



Russian Heritage

NEWSLETTER

Volume XX, Issue 2

Fall: October 25, 2015

The SPIFFS Annual Folk Fair: October 29—November 1, 2015

Russian singers at SPIFFS will be featured on Saturday at 11:20 am, followed by the Parade of Nations at 2:00 pm. The Russian dancers will perform on Sunday at 1:00 pm. Let's make every effort to support our performers this year.



The Russian exhibit at the 41st annual SPIFFS Folk Fair (October 29 - November 1 in Vinoy Park in St. Petersburg) will welcome many visitors. On the two school days more than 8,000 students are expected to come to the Fair, most of them coming to the Russian tent to get their passports stamped. The general public also will enjoy the Russian exhibits, the Russian entertainment, and the costumed Russians in the Parade of Nations at 2:00 pm on Saturday.

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Russian Heritage's Fifth Annual *Yolochka* Party: December 12

Ded Moroz (Father Frost) and Snegurochka (the Snow Princess) will again arrive in St. Petersburg on Saturday, December 12 between 2 pm and 5 pm. Save the date, and look for more information in upcoming newsletters and on our Facebook Page and Website.*

Our Twentieth Annual "Old Russian New Year's Celebration": Saturday, January 16, 2016 at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club!

You will receive your official invitation to this event in November and the full information will be posted in the November Newsletter and on our Facebook Page and Website.*

**If you have not discovered our new Facebook page or our new Website, now is the time to visit:
www.facebook.com/RussianHeritageAbroad or www.russianheritage.org.*



USF Students Report on Summer Study in Russia

At the September 20 Meeting of Russian Heritage, four students from the Russian Program at the University of South Florida presented impressions of their Russian study tour in Moscow in the summer of 2015. During the mornings they studied Russian grammar, phonetics, conversation, and readings with Russian instructors, and in the afternoons and evenings they had cultural excursions around Moscow and for a short time in St. Petersburg. They were hosted by Moscow State University and lived in the MSU dorms. The students reported on their shopping experiences in Russian, meetings with Russian students, and visiting cultural sites. The group was led by USF Professor Olga Oleynik. Shown in photograph: Dallas Ward, Joseph McElroy, Melissa Gentry, & Christopher DeLuca.



Marina Tsvetaeva Remembered in Washington, D.C.

On October 4, 2015 a special “bonfire” was organized to honor the Russian poet Marina Tsvetaeva. The celebration marked the 123th anniversary of her birth. This was the 20th annual event which included the readings of poetry, the singing of songs and the celebrating of Russian culture in the Washington area. The event was sponsored by Uli Zislin and his “Museum of Russian Poetry and Music.” This year’s event coincided with Uli’s 85th birthday and the 20th anniversary of the Russian School “Bukva”. The school also participated in the Tsvetaeva fete.

Many members and friends of Russian Heritage will remember the program we sponsored in October 2010 dealing with Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, and Uli Zislin. We were represented at the Tsvetaeva event this year by **President Nadia Yevstigneyeva** who was introduced by Uli Zislin, and who brought greetings from our organization.

In the September RH Newsletter we included a portion of the article in Russian about St. Petersburg, Florida (and Russian Heritage) that appeared in “Gazeta Kultura”. In this issue you can read a portion of the English translation done by RH member Tatyana Albert. The complete texts can be found on our Facebook page.

St. Petersburg under the Palms

By Irina Tolstikova McKay, Florida (Translated by Tatyana Albert)

August 10, 2015

Do you know that the famous city on the Neva River has a younger sister, or, to be more precise, a younger namesake in Florida, USA? When and how did this happen and what is St. Petersburg, Florida up to today?

Americans love famous names. Travelling somewhere in the boonies in the U.S., one might be surprised to discover many well-known geographical names given to cities and towns. It seems that all major European cities have their U.S. counterparts. Amsterdams, Parises, Viennas, and Stockholms keep popping up here and there, echoing nostalgic feelings of American frontiers. The population in most of these settlements ranges from a couple of hundreds to a few thousand people, and, as a rule, these locations, as well as the individuals who had once given them such famous names, are only known to those who live nearby.

