

# RUSSIAN HERITAGE

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САИРТ ПЕТЕРБУРГ

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## A JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO ST. PETERSBURGS

St. Petersburg, Fla. (March 11, 2002) At the National Press Club today in Washington, D.C., Mayor Rick Baker of St. Petersburg, Florida and Governor Vladimir Yakovlev of St. Petersburg, Russia made a joint announcement that in the year 2003, they will jointly celebrate and commemorate St. Petersburg, Florida's centennial as an incorporated city, and the tricentennial of the founding of St. Petersburg, Russia.

It was June 6, 1903 that St. Petersburg, Florida was incorporated as a city, but the ties to St. Petersburg, Russia go back more than a hundred years. Peter Dementyev (Peter Demens), a Russian aristocrat, is credited as being the co-founder of St. Petersburg, Florida when he built the first RR line to the city in 1888.

Similarities between the two St. Petersburgs include their shared dedication to the arts and museums, their waterfront locations, and their noted beauty.

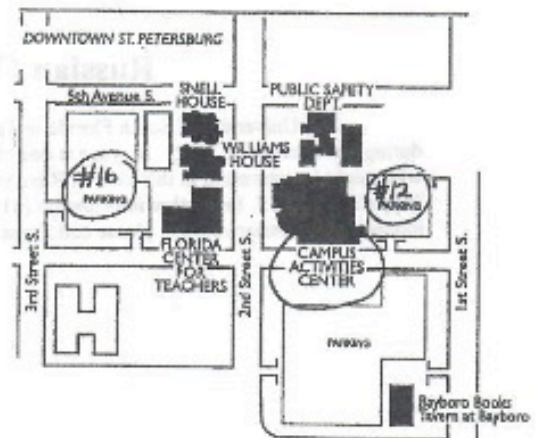
Now, on the threshold of these two significant civic celebrations, the two leaders envisioned today a celebration in each community that would include an exchange of delegations with representatives of arts and culture, education, industry, social services, health care, sports, and other fields traveling between the two countries. The cities also intend to work toward a relationship of some special status to be established in 2003. The official celebrations would be kicked off as both communities host New Year's Eve celebrations in 2002.

In Florida, Mayor Rick Baker plans to incorporate ongoing events – such as First Night, the debut of the Grand Prix of St. Petersburg in February, the annual Festival of States springtime celebration, the SPIFFS International Folk Fair, and Sail Expo St. Petersburg – into the official centennial observation, with additional activities filling out a year-round calendar.

## March 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of *Russian Heritage* to Discuss Plans for Celebrations of the Two St. Petersburgs

Many ideas have surfaced concerning ways to help celebrate the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of St. Petersburg, Russia and the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of St. Petersburg, Florida as a city. The *Russian Heritage* meeting on Tuesday, March 19<sup>th</sup> will discuss these possibilities. The joint announcement by Mayor Rick Baker and Governor Vladimir Yakovlev in Washington on March 11 make this discussion most appropriate at this time.

This meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday evening, March 19, 2002, in room 133 of the Campus Activities Center of the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg campus (at the corner of 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue South and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street). We expect to have in attendance people from the city administration, people who have had significant experience in the two St. Petersburgs, and many who want to know more about these two cities. Come with your suggestions, questions, and enthusiasm!



## THE AFTERMATH OF THE OLD RUSSIAN NEW YEAR

Those attending the Old Russian New Year's Party at the St. Petersburg Yacht Club have expressed many positive reactions to this event. The Executive Board meeting in February decided to hold this event again in 2003 on January 12<sup>th</sup> as one of the first events in the celebration of the anniversary of the two St. Petersburgs.

The celebration raised \$1,298 for *Russian Heritage*. The Executive Board decided to put \$1,000 of this amount into a fund to help prepare for the 2003 anniversaries.

