croquet filled with milk curds (like cottage cheese) and meat, cooked cabbage and potatoes. Small, uncooked cranberries were used as garnish, like we use parsley, at every meal. Only they ate the berries which were good but very sour. Dessert was ice-cream (like our ice milk) or cookies and cheese. Sugar is very short so cookies were prepared without sugar and only once was I served cake.

Supper consisted of a salad course again and then cooked cabbage, potatoes, and a little meat. Cabbage and potatoes are plentiful in the area so they were served at every meal.

The industrial city of Gorky is now called by its old but new name Nizhny Novgorod. Gorky was an author and writer espousing the Communist doctrine, so the name of the city was changed as was Leningrad, Stalingrad, etc. It is located 200 miles East of Moscow on the Volga River, and was a closed city to foreigners until 1989 (I was the first American banker to visit it) because they have four factories each employing 100,000 people producing cars, trucks (formerly tanks), airplanes (military fighters), and nuclear submarines. The population is two million and is heavily industrialized with a good base of skilled workers. The city has eleven colleges and universities, an engineering college with 10,000 students and many cultural events including a ballet, opera, symphony orchestra, and a children's puppet theatre. Apparently government and individual support for these activities continue in spite of economic difficulties. We saw an excellent ballet presentation of Romeo and Juliet. With very few cars, transportation is by buses and trolley cars. People get on and off without paying any fares. When asked about not collecting fares, they say they purchase monthly passes. I bet! I had heard previously that people don't pay the 15 kopeks fare. But in a Socialistic state, who cares.

We were discussing living without a car and one man said he takes Bus № 11. When asked what that meant, he said your two legs form the number 11. He walks. In the United States, we have similar expressions.

Vladimir, a city of 350,000 was the second place I visited and lectured. They manufacture small tractors, chemicals, cloths, and have a large underground missile plant. Vladimir was founded in 1109 and has a rich historical heritage. It is part of the so called Golden Circle of historical sites and a number of tourists pass through. In fact, in my last visit we stopped for lunch in Vladimir on our way to Suzdal.

Religion is beginning to come alive in Russia. The Communists have written freedom of religion in their Constitution, but made it as difficult as possible. In Nizhny Novgorod they allowed one Roman Catholic, one Mosque, one Synagogue, one Baptist (protestant) church, and one Russian Orthodox church. All the other Orthodox churches were closed and they permitted a church one half mile outside the city to remain open. There was no bus transportation so the only way to approach it was to walk. Then they watched and discriminated against all who attended. Now it is changed and churches are reopening as they are being repaired. People are eager to accept Bibles and seemingly want to learn about Jesus

The Attitude of the Russian people toward their government reflects the opinion of most people toward their governments. Solve my problem! They are most concerned about the lack of items to purchase and inflation. There is little food, but apparently people won't starve – at least the ones I talked with didn't think they would. They have faced this kind of problem before and survived. They are most upset about inflation. Prices have risen excessively the last year and are expected to go higher. For a country where everything, including prices, has been so controlled, this is devastating. Building material costs are up ten times. Autos cost from 15,000 rubles to 300,000 rubles. There are very few non-food items also. No suits, very few boots, little selection of women's and children's clothing. When I inquired as to why this occurred and yet they seemed to have clothing, they stated everything was bartered. One man worked at an automobile factory and he and his two friends wore exactly the same suits. Apparently there was a trade of automobiles for so many suits and the worker took care of his friends.

Several comments regarding the government. "This group (the Democrats – Yelstin) is no better than the other bunch." "I think we will have a military government in two months." The saying goes, "A ruble saved is a ruble lost".

In my opinion, these people have suffered so much and will continue to suffer and find a way to live. After 70 years of Communism they have learned to work within the system. This is a society of “who you know”. My host, Dr. K. is able to accomplish much because he has contacts in a great number of places – government, universities, business, etc. For example, we were able to get tickets to a sold-out puppet theater because a friend of his knows the director. He had a contact to get me an interview with the Governor of the Gorky district.

They are delighted to see the Communist Party be outlawed – but aren’t so sure they won’t make a comeback. Their buildings are now being used for other purposes. I lectured in former Communist Party buildings and Lenin’s picture is still on the walls of the offices and auditorium where I spoke. They are concerned most of the Communists may be underground, but not too much is said – this is still Russia!

The KGB is out of business. However, the buildings are still there, people are working and the records are intact, so they remain concerned. Gorky, formerly a closed city to foreigners, was where Sakharov and other dissidents were kept under 24 hour guard. The KGB has two big five-story high buildings. In Vladimir, the KGB took over a convent and has three large three-story buildings in a city of 350,000. The prison in this city was where Powers, the U.S. U-2 pilot was kept, and Solzhenitsyn was kept for a while before being sent to Siberia. Also, there is an underground missile factory outside of town. They are concerned about the re-emergence of the KGB also.

The construction and maintenance of buildings is terrible. This was probably the largest contrast between Russia and the USA. Repainted windows had paint drops on the windows and painting’s of walls and ceilings were very messy. Buildings only two years old required repairs. I saw tiles coming loose on step landings, bathrooms, concrete needing to be patched in one or two year old buildings. Construction of many apartments and buildings consist of concrete slabs for floors, walls, and ceilings. People were surprised that we used

bricks, steel, etc. Plumbing leaks and other household problems are common. Every apartment occupant must become a fix-it man. The joke about delivery in 10 years seemed more real in Russia. Only apartments are being built and no houses have been built for 50 years. This size of the city seemed to determine the height of the apartment building: Moscow – 20 floors; NN – 10 floors; and Vladimir – 5-8 floors. Note: outside the hotel in London where I stayed overnight prior to coming home, an addition was being built and it was a pleasure to observe the bricks were straight and square!

There are so many items we take for granted that are not available in Russia. I'll list a few: no coffee, no scotch tape, no paper to buy, no telephone directories (if you don't know the number, there is no way to obtain it), no glue, no ties, no chewing gum, no toilet paper (at least the way we know it), mail takes two weeks between cities, etc.

The government has problems shifting to a market economy for a number of reasons but largely related to past practices. The Communists believed in big factories and centralized control from Moscow. In NN an automobile factory employs 125,000 people and three other factories employ 100,000 each. They make all parts for the cars and don't use outside suppliers for parts. Another factory makes all the automobile windshields for the entire Soviet Union!

