

# George Peretsky

**(Augustyn) George Peretsky** is a former economics instructor and economic analyst for the state of Michigan who emigrated in his youth to the U.S. after World War II from Ukraine. He now enjoys writing poetry, articles, essays, and studying works of Shakespeare as well as other literary artists. He lives in Death Valley, California. His unique biography and family story of survival during World War II and emigration to the America is featured in our **Essay** column titled: "The Unfinished Odyssey."

A Pisces according to the Western zodiac, George agrees that he does have a secret desire to live dreams, turn fantasies into reality, and often, can be torn between two pathways. Says George:

*I do consider myself a dreamer and goal-oriented. Partly by design and partly by circumstance I have pursued several pathways and have enjoyed all facets of my life. The frustration is that there is not enough time to do it all. I usually have several projects and directions of pursuit. The upside is that I keep growing intellectually and am able to use my analytical abilities and creative inspiration when I have mastered some subject area to some degree.*



George enjoys southwest vistas of Zion National Park, Utah.

He earned his master's degree in economics from Central Michigan University while teaching and farming in the mid-Michigan area. He earned bachelor degrees in biological sciences and economics at the University of

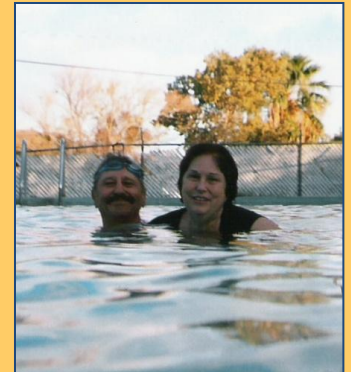
Michigan. Presently, George teaches math at Death Valley Academy in Shoshone, California. As a teacher, George has taught college level economics and high school in the sciences including chemistry, physics, biology, and geology, mathematics (geometry and algebra), and languages such as English, Spanish and German. Teaching for George has been an educational experience where he has learned and relearned things while teaching.



George with two favorite ladies: sister Ania Shalauta (left) and Mia Bradshaw (Center).

In an October 2007 issue of *Yosemite Highway Herald* article, "Integrating Arts and Sciences for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," he states that educational experts agree that the twenty-first century student needs to become more knowledgeable about the world, to be able to use his/her artistic and creative acumen for design and problem solving, and to increase mathematical and technological savvy. For George the arts, not only enrich our lives but are essential for progress:

*"The need to teach students artistic and creative thinking is paramount if we want our students to be inventive and [to] design the products of the future. It certainly has been rewarding for me to follow my artistic side in conjunction with my other endeavors.*



George and Mia cool off in Shoshone pool in Death Valley, California.

## Integrating arts and sciences for the 21st century

By **George Peretsky, Teacher, Coulterville High School**

In the December 18, 2006 issue of *Time* magazine, (How to Bring Our Schools Out of the 20th Century, Claudia Wallis and Sonja Steptoe) the authors examined American education in context to the global economy and skills needed for the 21st century. The article stated: "Today's economy demands not only a high-level competence in the traditional academic disciplines but also what might be called 21st century skills."

A consensus among the experts according to the authors is that "kids need to learn how to leap across disciplines. Its interdisciplinary combinations – design and technology, mathematics and art...." In other words, the student of the 21st century needs to become more knowledgeable of the world, use his/her artistic and creative acumen for design and problem solving, and be much more mathematically and technologically savvy than his/her predecessors.

As a consequence, Coulterville High

School has been **working towards** integrating its curriculum to include greater use of computers, more emphasis on communication skills, offer foreign languages, and expand the math and science curriculum.

Our last year's garden project not only gave the students the hands-on experience of learning how to plant and manage a garden, it also gave the students an opportunity to study plant biology in greater depth. We covered the chemical composition of plants, soil characteristics, and photosynthesis in greater detail than normal high school biology classes do. This also gave our students an opportunity to work as a team and solve problems in a collaborative manner.

According to the article, kids need to apply academic principles to the real world, think strategically, and solve problems. Integrating auto mechanics with physics and chemistry or integrating construction with geometry and art are our goals as 21st century educators at Coulterville High School.