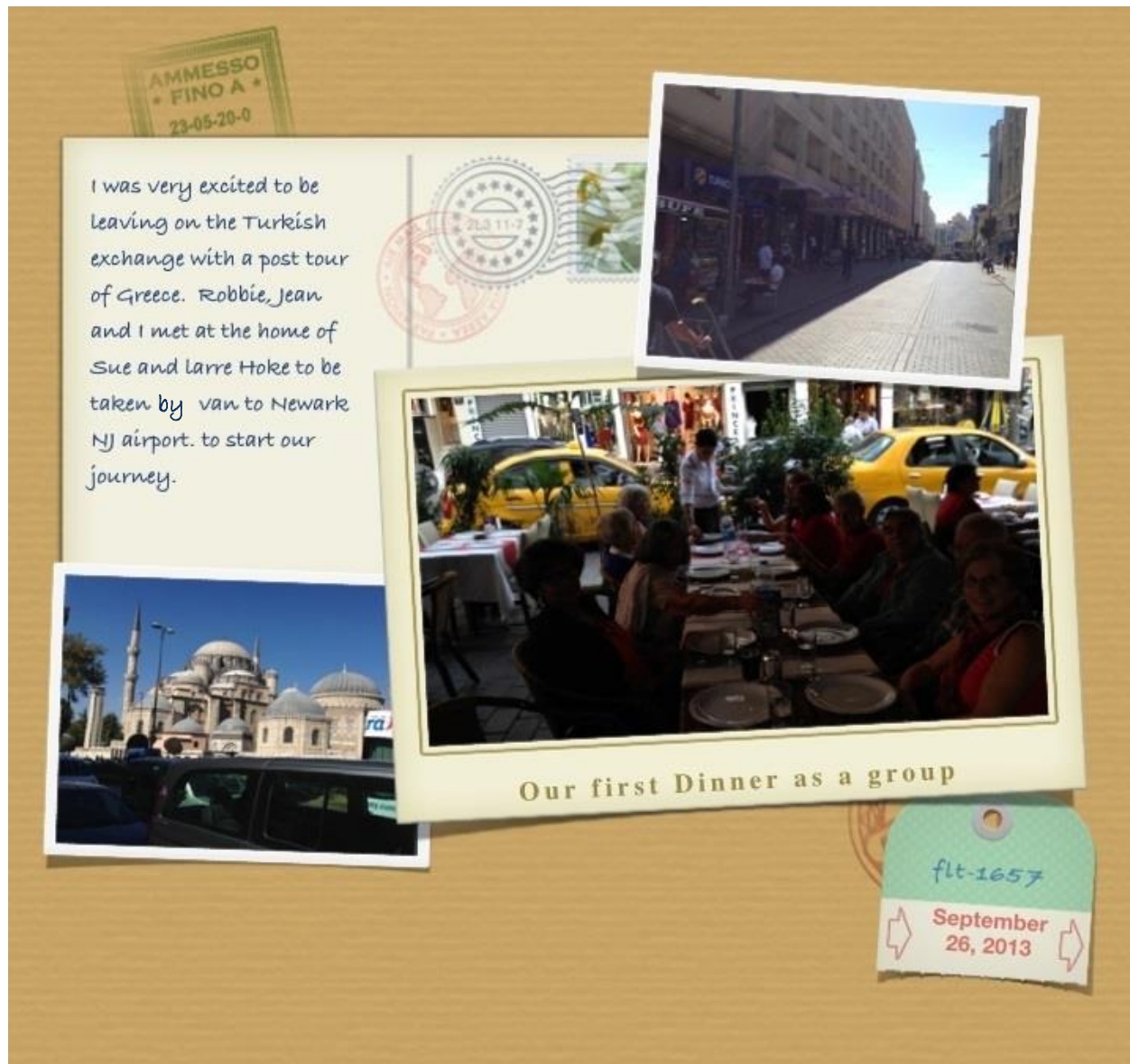


## September 26 - October 1, 2013 Pre-Exchange Tour to Turkey

Thursday, September 26, 2013 New Jersey to Istanbul



It was a beautiful fall day to start a journey. Robbie Thornton, Jean Sedar, Karin Sannwald and I met at the home of Sue and Larre Hoke to begin our exchange to Turkey with a pre-tour to start in Istanbul, Turkey and a post tour of Greece.

We were promptly met by a van that spirited us off to the Newark, NJ International Airport. Gwen Deas, Samantha Monheit, Val Bolan and Fay Harrison joined us for our flight to Istanbul.

The first leg of our flight was 4,032 miles from Newark to Munich, Germany where we transferred to United Airlines Flight #9544 from Munich to Istanbul Turkey, 980 miles.

Upon arriving in Istanbul we looked around for the last ambassador of our group who had taken a different flight, Rose Bennett. She was supposed to arrive about 15 minutes after us but she didn't arrive. After a long wait we investigated and found that her flight was delayed. We had to adjust our watches because there was a 7-hour time difference. We exited the airport to meet our tour guide, Mahmut Dikmen, who was waiting for us with a tour bus. After loading our luggage we took the grand tour along John F. Kennedy Blvd so named for our beloved late president into the center of the city. They said they would pick Rose up later.

We arrived at Hamidiye Hotel, where we were assigned our rooms. We agreed to meet in the lobby at 6:30 Istanbul time to share our first Turkish meal together.

We walked the area round the hotel marveling at the mosque across the street and the many exotic sounds and sights of the bustling city of Istanbul. We settled on a restaurant, had a wonderful meal of fish and called it a night. *Osa Meekins*

Hotel: Hamidiye Hotel, Fevziye Cad NO 1, Sehzadebasi, Istanbul, Turkey Tel:+90 212 519 4150

### Friday, September 27, 2013 Istanbul

Breakfast at Hotel Hamidiye about 7 AM. Coffee not the greatest, but better than nothing.

We meet in lobby at 9:30 AM for tour of the city, with stops at the Hippodrome, the Stadium of the Ancient Byzantium that held 100,000 spectators. The Topkapi Palace and its Treasures of Kitchens and Porcelain Collection. The Harem, which contained the Royal Hall, the Chamber of Princes, a view of the Tiles of Harem Musicians in the Harem and much more. We also saw the most impressive collections of jewelry and imperial treasures.



We visit the Hagia Sophia, which was accepted as the greatest and most sacred piece of the city during the Byzantine age. Today it is an admired architectural masterpiece. Hagia Sophia is a Roman monument constructed in the Byzantine Age.



Lunch was at a local restaurant, with local Turkish food and a great view. In the afternoon we visited the Blue Mosque (Sultan Ahmet Mosque).



When we arrived, we could not enter, since prayers were in process. We had to cool our heels in the courtyard for about ½ hour, before entering the mosque.





The Blue Mosque was constructed by the 14<sup>th</sup> Ottoman Sultan Ahmet I, who ruled between the years of 1603 – 1617. It is the greatest and most splendid mosque of Istanbul. Sultan Ahmet

Mosque is the last impressive structure of Ottoman religious architecture.

We finished the tour with a visit to the Grand Bazaar which has more than 4000 shops.

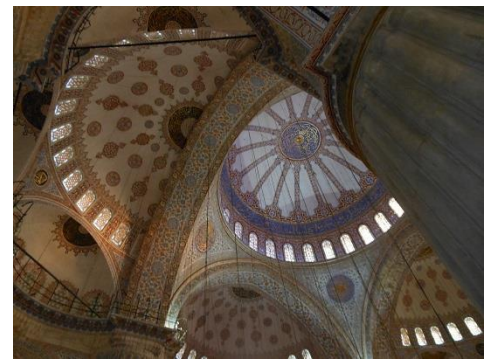
Back to the hotel for a shower and food and rest. *Val Bolan*

The Grand Bazaar is a maze and it is very easy to get lost. The guide told us to ask for Gate Number 1 if we had a problem. (It turns out there was only one gate.) He led us to a few shops and then left. Several of us walked through the bazaar and constantly said Gate Number 1.

