



# NEWSLETTER

Volume 2, Issue 1

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## Support Uplift Armenia, Become a Global Citizen

Richard C. Funt, Ph.D.



I am a citizen of Columbus, Ohio United States of America. I pay local, state, federal income taxes. I collect and pay sales tax when someone purchases a Christmas tree from Carobeth Berry Farm. As a citizen of Adams County, Pennsylvania, I was number one on the draft list in August, 1968. In May of 1970 I was stationed at Camp Radcliff, An Khe, Binh Dinh province Vietnam when I read the Stars and Stripes newspaper about the killing of students (US citizens) at Kent State by Ohio National Guard troops. It was difficult for me to understand such an event.

Camp Radcliff was the base camp for the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and for the 1<sup>st</sup> Cav and had over 450 helicopters. For 12 months I was a citizen of Vietnam and as most US soldiers, we worked alongside with indigenous personnel. They cleaned our clothes and cleaned our latrines. There was mutual respect for each other because we lived in a difficult environment. The country side was beautiful and the war increased the level of poverty and I observed children scouring the US military dumps for whatever we threw away. Severe poverty.

Since then I have spent approximately 1 month per year in a foreign country, if you count the 12 months in Vietnam. Just a few years ago I met a young girl (In Armenia) from Hue, Vietnam. I tried to apologize for what the US Army did to her city during Tet in 1968. She replied “I wasn’t born yet!” Such experiences make one feel ‘at home’ A global citizen

I have accepted many consulting assignments from USAID (ACDI-VOCA) to Bolivia, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan which are some most impoverished countries in the world. Yet, as I was working to improve their lives and increase their income, this human bond created the most important compliment that anyone can have which is “when will you come again, you are always welcome” But while on a 22 week assignment for USAID (USDA) in Armenia I found my second home and I renewed my global citizenship

In our first newsletter, I explained “the enlightenment” which occurred on a Saturday assignment in a remote village in Armenia. I represented the USDA where the village leaders, parents and children planted fruit trees to improve their lives. And yes the point was made that I was to keep working toward having “12 apples grow where 6 apples use to grow”. But I was also told the story of a 9 year old girl who collapsed at the stairs to a school (a school without doors and windows) because she was hungry. Going to school hungry and to a cold building without heat or stove to cook lunch, was an event that should not occur in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century anywhere in the world. I have returned to Armenia many times and intended to do so again in the near future. Armenia is my second home because I am a global citizen. I intend for all children, orphans, refugees or those of single parents to have breakfast, go to a warm class room and learn so that they can be productive global citizens. So I ask you to become a global citizen and support Uplift Armenia by becoming a Founding Member at the \$300.00 level.

**Richard C. Funt, PhD**, Director of The Armenian Children’s Support Fund, has had the opportunity to be a part of the Great American Agricultural Revolution during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with his assignments at the University of Maryland and Ohio State College of Agriculture. He believes that we must engage high school and college students in Agriculture and Medical research

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### **Introducing the Global Citizen Concept-Muskingum University, New Concord, Ohio, November 7<sup>th</sup> 2017.**

**Richard C. Funt, Ph.D.**

I was invited to speak on November 7<sup>th</sup> to a political science class (40 students POLS151-1 and POLS151-2 Introduction to International Relations) at Muskingum University lead by Associate professor, Dr. .Richard Arnold. He is also Co-advisor of International Affairs Major. I met Richard on a flight to Detroit n October, 2015 where we discussed my work in Armenia. I was on the first part of my trip to Armenia at the time and when I arrived in Yerevan I returned an email to him. Small world.

The lecture began with a definition of what it means to be a ‘citizen’. Students responded individually and then three groups attempted to write a short definition of being a citizen (village, state, and nation) on the black board. Then came the hard question “Define what it is to be a global citizen” In short a global citizen recognizes people of other countries as neighbors which allows social interaction , assisting with health care, education, reducing global warming and reducing hunger.

Prof. Arnold divided the class into three parts and asked each group to go on a book drive for Armenian children. I drove my F-150 pickup to the University to pick up 8 to 10 bags of books. The books were in very good condition and some were brand new. Listed below are a few titles:

*Physical Science* (Teacher edition textbook)  
*Life in the Soil* (Grade 2 to 4)  
*Simple Machines* (Grades 1to 3)  
*Solar System* (Grades 2 to 4)  
*Science Process Skills Hands On Student Performance*

*Earth Science/Concepts and Challenges*  
*Corporate Finance*  
*Consumer Behavior*  
*The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck  
*Skipping Christmas* by John Grisham

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## Life as a Global Citizen

Gretchen Hopley, M.S.



When I was young my grandfather would like to say, "When the soup bowl comes around don't get caught with a fork in your hand."

Then he would hand me a spade and into the fields we would go. The importance of having the right tool for the job has always guided my vocational endeavors.

My objectives have been and continue to be to provide leadership, training and education in the pursuit of food security across cultures. This of course requires knowing what tools are needed. I pursued early on in my career those experiences that would help me develop those tools to succeed in my goals.

