

Exchange program sends Guilford student to former Soviet Union

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Staff Writer

With an excited voice, Laura DeBlois recounted her experience in the former Soviet Union. DeBlois was part of a university exchange program which was initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev during his visit to the United States. DeBlois' exchange program took her to Moscow, St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad), and Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania.

"It was in St. Petersburg," DeBlois said, "that we got more culture shock than we needed."

One student was witness to a brawl in the market place. She said, "it made me feel terrible to be an American and have so much."

DeBlois sensed a somewhat somber mood in Moscow. At Red Square, she witnessed the changing of the guard at Lenin's tomb. DeBlois said, "this was strange because of the uncertain feelings about Lenin."

She and the rest of the students also went to view the tomb of the unknown soldier, where people were still bringing flowers.

"Incredible and beautiful" are the words DeBlois used in describing the Kremlin with its golden, onion-shaped domes. While inside this architectural marvel, DeBlois sadly commented, "we were herded around."

'On my first night in Lithuania, I knew I wanted to go back.'

Russia proved to be a different experience than Vilnius. "In Russia," DeBlois said, "we were another bunch of foreigners who are thought to be millionaires and are attracted to the black market."

There was also a lack of food, especially vegetables, as compared to Vilnius. This was a depiction of Russia's reliance on the Baltic States as sources of food. The exchange rate was 90 rubles to one dollar. In the summer of 1990, however, the exchange rate was seven rubles to one dollar. Such figures indicate an alarming decline in the Russian economy. The main foods available were meat, cabbage and potatoes.

Laughing, DeBlois talked about the day the group of students went to McDonald's in Moscow. She said, "all I wanted was lettuce, and the only way I could get it was by buying a Big Mac." Since that was the case, she ordered two Big Macs to satisfy her longing for vegetables other than cabbage or potatoes!

When asked about Lithuania, DeBlois' eyes lit up, and she excitedly answered, "on my first night in Lithuania, I knew I wanted to go back."

In Vilnius, the group participated in numerous seminars with the Lithuanian ministries such as the Ministry of Culture and Education and the Ministry of Eastern European Affairs. These talks were geared toward an exchange of ideas. The American students, for example, introduced the idea of fundraising, which, according to DeBlois,

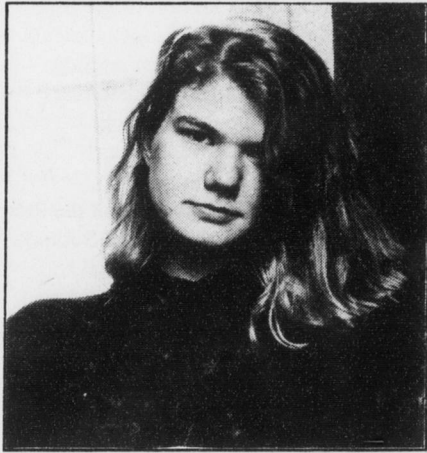
was a concept unheard of in Lithuania.

DeBlois said, "I am such an idealist. My Quaker education has taught me how to keep my ideals and still have the strength and courage to work toward motivating people about their own capabilities." In Vilnius, she also encountered a willingness to listen to ideas about reform.

Compared to Russia, DeBlois found sincerity and warmth in Vilnius. Through this exchange program to Lithuania especially, Laura said, "I have affirmed that this is where I belong." Moreover, she learned the necessity of getting beyond Russia and studying the other republics as well.

DeBlois also expressed her gratitude for being part of a small liberal arts college. She believes that Guilford's high level of student-teacher interaction gave her the chance to make this trip. Martha Cooley, for one, was instrumental in drawing DeBlois' attention to the program.

This summer DeBlois plans on either working for the Lithuanian Parliament or the Ministry of Culture and Education. She is highly motivated to use her knowledge of western states in aiding the Lithuanians as they to re-evaluate political and economic policies without Russian domination. She seems to be optimistic about Lithuania's emergence as a stable sovereign nation, however, she is skeptical about its recognition as compared to Russia. She sadly asked, "Everyone is still going to study Russia, but who's going to study the other states, and watch out if they hold on to their heritage?"



Laura DeBlois

photo by Joan Malloch

Culture Quiz

(From The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy)

- 1) A Latin term literally meaning, "you shall have the body," but which in law means an accused person must be presented before the court with sufficient cause for arrest.
- 2) Famous Spanish artist who painted *Guernica*, the portrayal of a town being bombed during the Spanish Civil War.
- 3) The Swedish biologist of the 18th-century who originated the present way living things are classified.
- 4) The speed of an object measured in multiples of the speed of sound.
- 5) A 19th-century French painter remembered for his use of color and paintings of Polynesian women.
- 6) The author of the poem with the following, often-quoted, line:
"A poem should not mean
But be."

> Answers on page 12

WQFS Top 35

Compiled by WQFS

LW	TW	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
-	1	The Cramps	Look Mom No Head	Restless
5	2	Clockhammer	Klinefelter	First Warning
6	3	Lush	Spooky	4 AD/Reprise
-	4	The Cranes	Wings of Joy	RCA
1	5	The Ancients	The Ancients	Mission
3	6	Teenage Fanclub	Bandwagonesque	DGC
12	7	Died Pretty	Doughboy Hollow	Beggars Banquet
13	8	Big Wheel	Holiday Manor	Mammoth
-	9	Shonen Knife	712	Rockville
4	10	Mortal	Lusis	Intense
15	11	Live	Mental Jewelry	Radioactive
-	12	Fungo Mungo	Humungous	Island
7	13	Think Tree	Like The Idea	Caroline
8	14	Del Tha Funkee Homosapien	I Wish my Brother	Elektra
14	15	Various	Manifestation Vol. II	Aweful
19	16	Nomeansno	0 + 2 = 1	Alt. Tentacles
16	17	The Look People	Boogazm	A & M
23	18	Public Enemy	Apocalypse 91	Def Jam]
-	19	My Bloody Valentine	Loveless	Sire/Wamer
-	20	Dream Kitchen	Dream Kitchen	Dream Kitchen
-	21	SUn-60	Sun-60	Epic
-	23	Eden	Gateway To the Mysteries	Third Mind
10	24	Luka Bloom	The Acoustic Motorbike	Reprise
16	25	Lou Reed	Magic and Loss	Sire/Wamer
17	26	Saint Etienne	Fox Base Alpha	Warner Bros
22	27	Psychefunkapus	Skin	Atlantic
27	28	The Cavedogs	Rock Takes A Holiday	Capitol
-	29	Corrosion of Conformity	Blind	Relativity
-	30	Various	Just Play	BBT 5
-	31	Pleasure Thieves	Simple Escape	Hollywood
-	32	Quadraphoni	Cozmic Jam	RCA
-	33	In The Nursery	Sense	Third Mind
-	34	Lightning Seeds	Sense	MCA
-	35	Rollins Band	The End of Silence	Imago

ADVENTURE PICKS: 10 Slowdive 2) Cowboy Junkies 3) Sugarcubes

TOP AUDIENCE RESPONSE: 1) The Cramps 2) The Cranes 3) Big Wheel 4) Shonen Knife 5) Fungo Mungo

TOP 5 ADDS: 1) The Cramps 2) The Cranes 3) Fungo Mungo 4) Think Tree 5) Del Tha Funkee Homosapien