

RUSSIAN HERITAGE

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JUNE 2001



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New Officers for *Russian Heritage*

At the May meeting of *Russian Heritage*, a new slate of officers was elected for 2001-02. The new officers are the following:

President: **Tania Vondersaar**

Vice-president: **Victor Peppard**

Secretary: **Oga Fincher**

Treasurer: **Bill Grant**

Board Chair: **Bill Parsons**

Members of the Board of Directors:

Zinalda Downen

France Frankian

Vladimir Khokhlov

Sergei and Elena Novikov

Bernie Orlando

At the May meeting there were reports on the activities of the past year (see page 2), and discussion of possible programs for the future. The new officers

will meet on June 25 to plan for the new year. We hope you will fill out the information on pages 3-4 to help us in our deliberations.

We want to give a special thanks to Vera Espinola Beery and Bruce Beery for their dedicated work as officers for *Russian Heritage*. Vera was the founding president and has been a leader for five years.

Tania Vondersaar Honored for Her Community Service



Tania Vondersaar shown with Secretary of State Katherine Harris. Story on page 5.

RUSSIAN HERITAGE: 2000 – 2001: Demens, Concerts, and Cold War

We ended our last program year with a major celebration on May 1, 2001 of **Peter Demens**, the Russian-American founder of St. Petersburg, Florida, on the 150th anniversary of his birth. We held an international symposium to honor him, we erected a new historical marker at the entrance to Demens Landing city park, and we helped sponsor two museum exhibits, one here in Florida and one in Russia. This year saw the publishing of the Demens Symposium Proceedings, and the traveling of the Russian Demens Exhibit from Tver (April – July) to St. Petersburg, Russia (October-November), and then to Vesegonsk (February to the present). We were pleased that *Russian Heritage* board member Elena Novikov was present for the opening of this exhibit in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Perhaps the outstanding feature of this year's program was a series of three concerts by the **Russian Heritage Ensemble** (violinists Eugene Bazhanov and Natasha Bazhanov; pianists Vladimir Khokhlov and Olga Glick; and guest artists Lena Lewenson and Sasha von Dassow). The concerts at the new Music Center at the SPJC-Gibbs campus were held on November 5, 2000, January 21 and February 25, 2001. The artists performed works by Russian and American composers, with a special focus on Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninov.

On March 25, 2001 *Russian Heritage* sponsored a Forum discussion: "**The Cold War: Myths and Realities Seen from Both Sides.**" This program was coordinated with the two exhibits at the Florida International Museum on the Cuban Missile Crisis and the U-2 Incident, and featured scholars from University of South Florida and Eckerd College, and Gary Powers, Jr., the founder of the Cold War Museum and the curator of the U-2 Exhibit.

In addition to sponsoring the Russian Exhibit of Peter Demens, *Russian Heritage* also helped to sponsor the Exhibit "**Leningrad to St. Petersburg: Historic Photographs from Russia**" which is still on display at the Exhibit Gallery in the Music Center at the SPJC-Gibbs Campus, and the "**World War II Event and Medal Ceremony**" at the Russian Cultural Centre in Washington D.C. on January 4, 2001.

Through the distribution of our *Russian Heritage* Newsletter we also helped to publicize events of Russian culture in the area. This year we also had a regular feature in the Newsletter devoted to the Russian Language, and we thank Professors Irena Nemchonok and Victor Peppard from the University of South Florida for their contributions.

Finally, we came together to celebrate our interest in Russian culture and heritage at our inaugural meeting at Buddy Freddy's Restaurant on September 12, 2000, at the Holiday Party at Bill Grant's home on December 15, 2000, and at the *Russian Heritage* Picnic at Ft. DeSoto Park on April 21, 2001, complete with our annual Russian Songfest.

Russian Heritage Survey

We have just completed *Russian Heritage*'s fifth year. A report of this year's activities is located on page 2. In planning for the future, the Board of Directors would like to hear from YOU. Would you please take a few moments to fill out the survey on this page about your interests. Then place the survey in the enclosed envelope. This would also be a good time to send in your dues for 2001-02 (see other side of this sheet).

I. Which of the following activities would interest you most in the coming year?

Check all that apply.

