



Director's Column

by ILEA Director, John Terpinas

"The bus leaves in 15 minutes." These are the last words that I say at each ILEA graduation banquet. This phrase has become an ILEA tradition passed on from Director to Director. These words are both an administrative announcement as well as a symbolic declaration that an ILEA participant has just become an ILEA alumnus.

I have now graduated 4 ILEA classes and met dozens of alumni. It is always a thrill for me to meet alumni and hear their stories. In this month's newsletter, we have a great story from Hungarian alumnus (ILEA Session #54) Attila Pataki who describes how his training at ILEA helped prepare him for service in Afghanistan. You will also read about ILEA alumnus (Session #45) Dimitar Georgiev, the Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Interior, who returned in March to teach in our Border Interdiction specialized course. We are very proud of our ILEA alumni and invite you to share your success stories with us. We also love when alumni visit us. It is always a joy accompany alumni when they return to ILEA as they look up their class photo on the wall, see their old seat in the classroom and remember the good times they enjoyed at ILEA.

I have written in the past about the small changes that we are making to enhance the program. One recent change also described in this newsletter is the new interactive city tour. No longer do we put participants on a bus with a tour guide; instead we give them a transit pass, maps, and a list of Budapest landmarks that they must visit. It is great to see the team building as the participants work together to plan their journey.

While we have made many small changes in the past year, 2012 will see one of the biggest changes since the creation of ILEA Budapest in 1995. Each session many well-qualified candidates are not able to attend ILEA because 8 weeks is too long for them to be away from their jobs and families. For this and other reasons, a revamped new 6-week curriculum will rollout beginning with Session #88 in October.

The staff and I have already started work to make sure that we maintain all of the good features of the ILEA program: classroom training, practical exercises, teambuilding, the Bogrács Challenge, physical training and English language learning. Managing these changes will be a demanding and challenging project, but ILEA Budapest is ready for the task. You can be sure there will always be a graduation banquet and at the end of the evening's festivities, I will close the banquet with these words: *"The bus leaves in 15 minutes."*



ILEA driver:
Ferenc Nagy



Bulgarian Deputy Minister Speaks to Border Interdiction Class

ILEA Alumnus and current Bulgarian Deputy Minister of Interior Dimitar Georgiev spoke to the Border Interdiction Course on March 22. It was a real thrill for Deputy Minister Georgiev to return as a speaker just 8 years after he had completed ILEA Session #45. His topic "Implementation of Schengen Standards" was important and timely for the participating countries: Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Romania.

Bulgaria and Romania are already EU member states who will be admitted to the Schengen Zone upon demonstrating that they are fully implementing Schengen standards, a step that Deputy Minister Georgiev expects will be granted for air and sea borders this year. Macedonia is an EU candidate country which shares a common border with Bulgaria and Schengen member country Greece.

The Deputy Minister's remarks served as a perfect complement to the emphasis that the Customs and Border Protection instructors placed upon the importance of developing liaison relationships between border police units. Many new technical devices are deployed to protect borders, but unless neighbors work together to share information and coordinate responses, borders cannot be secured. By bringing neighboring countries together for this course, ILEA helps to build effective liaison relationships in the region.

The week of Deputy Minister Georgiev's visit coincided with the commencement of Session #85 which included delegations from Bulgaria, Hungary, and Kosovo. In honor of the two delegations from Bulgaria and the visit of the Bulgarian Deputy Minister a special Bulgarian National dinner was held on the evening of March 22 combining the core course and the specialized course. Over 100 people packed the ILEA cafeteria to enjoy this evening of Bulgarian food, music, and dance.

Session #84: “We Are Number One”

ILEA Session #84 brought together 16 Albanians, 16 Bosnians, 16 Croatians, and 2 Hungarians. Under the enthusiastic direction of Class Coordinator Kent Wager from Customs and Border Protection, Session #84 set the goal to be the best ILEA session ever and their class slogan became “We Are Number One.”