Russia Trip 1997

Manufacturing operations have been shifted to so-called private companies where the managers are responsible for making a profit and can run the company as they see fit, or so they say. However, the stock is owned by the government. In one factory I visited, a shipyard making floating cranes, the manager is looking for new products they can bring to market. He seemed competent, aggressive, etc. I think he will be successful. Obtaining supplies is difficult, so the managers spend much of their time securing barter deals. This takes away from managing, expanding product lines, and developing new

markets. Also in autos, trucks, and most plants they can sell everything they make, so the incentive for efficiency doesn't exist as yet.

There are very few small manufacturers employing 15 to 20 people. The supplier network so familiar in the U.S. doesn't exist-so equipment, factory space, and personnel isn't available for a small manufacturer to begin operations. If a man wanted to manufacture knives, saws, etc., he couldn't find a place to start his business and he or no one else has the money to build a small building.

I was surprised there wasn't more "cottage" industry, where workers take supplies home and return the completed items to the owner. These are usually handicraft items which could be sold. Supplies may be so undependable that it isn't practical or it may be just the Russian mind set. Entrepreneurism hasn't been their way of life for generations so there are not large numbers of people wanting to work to earn additional money.

There is a group of businessmen engaged in trade and bartering. The Russian word means "go between". They arrange barter deals, etc. As you might expect there are many "fast buck" people among them. In NN, there are two "stock exchanges". They don't trade stocks of corporations, but sell and trade all kinds of items. Manufactured goods, clothing, grains, etc. In the USA that person would be trading at the CME or Board of Trade.

As I observed four years ago, the Russian people are not a cheerful people. On the streets, in the stores, when trying to find your way, being served in restaurants they are cold and uncaring. They could not work in our stores and McDonald's in Moscow must have conducted an extensive training program. Apparently this is the result of 70 years of state ownership.

However, when you are invited into homes or know the people, they are friendly, warm and hospitable. They love to give gifts and everywhere I went I received and was expected to give a gift. I was somewhat prepared, but was not able to respond to the degree I would have liked. Fortunately, I had taken with

me a number of small items that were in short supply, so these were gratefully received.

Although it is wrong to draw behavioral conclusions in such a short visit, but I did learn a few characteristics that I'm sure have plagued our diplomats. Americans are very direct and will state their desires and wishes, Russians seem to ask for one thing and add another and then another. I encountered several examples where this was the case. At times I received different answers to the same question. This may have been a problem of translation or simply wanting to please.

I came home with the hope that the problems will be resolved in a peaceful manner, and I pray to that end. The Russian people have suffered so much in their 1500 year history. They lived under a feudal system for six hundred years, then under the Romanovs for 300 years. The wealth was concentrated in the hands of the aristocracy and the Czars were either despots or like Peter spent millions trying to emulate Western Europe. Then came the Communists. At no time have they enjoyed the fruits and benefits of freedom. Now they have freedom, at least partially so, and I hope they have the will to keep it.

Americanism Is Moving in

Americanism is fast making its mark on Russia. I don't believe this is by design, but the very force of United States ideas, economic system, advertising, and communication make it inevitable. Even three years ago, Pepsi still had their monopoly, the two television stations showed few movies and they were largely from India. Mars candy bars created a sensation when they started advertising on Moscow and local stations. Now three years later, there are seven TV stations in Nizhny Novgorod showing a terrible and degrading violence-filled movies, Gillette is advertising on the buses, Coca-Cola has successfully challenged Pepsi's dominance, McDonald's is opening three restaurants, and New York Pizza is being advertised and described as "you'll love N.Y. Pizza".

One disturbing billboard announced “Smoking our cigarettes is meeting with America”. As the United States is fast moving as a largely non-smoking society, it is strange to see an advertisement tying America and cigarettes.

To add an exclamation point about this change, I attended a theater offering a stage production of “Hello Dolly”. The Russian audience seemed to understand the setting in New York City in the 1910’s and enjoyed the dialogue in the Russian language. The lead was no Carol Channing, but the performance was excellent, the dancing superb, and the cast enjoyed being part of a modern musical. In my past visits to Russia – Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod, the plays, opera, and of course, ballet, were all of Russian origin.

Into a Market Economy

The young Russians, forty and under, are leading and profiting from the change. They sense the opportunity and are willing to work hard to make it happen for them. A young auto mechanic is setting up a repair garage, a well-groomed man with contacts in the local and regional government has set up an organization to facilitate American businesses getting started in Nizhny Novgorod. Young women are becoming skilled in English to enhance their position and employability. Of course, hundreds are engaged in importing merchandise from China, Indonesia, and other countries and selling the goods at a substantial profit. Some of these operations are becoming quite large and young men are still going to China and bringing back all they can carry.

Most of the people are just eking out a living. Factory workers are working but not being paid. This development has three different scenarios. With factories now privatized, managers, seeking to develop new sources of income, are using the money coming from the sale of their manufactured products to develop new businesses. This assumes there is no fraud – a big assumption! Thus workers are not being paid for their efforts. This process can only go on for so long.

In a second case, the workers are being paid in products of the factory. In furniture factory, workers may receive three chairs and then the worker is expected to sell the chairs and keep the money. In Nizhny Novgorod a factory produces women's bras. On the street corners, one sees women selling large quantity of bras. A strange way to do business. The third is a promise to pay in the future. Since employees have no other place to go, many accept this alternative. People employed in schools, libraries, museums, are not paid adequate money to live on and are forced to find other means of income, such as, selling items on the street, products from one's own home and finding additional income where they work. In libraries and museums, the vastly underpaid employees sell candy, post cards, small handicraft items. Where there are duplicate items, such as books, pictures, these are also sold and the employees will keep the proceeds.

How do people survive in this atmosphere? By buying little they live and eat on a merger basis. Farmers are now bringing their produce to the city and market areas have been established where people can purchase potatoes, vegetables, fruit (in season) at reduced prices. This functions much like the Saturday farmers' markets in the United States. Transportation costs are minimal because only the rich have cars, and bus transportation is frequent and economical. There really is no entertainment, such as movies, sporting events, etc. Opera, ballet and orchestras are subsidized and excellent, but these performances benefit very few. Thus, people stay at home, eat much potatoes, borscht, lefty vegetables, and enjoy a frequent bottle of vodka which is still very cheap.

Remember, Russia began this process with no real private property, bankruptcy laws, no taxation, or any idea of how to function in a society where money is paramount. Being sufficiently aggressive to make a living is required. All these things were provided, not adequately, but a very complacent populace endured the hardships.

Now seven years later, people own their flats (given to them), new laws are gradually being enacted, and people are forced to find new and additional sources of income, usually other than the normal pay channels. Taxes are assessed and although Russians, just as Americans seek ways to avoid paying taxes. A new system is gradually emerging.

