

# RUSSIAN HERITAGE

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## *Nadia Yevstigneyeva Elected President at Annual Meeting*

Continuity is the key in the elections for the officers of Russian Heritage for 2008-09. Nadia Yevstigneyeva was elected president and Mary Stenov was elected vice-president. Chair of the Board Vladimir Malkin, Secretary Bill Parsons, and Treasurer Gene Stenov each have one year remaining on their two-year terms. Elected for one-year terms on the Board of Directors are the following: Laura Flesch, Vassili Goloubev, Helena Kazakova, Vladimir Khokhlov, Evgeny Lel, Victor Peppard, Konstantin and Zhanna Sidorenko, Peter Sidorenko, and Tatiana Vondersaar. Congratulations to all who will lead Russian Heritage in the new year. Names and contact information for the officers and members of the Board are given on page 2.

Highlights from the picnic and annual meeting include the entertainment and games provided by our emcee Boris; the dessert competition, with winners Zhanna Sidorenko, Peggy Newton, Maria Tregubova, and Barry Marshall; the raffle, with many attractive prizes; the general delightful atmosphere of the lakeside locale; and generous hospitality of Dr. Artzibushev. We thank all who helped make this event a grand success.

## Members on the go this summer. . .

**Nadia Yevstigneyeva** served as guide and translator for the leaders of the Orenburg group who came with the singers and dancers (Zhemchuzhinka) from Orenburg State University. They visited San Francisco, New York and Washington.

**Victor Peppard** will lead a group in the USF Alumni Program on the river cruise from St. Petersburg to Moscow along the rivers, lakes and canals of Russia in June 2008.

**Vladimir Khokhlov** who celebrated his 65 birthday in May will travel to Riga, Latvia for a Jubilee Concert in August.

**Bill Parsons** will attend the 30<sup>th</sup> annual Balalaika and Domra Association Convention in Reno, Nevada in July.

**Sergei Novikov** will spend part of the summer in Moscow where he will supervise a number of Eckerd College students in a travel/study program.

**Susan Haig** will be studying Russian intensively this summer at Middlebury College. For nine weeks she promises to speak only Russian. Всего Хорошего!

There are probably many more of our members with interesting itineraries. Let us know about your plans. We would certainly like to hear more about some of these activities in the fall.

Russian Heritage Officers and Board of Directors  
2008 – 2009

Flesch, Laura 941-224-2403  
6904 Manatee Ave. W. #14-c, Sarasota, FL 34209. [laura.flesch@verizon.net](mailto:laura.flesch@verizon.net)

Goloubev, Vassili 727-204-1797  
8325 41 Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33709. [vas\\_g@hotmail.com](mailto:vas_g@hotmail.com)

Kazakova, Helena 727-895-5334  
711 Snell Isle Blvd, St. Petersburg, FL 33704. [philippenovikov@yahoo.com](mailto:philippenovikov@yahoo.com)

Khokhlov, Vladimir 813-961-6597; 813-766-7458 (cell)  
14941 Old Pointe Road, St. Petersburg, FL 33613. [vlad525@verizon.net](mailto:vlad525@verizon.net)

Lel, Evgeny 727-321-7509  
1035 Arlington Ave. NE. #1208, St. Petersburg, FL 33705 [genicgenel@gmail.com](mailto:genicgenel@gmail.com)

Malkin, Vladimir, CHAIR OF BOARD 727-895-9755  
201 First St. NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33701. [v.collection@excite.com](mailto:v.collection@excite.com)

Parsons, Bill, SECRETARY 727-867-9148  
4220 Narvarez Way S., St. Petersburg, FL 33712. [parsonwh@eckerd.edu](mailto:parsonwh@eckerd.edu)

Peppard, Victor 813-971-0223; 813-974-2012 (work)  
3405 Country Woods Court, Tampa, FL 33559. [victorpeppard@yahoo.com](mailto:victorpeppard@yahoo.com)

Sidorenko, Zhana and Konstantin 727-367-2092  
6500 Sunset Way #110, St. Pete Beach, FL 33706. [mybabi@aol.com](mailto:mybabi@aol.com)

Sidorenko, Peter 727-360-1090  
301 87<sup>th</sup> Ave. #301, St. Pete Beach, FL 33706  
[petva.russianheritage@yahoo.com](mailto:petva.russianheritage@yahoo.com)

Stenov, Gene, TREASURER & 727-867-6013 [genestenov@yahoo.com](mailto:genestenov@yahoo.com)  
Stenov, Mary, V. PRESIDENT 727-867-6013 [marystenov@yahoo.com](mailto:marystenov@yahoo.com)  
254 Colony Point Rd. S, St. Petersburg, FL 33705.

Vondersaar, Tatiana 727-321-8379  
5443 4 Ave. S., St. Petersburg, FL 33707.