We found our way out and sat on the steps of a mosque that faced Gate Number 1. We were talking to some young women who were also sitting on the steps. They were Turkish but lived near Cherry Hill. They were in Istanbul for a family wedding. What a small world! *Sue Hoke*

**Saturday, September 28, 2013 Istanbul to Cappadocia**

After a morning flight from Istanbul, we landed in Kayseri, got on a bus and headed to Cappadocia, including the chimneys of Pasabagi and the Goreme Open Air Museum. Riding through the Devrent valley on the way to Cappadocia, we saw towns displaying the old (a mosque) and the new (solar panels on many rooftops). At Pasabagi, we climbed high to view the eroded land formations that looked like fairy chimneys (or phallic symbols to some of us!). We rode on to Firca ceramics, an underground factory, where Samantha tried her hand forming clay at a pottery wheel and we saw a variety of shapes and uses of beautiful handmade ceramics. Last, we went to the Goreme Open Air Museum, walked up and down to view the Byzantine art inside small chapels. It was a long, but varied and educational day! *Rose Bennett*  
Hotel: Perissa Hotel, Mehmet Dinier Buivari 25, Urgup, Nevsehir Cappadocia, Turkey





## Sunday, September 29, 2013 Cappadocia

After a restful night and breakfast we climbed back into our mini-bus to see the underground city of Kaymakli which had been occupied by early Christians. They had dug their dwellings and churches deep into the relatively porous rock. We climbed through one of these six-story structures, partially through tunnel-like openings and very low ceilings. Some openings had been designated to store food, others displayed long stone tables and benches; we saw a "kitchen", etc. The whole complex had an amazingly well functioning air circulating system. (Constant temperature 55 degrees) Huge stone wheels weighing several tons could be moved to close the structure from outside intruders. I don't remember any "lavishly decorated facades," but took a photo of our Jean Sedar pointing to the opening of a church.

Our next stop was a carpet store. In its court yard we were introduced to the art of natural dye making. Inside we observed young women knotting carpets. Another woman demonstrated the craft of releasing silk fibers by soaking (boiling) silk cocoons which then release their ca. 100 meter long "strands". These are wound on a large wheel to dry and to prepare for further processing. The latter stage is not done in this facility.



During our consumption of liquid refreshments we were introduced to hundreds of carpets of differing sizes, colors, patterns and qualities. Of course the goal was to entice us to purchase some of them.

After lunch we drove to the open air museum of Zelve which " had been the center of Christian monastic life in the 9th through the 13th centuries, and the town was inhabited until the early 1950s, when erosion and cracking began and slabs of rock to fall and villagers were moved out of the hundreds of cave dwellings." (Fodor's).





Our visit to a very expensive jewelry store surprised me as we entered its premises after observing the carving of an onyx rock into a goblet which might be used for ceremonial events. The displays ranged from somewhat ordinary custom jewelry to fine crafted gold adornments using locally "harvested" precious and semi-precious gems such as turquoise, onyx, amethyst, corals etc. It seemed to me that most of the items were not crafted locally, but that the store was designed to display and sell these goods.



Our long day ended by visiting the village of old Mustafa Pasa where we learned about the art of Ebru painting. The paint is produced from a mixture of specific ground stones and parts of a cow's stomach. After curing, the paint is applied onto the surface of water with various fine brushes. When the artist completes the design (in our case a stylized tulip) she transfers it by placing a paper on the top of the water, making sure that no air bubbles are trapped between the paper and water design. She strikes the paper surface with some sort of squeegee, and, voila, when she pulls the paper off a beautiful tulip appears on its surface.



After a long day we rode back to our hotel for dinner and packing for the next day's long bus ride to Pamukkale. *Karin Sannwald*

### Monday, September 30, 2013 Cappadocia to Pamukkale

After an early breakfast our group departed the Perissa Hotel in Urgup, Turkey by bus for the 12-hour ride to Pamukkale. During our long bus ride our guide entertained us with a bit of the history of Turkey and a question and answer period. We learnt that the number one export is textiles, then furniture and thirdly carpet and rugs. Most of their tourists come from Russia, Denmark and Germany.

We finally arrived at our destination just before sundown at 6:15 PM. We then visited the Baths, and Pamukkale's famous petrified calcium cliffs. It's now dark and after taking our shoes off and using flashlights many of us walked in the thermal



waters under a starlit sky. On the way down from the ruins of Hierapolis, we met an English couple who got lost in the dark and wanted to know how to get out. Since we



were the last vehicle in the area, we offered them a lift to the village below where their hotel was. We all boarded our bus, dropped the couple off and proceeded to



our hotel where we had a buffet dinner by the pool before heading to our rooms. The hotel was a maze especially in the dark so it was hard to find our way and the numbering system of the rooms was crazy. After we did, Jean, Samantha, Gwen, Sue, Val and I went to the outdoor thermal pool for a nice soak before going to bed. *Fay Harrison*



When we were walking around in the ruins after dark, I tripped on a rock and started to fall. I was suddenly surrounded by a group of Germans coming in the other direction who grabbed me by the arms and saved me! *Sue*

Hotel: Lycus River Hotel, Karahayit Mevki, Pamukkale, Turkey  
Tel: +90 258 271 4341

**Tuesday, October 1 – October 8, 2013 Exchange with FF Guzelbahce, Turkey**

**Tuesday, October 1, 2013 Pamukkale to Guzelbahce**

Wake briefly from a deep slumber at 5:30 – strident voices and noise in the hall – fully awake at 7:15. We are in Pamukkale at the Lycus River Hotel, a sprawling complex – certainly a most confusing accommodation, set in a tropical oasis with a palm filled garden. The al fresco dinner of the previous evening coupled with the luxuriant thermal pools - which we so enjoyed - make this a hotel to remember.



Suddenly hear someone calling my name, and it's not Samantha, my roommate. Am I hearing voices??? Minutes later the phone rings – it's Gwen - it seems that the balcony of her room is just below our balcony, we can communicate balcony to balcony, and she had been calling me.

Following breakfast we depart at 9:30, driving for some time through an agricultural region – farms with corn and cotton fields. Today is our first cloudy, overcast day. I'm struck by the excellent roads – many seem new - and the abundance of petrol stations. Gas is expensive in Turkey, equivalent to \$10/ gallon. We are told that September and October are the prime months of the tourist season – the summer is much too hot.

To pass the time on the drive, Mariana, the wife of our guide, Mahmut, gives us a short lesson in Turkish – a most impossible language!! By 11:30 we have arrived in Selcuk, a fairly large city and we stop at a leather factory where we are treated to a rather professional fashion show. Attractive live models demonstrate a variety of gorgeous leather goods - jackets so supple that they can be rolled into a small handful. Following the show we shop in the store, Karen buys a stunning coat and several people buy a versatile bag which functions as either a purse or backpack with many pockets. Later in the trip Samantha and I purchase one for Gwen – a token of appreciation from all of us for all the months of hard work she did as ED for this exchange.



It's raining lightly as we leave the leather shop and we decide to forego lunch and drive directly to Guzelbahce. We're eager to meet our host families. Upon arrival in Guzelbahce the



driver is unable to find the meeting spot (the Altinoluk restaurant), and he questions a few people on the street who led us astray for a mile or so – evidently there is another restaurant with a similar name. Finally the driver phones for directions, whereupon he turns around retracing his route along this esplanade bordering an azure sea - almost to the start- where the Guzelbahce FF people are waiting.



I meet my hostess, Nihal Senyuz, a very personable young blonde woman who is a high school physics teacher. She drives us to her lovely house and there I meet her mother, Rustira, and her 13 year old son, Ilgaz. He is studying hard preparing for the November entrance exams to an elite high school. I'm saddened to learn that Nihal is a widow – her husband, a lawyer - was killed suddenly in an auto accident two years ago.

My arrival upsets Hera, the resident German Police dog of this household, who creates quite a commotion when she spots me in the house where she normally stays!!! The sfamily shows me to the room which will be my home for the week, it's on the second floor in what seems to be a study – very nice & I have my very own bathroom!! They invite me to afternoon tea which they serve on a lovely outdoor patio – we sit and talk while munching and enjoying the day. Later I unpack and go downstairs to help Nihal and her mother who are busy preparing dinner. It's a delicious meal – chicken, rice, salad and wine. Cleanup is fast –



we load the dishwasher and go downstairs to a large recreation, TV room. We can't sit in the living room because the couch has been sent out for upholstery, and the curtains are being replaced. Ilgaz, Rustira and I spend some time attempting to solve the 9 piece humming bird puzzle that I brought from the USA, but it defeats us. Nihal joins in the struggle, but ultimately all of us concede defeat. Ilgaz goes upstairs to study, and we ladies settle down to watch a sad movie – I'm so moved I fall asleep about halfway through it! Nihal wakes me and all of us retire, but the dogs in the neighborhood are creating an uproar. Hera, the police dog is still outside and there's an approaching thunder storm. Finally the family relents and brings Hera inside – enclosing her downstairs behind a secure door, or so I hope, because the dog definitely thinks I've displaced her from her rightful place in the house.