Partly as a result of the Tango Dance performed by Andrei Ustinov and Elena Martinson at the New Year's celebration, the couple was invited to dance at the Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C. during the holiday of Maslennitsa on Tuesday, March 12. They will report on their experiences in Washington at the March 19<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Saturday, March 16, 2002. Russian Choir Concert at 7 p.m.** The Christ Episcopal Church in Bradenton (4030 Manatee Avenue West) has developed a strong interest in Russian spirituality, and has four exquisite icons by Father Andrei from Pskov in the church, as well as sponsoring several Russian choral performances this spring. For more information, call 941-747-3709.

**Tuesday, March 19, 2002. Russian Heritage General Meeting to Explore Options for Celebrating "The Two St. Petersburgs" in 2003.** The meeting will be held in Room 133 of the Campus Activities Center of the U. S. F., St. Petersburg Campus at 7:00 p.m. See page one for details.

**Monday, March 25, 2002. Russian Soprano Elena Lewenson** will perform at the Palladium Theater in St. Petersburg (235 Fifth Ave. N.).

**Tuesday, March 26, 2002. Concert of Russian Folk Music and Sacred Music.**

The Archiglas Vocal Quartet from St. Petersburg, Russia will present a free concert at the Palladium Theater. A free will offering will be received.

**Sunday, March 31, 2002. Easter for Western Christians**

**Saturday, April 27, 2002. Russian Heritage Ensemble** will perform at the Music Center of the Gibbs Campus of St. Petersburg College at 3 p.m. The program will include Brahms' Trio #1 for Violin, Cello, and Piano, and other selections.

**Sunday, May 5, 2002. Russian Easter**

**Tuesday, May 14, 2002. Russian Heritage Business Meeting and Elections.**

## Russian Classes for Children

The University of South Florida in Tampa is setting up language programs for children ages 8-11 during the summer of 2002. Russian is one of the languages being considered. If you know of persons who might be interested in this kind of Russian language "camp" instruction, please contact Professor Vic Peppard at U. S. F. for further information (813-974-2012). If there are children in Pinellas County interested in Russian classes, please call Elena Novikov (727-895-5334).

## *Russian Heritage. Who Are We?*

Some people have asked the question, just what is *Russian Heritage*? In our Articles of Incorporation, and in many of our Newsletters, we have stated that "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." We are a non-profit organization that also raises funds to support educational and cultural programs.

In late January, 2001 we had a membership of just over 80 members. Since that time we have had a surge in membership, and now there are 117 official members. Who are the members of *Russian Heritage*? According to our By-Laws, "full membership in *Russian Heritage* will be granted to those persons who agree to the functions and purposes of the Corporation, and who pay the annual dues stipulated by the Board of Directors." At this point we have 56 members of Russian-American background, of whom about half were born and grew up in the former Soviet Union, and have come to this country relatively recently. Others were born outside of Russia in Russian communities in America, Europe, Asia, and elsewhere. Many have fascinating stories.

There are approximately 61 members who are non-Russian, but who are interested in promoting Russian culture. Some of these members speak Russian and many have visited or lived in Russia. It is an interesting fact that at least fourteen couples in the organization include one Russian and one non-Russian spouse. What we all have in common is the desire to promote Russian culture in this part of Florida.

**Projects of *Russian Heritage*.** Each year *Russian Heritage* has sponsored cultural activities such as lectures, concerts, film series, forums, symposia, and social gatherings. Some years have been better for fund raising than others, but we have supported several cultural projects here in the United States and in Russia. In St. Petersburg, Florida we have placed a historical marker at the entrance to Demens Landing and provided funds for an exhibit of photographs of the Russian St. Petersburg at St. Petersburg College. In Washington we have supported the Russian Cultural Center with two projects to promote Russian-American understanding. We provided funds for the Tolstoy Foundation. In Russia we provided major funding for a Peter Demens exhibit which travelled from Tver to St. Petersburg to Vesegonsk, part of which is now included in the permanent collection of the historical museum in Vesegonsk (the part of Russia where Demens lived before coming to Florida). Finally, we have set up a fund to help celebrate the anniversaries of the two St. Petersburgs in 2003. In the first six years we have donated a total of more than \$15,500 to these causes.