Yevstigneyeva, Nadia, PRESIDENT 727-204-9344; 727-791-2708 (work)  
12343 Berkeley Square Drive, Tampa, FL 33626. [nadiastpete@hotmail.com](mailto:nadiastpete@hotmail.com)

## *New Board of Directors Plans Workshop*

On Saturday, June 14 the Board of Directors of Russian Heritage will meet to discuss the plans for 2008-09 aboard the Starlite Princess. We have a number of ideas that we are working on, but we need your ideas to help us plan programs that will be of interest to our members. If you have suggestions, we want to hear from you. Contact any of the members on the board and we will include your ideas on our agenda.

## *Financial Report: May 2008*

At the May 17 Annual Meeting it was reported that Russian Heritage has a balance of \$27,239 in the General Fund and \$6,960 in the Scholarship Fund. For the Nick White Fund which was established to help support our musical ambassador at the St. Petersburg Conservatory in the fall of 2007, the total income was \$3,500 from 17 donors, and the expenses were \$6,039, including \$3,892 for tuition. Part of the difference is considered to be a loan, and part was transferred from the Scholarship Fund, so the separate Nick White Fund no longer exists. A final report from Nick White is given below.

## *Nick White's Report on His Semester in Russia*

Dear Members and Friends of Russian Heritage,

To study everyday at the Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory in St. Petersburg, Russia was a feeling unlike any other; just being in the building made your heart pound and your ears perk. It was clearly old and very grey, but full of light. Ridiculous light. Passion enthralled light. The architect who built it was in love with something. Perhaps he knew the beautiful music that would one day fill its halls or perhaps he had fallen in love with one of the many, oh so beautiful Russian girls that walked the streets of St. Petersburg. Regardless, it was a love that filled the halls with beauty unlike any other. A romance that can not be touched by any other building made for music on Earth. I now miss it dearly.

Just next to the first floor stairs was the Foreign Students' Office, and the office of Natalia Vasilievna, our wonderful Dean. It is hard to explain her elegance or the amount that she obviously cared for her students. Any time of the day under any cascade of business she would always take the time to hear your problems. To heal your heart. When I told her that I needed to go home, I could see in her eyes the pain of a mother whose child is leaving again for college. She understood, and she made every assurance that should I ever want to return I was welcome.

One thing that sticks in my head as the most important and richest part of my time in Russia was Sergei Michailovich Slonimsky, the great genius. Maestro Slonimsky is now one of the most important people in my life and I wish like you would not believe that I could talk to him again. We spoke mostly through a translator but he was always amazingly supportive of everything.

Of course, I can not thank Russian Heritage enough. Thank you Russian Heritage for all that you have done. For all of the incredible support both financially and emotionally that you have invested in me. Despite the fact that I may have let you down, I am truly grateful. I hope to make you proud in the future.

Sincerely,  
Nicholas J. White

## News and Views From Spring in Russia . . .

*Adam Colby is an Eckerd College student who has spent the last semester in St. Petersburg, Russia. He has sent back periodic letters to family and friends. Next year will be his senior year at Eckerd, where he will be a double major in Russian Studies and International Relations.*

To wrap up my stay in Russia, I decided to spend my last weekend in Moscow. The 9th of May is one of the biggest holidays in Russia. Officially, it is called Victory Day!! So we had a nice three day weekend. Unfortunately, due to my train being late I missed the big parade in Moscow that made such big headlines. Anyways, it was a rather gloomy day in Moscow. I spent most of the day walking around the city and watching the small celebrations.

The next day I spent out of Moscow in a dacha (small country house). We walked around the woods, relaxed and ate *shashlik* (which is their form of grilling like our kabobs). The third day was probably the most interesting. I went to a park where they have collected a large number of old Soviet statues. Although, I have many pictures of Lenin statues, I added some more to my collection and now have my first photo of a Stalin Statue. Then before I knew it I was on the train heading back to Petersburg. I ended up being in a cabin with two army generals and a captain (who was a friend of one of the generals). The captain was extremely drunk, but instead of being horribly rude or a jerk he kept trying to feed me. I think he literally forced me to eat half

a loaf of bread, which was freshly cooked and delicious so it could have been worse. Thankfully, one of the Generals basically ordered him to bed and I got some sleep. I arrived back in Petersburg twenty minutes before class and my first final. Perfect timing.

Here are ten things that I think about Russia and Russians:

1. Russians haven't grasped the idea of hydration and of drinking water. My host family thinks I am crazy because I drink so much water. Trying to explain the idea of dehydration is impossible and I have given up.

2. I still don't understand why Russia has so many incredibly smart people but can't seem to implement their ideas. "In Russia dreams are dreams and elsewhere they are plans." - anonymous

3. Here they feed their cats corn, bread, vegetables, and other basic food products....I am beginning to think that we spoil our animals. :)

4. Why buy bottled water when it costs more than a beer or a small bottle of vodka?

5. Homeless dogs are treated well and considered normal even if they travel in packs. Yet, I usually avoid them, but I have seen people go up and pet them. On that note: people's dogs don't seem to attack other people's dogs.

6. I have never seen so many people read!! It seems like no matter where people go most of them carry a book and when they are sitting and waiting or on public transportation they read.

7. Cross country skiing is one of the most popular sports to watch on TV, even in bars!!!

8. Pull out couches are the normal form of beds...dual purpose rooms are normal.

9. Russia is where American bands go when they don't have a career any more and need money. SOON STARRING IN RUSSIA: Kiss (didn't know they were still alive), Back Street Boys, and Pussycat Dolls (need I say more).