1. The showing of Russian films. Suggestions of films. _____

2. Concerts of Russian music.

3. Lectures/discussions on classical Russian culture.
Specific topics? _____

4. Lectures/discussions on contemporary Russia.
Specific topics? _____

5. Lectures/discussions by our members on their Russian-related experiences.

6. Old Russian New Year's Party.

7. Russian sing-a-long.

8. Russian picnic.

9. Get together at a local restaurant. Suggestions? _____

10. Parties like the one at the Grants

11. Russian poetry reading.

12. Preparing for the St. Petersburg anniversaries in 2003.

13. Other suggestions.

II. Russian Language. (We had about six responses to our last survey)

A. I would be interested in a series of regular lessons.

Beginning; Intermediate

B. I would be interested in participating in a Russian conversation circle:

Once a week; Twice a month; Once a month.

III. Newsletter.

A. What do you like most about the newsletter?

B. What suggestions do you have for the newsletter?

Membership Dues

The *Russian Heritage* year begins in September and ends in June. Dues for 2001-2002 can be mailed in the enclosed envelope now, or can be sent in by fall. The purpose of *Russian Heritage* is to preserve and promote Russian heritage, history, and culture, and to educate the general public through such activities as, but not limited to, social events, film festivals, artistic venues, and educational programs.

Please mail this form with your dues to:

Russian Heritage
PO Box 14552
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Categories of yearly membership are:

- \$5 Student
- \$10 Individual
- \$15 Family
- \$50 Sponsor

Please make checks payable to: *Russian Heritage*

Name _____
Address _____
City/State/ZIP _____
Telephone _____
E-mail address _____

___ Please keep my name on the RUSSIAN HERITAGE Newsletter mailing list.

___ Please remove my name from the mailing list.

Optional Information. **Несколько слов о себе.**

In either Russian or English, please write a paragraph or two about yourself, where you have lived, your work, your family, and your interests in Russia.

The People of *Russian Heritage*

Tania Vondersaar. Our president was recommended for an award given by WGUL Radio for her outstanding volunteer hours in the community on behalf of SPIFFS in April 2001. She was also at the St. Petersburg Pier representing SPIFFS for the Regata and Fiesta Del Sol al Sol in April, which celebrated Florida's relationship with Mexico. At this event she had her picture taken with Secretary of State Katherine Harris and Barbara Sheen Todd, Pinellas County Commissioner.

Tania has been active representing Russian culture in the community, appearing this past year at Shore Acres Elementary School, Belcher Elementary School, Woodlawn Elementary School, several retirement centers, and in several community cultural programs, including fashion shows at St. Petersburg Junior College and Menorah Manor Nursing Home. She has also served as a translator of the Public Defender's Office.

She has been a visible part of the Russian community as well as leader of *Russian Heritage*.

Lori Scheiwe is one of the newer members of *Russian Heritage*, but she has also been active as a volunteer in the local community. She is the first native-Russian and the first woman appointed to the Governor's Mentoring Initiative Office as Volunteers in Service To America (VISTA). She also volunteers to teach English as a second language at the Mirror Lake Public Library in a program called *Jumping into English*.

After our May meeting, Lori spoke with her supervisor at Mirror Lake, and worked out an arrangement to teach a basic course in Russian at Mirror Lake, Saturdays from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. She is patterning the program on the English lessons, and calls it *Jumping into Russian*. The program will offered in the fall. For further information, call 727-343-8910.

Lori is also exploring the possibilities of arranging a Russian Conversational Circle at Mirror Lake. If you are interested, please respond to the survey on page 3.

* * * * *

Vera Espinola Beery will again be working on *Science Under Sail: Russia's Great Voyages to America, 1728-1867* as exhibit conservator in July, at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco. This interesting exhibit about the maritime voyages made under the Russian flag by Russians, Germans, Estonians, British and others, was organized and curated by Barbara Smith of Anchorage, Alaska and first shown at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art for six months in 2000. Recent research has shown that a **Dr. Fyodor Petrovich Brykin**, a physician of St. Petersburg, Russia sailed on the first 'round the world voyage under a Russian flag, on the *Nadezhda* under Commander Ivan Fyodorovich Kruzenshtern in 1803. It is a wonderful piece of serendipity that Vera (whose family name is Brykin, but spelled Bricken in the U.S.) has an actual blood connection to the explorations as well as to the exhibition itself.

* * * * *

There are plans underway to offer a course in *Conversational Russian* at Manatee Junior College in the Fall. If you are interested, or if you know of persons who would like to study Russian, please contact us through our survey. Or if you know of other Russian classes, please let us know so that we can advertise them.