However, this rule has exceptions. One of these exceptions is the city of St. Petersburg on the west coast of central Florida. Founded in 1888, this city was destined to grow and flourish, and, with its population recently reaching the quarter million mark, has become one of the most beautiful and popular resort destinations in the country. It is pleasing to know that Pushkin’s well-known phrase “here a great city will be wrought” (or a very similar one) is also associated with our compatriot, Pyotr Alekseyevich Dementyev, in the founding of the Floridian St. Petersburg. Who was that lucky man who shared his first name and middle name with the great Russian czar and what chance brought him to a faraway hot Florida?

On September 28, 2015 Professor Parsons of Eckerd college gave a speech about Pushkin and Putin . He stressed the following “top ten” list of things to know about Pushkin.

1. Pushkin is considered Russia’s number one writer by Russians of all cultural and political spectrums, from Tsarist Russia, to Soviet times, and now in Post-Soviet Russia. He is seen as the equivalent of Shakespeare, Goethe, and Byron, all rolled into one. Pushkin has been called “our everything” (наше всё). He wrote lyric poetry (over 600 poems), narrative verse, plays, a novel in verse Evgeny Onegin, prose works, and numerous letters.
2. Pushkin is remembered in Russia and around the world. On the territory of the former Russian Empire there are currently 26 museums to Pushkin. There are also more than 190 monuments to Pushkin, with more being erected each year. In 1999 the ground was broken for a Pushkin statue in Washington, D.C., and recent ones have been erected in South Korea, China, and Ethiopia.
3. Pushkin was the great grandson of a Black African man, possibly from Ethiopia, but more likely from Chad or Cameroon. Abram Gannibal was a former slave who had been given as a present to Peter the Great. Therefore, the poet Pushkin was 1/8 African. Pushkin’s mother was called “a beautiful Creole woman”.
4. School children and adults in Tsarist Russia, Soviet Russia, and post-Soviet Russia have all memorized the poetry of Pushkin, and the excellent students might well know numerous verses by heart. His poetry is quite “musical” and is easily memorized.
5. Pushkin was fascinated with duels. He himself participated in possibly 11 duels, including the one that killed him at age 37; there were other challenges to duels that were averted before anyone got hurt. Duels played an important part in at least four of his works, including his most famous work, the novel in verse Evgeny Onegin, in which the hero Evgeny kills his poet friend Lensky.
6. Pushkin was fascinated with Mozart, and especially his opera, Don Giovanni. His life has several parallels to the life of Mozart. He wrote two short plays in verse, one based on the story from the opera, Don Giovanni (The Stone Guest), and one based on Mozart’s life (Mozart and Salieri), the theme that was later the inspiration for the play “Amadeus” by Peter Shaffer, and the popular film, “Amadeus”.
7. Pushkin was a womanizer with many conquests. We wrote an entry in a lady friend’s album called his “Don Juan list” that included the first names of his 16 serious loves and 21 less important loves. He “boasted” to a friend that his wife Natalia was his 113 love.
8. Three Pushkin holidays celebrated by poetry lovers in Russia each year: June 6 (his birthday); February 10 (the day he died); and October 19 (the date of the founding of the Lyceum). The major anniversaries of his birth (for example, in 1999) have been major national holidays.
9. The Pushkin library in his final apartment on the Moika included 3,560 volumes in 14 languages. He was widely read in French classical literature and Roman and Greek classics. On his deathbed after the duel he was asked if he wished to say goodbye to his friends, he reportedly said farewell to his many books.
10. Pushkin does not translate well into English. His rhyme schemes and the musicality of his stanzas are difficult to reproduce. His masterpiece, Evgeny Onegin, has been translated more than 40 times into English, and still it is better known in the opera by Tchaikovsky.