

RUSSIAN HERITAGE

VOLUME IX, ISSUE 7.

APRIL - MAY 2005

Plan Now for the Annual Meeting Saturday, May 7

Our annual meeting is held in May and includes the business meeting and election of officers for next year. It is also a time to reflect on our major events of the year, and begin to think about next year.

The meeting will be held at the Oriental Super Buffet (2456 Gulf to Bay Blvd) in Clearwater at 6:00 p.m. Many of you will remember the interesting meeting we had at this restaurant in September with Natasha and Maria, our exchange ambassadors from St. Petersburg, Russia. The price of the meal, beverage, tax, and tip is under \$15.00. Plan to come and invite your friends.

We will be discussing the plans for continuing our exchange program, our Old Russian New Year's Celebration, and other programs for next year. Bring your ideas.

Russian Films About WWII

Russian Heritage will present two programs of films about WWII in late April and early May, in connection with the 60th anniversary of the end of that war. On **April 27** the classic film *"The Cranes are Flying"* will be shown at 6:30 p.m. on the Clearwater campus of St. Petersburg College, followed by the American film, *"Song of Russia"*, a love story made in 1944 about our wartime alliance. On **Friday, May 6**, *"Ballad of a Soldier"* will be shown at Eckerd College at 6:30, followed by *"The Star"*, a 2002 Russian film about the war (without subtitles). For more details, see page 3. Films are free, and open to the public.

Russian Film at Tampa Film Festival

On **Friday, April 8**, at 6:30 p.m. the Russian Film *"The Rider Named Death"* will be shown at the Tampa International Film Festival at Sunrise Cinemas (1609 W. Swann Ave) This 2004 Shakhnazarov film shows a terrorist attempt to murder Grand Duke Sergei in Moscow in 1904. Film in Russian with English subtitles. Adults: \$8; students and seniors: \$5. See: www.tampafilmfest.com

WORLD WAR CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT CLEARWATER CAMPUS OF ST. PETERSBURG COLLEGE ON WEDNESDAY, APRIL 27 FROM 9:00 TO NOON. CALL: 727-712-5247.

Beslan Aid Report

In September *Russian Heritage* collected money to aid the victims of the school hostage disaster in southern Russia, where more than 1,000 hostages were taken by the terrorists at the school in Beslan. More than 300 persons died in this tragedy.

We sent the money collected to Russia on the assumption that a family had been identified to receive this aid directly from us. Our representative in St. Petersburg let us know, however, that we could not help this family directly, and that even the Russian Red Cross would prefer to receive the money from us.

We learned that the Sister-Cities Program in Asheville, North Carolina had organized a relief effort also directed towards aiding individual families in Beslan. They have "adopted" 10 families, and will follow their stories through direct visits. In late February a delegation from Asheville, led by Constance Richards, traveled to Beslan, and met the 10 families. The stories of this trip can be found on line from the Asheville Citizen-Times at www.citizen-times.com for February 18, 24, March 6 and 13.

We sent the \$775 we collected to the Asheville-Beslan Family Fund. It will be used for the 10 families identified, for medical care and possibly for travel. It may be that some of the children from Beslan will be brought to our country for a summer program in 2006.

Conversational Russian

Two Opportunities to Study Russian

RAPID RUSSIAN LANGUAGE

A non-credit conversational Russian class offered at the Tarpon Springs Campus of St. Petersburg College starting on April 16. This 20-hour program for beginners will meet on Saturday mornings from 9:30 to noon. Instructor: Nadia Yevstigneyeva. This course is designed for those who want to travel to Russia (it is offered in connection with a St. Petersburg College trip to Russia in May), or for those who want an introduction to the alphabet and language. Contact: 727-712-5247, or yevstigneyeva.nadia@spcollege.edu

SPOKEN RUSSIAN II

A non-credit conversational Russian class offered by USF in Tampa in the Continuing Education Program, starting on April 23. This 20-hour program is designed for those who have already begun to study Russian, but who want to continue. Classes meet on Saturday mornings from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Instructor: Olga Oleynik. Contact: 813-974-5421, or 813-866-5406.

ПРИВЕТ. СПАСИБО. ПОКА.
ДО СВИДАНИЯ. Я ТЕБЕ ЛЮБЛЮ.
Я НЕ ПОНИМАЮ. ПОЦЕЛУЙ
МЕНЯ, Я ГОВОРЮ ПО-РУССКИ!