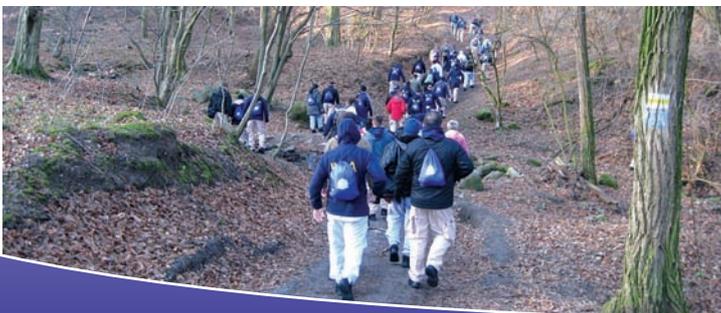
Because the weather in January was mild, the group was able to travel to Ram Canyon. Halfway up the mountain the group encountered snow and ice which created a beautiful sight on a bright sunny winter's day as the ILEA hikers mixed with cross-country skiers. The gulyás lunch was served below the summit of Dobokógó and below the snow line. The hot gulyás served directly from the bogrács over an open fire never tasted better.

While January was a mild month, February quickly turned cold and bitter. A severe winter storm forced the postponement of the trip to Visegrád on February 4, but all was not lost since the snow created an opportunity to make a snowman and the trip to Visegrád was rescheduled for Feb. 18.

A great honor for the class was the visit of the Albanian Minister of Interior Bujar Nishani. While not an ILEA alumnus, Minister Nishani received international training in the United States while still an army officer. Speaking forcefully and personally, he stressed to the participants the importance of the training opportunity they had at ILEA Budapest.

No participant was more inspired than Sokol Pepkolan. Tragically he received word on February 2 that his mother had passed away in Albania. Immediately the ILEA staff made reservations to get him home, which required a drive that morning to Vienna to catch a flight, just before a huge storm descended on the area. Once back in his village, Sokol found himself snowbound after the storm dumped 2 meters of snow. Rather than wait indefinitely for his mountain village to be plowed out, Sokol walked 7 kilometers through the deep snow to the closest road in order to complete his course with his ILEA colleagues.

After 3 weeks of cold and snow, by the end of February warmer weather had returned and the final 2400 meter fitness run was held outdoors as scheduled. The hard training paid off and virtually every participant saw big improvements in their times and general level of fitness. As usual by graduation time the class of 50 had become close friends, and for session #84 their experience was unforgettable. Like very session which preceded #84, the participants left with a deep sense of accomplishment and great memories. In their minds they will always be “Number One.”



What a Great Time in the Heart of Budapest!

ILEA PT instructor Péter Pakányi reports on the inaugural ILEA Interactive City Tour of Budapest.

We decided to develop a new program for our ILEA students. This program is called the Interactive City Tour of Budapest. Our goal was to display this beautiful city through fun and games for our students. Some weeks ago we introduced this program which was designed with some fun tasks in Budapest that require teamwork as well as challenge which can only be overcome through working together.

The task was to find some very well-known locations in Budapest and upon arrival answer some questions. We gave them 13+1 tasks which turned out to be sufficient. Before starting the mission students received an envelope which contained a map and the list of tasks. By using this map they were able to find out how to reach their next destination.

The exercise began with breaking up our students into 5 groups of 10 people each. Our students had to visit the most memorable parts of Budapest. These were the Buda Castle District, the Heroes Square, the Margaret Island, the Great Market-Hall and the Duna Corso. They had to shake hands with one of the presidents of the United States who was walking somewhere in the city (see the picture below) as well as in the vicinity of the Heroes Square find the statue of “Anonymous” and make a group photo with him.

We had a great time together with a lot of laugh. We were very lucky with the weather which couldn't have been any better for this exercise. We have to admit that after visiting these places and answering all of these questions everybody became very tired, so the food that we received when we got back at the ILEA was divine. We agreed that we not only learned a lot about this city but we also learned a lot about each other. We would like to thank the directors for joining us during this program.