Talking with the tax collectors, one senses their frustration, but they also recognize the system is only five years old and slowly a new tax system will emerge. Previously, the central government owned all manufacturing, trade, and institutions and prices were established in Moscow. The government received its income from the difference between the cost of manufacturing and the sales price and to the general populace this was a painless process. Of course, the “profits” went to Moscow and not into new equipment and modern techniques. The government supported itself, but the economic machine fell far behind the manufacturing efficiency of the Western World.

Privatization of business, largely completed, is making itself felt in many ways. The telephone company is now charging based on usage as in the United States. Previously, a telephone was installed, if you had the right connections, at no charge and no usage assessment.

Russian railroads are now charging a market rate for passenger service. In the past, the subsidized cost of travel from Nizhny Novgorod to Moscow was less than five dollars. Now the cost is over sixty dollars.

Housing changes are equally as interesting. Everyone was supplied a flat. There are no single family houses in Nizhny Novgorod or Moscow. All were given the privilege of taking over ownership of their present flat and begin paying a nominal amount for utilities and other services. If a person chooses to sell his flat, he may keep the proceeds, but obviously must find a new place to live. Market forces are evident because flats in the desirable, well-located section of Nizhny Novgorod are priced much higher than those in outlying and less desirable districts.

With foreign businesses and other representatives coming into the area and being able to pay for larger, desirably located flats, the Russian can sell his flat for an attractive price, and move to cheaper housing in another part of town. He keeps the difference, usually in U.S. Dollar \$100 bills!

Banking System and Use of Cash

Cash is used exclusively to make payments! There are no, maybe a few, checking accounts in Russia. This is difficult for Americans to understand and believe since the use of checking, or demand deposit, accounts have permeated every part of our life. I suspect credit cards will be used more extensively than checking accounts. Why is this?

First, one has to understand the past history and present circumstances of the Russian people. In the past the value of the ruble was fairly steady with the exchange rates being controlled by the central government in Moscow. In my first visit to Russia in 1989, the exchange rate was eight rubles to the dollar. The small, illegal black market rate was somewhat higher. Russians were unable to exchange rubles for dollars.

All transactions were cash and people kept excess money in the State Bank of Russia, the only bank permitted. For large transactions, people went to the bank and bought a bank check, like our cashier's check.

With the coming of reform, severe inflation reared its head, so now the ruble exchange rate is 5600 rubles to the dollar. This means that anyone having savings in rubles, lost all of its value. Also, the government permitted banks to be organized without sufficient capital, oversight, or trained managers. Thirty locally organized banks are operating in Nizhny Novgorod plus an additional twenty-four branches of Moscow banks. Six of these banks went bankrupt in 1996. There is no deposit insurance, so depositors lost most or all of their funds. Therefore, people don't trust the banks. With the ruble now convertible into dollars, people now hold their excess cash, if any, in U.S. Dollar \$100 bills.

Since my initial visit to Russia's third largest city was to lecture on banking and small business, I have enjoyed a continuing relationship with several of the local bankers. In one bank I have maintained a deposit in U.S. dollars for several years. Some of the bankers were products of the old system and brought to their new banks experience and a natural bent toward conservatism. However, many entered the banking industry with an erroneous idea of benefiting their friends and making themselves rich. These banks often are the ones in financial difficulty.

One reads of newspaper reports about bankers being ambushed and held for ransom. These reports originate largely in Moscow and don't seem to be as prevalent in Nizhny Novgorod. However, the local bankers take no chances. A customer entering a bank, usually after being identified and admitted, will see several guards with pistols and one will carry a sub-machine gun.

Employees are paid in rubles and must go to the headquarters or paymaster to obtain their pay in cash. Pensioners and retirees also receive their payments in cash. In the United States, social security and pension recipients receive their funds by check or direct deposit into their checking account. In Russia, a representative goes to the home of the pensioner and gives the recipient cash, rubles. This delivery is made twice each month. The system seems vulnerable to fraud and extortion. I asked one recipient what happens if she is away or sick when the woman comes with the payment. She replied she would return at another time. Also, to insure a good relationship, she tips the delivery woman each time she comes.

There seems to be no movement to establish checking accounts, but credit cards are entering the scene. A credit card, usually of a Russia financial group, can be used for restaurant and clothing purchases. These programs originate in Moscow, so the local bankers are not too familiar with the credit requirements or usage restrictions. For various reasons I wanted to open an account in dollars in Nizhny Novgorod. I had known Egor Koloshin, Chairman of the Board and

Director of the Promstroybank and in this trip I had a long visit with him followed by the usual lunch and refreshments. His bank is the largest in Nizhny Novgorod and the 41st largest bank in Russia, so naturally I selected his bank.

This is a story of frustration, bureaucracy, and the difficulty of conducting business in Russia.

My friend and sponsor, Vladimir K., had spent three hours the previous day obtaining information on the complicated procedure and possible courses of action. Rather than opening a business account in my company name, we determined it would be easier to open a personal account in my name only. Now the story begins.

In Russia, the terms and number of the account along with the right of withdrawal must be notarized in a specially established government notary office. These people are paid by the State and make appropriate charges for their services. Under normal conditions, a citizen must make an appointment a week or two in advance, however, since they work closely with the bank, we were able to see them at 10:30 a.m. the next morning. We established the account number, the terms of withdrawal and recorded my identification (USA Passport). The process took over an hour and the charge was 36,000 rubles (\$ 30). I now possessed a notarized document with the various stamps stating I intended to open an account at Promstroybank.

After a short walk to the bank from the notary office, we went to the International department of the bank, consisting of manager who I had met at the Koloshin meeting, Nadia, the English interpreter employed by the bank, and six others. I frankly don't be critical, because they supplied us with coffee during the long waiting periods.

The papers were presented to the head of the international department, and she thought I may need to be registered for tax purposes. This was not mentioned the previous day, but today after calling several people she felt it was necessary. Of course, there will be no interest or income on the account, but tax

registration I must have. So off to the tax office, another ten minute walk, we went. In all fairness to the Russians, it should be noted we would not open an account in the U.S. without a Social Security number.

In this office people and businesses file tax forms and pay taxes. There were two tables where 10 tax consultants were sitting with people on the other of the tables talking to the consultant. There was also a line of 30 people waiting their turn in may be two or three hours.

However, Nadia, from the bank, knew where to go so we went upstairs to a room where six people had desks. The reason apparently I charge was reading a newspaper and she directed us to another woman. This woman said they didn't issue tax registrations on Wednesday, only on Thursday. After a discussion in which my departure time was explained, she agreed to fill out the forms. However, she said it required the approval of the Director of the tax office. She went downstairs, the office was a large converted house, returned in twenty minutes, and told us to wait outside the office for awhile.

