

Seeing War Up Close MHC Professor Visits Russia During Uprising

By Michael S. Roten
Hilltop Editor

"I knew things weren't okay when my husband called and said the Anti-Yeltsin forces were attempting to take the communication center; The main television tower could be seen from my window."

It is hard to imagine the terror of war when you have not experienced it, but for one MHC professor, the terrors of war are a little more understandable.

Dr. Susan Kiser of the mathematics and education department of the college went to Russia last October which was the same time as the Russian uprising against Boris Yeltsin.

Kiser said that from her twenty-second floor room, she could see the red tracer-fire from artillery. Her husband, calling from Mars Hill, told her to request a room on the back side of the hotel when he realized the type and range of the artillery. Shrapnel could reach Kiser's room.

"All night, you could hear the gunfire," Kiser explained. "By morning, everything had calmed down."

But, the day just ended, Oct. 2, had been a truly action-packed experience for Kiser

and the other participants of the joint U.S. and Russian math education conference. "When we went on the trip, we knew we were going at a less than perfect time," said Kiser.

Oct. 2 began for the conference participants with a decision to go on with the meetings. There would have to be some

changes, however, like a scheduled trip to the Kremlin being changed to a tour of the socialist art-filled subway.

At noon, the people moved to the observatory deck of the

Presidium. From the vantage of that building, Kiser said she could see the Russian Parliament building (the Russian White House) burning.

"That was the most impressive time of my life, to see things like that happening before my eyes," said Kiser.

Kiser said that the impressiveness of the event went deeper for the Russian people.

"The Russian people were so aware of the significance of what was happening, as well as the potential danger. They could see that their whole way of living was not resolved," Kiser said.

The conference Kiser went to was for mathematics and science education. A total of 102 people from 36 different states

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Dr. Susan Kiser
professor of math education



Dr. Susan Kiser visited Russia at the height of the recent uprising against President Boris Yeltsin.

went to the Citizen Ambassador program. The group visited Moscow, as well as two other cities, St. Petersburg and Minske.

During the visit to Minske, Kiser got to see several elementary schools, which feature happy, uniformed children who rise when a teacher enters a room. The students also neatly work math in pen and are the results of a different educational emphasis.

"There is more emphasis on the work the child is doing and less focus on the environment they are in," said Kiser.

In St. Petersburg, several secondary schools and pedagogical or teacher institutes were visited.

Also at St. Petersburg, the Youth Palace for Creativity was visited. This palace, built for an empress of the lineage of Peter the Great, was taken over during the 1917 Revolution. The Pioneer palaces as they were then named, became places for training youths in the ways of being good citizens. Since the end of communism, the palaces have become centers for

educational enrichment. The Youth Palace for Creativity became a center of math and computer science education.

During the conferences at the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, Kiser presented a paper to the group. The paper, involving retraining of Algebra teachers in the public school system, had to be translated into Russian. Since the paper

was presented on the morning of much of the revolt, interpreters were delayed and a Russian professor translated Kiser's.

"I really found out quickly that I couldn't use certain words," Kiser said. She explained that,

in translation, much of the jargon of educators comes out meaning totally different things.

The entire experience was definitely one Kiser will never forget.

"In a bizarre way, I hated to leave Moscow. I was there for five days, but wished I could stay for a few more. At the end, it was no longer so frightening."

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This Yeltsin doll holds the Russian rulers all the way back to the last Russian Czar. Each ruler fits into his successor.



Financial Aid Director To Retire

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The heavy demands of such off-campus engagements on her time and the stressful nature of her job contributed to her decision to retire early, she said. The fact that her husband, Ken, retired in Sept. 1992 after 25 years as director of Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center, also had bearing on her decision to retire early. The two anticipate retirement will give them more time with their three grown children and

two young grandchildren, as well as opportunity for other personal interests.

It is possible, McAnear said, that she will return to volunteer work such as she was involved in several years ago. She has served as treasurer and vice president of Memorial Mission Hospital Auxiliary in Asheville. She has also served on the hospital's board of directors and as corporate secretary.

The new director, Ruth Angle, is an UNC-Greensboro graduate who has also studied at Oklahoma City Community College. She has served in the financial aid office at Embry-Riddle since Feb. 1990. Before that, she was financial aid director at the National Training Center, a proprietary school in Oklahoma City. Angle has served in many other financial aid positions at various organizations.

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