PS Hera didn't bark at me the day I left – maybe she realized I'm a friend??? *Jean Sedar*

After we had tea at Altinoluk Restaurant and all the others left, Tayfun drove us to his house. While we were driving along the coast, he received a phone call from Baha Tanriverdi who was at the airport to pick up his guests Mary Kinsey and Lucie Lenore who were supposed to have arrived about 3:00 PM. He waited until everyone got off the plane and they weren't

there. While we were still in the car there was another phone call. This time it was Mary. They were still in Istanbul. Their flight to Athens was delayed so they missed their flight to Izmir and couldn't get Turkish Air to put them on another flight. We were trying to decide what to do when their phone card ran out of money. Since they were calling from a pay phone, we had to wait until they called again. Tayfun called Baha and told him to go home.

We met Gulen, Tayfun's wife, and their dog Kate. They have a beautiful home. We freshened up and had a late lunch or an early dinner. Delicious! Before it got dark, they took us on a short drive around their town. They live in Cesmealti, very near the water. The area used to be a Greek town and they took us to a mosque that used to be an Orthodox church. It was an nice little town and some of the

buildings had very interesting architecture.



When we got back to the house, we sat in the living room and talked. They gave us a gift – a beautiful bronze tulip-shaped tray with a glass for water and a little coffee cup in a bronze holder and a bronze saucer to make Turkish coffee.

Later in the evening Mary called again and we said she should just buy new tickets.

She said she would call when they knew when they were arriving. They were both totally exhausted since they had been sent back and forth between the International terminal and the Domestic terminal lugging all their suitcases. Later in the evening, Baha and his wife Incilay came over. Gulen gave them dinner and then we had dessert. Incilay was an English teacher so it was easy to talk to her. The evening passed and it was quite late. We didn't hear from Mary again. It was after midnight when we went to bed. We had just turned out the lights when Tayfun knocked on the door and said they had a call from Mary and Lucie, who were at the airport in Izmir. I offered to go with Tayfun and Baha but he said I should go to sleep. *Sue Hoke*



### Wednesday, October 2, 2013 Urla

Since there were some conflicts with the schedules of the Mayor of Guzelbahce and the head officer of Guzlebahce, plans were changed for the day. We met at Altinoluk and we were happy to see our two missing ambassadors – Lucie and Mary, who arrived very late last night. We were taken by bus to UZBAS Plantation. This description on their website tells of its beginnings. “In 1996, the endless passion for nature finally gave birth to the UZBAS Plantation between the green hills of Urla, in the hidden valley, 35 kilometers away from Izmir; where all the winds carrying the smell of the seas caress each other. As shadows of the century old red pine trees fell over the elderly olive trees and tens of various types of palm trees collected from the different parts of the world, slowly and slowly and in harmony, settled themselves in the UZBAS Plantation. ”

The idyllic setting, beautiful plants and trees, a gorgeous mansion and a pack of dogs romping at our heels provided an interesting few hours. UZBAS Plantation is a growing company producing Mediterranean palm-trees, tropical and sub-tropical plants. They have grown, in the soil or in pots, 250,000 palm trees - each representing one of the 52 selected best varieties of its kind. Other than palm-tree varieties, they grow, import and sell shrubs, miniature trees and other kinds of trees, all durable and fit for long years of existence under different climatic conditions and environments.



We walked around the show gardens with some of the staff. Then we saw ancient olive trees – some of them that are many centuries old.



During plantation period of the farmland, they found out that there are many signs of historical grape-vine terraces which show that the region has a great history of wine production.





After the renovation of historical grape-vine land, UZBAS conducted an investigation regarding the science of cultivation of grapes in their vineyards. About 10 years ago they started cultivating grapes, and now Urla Winery, a boutique winery has started to operate in order to produce premium wine collections only from their own grapes. We went to the winery which also has a few rooms for those who would like to stay. The décor is gorgeous.

We put on little booties and had a tour of the cellars. The law recently changed so you can't taste the wine but you can buy it. Some of the ambassadors bought some for their hosts.



Next we went to lunch at Yoruk House Restaurant which was in a beautiful setting. We saw a woman making gozleme – dough rolled out very thin and filled with your choice of



ingredients then cooked over a wood fire. We ate outside – a bit breezy and cool – but the food was delicious. We had a nice salad and a yogurt drink with our gozleme.



After lunch we visited the house of a famous Turkish poet and writer, Necati Cumali (1921-2001). They had an interesting collection of his works, writings, photos, etc.

We were driven back to Altinoluk restaurant to be picked up by our hosts. Later we went to the Welcome party, which was held in a big open room. The hosts and other members brought various foods and drinks- all delicious! We sat at long tables. There was music and dancing. The mayor of Guzelbahce was there and welcomed us. It was a lovely evening. Two young boys who spoke excellent English were very helpful translating. One was the son of a host and the other was a neighbor of a different host. They were very poised young men and they even danced.

*Robbie Thornton and Sue Hoke*





Thursday, October 3, 2013 Izmir

We had our usual breakfast of delicious jams, black olive, green olives, and tea with lemon and honey. A few fresh-baked simit, the big round sesame



covered bread that I



This museum has various halls exhibiting artifacts collected from around the Izmir and specialist halls for ceramics, glass, gold, statues and mosaics. The museum was opened in this building in 1984 but was originally established in 1927. There are over 1500 artifacts on display. The exhibition is organized in different floors and halls containing findings from ancient city of Smyrna as well as from surrounding ancient sites such as Pergamum, Ephesus, Teos (Seferihisar), Klazomenai (Urla), Foca, Metropolis, and Lebedos.

The collection was amazing. If you would like to see some of the displays that we rushed through, check out this wonderful video:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oul1HGn6XjU>



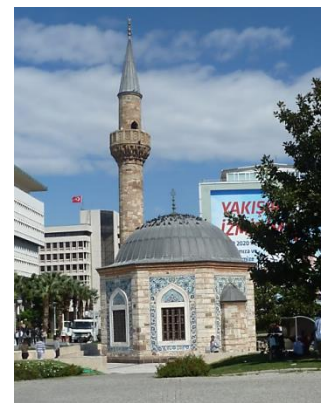
Next to the Archaeological museum is the Ethnographical Museum with cultural objects from daily social life of Anatolian people housed in a 19th century three-story Neoclassical building which was used as a hospital in the late 1800's. The museum displays many models of extinct or near extinct handicrafts due to the industrialization, such as; tinsmith, clog making, pottery, blue bead making, wood imprinting, carpet weaving, rope making, feltsmithery and saddlery. It was very interesting.



Then we walked to Konak Square with several of us stopping at the Post Office to buy some stamps. At the square we saw the Konak Clock Tower which was built in 1901 and is the symbol of Izmir. It was one of 58 built in Ottoman times to try to get Turks to use European timekeeping practices. The clock in Izmir is one of the finest. The tiny Konak Mosque next to the ornate clock tower is very simple and decorated with beautiful ceramic tiles from Kutahya. There were some interesting buildings near the square including the opera house and the Governor's Palace.

After taking pictures at the Clock Tower we walked to Kizlargazi Hani, which is inside the Kemeralti bazaar. It is an Ottoman caravanserai built in 1744 by Hacı Beşir Ağa. It is a magnificent construction with a 4000 square meter courtyard, with a

roof completely covered with lead. Today the well-preserved caravanserai shelters many shops selling handicrafts, souvenirs, carpets, silver, clothing, hubble-bubbles and leather clothes. There is a tea house in the center of the bazaar where we had a chance to drink a cup of tea or coffee or a cold drink.





This was where the Silk Road ended in the past. It was restored in 1888-1933. We were given some time to shop. Then we were picked up by the young man from the Welcome Party whose family owns a carpet store: *Ugur Halicilik, 1375. Sk No:18, Alsancak/ Izmir, Turkey*. He drove us to the store where they had lunch for us and we were shown lots of beautiful carpets. Unfortunately we had already visited a carpet factory in Cappadocia and we had no buyers for big items here.



We finally left the shop, met our bus and were driven to Guzelbahce where we had a meeting with Mayor O. Mustafa Ince. They had cookies and drinks for us and then a presentation. Jean Sedar gave the mayor a key to Cherry Hill. The Mayor gave Osa a very big picture



of Ataturk. He also gave Jean and Osa books about Guzelbahce and then gave each ambassador a bag with books and a large ceramic plate in the shape of a leaf decorated with figs. The mayor seems like a really nice guy and is popular with the hosts. All the people seem to be very proud of their country and their history. Ataturk is revered everywhere. Almost every town we visited had a statue of him.