After ten minutes, I sent Andrew, my English speaking interpreter and helper, inside the office and ask how much longer. She said, "Wait, the director was in a meeting and it might be one or two hours". Hearing this, Nadia went to see the director's secretary and she said there was no meeting. In fact, he wasn't even in the building. That woman was prepared to have us wait all afternoon (it was 1:30 p.m.). The bank then determined tax registration could be obtained the next day. Now back to the bank.

The bank needed to prepare a "Payment Order". All transactions, withdrawals, deposits, etc., all require a payment order. It is their action document. After preparation and my signature, the payment order was taken by the head of the international department downstairs for the Director's, Mr. Koloshin, signature. However, he was out of the bank and she returned with the document unsigned. I said there must be someone else to approve it, so downstairs she went again (each trip consumed about twenty minutes) and

returned with the news that the two deputies who are also authorized were out of the bank also. I was reminding myself that this is what would happen at the Madison Bank when we had a Board of Directors meeting.

She finally agreed to sign something, but said it wouldn't be official if that was O.K. with me. Of course, it was since I didn't know the difference and couldn't care less.

We then proceeded to the cashier to make my \$100 deposit, but first we stopped in the accounting department. A big discussion, more like an argument, ensued as to how to set-up the account on the banks's books. I learned it was the first account of this type opened by an individual. They had several business dollar accounts, but not individual.

I was interested in the whole process, really had nothing else to do, so all day long I patiently waited for events to unfold. It was now 3:30 p.m. and I announced I was leaving in 15 minutes. Then they found a way to handle the transaction. I gave my \$100 to the cashier. I noticed the deposit receipt did proper account. Nadia, the excellent interpreter and a big help, stated they would be sure it was recorded properly. Then with a smile, she said, "Besides, it is the only account like this we have." I was now ready to leave and they did provide a bank car to drive us to my hotel.

My whole purpose in detailing this story is to demonstrate how far behind some parts of the Russian economy are. Of course, banks and governments are always the last to change. In this case, the middle level clerks were afraid to make a decision and delayed or bucked the problem to someone else. These clerks were not concerned that the account opening took from 10:30 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., but how do we handle something and cover ourselves from criticism. I realize U.S. employees of government and business use the same tactics. Since the Russians have no checking accounts and no interbank clearings, bank customers are really not trusted (or anyone else), I guess all this can be expected.

I did transfer \$1000 into this account from the United States and after ten days the bank called and reported the funds had been received. There is hope!

Russia still seems to be the same, yet change is evident in so many little ways, and visible to an outside observer. Although this was my fourth visit to Russia's third largest city, Nizhny Novgorod, it had been three years since I had, seen this industrial city, 250 miles east of Moscow.

Nizhny Novgorod, a city of 1,5 million people located at the junction of the Volga and Oka Rivers, was called Gorky during the Communist days. During its 800 year history, its strategic location made it a trade center and for 100 years, host of the Nizhny Novgorod trade fair.

The Communists took a city with skilled tradesmen and turned it into a heavy industry complex. Nuclear submarines, MiG airplanes, tanks, trucks, and for years Volga cars have been manufactured in this lovely city on the Volga. Nizhny Novgorod, or Gorky, was always closed to foreigners because of the extensive military manufacturing, and thus became a good place to send political dissidents Andrei Sakharov, being the most prominent. His apartment, where he was kept under house arrest is now a tourist attraction.

In my first visit, in 1991, two years following the introduction of Perestroika, stores were devoid of merchandise, the streets were safe, and people were hopeful the prospective changes would bring a better life. Now, in 1997, stores are full of foodstuffs, clothing and appliances, major and petty crime is rampant, and the joy and anticipation of yesteryear has turned into disappointment and resignation. They now recognize a change to a better life, if there is to be one, will take time. These are hard, confusing times, but interestingly, no one I spoke with wanted to return to the old days.

The contrast between the rich and poor is alarming. There are a number of rich people driving in their imported Mercedes cars, eating at good restaurants, and wearing fine clothes. A soup and salad at a privatized Nizhny Novgorod

restaurant cost the same as in downtown Chicago. An upscale clothing store presented the same quality and prices of merchandise found at Marshall Field's.

Where did this wealth come from? Profits came from importing merchandise mainly, but also using contacts, interpreting and representing foreign companies. European and American businessmen eager to enter the large Russian market of 150 million people need assistance of every kind. The talented, young, aggressive Russian has learned how to profit from this need.

Of course, the Mafia has also created its own class of wealth. They have permeated most parts of the Russian business scene, and extract their ounce or pound of flesh on each person in business. And they are everywhere. I asked an official of a high-quality Nizhny Novgorod bank if the bank had any Mafia money. He said, "They don't come in and announce they are from the Mafia. We try to keep them out if we can."

Crime

Crime is ever present. One reads so much about major crime: extortion, killing of recalcitrant executives, burning of businesses, fraud and other offenses. This exists but, I wasn't able to observe these crimes. There was a television report about three thugs entering a small business office and gunning down the three business partners. According to my host, this type of event is a common occurrence.

However, petty thievery is another matter. I left my Russian shapka, the fur hat, at home because boys come and take it from a foreigner's head.

In the flat of my Russian friend and host, they are unable to keep electric light bulbs in the corridors because petty thieves take the bulbs and sell them on the street. Russians have always double and triple locked their steel doors leading into the flat and now some have alarm systems alerting the police.

The safety of foreigners is clearly a concern of the Russian hosts and the concern is increasing. During my first visits to Nizhny Novgorod, my hosts felt comfortable leaving me at the tram or bus stop and I could proceed to my hotel

myself. In the last two visits in 1994 and 1997, my hosts insisted on accompanying me all the way to my lodgings. When I protested that I felt this was unnecessary, they recited the number of visitors who had been mugged. Some in broad daylight.

Interestingly, people associate democracy and freedom with crime. Certainly, if one looks at the United States, this could be an apt observation. It is useless to point out that Western Europe democracies and others do not experience this relationship. It is my observation that petty crime has always been present as evident by the double and triple locked doors I have observed the past seven years. However, with the wide variance in wealth and large number of poverty stricken people, the level of theft has increased substantially.

Religion

Russia remains a very secular nation in spite of inadequate attempt by various U.S. religious groups. Some of the Russia Orthodox churches are being restored, but after seventy years of neglect and non-use, there is much work to be done. Also, this church is woefully inadequately prepared to reach out to the secular community. Their ranks of trained priests and knowledgeable parishioners are very low. After years of just being afloat, it is difficult to have a dominant voice. Yet, many Russians recognize some relationship with the Orthodox. They state, “we are Russian and the Orthodox church is Russian.”

