



In 1990, the first group of Peace Corps volunteers to serve in Central and Eastern Europe departed for Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and the Slovak Republic. Five years later — six years after the Velvet Revolution ended 40 years of Communist rule in Czechoslovakia — Steve Kautz, '88, was assigned to Blatna in the Czech Republic, a small town of about 6,000 located some 60 miles from Prague.

As a business development volunteer, he wore many hats. Kautz taught and served as a curriculum adviser at a local vocational high school that was transitioning from an agricultural focus to an economics and business education program. He also worked as an adviser to the district chamber of commerce and taught marketing at Southern Bohemia University. And then there was his side project: working with a local baseball and softball program. ("Blatna translates into 'Mudville,' which was fantastic and fitting . . .," notes Kautz.)

Home was the high school dormitory, located next to a 14th century castle and an enclosed English-style park with tree-lined carriage roads. "I spent



continued on page 35

Peace Owls, Kautz
continued from page 13

countless hours running in the park, feeding the deer, touring the castle, or having coffee with the Baroness. Yes, a real baroness lived there," says Kautz.

The experience made an indelible impression. "I made incredible lifelong friendships and I learned far more than I taught. I learned about myself and about my capabilities. I gained an appreciation for history. I learned that when you are uncomfortable, you are truly growing," writes Kautz.

For the past eight years, he has lived in Maine where he works as a math and finance teacher at the Waynflete School, a private day school in Portland. He is also the varsity baseball coach.

From Peace Corp news

Thanks to my dear mom from the Czech Republic

Dear editor:

Hello. I live in the Czech Republic. I came here in June 1995 as a Peace Corps Volunteer and after finishing my two-year term as a volunteer, I stayed for a third year as a volunteer, but without Peace Corps support, to continue the work I started.

My parents moved to Crossville in early 1995 and live there now. They send me copies of the paper from time to time and I look at your web site regularly.

During the nearly three years I have been here, my mom has sent me more packages than I can count. I always have some M&Ms, papers, special tea or coffee, to make me feel at home. This has made my difficult time here much more manageable, especially with homesickness.

She sends tapes of the family Christmas party (the family is all around Crossville, Oak Ridge, Harriman, Wartburg, etc.) and pictures from the summer picnic.

What can I ever do to thank her...never enough. But I would love to say thanks in your newspaper (my folks read it all the time). Is there a way I could do something?

Steve Kautz

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(Editor's note: You just did.)