My Success story

By Police Captain Attila Pataki

I was a student of the ILEA Budapest session 54 from January to March of 2006. The quality of the training and education we received was by far the most professional anywhere. The trainers who taught this class were from some of the most respected Law enforcement and Federal Agencies in the United States. The Hungarian and American staff were truly professional and did an outstanding job.

Those eight weeks strengthened my belief that this career I have chosen truly requires special skills to give your best to your community. The challenges and unforgettable moments of giving something to your community is something that is difficult if not impossible to describe.

Communication is an Officer's biggest asset, it is a challenge for an officer to communicate in a language other than their native language. This class improved my English so much, the instructors were patient and understanding of our difficulties. All of the language assistants and staff were outstanding. Sometime early in 2009 I applied for my first International Peace Keeping Mission to Egypt as a member of the Multinational Force and Observers. When I found out I had been chosen to deploy as a Military Police Investigator attached to this unit because of my English comprehension skills, I discovered all the hard work I had put in practicing English had paid off. This was a very demanding position and great experience. During my time on this Mission I was promoted to Captain by the Minister of Internal Affairs and in the last six months to the position of Chief Investigator. I completed my Mission in September of 2010. I received The Force Commanders Certificate Award for outstanding performance while on this mission.

A few months after returning to Hungary I was to face a yet new challenge, I was chosen to go to the most dangerous place on this earth, Afghanistan, a war zone. I had no idea how important the training I received while attending ILEA was, until I deployed my first time outside the wire in a hostile environment. I am with EUPOL in Afghanistan working as a Police Mentor/Advisor/Trainer in Baghlan Province in Northern Afghanistan. I contribute my success on this mission to the excellent training I received while attending the ILEA course.

Thank You ILEA Budapest, you are awesome!



Staff Profile:

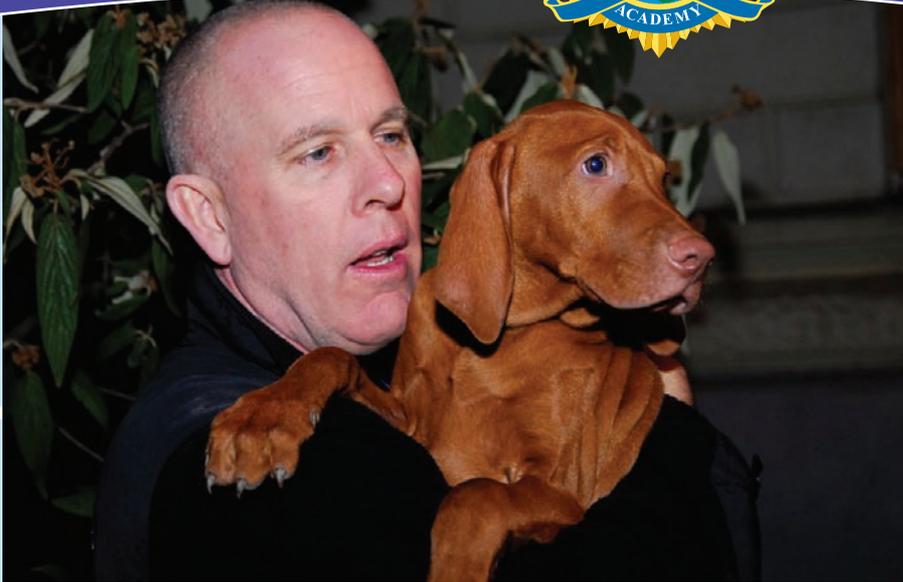
Tihanyi Réka

"Man proposes, God disposes." This saying describes very well the situation I got in in February 2009, when I came here to ILEA. I worked as a product manager at an importer company before, keeping daily contact with English- and German-speaking business partners. It was a great chance for me to practice languages and I didn't want to give it up. So after quitting the company I decided to leave the country and go to England or anywhere where I could practice English. I visualized my future life as roaming around Europe with one backpack and no specific goals. I was excited... and quite surprised when I got a phone call from ILEA that they were interested in my CV and wanted to meet me at a job interview. I was happy but frankly speaking- hesitant, too, because I didn't know much about the job and I had already decided to continue my life among English people. You can imagine how happy I was when I learned that I would be the assistant of native English-speaking directors. So how was the story about Mohammed and the mountain? :)