10. Russians love their parks and seem to spend a lot of time in them but I guess I would too if I had such a long winter.

Adam Colby, Eckerd College

## Who are the Doukhobors\*?

This religious group originated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Russia as a protest against the Russian Orthodox Church and the Tsarist government. The name Doukhobors means "spirit wrestlers" in Russian and was used as a derogatory term by the Orthodox Church. They preached a "simple" Christianity, rejecting the authority of the priesthood and the government. They believed in communal values, advocated the equality of all men, and practiced non-violence. They faced persecution in Russia, and later in Canada, the country to which many emigrated in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the early nineteenth century they were encouraged to settle in the south of Russia, near the Sea of Azov. For a time they prospered there, but in the 1840's they were subjected to renewed persecution and the majority of the Doukhobors were forcibly resettled to Georgia in the Caucasus region. One group of the Doukhobors cooperated with local authorities, but the major group refused to swear the oath of allegiance to the Tsar or to serve in the army because of their pacifist beliefs. In 1887 the leader of this group, Peter Verigin, was arrested and exiled to Siberia for 16 years, and severe persecution continued.

By the end of the nineteenth century the treatment of the Doukhobors had been severely criticized by the novelist Leo Tolstoy and the Quakers who shared their beliefs about pacifism and non-violence. The government decided in 1897 to allow the Doukhobors to leave the country. The migration of more than 7,000 Doukhobors to Canada in 1898-99 was largely financed by Tolstoy, who donated the royalties from his novel *Resurrection*, other "Tolstoyans", and the Quakers. They were welcomed by the Canadian government and given land grants in Saskatchewan. They were not required to serve in the military or take an oath of allegiance to the crown.

The climate in Canada was a challenge for those who had been accustomed to agriculture in the south of Russia, but they worked hard to make their settlements a success. Some considered a move to California, but they feared the interference of US authorities and decided not to go.\*\* Others moved from Saskatchewan to British Columbia. Divisions existed within the settlements and eventually conflicts with Canadian authorities developed. Most Doukhobors wanted to continue the communal lifestyle and they opposed the government's attempts to require land registrations by individual owners. The government also changed its policies by requiring an oath of allegiance to the crown and requiring compulsory education in public schools.

An extreme group known as the Sons of Freedom, or "Freedomites" opposed the government, usually with passive resistance that included demonstrations of mass nudity, but on occasion they used arson and bombings. A crisis occurred in 1953 when a group of children from this radical group were removed from their homes and placed in a governmental residential home in British Columbia. More than 20,000 persons of Doukhobor heritage remain in Canada and about 4,000 still claim this as their religion. Isolated groups of Doukhobors also remain in Russia and Georgia.

\*This article contains selections from an entry written by Professor Bill Parsons in the *Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization*, published by Blackwell Press.

\*\*It was Peter Demens, the founder of St. Petersburg, Florida who invited the Doukhobors to California. Leo Tolstoy, who did not have a good opinion of Demens, warned the Doukhobors not to accept Demens' offer, and the two exchanged letters concerning the fate of this religious sect.

### *Adam Colby comments on Zenit's victory in May*

The streets have been packed since the game ended at 12:30 am.....it's now 4:30 in the morning and the streets are still not quite back to normal. Zenit has defeated the Rangers in the UEFA Cup final in Manchester, England!!!! Fireworks, chanting crowds, and an overwhelming sense of joy have erupted throughout the city of St. Petersburg. I have my hardest exam tomorrow and even though I returned at 1 am to get some sleep it was impossible, so I joined the crowd on the street and sang and watched the fireworks and celebrated. This city finally has something to cheer about!!!! Zenit, their heroes, the underdogs have done it.....they have put St. Petersburg on the world stage of soccer....they won against some of the greatest teams in Europe!!!! A new chant erupted tonight Синий, Белый, Голубой – Это цвета наш родной!!!\* (BLUE, WHITE, LIGHT BLUE, THESE ARE THE COLORS OF OUR CITY!!!) The honking, the crazy fans, and the cheering will not end for awhile now and as I lay down to sleep I wonder if I haven't just experienced a moment unlike any other.....

\*We are wondering just what the crowds were chanting. Similar words are part of a song that fans sing, but the grammar does not quite fit the way Adam heard and recorded the sounds. Does anyone think they know what was said? Some consultants think it might have been:

1. Синс-бело-голубой – Это флаг наш родной!!!
2. Сине-бело-голубой – Это Зенитушка родной!!!

If you want to find a multitude of interesting versions of Zenit songs and fan appreciations, visit the Zenit fan web-site <http://zenitzone.ru>. If you have no idea concerning the above description, it refers to the victory of the Zenit futbol (soccer) team, in what might be similar to a super-bowl victory or a world series championship in this country.

## Membership 2008

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 Celebration.

Please mail the following form, with your dues, to: Russian Heritage  
PO Box 14552  
St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Please check one:

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

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E-mail \_\_\_\_\_