Russian Heritage Ambassador Program

In September 2004 *Russian Heritage* hosted two Student Ambassadors from St. Petersburg, Russia. Many will remember Natasha and Maria. We decided this year to sponsor a number of American students going to Russia on summer programs. We have identified three high school students and at least one college student for this program this summer. You will definitely be hearing more about this program in the fall. We will be discussing the future of this program at the May meeting. This spring, *Russian Heritage* did provide prizes for the winners of the English language competition in St. Petersburg, but the prizes for the top students was a \$50 computer language program, rather than a trip to Florida.

Russian Films at Clearwater Campus of SPC: April 27

(Art Auditorium, 2465 Drew Street, Clearwater)

Wednesday at 6:30 p.m.

The Cranes Are Flying

1957. 94 minutes. B&W. Subtitles.



One of the best Russian films of all times. Tragic story of love and war.

Wednesday at 8:00 p.m.

The Song of Russia

1944. 80 minutes. B&W. English.



Susan Peters as Nadia, Russian girl.
Robert Taylor as American musician.
WWII wartime allies!

Russian Films at Eckerd College: May 6

(Miller Auditorium at Eckerd College, 4200 54th Ave. S., St. Petersburg)

Friday at 6:30 p.m.

Ballad of a Soldier

1960. 89 minutes. B&W. Subtitles.



A Russian film classic. A poetic "ballad" about an innocent young Russian soldier in WWII.

Friday at 9:00 p.m.

The Star (ЗВЕЗДА)

2002. 93 minutes. Color. Russian only.



A modern WWII thriller!

News from SPIFFS

Russian Heritage participated in the SPIFFS Folk Fair for the third year in March. An article about the event is found on Violetta's page with information about our booth and our participation. There is also a pink insert in this edition which gives information about the Russian New Year and other holidays in Russian culture.

On Friday, April 22 SPIFFS will hold its Annual Banquet at Banquet Masters at 8100 Park Blvd. North Pinellas Park. Last year *Russian Heritage* was represented at two table for this Gala, and we honored Mayor Rich Baker and President Carl Kuttler of St. Petersburg College as our "Persons of the Year".

This year we are honoring **Suzanne Pomerantzeff** for her work in representing Russian culture in the community through her Russian Folk Dance Group that has been performing at SPIFFS for all 30 years of its existence. Her group has also performed for *Russian Heritage* events, most recently at the Balalaika Concert in March. If you are interested in attending this banquet, please contact Zina Downen (727-399-1713) or Bill Parsons (727-867-9148) ASAP, but not later than April 14. The dinner is \$25. Reception at 6:30; Ceremonies at 7:00; Dinner at 7:45; Dancing at 8:30. Meal options include roast beef, filet of sole, Spanish chicken, and vegetarian selections. We hope to see you there!

**Dues
For
2005**

Membership
But who are interested in Russian culture are welcome to join Russian Heritage by simply paying the yearly dues. Members receive a monthly newsletter and discounts at certain events, such as the Old Russian New Year Celebration.
Please mail this form with your dues to:
Russian Heritage
P.O. Box 34539
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Russian Heritage Membership Form

Categories for membership for 2005 are:

Student \$0 Individual \$15
Family \$20 Sponsor \$100 or more

Please make checks payable to: Russian Heritage

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Telephone _____

E-mail address _____

St. Petersburg Trio Dazzles St. Petersburg

In a concert that brought the two St. Petersburgs together, three musicians from St. Petersburg, Russia performed classical selections and Russian music on folk instruments that delighted the audience at the Palladium Theater in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Svetlana Nikonova on the domra, Vladimir Zakharevich on the bayan, and Andrei Savaliev on the contra-bass balalaika played Mozart, Bach, Strauss (the Blue Danube and the polkas were particularly exciting), and Brahms and Joplin. Perhaps most appreciated of all was the non-stop medley of popular classical melodies arranged by Svetlana Nikonova. To show the excitement of crowd, during the intermission, out of an audience of about 240 spectators, 41 CD's by the Trio were sold!

