



# Russian Heritage

**NEWSLETTER**

Volume XIX, Issue 5

February 2015

## *Siberia, Maslennitsa, and Celebrating the end of WWII in Europe*

### **Series on *Siberia* begins on Friday, February 13.**

At the Russian Heritage picnic last year a proposal was made to begin a discussion of books about Russia, beginning with Ian Frazier's book TRAVELS IN SIBERIA (2010). We have several members in Russian Heritage who grew up in Siberia, so this will be another interesting source of information. This spring several programs will be devoted to Siberia and Ian Frazier's book, beginning on Friday, February 13 at 3:00 pm at the Russian American Club in Gulfport (2920 Beach Boulevard).

Frazier's book is over 500 pages, and clearly not everyone interested in Siberia will be able to read it completely in one week. (Most of you were warned in an earlier newsletter that the discussion would take place this spring.) However, the first session will be an introductory discussion led by Bill Parsons, Professor Emeritus of History and Russian Studies, from Eckerd College. Several other programs in March and April will be organized to continue this theme, including films and reports. The second session is tentatively scheduled for March 6, but this date may change.

For those who want become acquainted with Frazier's book can read a summary that was published in *The New Yorker*, part 1 on August 3, 2009 and part 2 on August 10, 2009. These articles are available to read on-line (google Travels in Siberia New Yorker). Even if you haven't had a chance to read Frazier's works yet, you are invited to be a part of the first session on February 13.

### **Two Celebrations for Maslenitsa**

**USF Russian Club.** Saturday, February 21 from 3 to 5:30 pm.

USF's Maslenitsa will be held at the USF Riverfront Park on Fletcher Avenue (on the left hand side before crossing the Hillsborough River). We ask those who come to bring a dish to share or a modest monetary contribution. In addition to blini and other foods there will be music, singing, and several competitions, for example, drawing a Matryoshka doll blind-folded.

**Russian American Club.** February 22 at 3 pm in Gulfport. **Reservations required.**

22-го февраля клуб устраивает Масленицу, конечно с блинами и со всем что к ним полагается.

Цена: Члены клуба - \$25. Гости - \$30. Убедительно просим заказывать и платить заранее.

Звонить — Дагмара (727) 345 6360, или Жанна (727) 367 2092.

### **Other Upcoming Events**

At the February 8 Russian Heritage Board Meeting, it was decided to participate in the celebrations of the 70th Anniversary of end of World War II in Europe (see page 4). We will also participate in the Annual SPIFFS International Ball on April 18 at the Gulfport Casino.

# NINETEENTH ANNUAL OLD RUSSIAN NEW YEAR GALA!

The Old Russian New Year celebration marked the beginning of 2015 in a big way at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club on January 10. The festive party was visited by Ded Moroz (Grandfather Frost) and Snegurochka (the Snow Princess), and party goers danced to the magical melodies of the Dazzlers. This year special entertainment was provided by the Dance Studio “DanceLessonsTampaBay.com” and each attendee was given a free dance lesson at the studio.

The hosts and sponsors of this event were John and Margo Catsimatidis who brought many special guests from New York for the party. Congressman Gus Bilirakis and his family and friends were also in attendance, giving the party a Russian and Greek accent. We especially want to thank the Catsimatidis family for choosing this way to honor the memory of Margo’s mother Tatiana Vondersaar, one of the founders of Russian Heritage.

We thank all who came to make this a very special event, and we are most appreciative to the RH Board and all the volunteers who helped make this event possible.

After the party there were already rumors that we need to begin to think about making our 20th Annual Old Russian New Year’s Party even grander!







## RUSSIAN HERITAGE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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# On the 70th Anniversary of the End of WWII in Europe

Zhenya Nichols presented to the *Russian Heritage* Board of Directors a series of events that is being planned to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the end of WWII in Europe. Some of the activities are being organized by the Russian speaking communities in the Tampa Bay area, Orlando, and Washington, D.C. Projects include the collection of stories and objects associated with the veterans of WWII and their families. Also under consideration are exhibits and programs dealing with victory. Efforts are underway to contact the Florida Holocaust Museum and other venues for these programs, including a possible concert of music and poetry readings associated with the war. An art contest featuring drawings by children on the theme of the victory over Fascism has also been announced and entries will be exhibited in the Tampa Children's Museum.

A discussion followed Zhenya's presentation. Was this celebration likely to be more political than cultural or educational? We were reminded that *Russian Heritage* does not engage in political or religious programming. It was argued that we sponsored a major event featuring the ending of the Leningrad siege in WWII and this would be a rather similar focus. It was also stated that this could be an area of emphasizing common interests (we were allies in WWII) at a time now when American-Russian relations are strained.

It was moved and seconded that RH support the celebration of the victory over Fascism by providing prizes for the winners of the art contest, and that we would look into the possibilities of sponsoring a concert of music and/or readings at a location that would be open to the general public (possibly the Music Center at St. Petersburg College or Studio@620). The motion passed with six in favor and two abstaining.

**Annual Meeting.** The *Russian Heritage* annual meeting is tentatively scheduled for Saturday, April 25. The place, time, and program are TBA (in the next Newsletter), but most likely will include a dinner. The election of officers and board members is on the agenda, as are possible amendments to the by-laws. If you are interested in being nominated for a position on the Board, or if you want to nominate someone to serve, please contact President Victor Peppard or another member of the current Board of Directors.

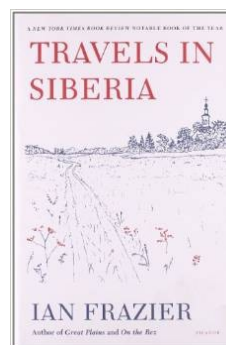
## Gene Stenov Making a Remarkable Recovery.

One year after being run over by an SUV in a Publix parking lot, Gene Stenov is making a remarkable recovery. He spent several days in the ICU and then months in rehab. But Gene has persevered and was able to participate in the SPIFFS Folk Fair and the Old Russian New Year. On the year anniversary of the accident, Gene took home-made cookies to the emergency workers who lifted the SUV off his chest and saved his life.

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Our book group discussion  
topic: Ian Frazier's  
TRAVELS IN SIBERIA.  
February 13 at 3 pm at the  
Russian American Club



# Membership Dues 2015

All who are interested in Russian culture are welcome to join Russian Heritage by simply paying the yearly dues. Members receive the Russian Heritage Newsletter and discounts on certain events such as the Old Russian New Year Gala.

Please fill in the following form, and send it with your dues, to:



Russian Heritage  
PO Box 14552  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Please check one:

☐ Student \$0; ☐ Individual \$15; ☐ Family \$25; ☐ Sponsor \$100 or more.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a new member of Russian Heritage, we would enjoy hearing more about your interest in Russia: Is your ethnic heritage Russian? Were you born and raised in Russia? Where? How long have you been in the United States? Etc. etc. (несколько слов о себе) in English or Russian.

2. As a member of *Russian Heritage*, what suggestions do you have for the Board of Directors about future programs or activities?