At age 16 I embarked west and enrolled in an Outward Bound Survival course in the San Juan Region of the Rocky Mountains in southern Colorado to learn outdoor survival skills. I followed with another course 5 years later at age 21 in Kenya, East Africa where I led a mountaineering expedition on Mt. Kenya with the National Outdoor Leadership School.

While studying at Colorado State University for a degree in agronomy I took a semester off and served with the National Council of Churches in Kenya, East Africa. I taught English to girls in Secondary School in the remote Rift Valley of Northern Kenya where the Sumburu Tribe resides.

After completing my B.S in agronomy I joined the U.S Peace Corps and served for three years in Senegal, West Africa as an agricultural extension agent.

When I returned to Colorado I became assistant manager for the Colorado Seed Growers Association providing leadership for programs promoting the use acceptance, and marketing of certified commodities in Colorado. Using my extension skills I formulated agricultural training programs for the Colorado State University Cooperative Extension Service including seminars, workshops and technical reports.

As Executive Secretary to the Colorado Seedsmen Association I led statewide efforts to market Colorado Seed Growers services, enhance Colorado Seed Growers image.

and assist producers in their marketing.

I trained and supervised field inspectors and worked collaboratively with the Colorado State Plant Division to coordinate official seed sampling procedures.

As well I was responsible for producing the annual, western and international seed conferences for Colorado State.

I developed interstate relationships to allow farmers and university plant breeder's access to bean, wheat, and grass varieties developed and licensed by other states.

Developing and documenting transportation logistics I was responsible for the movement of licensed commodities into Colorado.

Taking a break from seed work I hired on as a cowgirl for a Colorado cattle rancher for a couple years while building my own small ranch where I bred and raised Navajo-Churro Sheep, American Quarter Horses and Thoroughbreds. After this I accepted a job with USDA's Foreign Agriculture Service working as an International Training Specialist in Central Asia for the Cochran Fellowship Program. I designed training programs for agriculturalists, businesses and Government officials to participate in the United States. This required that I travel throughout Central Asia interviewing farmers and designing the right programs for them to excel at their goals.

After completing five years of training programs for USDA I decided to pursue my Masters in broadcast media. A skill that has been useful in my continued work as a consultant with USAID in extension agriculture.

Challenging me to work in diverse and physically demanding environments with the goal of gaining experience and insight I believe is critical to an understanding of the dynamics of food and agricultural issues facing the world today.

My work experiences in Africa, Central Asia and the United States highlight a comprehensive training and educational focus devoted to the economic advancement of the agriculture sector. It includes community action, civil engagement, research, education and outreach. These attributes are what highlight the American part of what it is to be thriving community that contributes to its own.

It is why I chose to serve in Africa as a volunteer, it is the reason I became involved with a farmers cooperative, it is the reason I applied to work with the Foreign Ag Service and the reason I chose to build a ranch with my own hands. On the job training in all of these areas is an absolute necessity in order to be a part of the momentum of public service organizations as well as for this momentum to be maintained.

Choosing to live and work in very different cultures and experiencing nights where the ranch was vast and my own undertaking humbled by the universe one learns that the sacred can be both frightening and reassuring. I have taught myself over the years. In a way it is my tuition and the truth of it is realizing how important our connections with each other are, in this way our weakness is our strength. Our tendency to rely on others is the way we will save ourselves and perhaps others as well.

My family still farms corn and soybeans on the same quarter section of land bought for \$2.50/acre by my ancestors in 1869 in Northwest Iowa and I return every summer thankful for the inspiration my grandfather gave me to always pursue the right "tools" for the job.

Given the fractured nature of agriculture and food security in the world we live in today without organizations like Uplift Armenia that aim to educate individuals in sustainable agriculture we will be slower to advance as a community together. I truly believe in the importance and relevancy of the Uplift Armenia Organization and am greatly looking forward to having the opportunity to apply my skills and experience to the team.

**Gretchen Hopley, MS**, Broadcast Media; has knowledge of several languages, has been a member of the US Peace Corp as an Agriculture Extension Agent, Senegal, West Africa. and many other experiences She is a member of our advisory team. Gretchen was introduced to Uplift Armenia by Chris Andrew who also has vast international Agricultural experience.

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### **First Annual Dinner – Barbeque and Berries**

Uplift Armenia held its first Annual Members Dinner on November 10<sup>th</sup> at the West Walnut Park in Marengo, Ohio with 14 people attending plus four other people who made a donation but were unable to attend. The catered meal of barbeque pork and berries on top of vanilla ice cream became a signature of Uplift as the Barbeque and Berries Festival. Ross Porter gave a brief presentation of Section 1 of our planned campus for K-12 STEM+M school. A silent auction, which included Armenia wine and Armenian Cognac and American fresh baked pies, jams pasta etc. brought in extra dollars for The Armenian's Children Support Fund. Those who attended became more enthusiastic for our future.