When we left the mayor, we went back to Tayfun's house, changed clothes, drove to Baha's house and we all walked to the restaurant in Urla. Tonight we treated our hosts. The restaurant they had chosen didn't have room for us inside and our hosts decided it was too cold to eat outside so we walked to a different restaurant in the same area that could take us all. The restaurant was called Sahil. Lots of raki was consumed. It was an unusual place. We went to a refrigerated case in the back of the restaurant and picked what we wanted for appetizers. Some of us didn't understand what was going on and over-ordered. Then you went outside to another refrigerated case that had fresh fish and picked what you wanted them to cook for you. Later they brought lots of fruit for dessert. The food was very good. We walked back to Baha's house and Tayfun drove us home.



When we turned onto their street, Tayfun yelled "pigs" and drove off into the woods where there were lots of wild pigs. They live in the woods and the dogs go crazy at night when they come near the house. Unfortunately Gulen loves all animals and leaves food out for the pigs so most nights the barking goes on for a long time. Tayfun drove back to the house and we went in and talked for a while before going up to bed. *Sue Hoke*

### Friday, October 4, 2013 Ephesus

Today has been a day full of ruins and antiquities. We visited the Archeological Museum which exhibited amazing ancient artifacts. We also walked on a shaded path to the legendary House of the Virgin Mary. It is thought that Mary spent her last days in this house. It contains an altar with a statue of the revered Virgin Mary.





We explored the majestic ruins of the Church of St. John. St. John had come to this later location of Ephesus (on the slopes of Mt. Koressos) to encourage the spread of Christianity.



Originally, in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE, a church with a wooden roof was built here. It was located where a monument had been built to mark St. John's burial site. Later, a domed basilica was built by the Emperor Justinian. The day was beautiful and the views were stunning as we observed the ruins of the church and gravesite. Looking down in the valley, one can



view the ruins of the Isabey Mosque as well as the former site of the Temple of Artemis.

The city of Ephesus was originally built on the shore of the bay where the Cayster River feeds into the sea. The Ephesians fought various wars and invasions, eventually becoming the most important Asian Province of the Roman Empire. State buildings such as the Arch of Triumph were erected, starting in 3 BCE. As one enters the



city, the massiveness and the scope of the ruins are nearly overwhelming. Our guide introduced us to some of the major points of interest along the major walkway, the Curetes Street, such as the Trajan Fountain, the Scholastikia Baths, and the Temple of Hadrian. The Public Latrines were most interesting, able to hold up to 50 people sitting side by side. They were serviced by a fairly modern plumbing system. Unfortunately the



“condo” houses of the slopes were not available to the public, due to the continued restoration activities. At the end of the street, we came to the stunning library.

Large, architecturally intricate and elaborate, it was of great importance, holding many, many volumes and serving as a lecture hall for the intellectuals of the day. We had a group picture taken at the library and then moved on to the agora and to the Grand Theatre.

A tasty Turkish buffet in a lovely, natural setting was a fitting end for our day.

*Lucie Lenore*



After lunch at Bizim Ev Hanimeli Restaurant & Café ([www.bizimevhanimeli.com](http://www.bizimevhanimeli.com)) where we had wonderful buffet lunch, we stopped in a village called Sirince. There were musicians, food and a young boy dressed in white sitting on a horse. The celebration was for his circumcision. Locals and tourists were dancing, eating and giving the boy gifts. We were given some time to shop or explore the village. We were all tired when we finally got back home.



Tayfun and Gulen's neighbors, Ercument and Nursema Bilgili and their daughter Gokce, were invited for dinner. The daughter had studied English and enjoyed speaking to us. The food was very tasty and we sat around the table talking for several hours. It was a pleasant evening. I gave them some small gifts and they gave us hand knitted socks. *Sue*



## Saturday, October 5, 2013 Cesme and Alacati

Merhaba! Welcome to the picturesque coastal town of Cesme (pronounced "chesh-meh")! On a glorious sunny day, we rode to the city of Cesme. The highlight of the day was our visit to the Cesme Castle. The Castle sits overlooking the harbor. Climbing up the steps of the castle provided a stunning view of the crystal blue water of the Aegean Sea and the city below.



Cesme Castle (Cesme Kalesi) was built in 1508. Later the castle was repaired by Sultan Beyazit, son of Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror (Mehmet Fatih), to defend the coast from attack by pirates.

Today, the well-preserved castle houses two museums. The rich history of the area is depicted within the Castle's archaeological museum by artifacts from the nearby ancient city of Erythrai. There are also exhibits on the city's naval history. During the Russian-Turkish War (1787-1791), Cezayirli Gazi Hasan Pasha, commander of the Turkish troops was killed in combat in 1790 at the age of 85. The Castle is guarded by a statue of Pasha caressing his famous pet lion.



If you visit during the first week of July, you'll be able to attend the International Cesme Music Festival held at the Castle.

Our tour included bazaar shopping. We learned that bargaining is not as prevalent as the advice in guidebooks suggests. Later we rode to the village of Alacati (pronounced "aa-LAA-chaa-tuh"), just east of Cesme on the peninsula jutting out into the Aegean Sea.

After another opportunity for bazaar shopping, we had lunch at a quaint restaurant; then rode on to the Alacati Marina for windsurf watching. There were several windsurfers enjoying the ideal

conditions. The cove is perfect for windsurfing since it lies on the leeward side of this windy peninsula which means lots of wind but no visible waves towards the coast. Some schools offer windsurfing training on the beach.



There are ancient windmills on the top of the hill overlooking the village. The 19th century windmills are overshadowed by much taller modern wind turbines used to generate electricity.

*Mary Kinsey*



Lunch today was planned at Kumrucu Erol. Cesme Kumru is a special kind of sandwich which is served especially in Cesme, a district of Izmir. The sandwich features cheese, sucuk (pronounced as sujuk, a spicy sausage) and tomato.

Today it is also served with the addition of sausage and salami. It is served with cucumber pickles, hot pickled pepper and along with ketchup and mayonnaise. Vegetarians were taken to a different restaurant.





At the Welcome party on Wednesday we sat across the table from Riza and Hatice Torun, a couple who are members of the FF Urla of Greater Izmir. We spent time talking to them and when we were leaving, they said they hoped we could come by during the week. Tayfun told us we were invited to their house tonight for a drink. Osa and Nurel were also invited. When we came back from activities today, Nurel drove us to Urla and we met Tayfun and Gulen and drove to the Toruns' house. Their home is beautiful. We sat talking in the living room and had snacks and drinks. Then we moved into the dining room where they had a multicourse meal. Everything was absolutely delicious. After we finished what was on the table, they brought out a special rice dish. Then we had dessert and coffee or tea. Riza was born in Iran but has lived in Turkey for more than 35 years. It was a very interesting evening. Sue



When we came back from activities today, Nurel drove us to Urla and we met Tayfun and Gulen and drove to the Toruns' house. Their home is beautiful. We sat talking in the living room and had snacks and drinks. Then we moved into the dining room where they had a multicourse meal. Everything was absolutely delicious. After we finished what was on the table, they brought out a special rice dish. Then we had dessert and coffee or tea. Riza was born in Iran but has lived in Turkey for more than 35 years. It was a very interesting evening. Sue

### Sunday, October 6, 2013 Sigacik and Izmir

Today we met at Altinoluk and were driven to Guzelbahce Yaka Mahallesi Otantik Halk Pazari, small bazaar in Guzelbahce where we had coffee and tea. The bazaar had lots of fresh vegetables and they were selling many herbal cures in this bazaar. It is only open on Sundays. In the place where we had drinks there were local women making gozleme. The man pictured below was making fresh combinations of fruits which he blended into drinks. Very healthful and delicious!



Then we moved on to Sigacik, where we wandered through the maze of a large bazaar in the former Sigacik Castle which was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They had wonderful looking pastries, foods, beautiful vegetables and interesting crafts. But we were scheduled to have lunch so we didn't want to try too many things and not be able to eat our meal. Outside the bazaar there was a pretty little port. At the end of the vegetable market there was a small domed room which was part of the original castle. It had great acoustics and when we went through there later a man was playing a violin. Jean went over and spoke to him and he gave her the violin to play. When we went outside there was a wedding party standing on the fortification taking photos. We had lots of free time to explore and shop and then met at the outside restaurant where we had a delicious assortment of foods including a wonderful soup.





We had more free time after lunch and then we were taken to the Balcova Thermal Hotel where we had a few hours to soak in the various pools. Those of us who went in enjoyed it very much. The people who didn't want to test the waters were taken to Nurel's apartment to rest or help prepare for the party later. Again there was a wonderful assortment of food and drink and a great view from Nurel's balcony. It was a lovely evening. Sue



**Monday, October 7, 2013 Urla**

We drove from our home base to the district of Urla. The day started cloudy with a little rain here and there. The views along the way were picture postcard ready as the sun finally came out for the day. The entire day was spent connecting the past with the present. In order to understand Turkey and its people we found ourselves going back into history. History is the study of the past as a guide to the future, so this maybe why Turkey is so invested in its past.