Russian folk music and folk dances dominated the second half of the concert which featured Savaliev playing the prima balalaika with crowd favorites Lara's Theme from Dr. Zhivago and Selskaya Kadril. Three folk dances performed by Suzanne Pomerantzeff's St. Petersburg (Florida) Folk Ensemble made this a truly "Two St. Petersburgs" concert.

On the flight of the musicians back to Washington, D.C., the contra-bass again occupied two seats (two tickets!).

Russian New Year

The arrival of the New Year was the time for celebration in pre-revolutionary Russia, from the time of Peter the Great who adopted a calendar similar to that used in Western Europe. An example of the type of grand parties associated with this celebration can be found with Natasha's first ball in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. In St. Petersburg, Florida, *Russian Heritage* has carried on this tradition of the Old Russian New Year with a gala ball at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club on or near January 13, which is the day when New Year's Eve was celebrated according to the old Russian calendar.

After the Russian Revolution of 1917, and after the calendar was changed to the modern (Gregorian) calendar used in most of the rest of the world, the New Year celebrations took place on December 31. And because the new leaders of the Soviet state wanted to de-emphasize religion and Christmas, some of the traditions formerly associated with Christmas became a part of the New Year's traditions, especially with the three traditions of **Grandfather Frost (Dyed Mo-ROZ)**, the **Snow Maiden (Sne-GOO-roch-ka)**, and the **New Year's Tree (YOL-ka)**.



For children, DYED MOROZ (Grandfather Frost) is something of a Santa Claus figure. He usually dressed in red, with white trim (although sometimes with blue, yellow or white clothing), and he brought presents on New Year's to good boys and girls. He is the personification of winter, and is not related to Christmas. He and his assistant SNEGOOROCHKA lead the children (often dressed up in costumes) in dancing around the YOLKA. Parties where DYED MOROZ and SNEGOOROCHKA appear sometimes are held in schools, in youth organizations, or even in the homes. Most families have a New Year's tree (YOLKA) in their homes, and most offices, hotels, and other institutions also decorate these YOLKAS for the holiday season.

For adults, the New Year is often welcomed with a major party, either in a restaurant, a club, or at someone's home. This is a time for serious eating, numerous hors d'oeuvres called ZAKUSKI, followed by main courses and desserts. Serious drinking and numerous toasts have also been traditions of the New Year. As opposed to American celebrations, which usually begin early and end shortly after the New Year arrives, the Russian celebration often begins later, reaches its first climax at about midnight, and then often continues all night.

The Russians do like to celebrate their holidays. Even in Soviet times many celebrated the New Year twice, on December 31 and January 13. This continues, and now is often combined with the observance of Christmas on December 25, and again "officially" on January 7. But remember, when polled in recent years, Russians have indicated by an overwhelming majority, the New Year holiday is the most popular and most widely celebrated.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

С НОВЫМ ГОДОМ!

SNOW-vim GO-dom!

RUSSIAN HOLIDAYS AND FESTIVALS

Russian Holidays reflect the historical developments of a proud nation.

In pagan times, holidays were related to the seasons and growing cycles. Two of the biggest came on the mid-summer night and the arrival of spring after a long winter. Even now in our namesake city of St. Petersburg, Russia, the "White Nights" of summer are celebrated each summer.

With the advent of Christianity, Easter and the Orthodox Church's Holy Days became the most important festivities. Before the Russian Revolution, almost every third day was a Church Holy Day, and on every day of the year one or more saints of the church were honored. Fasting was an important part of the life of Orthodox Russians, and there were more fasting days for the devout than there were days without restrictions. The high point of the year was Easter, preceded by a Great Fast of seven weeks, in which no meat, milk, eggs, butter or sugar were allowed. This fast was preceded by the carnival-like celebration of "Maslenitsa", featuring the consumption of *blini* (Russian pancakes), street performers and puppet theaters (Petrushka), and general merry-making. In addition to Church Holidays and Holy Days, Russians have always celebrated the arrival of the New Year, and the anniversaries of major military victories and political events. This was true in Tsarist Russia, in Soviet times, and now in contemporary Russia.