In the older part of the city there are a number of closed Russian churches and some are being rehabilitated. However, in the industrial part of the city, which was built in the Communist days, one can drive for miles and not see a single church building. Of course, this is the area where most people live!

Religion was authorized in the USSR constitution, but very restricted in actual practice. Only two Orthodox churches, one Baptist, one synogue, and one mosque were permitted to exist. Visiting the Baptist church in its old, cramped building where three hundred dedicated worshippers stood for a two hour service was an inspirational experience. Since that time with the assistance of

foreign money, they have constructed a new building where four hundred people can worship in comfort, peace, and not be threatened. For seventy years, these people kept the faith alive in Nizhny Novgorod, in spite of threats, discouragement, and deprivation. However, now it is difficult for them to reach out and minister to the large number of non-believers.

In my opinion, Russia is still very open to learning about Jesus Christ. Part of this interest is curiosity because they had been told how bad Christianity was and now they want to explore the tenets of religion for themselves. Also, in spite of the lure of capitalism and its focus on money, people still sense emptiness in their lives and are interested in investigating the value of Christianity.

Recognizing all the factors listed above, the efforts are much too small to have a real influence in the lives of a large number of people, specially in the face of economic opportunity for a few and deprivation for many. In many cases, the search for a livelihood is a difficult and time-consuming need. Russia is and will continue to be largely a very secular, non-religious nation. Discouraging, but true.

Government

The very popular regional governor, Boris Nemtsov, had just accepted a position of Deputy Prime Minister with the central government in Moscow when I arrived. He was well-liked, had helped make the Nizhny Novgorod, region the most advanced regarding reform and privatization of any of the Russian regions and the people were sorry to see him leave. They have hopes he can make changes in Moscow, but they aren't so sure this will happen. There is not much confidence in the central government, people seem to be resigned its mistakes and failure to improve economic conditions.

Boris Yeltsin doesn't generate much enthusiasm, but he seems to be the only recognized leader. He was just emerging from his prolonged period of illness and inactivity so people seemed to be hopeful his recovery was complete.

But there is clearly a wait-and-see attitude. However, the economic problems are also local and the quest for money and necessities is so pervasive, that the focus is on the immediate situation and using whatever tools are at hand to help their immediate needs. Moscow is important, but more significant is how do I live today.

In the End

Russia has seen many crises before and through their toughness, steadfastness, and recognition that life has always been difficult the people have persevered. The one thousand year history of this immense country has been one of battles for food, shelter, and economic survival.

The Russians are an educated people with deep literature, music and arts talents giving them a sense of recognition that times have been difficult before and will improve some time in the future. The present adult older generation will not see significant benefits, but younger people and their children will live in a much different Russia. Their basic intelligence, philosophical approach to life, and ability to survive all are factors in creating a new, free and progressive Russia. The change may take ten or twenty years, but it will come.

Charity Giving in the United States

People in the United States don't realize how different giving to charitable organizations, (such as, churches, museums, symphony orchestras, etc.) is in the US, than charitable giving in other countries. I pose as no expert but I will try to describe some of the differences and how this originated.

Why is the United States different? Maybe because in the beginning the United States was formed on a basis that called for a limited government, as is described in the Constitution. The founders of the United States gave limited powers to the national government and most of the governmental responsibilities were reserved for the states (originally there were 13 states, now there are 50).

Although the national government has assumed additional powers, many rights remain with the 50 states.

Thus, the Constitution says there will be a separation of church and state and the people are vigilant to be certain the church and state are separate especially where money is involved. No church or church school receives any federal money. Since education has been required of all citizens from the beginning, the government does support public schools, but even this is largely carried out by real estate taxes on local property in the individual school district. For example, I pay taxes on my house to support the local elementary and high schools. The nearby church schools are not eligible for this support. Private colleges and universities are not eligible for government funds although the public universities receive most of their funding from the state where they are located.

How did this come about? There are a variety of reasons, some valid today and others not. First, at the adoption of the new government following the American Revolution, the people wanted to limit the national government to only protection and some monetary actions. The state governments were given the task of financing schools, building roads, courts, police, etc. Second, most cultural organizations were privately funded and managed. No government assistance was required or wanted. Because the only source of funds to the federal or state government was through taxation, people wanted to keep taxes low. People preferred to donate the funds for most conveniences, cultural and religious organizations themselves and keep the government out of it. Third, although the government was new, the colonial states had been in existence for over one hundred years and people through a capitalistic approach in trade, agriculture and commerce developed wealth to support charitable institutions. Thus, there has been a tradition of wealthy people supporting the churches and cultural institutions in their area. Names on museums, schools, etc, date back over 200 years.

The U.S. Government does not support any charities; the people do. How does this work? Very well! If the people do not support a cultural / religious institution, then it will dissolve. Since the people recognize this fact, the responsibility is theirs to fulfill. Because of this responsibility individuals become interested and participate in the activities of the institution. They become active financial supporters and give their time and talents. Because paid employees, like ministers, priests and executives understand the institution's donation system, which includes their own financial support, they are more caring, energetic in planning activities and programs which lead to community involvement and add to the health of the organization. They work harder! Their livelihood depends on the support by the constituents and community.

Consider this interesting example. A small, Baptist college in Chicago was having financial problems in the early 1900's. John D. Rockefeller, a very rich oil magnate, became interested in the school and provided millions of dollars for new buildings, an outstanding faculty, and a large endowment, etc. Today, that school is the World famous University of Chicago. Harvard University has an endowment of thirty BILLION dollars, all provided by alumni and friends. The Art Institute of Chicago regularly receives gifts and bequests of priceless art objects from estates of wealthy Chicagoans and art patrons around the World.

Houses Americans Live In

Americans look forward to living in their dream house and over 60 % of American families own their own house, apartment, etc. Young families will usually rent for a period of years but their usual objective is ownership. This may be a trait existing since early days of the United States when people came to the American shores for freedom and free land. This urge sparked the westward migration from the original colonies to the middle part of the US and finally to the West Coast. The desire for owning land seems to be part of our heritage. In the early days land was the objective, now it seems to be home

ownership, whether a house, an apartment or a vacation home beside a stream or lake.

The gradual evolvement of the makeup of the dream home has changed over the years. In 1930 when I was growing up my family owned a typical house for a middle class family. A living room occupied the front of the house. Toward the back was a dining room and kitchen. Not typical but our house had a study or bedroom on the first floor also. Upstairs were three bedrooms and one bath. We also had a driveway and a one car garage.