It was hard to believe that we were going to another archeological dig. If you have seen one unearthed rock or civilization, you have seen them all, and we have already seen Ephesus. The highlight of this dig was the ancient olive oil factory of Klazomenai. This tour showed us the procedures used centuries ago that are the basis for making of olive oil today. The restored hut where the museum factory is today was filled with lots of pots and other artifacts from the dig. This factory really made the tour very interesting.



The next stop was Karantina Island - a beautiful offshore island reached by a long causeway. The main building we toured was in operation from 1865 to 1950 but the island was used as a quarantine station much earlier than that to try to prevent disease being brought into Urla. We were shown the step by step treatment of all the people trying to get into the city. These people included the immigrants coming into the city as well as some of the workers on the boats up and down the river. The immigrants stayed on the island for about 40 days. They were treated with great respect. Some came to the island sick so they died and were buried



there. On the island there were 5 or 6 houses where the workers lived. It was a wonderful day. We all compared the day to a trip to Ellis Island in New York.





The original plan for the day included a boat trip and lunch on the boat but they didn't feel it was safe to take the boat ride so a drive was substituted. We stopped briefly by the Liman Tepe archaeological dig to take a few pictures and then went to a research center associated with Ankara University. The 360<sup>0</sup> Research Association in April 2007 with Mare Nostrum and Centre Culturel Francais Izmir started a project to build a bireme type antique ship which has 20 oars and a sail. We toured the shipyard and were given the history of this fascinating place. The project recreated the ship and has taken one historical voyage so far. Most of the work done on the historical recreation was exactly the same as it was 600 BC with changes due to safety issues only. Additional objectives of the project include underscoring that Izmir throughout history has been one of the largest and the most important ports of the Mediterranean and contributed to making the Mediterranean a sea of peace and fraternity. The project holds conferences, exhibits and symposiums to help educate the public.



We continued our drive and went to one of the highest points in the area where we had the best view of the area. We were high above Cesmealti where Sue and Larre were hosted. We took some photos and then went to lunch at a restaurant right on the waterfront in Urla called Unal Kardeesler Katmer Salonu. We had salad and a huge plate of fried anchovies. Delicious!



People went their own way after lunch. Some went shopping and others went home to rest or pack. We met in Guzelbahce for the Farewell dinner which was held in a very nice Turkish restaurant on the waterfront called Gemi Restoran. The dinner was filled with all kinds of Turkish food that we had all week. It was party time "TURKISH STYLE." There as a musician who played a traditional Turkish instrument. There was singing and dancing. Everybody got into the act. We did our usual entertainment with a translator translating the words into Turkish. Gifts were given and Robbie's host, Hilmi Angin, who is a member of a dance group, performed some traditional dances in costume. A good time was had by all because the Turkish people really know how to party. *Gwen Deas*





**Tuesday, October 8, 2013**

Saying goodbye is never easy. We said ours at the airport in Izmir. It was hard. We boarded the plane to Istanbul, where we changed planes to fly to Athens. We spend several hours in the airport, before flying to Athens. We arrived in Athens in the evening and were met by our guide, who delivered us to our hotel.

We deposited our luggage in our rooms and met the guide in the lobby. He walked us in the old part of town for about 15 or 20 minutes, he then departed and we were on our own, to roam the Old Town of Athens. We ate dinner at one of the restaurants and then walked back to our hotel. Shower and sleep. *Val Bolan*



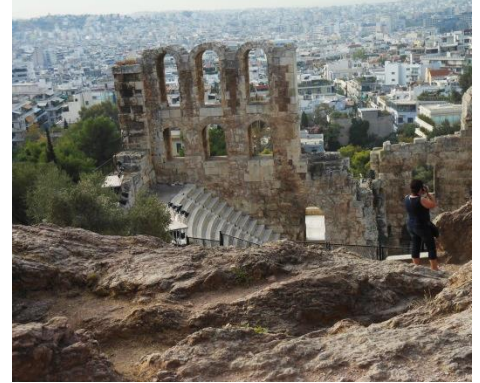
**October 8 – 17, 2013 Greece Post-Exchange Tour**

**Wednesday, October 9, 2013 Athens**

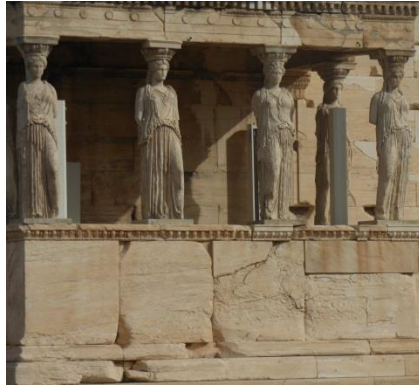
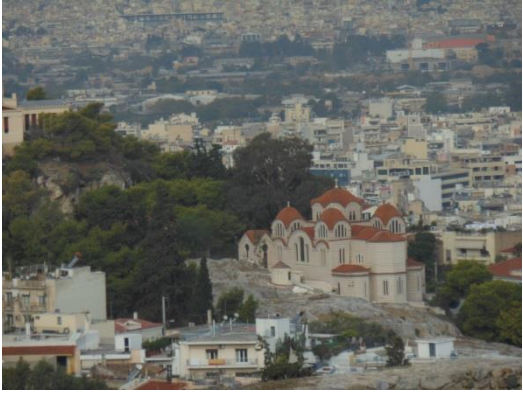


The group that went on to Greece had a tour of Athens the first morning. We stopped at the site of the first modern Olympic Games in 1896, drove past the Parliament House, the Presidential Palace, the National Library and many other sites. Then we climbed the rocky Acropolis, walked through the gate and saw many monuments up close, including the Parthenon, the Temple of Athena Nike and the Porch of Maidens on the Erechtheion. This photo of our group was taken after we entered the gate and were facing the Parthenon. *Rose Bennett*

Here are some of Val's photos from Athens.







## Thursday, October 10, 2013 Athens, Delphi, Kalambaka

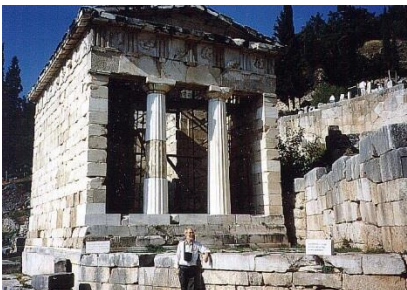
Roused at 5:30, Samantha, my roommate, heard someone knocking on the door. We dress & finish packing – must check out of the Callirhoe hotel by 7:45. We're determined to be early for breakfast which opens at 6:30 – we spotted 2 busloads of hungry looking people checking into the hotel last night which is apt to mean bedlam at meals. We breakfast with Gwen and Osa, and give Gwen the small plate plus place mats with napkins representing the remainder of the group's gift to her for acting as ED – we purchased these gifts last night in the Old City of Athens.

Following breakfast we check out of the hotel, taking only necessities for tonight and tomorrow since we'll return tomorrow night. Adonis, the guide from Homeric tours arrives and introduces the lady guide – an attractive curly-headed blonde from Chat Tours - who will be with us today. It's raining lightly as we depart the city, but we make good time arriving at Delphi around 10:30. During the ride the guide talks at great length about Delphi & its significance in Greek history.

Delphi is situated in a very mountainous region – a ski area in wintertime- the sanctuary is located at the foot of Mt Parnassus. It is now a World Heritage Site which was first settled about 1500 BC during the Bronze Age. It was considered the center of the world, according to Greek mythology Zeus released two eagles from the eastern and western sides of the earth, and they converged in Delphi - the navel or omphalos of the world. The Sun God, Apollo, killed the serpent, Python, and established the Oracle: people came from the entire known world to receive her answers to their questions. There were underground sources of natural gases in the area, and it's possible that the answers were given in a hallucinogenic drug-induced state. Probably most people traveled by boat, we are not far from the Bay of Corinth which has receded in modern times

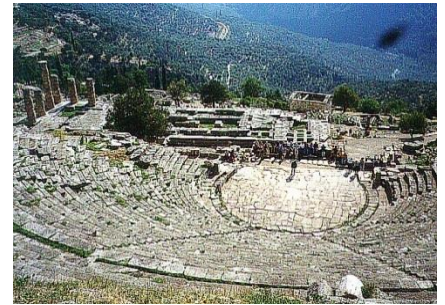
The first temple to Apollo was built around 650 BC, but it was destroyed by fire, and replaced by a second temple which was destroyed in an earthquake. The third temple replaced the first two, and the remains of it are what we saw today. There were other constructions – stadium, theatre, temple to Athena, huge statues and monuments – but now only the pedestals of these works remain. Delphi was first attacked by the Gauls in 200 BC, but later fell to the Romans where it remained until the Emperor Theodosius ended all pagan games in Greece. Since Mt. Parnassus was the center

of the Pan-Hellenic Pythian Games, this resulted in the decline of the area. Later a Christian community was established on the site, but it was abandoned in the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and the area languished until rediscovered by French archeologists in 1880.