After the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 the two major holidays were November 7 (the anniversary of the revolution) and May 1 (International Workers' Day). On these two holidays Russians had two days off. Parades were organized on Red Square in Moscow, and in other major cities across the Soviet Union. Additional Soviet holidays filled the calendar, celebrating women, the armed forces, schools, the media, and many industries and social organizations.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, many of the old Soviet holidays were no longer appropriate. May 1 became the "Spring and Labor Holiday", and November 7, the anniversary of the revolution, was changed to the "Day of Accord and Conciliation". Some want to cancel this holiday completely. A new holiday celebrating the new independence of the Russian Federation is now observed on June 12. It was first called "Independence Day" and is now called "Russia Day", but fewer than 10% of the population report that they consider this a major holiday. "Constitution Day" is officially celebrated on December 12, the date when the 1993 "Yeltsin" Constitution was adopted. Previously, Constitution Day was observed on October 7, for the "Brezhnev" constitution of 1967, and before that on December 5, for the "Stalin" Constitution of 1936. International Women's Day continues to be celebrated on March 8, and Victory Day, marking the end of WWII is observed on May 9.

A recent public opinion poll shows that Russians now consider the following holidays the most important, in this order: 1) New Year Holiday (89%); 2) Respondent's birthday (78%); Easter (65%); Women's Day (58%); and Victory Day (55%). On the reverse you will read more about the traditions of the Russian New Year's Celebrations.

1 ЯНВАРЯ 7 ЯНВАРЯ 14 ЯНВАРЯ 8 МАРТА 1 МАЯ

9 МАЯ 12 ИЮНЯ 7 НОЯБРЯ 12 ДЕКАБРЯ 25 ДЕКАБРЯ

СТРАНИЧКА Виолетты**Violetta's Page**

(Violetta Yevstigneyeva is continuing to write articles for the RH newsletter from a teenager's perspective as part of a service learning program at Palm Harbor High School.)

**О международном фестивале в Тропикана Филд
About SPIFFS Festival at Tropicana Field**

SPIFFS (The St. Petersburg International Folk Fair Society) is where all the counties are united and no boundaries exist! Bright costumes, welcoming smiles, educating booths, and wonderful performances were all held at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg from March 16th to March 20th. This year SPIFFS Folk Fair theme was "Festivals and Holidays around the World"! This year the Folk Festival was amazing, and the number of people who came was great! "Thank You" to everybody who came out to support our Russian booth and help us share our unique culture and traditions! What are most imperative and interesting things about human beings? It is their similarities and their differences! And what can show that better than SPIFFS? We can proudly represent our Russian culture and our individuality, and share it with all who attend.

But can you guess which booth stood out from the rest? Our booth, the booth of the Russian Heritage! Our enthusiasm, spirit, and openness immediately drew thousands of visitors! We had 5 beautiful life-sized Matryoshkas (Russian Nesting Dolls) with spaces cut out for the smiling faces of our visitors. Both children and adults were absolutely intrigued! The doll cut-outs were painted by the talented Zina Downen, who was dressed in a beautiful Snow Princess costume. Our game-quiz featuring Russian holidays was very successful! This year participants had to recognize traditional Russian holidays, like New Year, Women's Day, May Day, and Victory Day from Russian magazine covers, greeting cards, etc. This game attracted the attention of people of all ages; even I was mesmerized by it! Russian entertainment was beautifully presented by Suzanne Pomerantzeff's Folk Dancers on the main stage, and by bayan player Regina Kozhyna in our booth. Of course, no one can forget the amazing items of sale from *Vladimir's Collection*, wonderfully presented by Galina Malkin and her son, Vadim! All we can say is THANK YOU to everyone that dedicated their time and hard work to SPIFFS.

СПИФФС (Санкт-Петербургский Международный Фестиваль Фолклора) – это организация, где страны и их уникальные культуры объединяются и между ними исчезают границы! Яркие костюмы, доброжелательные улыбки, а также великолепные выступления ансамблей и артистов прошли в Тропикана Филд с 16 по 20-е марта. Наибольший интерес привлекали образовательные павильоны нескольких стран, среди которых особенное место занимал павильон представленный *Русским Наследием*. Тема в этом году - «Фестивали и Праздники!» Огромное спасибо всем, кто участвовал в подготовке и проведении этой незабываемой недели – особенно Зине Доунен, танцевальной группе Померанцева, Регине Кожине, Биллу Парсонсу, Галине и Вадиму Малкиным от «Владимир Коллекшн»! Наш павильон, как всегда, привлек внимание огромного количества детей и взрослых посетителей выставки. Спасибо!!!!