In Chicago thousands of smaller houses were built on a lot 40 feet wide (forty feet facing the street and 80 to 120 feet extending to the rear). The floor plan consisted of a corridor running the length of the house with a living room, small dining room and kitchen on one side of the corridor. Two or three bedrooms and a bath occupied the other side. There was usually no second floor. These were called “Chicago bungalows” and were built for working class families. They were small but “their house” was their own! An alley in back of the house and a lot, gave access to the one car garage.

Following World War II the dominant use of the car and new prosperity, cities expanded new subdivisions for houses with larger lot sizes were built extensively. The typical dream house changed. Also with the Great Depression of the 1930’s behind, families expanded and three and four children were common.

As the mode of living changed so did the houses. Television screens occupied the dominant part of a room. Kitchen and washing machine appliances became commonplace. A typical kitchen had a refrigerator, stove, oven, dishwasher and a “a breakfast nook” for the family meals. The washing machine and clothes dryer were often rescued from the basement to a side part of the kitchen. All these changes in living required changes in the layout of the 1950–60’s house.

A “ranch” style house with an adequate outside play yard for the children was very popular. The house was on one floor, usually with a small basement, but the family’s living area was located on one level. The living room of the past was combined with the dining room. The kitchen was enlarged to accommodate an eating area for the family to eat regularly. The dining area was reserved for “company” dinners. The laundry was located in an alcove of the kitchen. Three or four bedrooms with two bathrooms were located in a wing away from the living area. A two car garage was reached by an open walkway called a “breezeway.” In more affluent families, a separate room called “the den” contained the TV, viewing sofa and chairs and usually a desk.

A working class family would occupy a “Cape Cod” type house with the typical living room, dining room, kitchen, laundry and one bedroom on the first floor and two bedrooms on a second floor. The center peaked roof gave the house its name and gable windows provided light to the second floor.

Recently a trend to a full two story house is prevalent. The desire for more space without consuming additional lot size makes a two story house desirable and practicable. These newer houses will have a full basement, larger family living rooms, and sufficient space on the second floor for bedrooms and additional baths. These houses are desired by wealthier families. Middle class families will opt for different architecture or room arrangement but the basic arrangement is that of the ranch style. One benefit of this arrangement is to facilitate the family activities while part of the family is cooking or watching television. Being together is the key wish.

With this prologue, let us examine the various factors involved in selecting a home. Size is an important consideration but other factors will influence or dictate the number of rooms, etc. Location, financing availability, neighborhoods, etc. are among these. A family moving from an apartment will feel they need at least three bedrooms, a sufficiently ample kitchen to enjoy eating most meals at the kitchen table, a dining and living or family room

(combination living, den and TV room) and a two car garage. American families are larger than in many other countries.

Financing limitations are a significant controlling factor in house selection. The USA has pioneered many new and now accepted financing methods. Here is a little history. One hundred years ago banks only lent money for home purchase purposes for a very brief time period, such as six months or one year. The loan would be renewed and usually substantial payments on the principle would be required. This worked for wealthy people but not for the worker, rising executives and tradesmen. During the depression days in 1930–40, the Savings and Loan financial institutions introduced a new 20 year loan with monthly payments program. Monthly payments would provide for amortization of the loan at the end of 20 years. Of course the loan could be paid off at anytime. This program enabled many people to afford home ownership and with the US government endorsing the program in many cases, this monthly pay program has become standard in the United States and many parts of the World. In any home purchase a cash down payment is required. Twenty per cent of the purchase price was the standard for a number of years, but recently, with guarantees from the U.S. Government or private insurance companies lesser payments are common.

Buying and selling a house is an interesting process. Since the prospective buyer is often unfamiliar with the availability of houses in the area the buyer wishes to locate, they will contact a “real estate broker”. The broker will know of all the houses in all price ranges, in the neighborhood for sale. He or she will ascertain from the buyer their price range, family size and wishes for the “dream house” they are looking for. With this information, the broker accompanied by the buyers will visit a number of houses that meet the stated needs of the buyer. For this effort the agent will receive a commission usually 6 or 7 % of the sales price to be paid by the seller. Following much discussion, visits to houses and a

little persuasion by the agent (they are interested in making a sale) a price with the seller is agreed upon.

The purchase of a house is usually the largest investment a family will make. Often they will live in the house for a number of years and then sell it to another family. As families mature, children are educated. They leave home and start their own families, owners will move to different housing to fit the needs of a smaller family. Also, Americans are very mobile and move to another city for employment opportunities, smaller retirement houses, etc. Studies indicate Americans move on average every seven years!

I should digress to discuss apartment living which for some people is a desirable choice over a house. In the city of Chicago most people will live in apartments as renters or owners. The reasons are universal: location, costs, transportation, cultural activities and flexibility. Apartments facing Lake Michigan are expensive, new apartments with modern features will rent at higher prices than older, sometimes “run down” units. This also is true the World over.

There are many factors entering into deciding where to locate, but American families make these decisions every day knowing a house purchase will be their largest investment. Usually, all are satisfied with their final decision.

Medical Insurance in the United States

To understand the changes introduced in the USA medical insurance program, a view of the present system must be reviewed.

Insurance in the present system is provided by privately owned insurance companies with the exception of Medicare, the government medical insurance sponsored for citizens over 65 years of age. Medicare has been successfully operating for 30 or 40 years. Also, for poor people below a certain income levels the government provides basic insurance coverage in a program called “Medicaid.”

For the population under 65, which includes most of the citizens, insurance has been offered by private insurance companies. Most larger corporations will provide medical insurance as a benefit to their employees and their families. Those working independently – artists, business consultants, farmers, etc., obtain insurance by buying a policy through a number of insurance companies offering a variety of plans. However, since the insurance company determines the qualifications required to purchase their insurance some people, with previous severe illness, chronic complaints, mental health issues may not qualify. These people have been unable to find insurance coverage.

Another large group is young people 25–40 who are generally healthy and some may not purchase insurance because they feel they don't need it and it can be expensive. Without insurance they can go to the emergency room of hospitals and their immediate needs will be handled.

This is a brief sketch of the present system. However, people generally recognized the system wasn't working satisfactorily and was too expensive. The United States was the only industrialized country without a universal health system. So changes needed to be made.

In 2008, President Obama was elected and one of his prime endeavors was to improve the health insurance program and “Obamacare” or the Affordable Care Act was the result. Following the passage of the law in 2010, since the changes were so far reaching, the provisions have been introduced over the ensuing years with the major changes scheduled to occur in 2014.

The basic premise is that everyone will have medical insurance. If an employer provides insurance for its employees the present program for poor people, Medicaid, will continue and expand to include those previously excluded individuals and families. If a person or family has insurance they will continue to have the same coverage. People rejected before because of medical or other reasons must be offered coverage by insurance companies.