Some of our members were so enthralled by the site that we were a little delayed in our departure, but we arrive at the restaurant in good time. Unfortunately three of us were not served promptly and we are gobbling our food as the others are preparing to leave. Following lunch we embark on an extended ride to Kalambaka - passing through the Thessalonian Plain, an agricultural area where olives, grapes, cotton and corn are growing. Finally after more than 6 hours in the bus, we arrive at the Amalia Hotel, are given an abundance of food at dinner, and fall into bed exhausted!! *Jean Sedar*



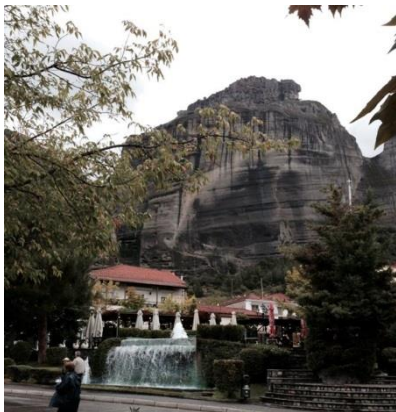
### Friday, October 11, 2013 Meteora to Athens

We departed from our stay at the Amalia Hotel in Kalambaka, early in the morning. On our rainy day trip to Meteora, the monasteries were mystically shrouded by clouds.

Perhaps you will remember the James bond thriller, *For Your Eyes Only*, which features a memorable scene towards the end, when James Bond is sent to Meteora, Greece. Bond attempts to shimmy up the sheer cliff-face. This scene was actually filmed at the Monastery of the Holy Trinity, one of our stops, known in the movie as the Monastery of Saint Cyril, the most isolated of all the monasteries. After making the effort to climb about 300 steps (Osa, did you count them?), we were rewarded with an incredible misty view of the valley and city of Kalambaka below. We also saw the rope basket used by the monks to ascend the steep cliff.



Our guide explained several of the Greek myths and legends of the surrounding area as well as some of the ancient and more recent history. Although the dress etiquette of the monasteries requires skirts, we were able to comply since wrap around skirts to be used by tourists are available at entrances. The "shower-base" toilets were as challenging as the steps!



The very ornate walls and ceilings of the churches within the monasteries we visited are covered with religious art.

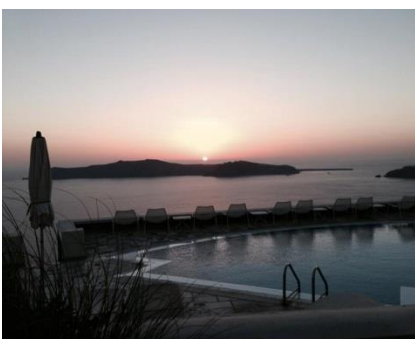
Most of us seemed very weary after our long two-day bus tour. *Mary Kinsey*



### Saturday, October 12, 2013 Athens to Santorini

Today was a travel day. We left our Athens hotel, travelled to the airport, then flew to Paradise, i.e. Santorini. A small bus transferred us to our lovely individual villas, overlooking the sea. The top level of our hotel featured a beautiful pool and lounging area with a view of the sea on all sides.

That night some of us ordered food from room service. The others went to a restaurant with an al fresco dining area, another gorgeous view and a quirky waiter. By the time we walked back to our hotel, darkness had descended. *Lucie Lenore*





## Sunday, October 13, 2013 Santorini, Greece

Today our group woke up in the very beautiful island of Santorini. There are 12,000 inhabitants who live all-year round in the island. We are staying at the hotel Xenones Filotera in the town of Imerovigli which is surrounded by the Aegean/Mediterranean seas. Our hotel is situated on a sort of peninsula and all our suites are facing the ocean. It was quite unique.

Our group of 10 is off in different directions today. Gwen, Osa, Val and I took a 6-hour bus tour of the island which took us to some of the larger villages. We visited the site of the Prehistoric Town of Akrotiri which is being excavated and joined a guided tour already in progress. After lunch in the Village of Pyrgos we took a walking tour of the small Village of Megalochori. We then went to Santo Wines in Pyrgos for wine tasting. Then continued to Oia (pronounced Eea) to watch the sun set. We enjoyed a lovely dinner in a restaurant overlooking the ocean. Took the bus back to our hotel for a good night's sleep. *Fay Harrison*



## Monday, October 14, 2013 Santorini to Rhodes

My roommate and I woke up early to have breakfast on the balcony as today sadly we were leaving this beautiful island. It has been a truly enchanting stay. The island of Santorini, Greece is absolutely beautiful. The white washed houses with their blue doors are breath taking. I am so relaxed I could stay indefinitely.

We were served an early breakfast on our balcony so that we would be ready for our 9:00 AM departure to the airport. Today was a travel day. We are to leave Santorini for the isle of Rhodes, Greece.

Mary Kinsey and Lucie Lenore joined Gwen Deas and me on the balcony for breakfast. Gwen and I had feta cheese and tomato omelets with tea and toast, looking out on the Aegean Sea.

Our flight schedule was Santorini to Athens and then Athens to the island of Rhodes, Greece. We did not reach Rhodes until 5:00 PM that evening. We were transported from the airport to the Hotel Mediterraen (Greek spelling) and arrived at 6:00 PM. I must say the contrast between Santorini and Rhodes is like day and night. It was like I left paradise and was transported back to the real world. Rhodes is a busy modern seaport island. Our hotel is very modern and is across the street from the beach.

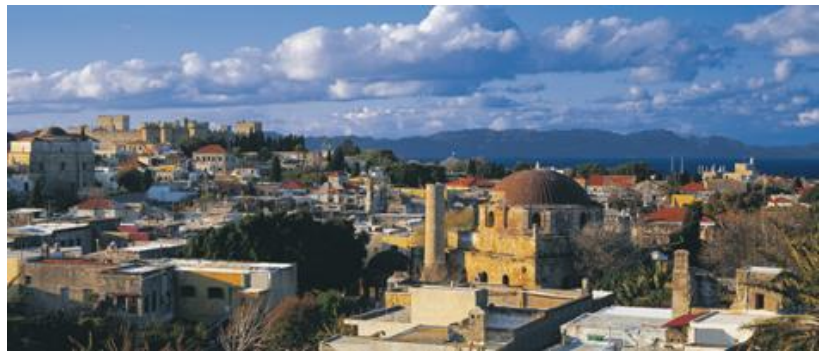
After unpacking I went to meet the rest of our group in the dining room for our first meal on the isle of Rhodes. *Osa Meekins*





## Tuesday, October 15, 2013 Rhodes

Today we decided to take the Hop-On Hop-Off bus around. The plan was to ride the loop once and then get off at places on the next time around. Some people did that and others headed for the beach. Here are some photos of the sights.



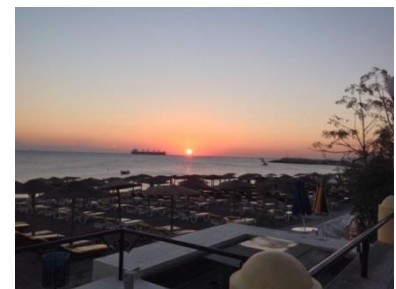
## Wednesday, October 16, 2013 Rhodes

I can't believe it's the day before we leave for home. We had decided on Tuesday to have a quiet day on Wednesday to rest up before the long journey home.

We awakened and we all met in the dining room for breakfast.

Several of us were really early for breakfast. I saw sunrise from the beach. We went across the street and found beach chairs, positioned them either for the maximum sun or minimum sun exposure. I had had it in my head that I wanted to go para-sailing since arriving at the hotel. I walked down the beach to the para-sailing business only to discover that the business wasn't open yet and that it was too pricey. Oh well, next time.

All around the ambassadors were chatting, playing games on iPads, reading, dozing, swimming or just going into the water. Lunch breaks were taken and then people







returned to the beach and some just wandered off to parts unknown until dinner.

Dinner was wonderful and very surprising for Osa. As it was our last night together and Osa's birthday was on Saturday, there was a surprise birthday party for him. Osa was speechless. As he is slightly hard of hearing, he didn't hear when the waiter almost spoiled the surprise by mentioning the cake. When Osa asked what the waiter had said, Osa was told he was too nose.



