

**The road to Ukraine**

The trip began at DFW on June 7 at 6 pm. First leg - Minneapolis, MN, then to Amsterdam and from there to Bucharest Romania. The schedule was so tight between flights I went from one gate to another and walked onto the plane without sitting down in the airports.

I arrived according to schedule on June 8. It was great, but I knew my luggage would not arrive at my final destination with me.

**ROMANIA**

June 8-12

My friend Erick Schrock picked me up in Bucharest and we went directly to his home 3 hours away. He gave me an opportunity to rest at his home over the weekend. I also preached in his church Sunday morning. I so enjoyed that opportunity.

**ALERT!!!**

My first night in Romania my phone went crazy, blasting an alert. I was not expecting that in Romania. The alert was informing residents that a bear was roaming the parking lot at the local mall in the middle of the night. The Schrock's live at least half a mile from the mall so I thought I should count myself "safe" from this alert.

Besides that, Ericks two huge watch dogs had befriended me and were my constant companions. Thank you Max and Oreo for keeping me safe!

Erick and his wife Lili then drove me to Ukraine on Monday, June 12. He arranged to meet with some refugees (Uri and Andrea) they had helped during the early stages of the war. We met with them just across the border into Ukraine. We had a great visit.

**URI AND ANDREA**

As we sat and ate Uri and Andrea asked where I was from. I told them 2.5 hrs north of Houston and 2.5 hours east of Dallas. One hour west of Shreveport. They asked Tyler, Longview, Marshall? I said "Mt Enterprise. The town has a population of 500. Very rural."

They said, "Do you know Freeman's and the Parkers from Mt Enterprise? They are members at First Baptist in Henderson." I was stunned. I said I knew of them. Tammy knows them well. They were a coach, teacher and counselor in the Henderson ISD when Tammy was in school. Such a small world.

Uri made arrangements for me to rent a car from one of his colleagues, and for us to stay in a resort near the border town. His help has been invaluable to me.



On Tuesday, June 13 Erick and Lili accompanied me to Zhytomir. I drove the rental, they drove their own car. There we met with a friend and his wife, Tony and Coretta Hansen. They are very gracious hosts.

On Wednesday, June 14th there was a meet and greet at the church. The food and fellowship was awesome.

Afterwards I learned that the people at the church love to play Corn Hole. The competition was stiff and I was soundly beat each and every time I played.

Katya also wanted to join the fun. But she had never played. There was no telling where the bags would land when she threw them. Once a bag landed on the window sill on the second floor just over her left shoulder. It was funny and everyone laughed.



It seemed no one had ever taken the time to show her how to play anything! So I asked "Katya, do you want to learn how to throw the bags?" And she said, "yes." The result was that she was able to hit the board or very near it most of the time. She was the most improved player and we all congratulated her on a job well done.

A SMALL CATASTROPHE

On Thursday the five of us drove outside the city and looked at some property.

When we got there we were looking across the fence. I was taking a few pictures. A man and woman quickly came out with a key and let us onto the premises.

I was able to communicate with the lady in Russian and learned that they were responsible for cutting the grass and apologized that they hadn't done more. She thought I was the new landlord or owner; but I assured her that was not the case.

She had been asking everyone for cigarettes. At last she asked me. I told her I did not smoke and did not have cigarettes. She said, "We're not into narcotics. But the fact that you don't have cigarettes is a small catastrophe!"



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