The big change is that everyone will be required to have medical insurance and unless one meets certain exceptions, must pay for it. Thus, young people, those who don't qualify for Medicaid, poor people, others who couldn't afford the cost, and other groups must have insurance. To financially assist those unable to pay for the coverage, the government has a program to relieve some of the cost.

Insurance companies are pleased to have these additional groups, particularly young people who don't require much service, because it represents a new source of business. They are offering a package of programs featuring a variety of benefits at varying costs. Also, the federal government, through individual states is offering an insurance option.

This is the basic program which keeps intact the private insurance companies participation, companies providing insurance to their employees and flexibility in programs. However, in adopting a new program and keeping intact a large amount of existing health care insurance, changes must be made and some will be pleased but many will be unhappy, disappointed and just "mad." Also, health care providers, doctors, hospitals, etc. are finding it difficult to adjust to the new system.

To people in other countries offering medical insurance, where a "one-payer" government operated and paid through taxation, the United States program must seem unusual. However, people in the United States have always opted for a free enterprise system and less government control. The Obamacare program is an example of this.

In introducing the major changes of the new program in the last several months, it could be difficult for many to understand the changes, and then the government computer program was "botched", not functional on the initial date, and very complicated to understand. New computer programs often contain "bugs" which have to be worked out and corrections made.

In the United States most government policies are criticized by the opposing political party and in this case exceedingly so. The Republicans have attacked the whole program as poorly conceived, unworkable, and too bureaucratic to work.

Since retired people having Medicare and those working for companies providing medical insurance as a benefit are not affected and if the “bugs” get worked out, I hope the clamor will die down and the program will be a success in six or eight months. We shall see!

My Choices in Books I Read

Everyone makes choices in many things and books may be one of those. Choices in life are made throughout our lifetimes: where we live and work, our wife or husband, what church we attend and schools where we receive our education and training. These are major choices. What books we read are minor choices, but this and other so called minor choices are greatly influenced by other decisions, desires and experiences in our daily lives.

In our younger years we often don't have a wide choice in our reading because school demands school texts be read. Later our career will demand study and knowledge in our chosen fields. A doctor must remain current in his field, largely through seminars, discussions and reading, a teacher through special classes and reading, a businessman through daily newspapers, discussions and reading, etc. Most fields require some or much reading. However, it is a wise person who augments this required reading with seeking to enhance his/her interests and knowledge by reading in other areas. Thus, many of our leisure or free time reading is dictated by our non professional interests.

This leisure reading can take many directions: travel, sports, mystery, adventure, biographical, religious, personal testimonies, leisure activities, cooking, crafts, improvement, etc. Talk to ten people and you will receive a variety of answers. Unfortunately, the answers may also state “I don't read

books, all my information comes from TV or the computer.” This is unfortunate and a subject for another discussion.

Now, back to me and why I read certain types of books. I enjoy reading biographies, history, adventures of a person, people, and migrations of groups of people. These are the areas of significant in depth reading. I learn and evaluate interesting facts about the subjects. I also enjoy what I call “junk reading” and that term is a misnomer because mysteries, action stories are often written by outstanding, talented writers, but I read them quickly grasping only the story and suspense and not for the wisdom or beauty of the language. This is unfair to the writer, but that is me! Also, to some degree my taste in books is produced by eliminating areas I have chosen to reject by trial and error.

One of the reasons I enjoy biographies, history, etc. is that these are stories of real people experiencing real life tests, obstacles, and conquering difficulties, no make believe. Who cannot enjoy stories of pioneers migrating to the West, or difficulties of whaling during the sailing ship days or experiences of the Marines at Iwo Jima in World War II. Two books I recently enjoyed covered the ten year period of the building of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, California and the building of Rockefeller Center in New York City during the early 1930’s. Both construction projects faced problems inherent in many projects plus building during the great depression in an urban setting. In building the Rockefeller Center they faced the complexities of acquiring land, permits to build, design and being sure a 67 story building and lesser structures were safe, attractive and rentable. In building the longest suspension bridge in the World, at that time, the Golden Gate bridge, presented problems, such as, severe winds, secure piers for the cables and financing. The Rockefeller book I bought at a used book sale, not really intensely interested me at first but after reading a few pages I was thoroughly hooked.

I find biographies of former United States Presidents fascinating. I have read books about John Adams, Harry Truman and Franklin Roosevelt written by

outstanding historians and biographers. Although the times, backgrounds of the individuals, and problems were different, it is revealing how they met the political and social problems of their day: John Adams, a New England revolutionary patriot, Roosevelt a wealthy patrician from New York and Truman a down to earth Midwesterner from Missouri. Yet all are recognized as outstanding men and Presidents. Of course, I could list the many books about Abraham Lincoln encasing every phase of his turbulent, heroic life. 150 years following his death twenty or thirty books about Lincoln are written and published each year. I have read a number and have a bookshelf of his books.

I also read and find interesting books about periods in history, such as, the Roman and English Empires. What forces were at play? Why these empires were leaders and not others at the same period. This is not easy reading and one must "think" as the words on the pages are being comprehended, but I enjoy it! Will Durant wrote a ten volume "History of the World" from the beginning of civilization to the rise of Hitler and Communism. I don't pretend to sit down and read it all, but I find it enjoyable and gratifying to keep a volume on my coffee table and read ten or twenty pages in the evening. Some famous books, such as Gibbons, "The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire" can be read and then maintained as reference books for questions about this period.

My admonition to the reader is to pick some subject you enjoy and pursue books, articles, movies on your chosen subject and enhance your knowledge and enjoyment. I have written about my favorite, now it is your turn to select yours. Good hunting!

Smoking in the United States

The United States is fast becoming a non-smoking country! How did this come about?

Seventy and even eighty years ago cigarette smoking was commonplace among adults and teenagers. I remember those days very well. It seemed people

smoked everywhere: at home, in offices, on the street, in restaurants, at meetings. I believe 60 to 70 percent of adults and teenagers were cigarette smokers.

During World War II cigarette companies bragged in their advertising about sending one millions cigarettes to “our troops abroad” each week. In meetings, the room would be filled with cigarette smoke. In homes, all rooms would have the lingering odor of tobacco smoke for days, weeks and months. Occasionally, the cigar smoker would be asked to “step outside” to enjoy his stogie, but not the cigarette smoker. It was the normal activity. The non smoker was forced to endure. Young girls would rationalize their smoking by saying “it gives me something to do with my hands!” The practice was just accepted. The only places where smoking was forbidden were theaters (the fire hazard), schools, and churches.