When the cake arrived, the WHOLE dining room sang "Happy Birthday" to Osa in English as Osa sat with his mouth open. This is a universal song!! How wonderful!!! The surprise and joy on Osa's will not be quickly forgotten. Osa was very generous with the remaining cake by giving it to the little girl at the next table.

After the dinner and birthday cake, the ambassadors went to their rooms to finish packing and to bed early for those who had early flights the following morning. *Robbie Thornton*

*(no photo available so I created my own - Sue)*



### Thursday, October 17, 2013 Our Last Day

Ring!! Ring!!! It was our very early wake up call. It was time to get up. The Turkey / Greece tour was finally over. It was time to go home but yet it was hard to believe that "it's all over." It is 5:00 AM and we were already running late. The hotel had prepared a special breakfast for us. Now our group was down from 13 ambassadors to the last 10 Greek travelers. We boarded our van and off we went to the Rhodes airport. We looked out the window and recalled our walks & tour all around Rhodes. These would be our last moments together. It was kind of funny as I look back on it. The group started peeling away like a banana. Sue, Larre and Karin had left us before our trip to Greece. Lucy and Mary left the group next and they started their trip straight back to the United States from Rhodes. The rest of the group went back to Athens. In Athens we divided again. Some of us went to Istanbul and the rest went to Frankfurt. All of us finally made it back to the United States of America safe and sound. We were glad to see Bridgewater, Cherry Hill, Closter, Collingswood, Cranbury, Fernandina Beach, Marlton, Medford, Mount Laurel, Newark, DE and Palmyra. *Gwendolyn Deas*

### October 8-11, 2014 Extension to Pergamum, Troy, Gallipoli and Istanbul

#### Tuesday, October 8, 2013 Pergamum

Sue, Larre and I met our driver at about 11:30 AM in the familiar parking lot in Guzelbahce. We rode comfortably for many hours through landscapes which varied from agricultural to mountainous regions.

It amazed me how much the country is being developed and changed through construction of highways and cities. After three to four hours we arrived in a rest stop in busy town near Bergama, where we met our guide who had been hired to lead us through Pergamum, an ancient site of ruins which dates from several hundred years B.C. to approximately 300-500 AD. After we had picked up the very tall and "slinky" looking guide he filled the cab with a thunderous voice of broken and rapid English. I finally had to tell him to slow it down a little and to try not to sound like a trumpet. He tried!!!!!!!!!!



We drove a long way up the elevation to the entry of the acropolis. "Broken but still mighty triple ramparts" enclose the upper town, with its temples, palaces, private houses, and gymnasia (schools). In later Roman times, the town spread out and down to the plain, where the Byzantines subsequently settled for good. After entering through the Royal Gate, there are several different paths over which we 'walked' and/or climbed. The first path took





us to the Temple of Trajan, at the summit, with its white marble pillars. On the terraces below we saw the scant remains of the Temple of Athena and the Altar of Zeus which was extracted from that site by German archeologists and stands now fully reassembled in the famous Berlin Pergamum Museum. We walked through the Great Theater, saw the remains of the famous library, built by Eumenes II (197 - 159 B.C.) which was then in competition with the great library of Alexandria. Egypt. As a result of this competition the sale of papyrus from Egypt was banned and parchment, made from animal skin was developed. We admired Roman architecture, underground vaults, which made possible the construction of a flat surface above for the theater. Other vaults which served for food storage etc. were also identifiable. We spent more than 1½ hours on the Pergamum site and learned of its extensive history of a town surrounding the Acropolis with a population of more than 15000 people.



We finally left Pergamum and passed by the famous Red Basilica in the town of Bergama, the last pagan temple constructed before Christianity was declared the state religion in the 4th century, when it was converted into a basilica dedicated to St. John. We did not stop to see it in more detail as I had hoped. We dropped off our guide (who wanted to save the bus fare) and I was happy to rest my aching legs back in the front seat. We visited another, and I must say a more authentic, carpet store, which exhibited truly Turkish carpets of brilliant natural colors, which were woven by local people. We admired and resisted buying any of them. *Karin*



We didn't leave the carpet factory until after 5:30 PM and then we had a long ride to Cannakale. We got to Cannakale and the driver dropped us at the ferry. He had to drive back to Izmir. We took the ferry across Eceabat. We were supposed to be



met at the pier but there was no one there and I had noticed the hotel as we pulled in so we walked there ourselves. We checked in and went to our rooms then went out to find some food. It was almost 10:00 PM. We found a small restaurant a few blocks away near the water. We ordered our food, ate and went back to the hotel. One funny thing – Larre wanted a Fanta and they didn't have any in the case. The waiter went out the front door, was gone for several minutes and came

back with a Fanta. He obviously went somewhere else to buy one. The hotel is like a hostel – lots of young people from around the world. The rooms were clean but simple. We went to bed but it was hard to get to sleep since there was a big party going on in the dining room with lots of singing and loud talk in multiple languages. *Sue*



Hotel: The Crowded House, Ismetpasa Mah. Huseyin Avni, Sokak No:4, Eceabat 17900, Turkey

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Wednesday, October 9, 2013

After a night's rest in our hostel-like hotel, we rode the ferry back to the Asian side of the Dardanelles to Canakkale where we met the guide who was to show us Troy, a UNESCO Heritage site. (Remember Homer's Iliad?) Because of its location bordering both Europe and



Asia, Troy has been inhabited and built and re-built by many different peoples, like Hittites, Persians, the armies of Alexander the Great, Romans, Byzantines, and Ottomans, all of whom have left their imprint on this site. You can identify these time periods (from 1200 B.C. to 1566) by differing building methods and materials. At the very entry of the site there stands a large wooden Trojan horse into which people can climb to have their pictures taken looking out through the little windows. A famous (or as our guide stated, an infamous) German archeologist, Heinrich Schliemann, discovered the site and found not only multiple layers of historical periods, but also "hoards of jewels that he

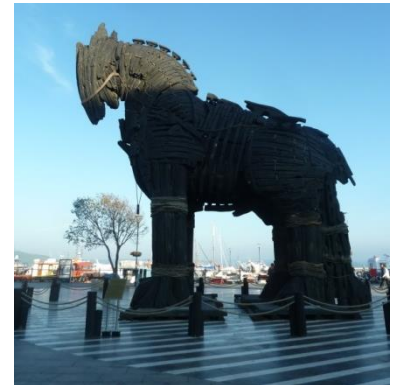


believed were those of King Priam." He smuggled them out of Turkey, they ended up in the Berlin Pergamum Museum, disappeared again in 1993, until Moscow announced that its Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts housed the "Treasure of Priam". We took many photos of Troy since all of us had been intrigued by its myths and history. These depict Roman arches, walls which reveal several layers of construction from different time periods. Our guide was very knowledgeable and pretty, and she climbed on top of one of the Roman pillars to have her picture taken as a souvenir. *Karin*



Once I got to sleep, I slept well. We were the first at breakfast.

The young man who was at the desk last night when we arrived was slicing rolls and putting out the food this morning. This was the best breakfast we have had so far – lots of choices. We took the ferry to Cannakale arriving about 8:30 AM, and our guide took us to see the Trojan horse statue that was built for the movie Troy and given to the city. Then we were driven



to the ancient city of Troy about 30 minutes away.

The archaeological site of Troy is of great significance in the



understanding of the development of European civilization at a critical stage in its early development. It is also of exceptional cultural importance because of the profound influence of Homer's Iliad on the creative arts over more than two millennia.

Troy II and Troy VI in particular are characteristic examples of the ancient city, with a majestic fortified citadel enclosing palaces and administrative buildings, surrounded by an extensive lower town, also fortified. The surrounding landscape contains many

important prehistoric and historical sites: cemeteries, Hellenistic burial







mounds, Greek and Roman settlements, Roman and Ottoman bridges, etc. The stonework was amazing. We stopped briefly at a café and then returned to The Crowded House for lunch before departing on our tour to Gallipoli.

This time we had a bigger crowd – mostly Australians and New Zealanders since they are most interested in Gallipoli. The Gallipoli Peninsula is bordered by the Aegean Sea to the west and the Dardanelles, a strategic waterway giving access to the Sea of Marmara, the Bosphorus and the Black Sea. In ancient times this deep channel was known as the Hellespont. The peninsula was the scene of one of the bloodiest campaigns of World War I – waged between 25 April 1915 and 9 January 1916, There were nearly 500,000 Allied (Australian, British, French, Indian and New Zealand) and Turkish casualties (dead, wounded, missing and prisoners of war.) We visited beaches, war cemeteries, memorials and reconstructed

trenches.