I'm very happy to have gotten this opportunity just at the last minute and I have enjoyed the last 3 years very much. It's really exciting to work for agents from FBI and DS, observing police tactical instructions and so on. I like the most in my job when I have to solve problems. Since ILEA is a very well-oiled machine I am not often asked to solve problems, but irregular issues happen once in a while and I really like helping to fix them. Of course, I am grateful for every opportunity to practice English and to keep contact with other U.S. Embassy or Hungarian Government colleagues and I enjoy working with Americans. I am thankful for their constant support that helped me a lot in the last three years. Without this, I would have never been able to pass Hungary's most traditional English language exam on the advanced level, which I did in October 2011. I can only say thanks for it to ILEA.

ILEA also helps me in my private life, since this year I was able to buy a horse from one of my colleagues to practice my favorite hobby: horse riding. I think of my horse, Titania, as a member of the ILEA family now and I am constantly asking my colleagues to come and try it.

In my free time, I also like running and cycling in the forest near my home, and going out with my friends who have been calling me "Special agent R." for the last three years. :)



A Dog Named Bogrács

My name is Bogrács. I am a four-month-old Vizsla, born in Hungary. When I was three months old, I received a new master and moved to the United States. His name is Kent J. Wager and he works for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency. Kent recently fulfilled an assignment in Hungary; he served as the Class Coordinator of Session #84 at the International Law Enforcement Academy in Budapest. That is where I met him.

Kent worked as a canine instructor for 12 years; therefore, he was very much interested in the K-9 center in Dunakeszi. On his visit to the center, he watched how police dogs were being trained for crowd control, patrolling, bomb- and drug detection. While taking a tour of the facility, a Vizsla puppy caught his eye and immediately stole his heart. Earlier he had spent hours studying Vizslas on the streets of Budapest and now, seeing this puppy, he instantly knew that Vizsla was the dog for his household. He wished he could take him home, but the owner would not sell him.

When ILEA administration saw how much Kent was in love with the Vizsla, they promised to find him another puppy. Locating a breeder who could also provide the necessary documents, such as a health certificate and a passport, and could deliver the dog in a matter of days, was not an easy task. Kent was scheduled to leave early in the morning on March 2, but the night before still no dog.

Then finally, on March 1 at 10:50 p.m. I arrived! I already had a long drive behind me and I had been awakened from my sweetest dream, but the new surroundings rose my curiosity and many new impressions made me forget how tired I really was. My first task was to mark my new territory. While my new master was busy going through some important documents, I discovered the parking lot and the dormitory building. On the main floor of the dorms, I met some strange people. They came down from their rooms in their pajamas just to see me. I played with them for a while, then I checked out my new room. It was a cozy little place. My new master seemed very excited to see me and kept hugging and kissing me until I fell asleep. We soon became friends.

He calls me Bogrács. It is a Hungarian word and it means kettle. I was named after a physical fitness challenge program that was recently introduced at ILEA. It is called Bogrács Challenge. You can read about it in the Fall 2011 issue of the ILEA Newsletter.

Upon arrival to my new home in the United States, I met some more strangers. They all were very thrilled to hug me, kiss me and play with me. I was also introduced to two other dogs who were already living there. Their names are Bella and Bucky. We became good friends and now that I, Bogrács, joined the team, we became the threebees.

I love hiking and can retrieve toys and balls all day long! Kent can go on for hours telling stories about his once-in-a-lifetime work assignment, after which he is always quick to add that I am an extension of those wonderful experiences. One thing is for sure; no matter what, I will always stay by his side. Where he goes I will go, and where he stays I will stay. And while I remind him of his time spent in Hungary, he will always remind me of where I came from.

Do you have any news to share? Any exciting stories to tell? Have you celebrated any awards or promotions? If so, we would like to hear from you. Please contact us (ilea@ilea.hu), and we will share your news in our Alumni Newsletter. Don't worry about your English ability, we can help!