During the 1960’s health scientists began to recognize a connection between cigarette smoke and lung cancer. As these facts became recognized by the general public a long and difficult campaign began to educate the public about the dangers of smoking and enact laws restricting the use of cigarettes in public places. Any reduction in smoking was fought “tooth and nail” by the tobacco companies and farmers growing tobacco. In the face of severe opposition cigarette advertising was required to carry a warning about cigarette smoking. As a result not a single cigarette package was without such a warning. Cities seeking more income cooperated to raise taxes on cigarettes. Today these taxes are a source of income and hopefully a deterrent to the smoker and a contribution to clean air.

In the last ten years a ban on smoking in offices, restaurants, trains, etc. has been required and praised by most and violently objected to by some. Today no one can smoke in offices, buildings, restaurants, athletic arenas and most public places in most large cities. I do not know how it is in small cities in the

US. As a former smoker and with non smokers, we really appreciate these rules because the air is cleaner and smoke free.

These changes have taken place after much heated debate and intense discussion. The growing number of lung cancer victims has been a big factor as well to help the public realize that smoking is unhealthy, expensive, affects the environment and repulsive to many. Remember, in the United States we have laws protecting our personal freedoms, so any public rules must recognize this basic principle. However, these changes show what can be accomplished if the general public is aroused. Today, about 25 % of the adult and teenage population still smoke, but the campaign continues. Income and education levels seem to reflect smoking habits. Thirty-one percent of adults without a college degree smoke compared to nine percent of college graduates. Fortunately, the level of smoking adults drops slightly each year and falling perceptibly from the 1960 and 70's.

The seventy year campaign against smoking in the United States can be compared with the effort in other countries. Although I have no statistical evidence, my observation when traveling is that smoking is much more prevalent in many countries. In Europe smoking is still very evident in spite of European efforts in environmental areas. Asia is still a big market for American tobacco makers.

Progress in fighting smoking in the World may be slow, but with the medical, health and environmental facts arrayed against smoking I believe progress will continue.

Trees Discussing Falling Leaves

At the annual meeting of trees at the White House Conference, the usual argument about the beauty of leaves and their importance broke out again.

Someone commented that Oak leaves were dull, brown and colorless. The Oak Tree, patriarch of the trees, responded when you have served nature as long as I have and have acquired my stature, leaves are unimportant. Look at my long life, my knarled branches reflecting the cares of the world and my toughness in rain, snow and wind. I have proved myself. When I was younger, like some of you, I showed a little color, but now I'm tired and old: brown is good enough. When you become as old as I am, if you ever do, you too may abandon color for brown. It takes a lot of energy to be colorful.

The Elm tree could hardly wait to respond. You may be the patriarch, but I'm the matriarch of the forest. Almost as old, just as big and tall, yet I consider myself young and beautiful. Look at my branches: they form a graceful umbrella in the summertime providing shade and cool to our friendly birds and animals. People appreciate us too because streets, movies, etc. use our name. When Gen. Washington assumed command of the Revolutionary Army, it was under the "Washington Elm" in Cambridge.

In the winter my shapely legs, I mean branches, form an urn like a pitcher reaching up in the cloudy Winter sky. Mr. Oak, you look like an old man, but I am the graceful, sophisticated matron of the forest. Also, although my leaves are somewhat subdued as befitting a person of my age, they are an attractive pale yellow and with their plum shape exhibit a sense of beauty and form. Not those moth eaten-looking leaves you litter our forest floor. Also my leaves have a serrated edge to remind everyone we are still sharp although dormant for the winter.

The Maple trees entered into the discussion. We may not be as tall, or old, or proud as Mr. Oak and Mrs. Elm, but who can surpass the grandeur and vividness of our fall leaves. From the top of our ball like shape to the lowest

branches, our leaves display a bright, shiny yellow or almost scarlet red for all to admire. In the brilliant sunshine the dazzling yellows and reds stop traffic as people awe and admire. People travel hundreds of miles just to observe our fallen leaves. Can any other tree make that claim?

Color is not the only part of the Maple tree's gift to the World. Our heavily lobed leaves with their sharp points are the national symbol of Canada and on its flag everywhere. Also, who hasn't enjoyed pancakes with Maple syrup! For beauty, variety and usefulness we think all will select the Maple each time.

Mr. Oak was accustomed to such abuse and responded by saying all leaves after a few days on the ground turn brown. They may start out yellow, red, rust, gold, orange but they all end up brown in the end. So why bother? Just start with brown. I'm so old, I like to do things the easy way.

The hickory tree and walnut tree started to enter the fray, but hesitated because although they provide an attractive leaf, they would be criticized because the hickory tree looks so unkept with its shaggy bark trunk and the walnut would be subject to comments about the large green balls containing its fruit dropping all over the forest floor. Someone wanting to eat the inside kernels must first cut through the green cover and then crack the hard shell. All this for a few, tasty kernels. In answer to this criticism, Mr. Walnut says, "Isn't it worth it!!"

The Willow tree had been waiting his turn to speak. He mentioned his distinctive branches with their graceful ends almost touching the ground. He also talked about the misty water cascading appearance of the whole tree. But someone had the audacity to mention the willow leaves. Their thin, elongated size provides inadequate shade they messy, have no distinctive characteristics and so small. Are they really called leaves? Maybe that is the reason the tree is called "weeping willows"!

Now one of the smallest trees, the Ginkgo tree, speaks up. I am so special but you do not recognize my unique attributes. I keep my green leaves far longer than the rest of you. I want to continue to grasp the last the fading rays of Summer as long as I can and thus help all mankind by continuing the photosynthesis while the rest of you are bedded down for the winter. My leaf is so distinctive. Not lobed like an oak or maple, or sawtoothed like an elm or ash, or thin like a willow, my special design is fan shaped that tells all I am a ginkgo tree. Even in the Fall-Winter when I finally decide to drop my pretty, subdued yellow leaves there is a narrow band of green at the edge of the fan.

Some of you may not know me well because I don't frequent the deep forest, because I am a tree. I line parkways and front yards where people can admire and praise me. Even my name is distinctive.

One of the other trees spoke up. I don't know why we even let you in the tree world because you are so different. You really don't belong. You are a Gymnosperm and we are Dicots. I don't mean to sound racist, but please keep your place. Front yards and parkways are all right, but no further. Don't expect us to welcome you into the hardwood forest. Go with your brothers and sisters, the Conifers, in their section of the forest. Of course, you are so different from them, maybe they don't want you either. People would call you a "halfbreed".

On that sour and discouraging note, the trees decided to settle down for their long winter sleep. Each proud of who they are and what they represent.

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