The campaign was one of the greatest Ottoman victories during the war and is considered a major failure of the Allies. In Turkey, it is

thought of as a defining moment in the nation's history—a final surge in the defense of the motherland as the Ottoman Empire crumbled. The struggle formed the basis for the Turkish War of Independence and the founding of the Republic of

Turkey eight years later under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, a commander at Gallipoli. The campaign is often considered to mark the birth of national consciousness in Australia and New Zealand and the date of the landing, 25 April, is known as "ANZAC Day". It remains the most significant commemoration of military casualties and veterans there.

While Americans played no part in the battle I was interested in visiting the area because we were in Australia on

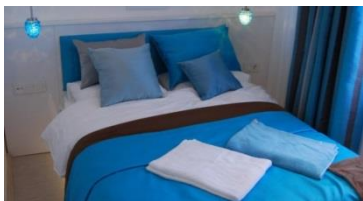
ANZAC Day and the country comes to a stop for something that took place nearly 100 years ago. Gallipoli has become a pilgrimage spot for Aussies and Kiwis. Our fellow tour participants were very interested in seeing as much as they could.

We finally got back to The Crowded House about 6 PM and left for our drive to Istanbul. We stopped at a rest stop about 8 PM for dinner and arrived in Istanbul about 10:30 PM. We were the first to be dropped off but when they stopped the van, there was no hotel visible. One

of the people on the van turned his phone on to use his GPS and he said we were close. The driver called the hotel and we drove on a bit and they pointed to a little sign up the street. There was a flight of steps which we dragged our suitcases down. We found ourselves in a little alley and there was the Minel Hotel. The two men working there took our luggage and led us in. They gave us our keys and a map of attractions, said we could pay the next day and took us up to our rooms. It is a beautiful little hotel. We were tired after a very long

day. What a nice room! Sue

Hotel: Minel Hotel, Alemdar Mah. Guzel Sanatlar sok. No:11 Sultanahmet, Fatih, 34121 Istanbul, Turkey  
Tel: +90 212 527 00 78  
www.minelhotel.com



**Thursday, October 10, 2013**

Since breakfast wasn't served until 8:30 AM, we slept late and then went downstairs to the bright dining area for a delicious Turkish breakfast. We talked to a couple from Connecticut before setting off for the ferry boat. We walked to





the water and then had to walk to the very last boat which was the round-trip excursion up the Bosphorus from the Galata Bridge to Anadolu Kavağı on the Asian side. The ferry made 6 stops. We enjoyed the scenery. When the ferry stopped at Anadolu Kavağı, we got off and made our way to the hill where we took the shortcut to the ruined fortress on *Yuşa Tepesi* (Joshua's Hill), reconstructed by the Genoese in 1350, and repaired by Byzantines and Ottomans. We stopped part way up at an outdoor restaurant where we rested, had lunch and enjoyed watching the cats running around. We had a great view of the Bosphorus. Turkey has



a huge number of feral cats and dogs but they are mostly in good condition and quite well behaved and friendly. We continued up to the castle where a guard let us in and we could see the Black Sea. The fortress is a working archaeological dig. Larre and Karin walked for some other views but I had had enough and started back down. We went back to the ferry pier and had to wait for some time before we could board the ferry back to Eminönü.



We got back about 5 PM and started to walk back to the hotel but there was some question about the right way to go. Karin was also checking out several of the shops. We also found a restaurant that served manti – the first we've seen in Turkey. It wasn't time to eat but we said we would come back later. We walked on and I recognized the Montana Café that was near our hotel. We turned in there and a waiter came over saying, "Hello, my neighbors." He showed us the menu and I asked whether they had manti which was not on the menu. He said they did and that he had had it yesterday. We said we would come back after a rest. We went back to the hotel which was just around the corner and took a rest. Larre decided he wanted fast food for dinner so he went off by himself. Karin and I went to the Montana Café and our friendly waiter ran out and greeted us and led us upstairs for dinner. We were the only customers and had 3 people taking care of us. I asked about manti and he again said that they had it. He told us we should share a meze platter so we could sample lots of different things and then they would bring our manti. While we were eating the meze I saw Larre walking by and the waiter yelled down to him that we were upstairs. They brought him up and gave him free tea. We finished the meze and then they brought huge bowls of manti which I am certain they bought from another restaurant, but it was delicious and they were so happy we were there. I had some tea and they wanted us to have dessert but we were too full. We were tired and wanted to go back to the hotel,



but they didn't want us to leave. Finally some other people came and they let us go. They said we should come back tomorrow before our flight. We walked back to the hotel, finished packing and went to bed. *Sue*

### Friday, October 11, 2013

Just as we were about to go down for breakfast, there was a power failure. We used a flashlight to get downstairs and breakfast was served. We still had not paid for our stay and because of the power outage the credit card machine couldn't be used so we paid in cash. Then we walked to the Basilica Cistern which Kerry had mentioned before we left for Turkey. The hotel was close to most of the major tourist spots, including this one. We walked over and



went in. This immense underground water container was built during the reign of Emperor Justinian I in 532 to meet the water needs of the Great Palace.

The Basilica Cistern is 143 meters long and 65 meters wide. The roof is supported by 336 marble columns, mostly in Ionic or Corinthian styles, each measuring 9 meters in length. Spaced at four-meter intervals, they are arranged in 12 rows of 28 columns each.

The cistern was forgotten for centuries and only accidentally rediscovered by the Frenchman Peter Gyllius in 1545. While researching Byzantine antiquities in the city, he noticed that people in the neighborhood not only got a hold of water by simply lowering buckets through holes in their basements, they miraculously sometimes even caught fish this way.

After cleaning and restoring the Basilica Cistern, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality opened it to the public in 1987. After descending into the underground water facility via a flight of stairs, we walked on the concrete walkways, enjoying the subdued lighting and the cool temperatures.



In the far left-hand corner of the cistern there are two Medusa heads. Both heads are used as column bases; one positioned upside down, the other tilted to the side. Both their positioning as their origin remain a mystery up till now, although rumor has it that they were recycled from an antique building of the late Roman period.

We walked back toward the hotel. Karin went and did some shopping and Larre took a walk but my back hurt so I went back to the hotel. Karin came back and we sat at a table in the alley to wait for our cab. One last drive through Istanbul past the old city walls and then we went on to the airport. We went through security when we entered the airport, checked in and Larre went to get some

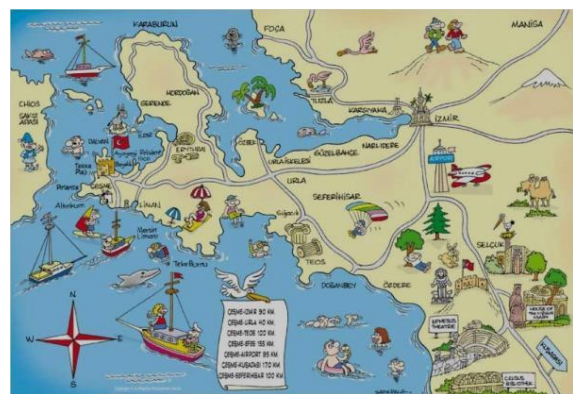


lunch at Burger King. Karin and I went through further security and immigration and started toward the gate. We walked through the Duty-free area and passed many places to eat, but Karin wanted to get to the gate area. Unfortunately after we got to the gate we found we were in an area that had no shops and only a few soda and snack machines so we had nothing to eat and nothing to spend our money on. I guess I'll have to return. Larre came and we were taken by bus to where the plane was parked. On the bus we met a young Turkish woman who lives in Raleigh. We spoke on the ride to the plane and she came by my seat several times during the flight. We had a layover in Toronto and then got on the plane. I fell asleep while we were sitting at the gate and didn't wake up until we landed in Philadelphia. Sue



Map of Our Stops in Turkey and Greece

Map of the Greater Izmir Area





**FF Guzelbahce, Turkey**

**October 1 - 8, 2013**



**Metin Kilic & Samantha Monheit**



**Nihal Senyuz, Ilgaz Senyuz, Jean Sedar, Rustira**



**Tulin Angin, Hilmi Angin, Robbie Thornton**



**Arife Bektas, Gwen Deas, Haydar Bektas**



**Gulcicek Ok, Karin Sannwald and Musa Ok**



**Nazli Ceyhan, Mehmet Koc, Rose Bennett, Yildiz Koc**

**Gulen Mercimek, Larre Hoke,  
Sue Hoke, Tayfun Mecimek**



**Mary Kinsey, Baha Tanverdi,  
Inclay Tanverdi, Lucie Lenore**



**Fay Harrison, Cuneyt Sarac  
Seniha Sarac, Val Bolan**





**Nurel Tufan & Osa Meekins**



**The Group at Ephesus**

