

# RUSSIAN HERITAGE

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SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2004

## Hurricane Ivan Affects Schedule for Natasha and Maria

At least three tragedies circled around our September *Russian Heritage* meeting in Largo. Locally, Floridians had just experienced two devastating hurricanes (Charlie and Frances) and we were almost ready to call off our meeting because of the threat from Hurricane Ivan. Twenty-six made it to the meeting for the pot-luck supper and the opportunity to meet Natasha Krupitskaya and Maria Kiselyova, our 2004 Student Ambassador Winners from St. Petersburg, Russia. The second and third tragedies were remembered by a moment of silence at the beginning of the Board of Directors meeting. It was September 11<sup>th</sup>, and the third anniversary of the terrorist attack in America, and it was also a week after the terrorist activity in Beslan, in southern Russia (see story below).

Natasha and Maria gave us a brief presentation about their school and their interests and activities that they have prepared for their planned visits to local schools. They were scheduled to visit seven schools, and we were waiting to hear from two or three more, but the hurricanes have affected the planning, and the first two visits have been cancelled (perhaps postponed) by Hurricane Ivan. We know that many more of our members had indicated that they planned to come to our September 11<sup>th</sup> meeting as well, but had to change their plans. In the next newsletter we will give a more complete account of the activities that were possible to arrange.

A second opportunity to meet Natasha and Maria will be the Farewell Dinner on Saturday, September 25 at 5:30 p.m. at the Oriental Super Buffet (2456 Gulf to Bay Blvd) in Clearwater. Because of the problems presented by Hurricane Ivan, this Dinner will be open to the entire membership. The price of the meal is \$10.95 per person (all you can eat with a wide selection of buffet items). Please call (727) 867-9148 to let us know if you are planning to attend.

## *Russian Heritage* to Support Victim of Terror in Beslan

The *Russian Heritage* Board of Directors has decided to collect funds to support the family of one of the victims, in response to the tragedy in Beslan in southern Russia where terrorists held an entire school hostage during the first days of September, and where more than 400 people died. Our *Russian Heritage* representative in St. Petersburg, Russia knows personally a family of a soldier who saved several of the children from the school before being shot in the back many times and killed by the terrorists. Money collected will go directly to the family of this hero-victim. You can send a donation with your dues and/or reservations for the Old Russian New Year's Celebration to the *Russian Heritage* Post Office Box, or bring it to the Farewell Dinner on September 25.

## Carl M. Kuttler Named Honorary Consul of Russia

Earlier this year, Carl M. Kuttler Jr., the president of St. Petersburg College, was appointed by Vladimir Putin as Honorary Consul of the Russian Federation. He received his official documents in a ceremony in Washington on September 9 attended by the Russian Ambassador to the United States, Yuri Ushakov, and representatives from the US Department of State. His first "official" duty as Consul was to meet our *Russian Heritage* International Student Ambassadors at the airport in Tampa later that day.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

September 25, 2004 **Farewell Dinner for Natasha and Maria.** (see story page 1)

September 29, 2004 **First Class of "Russian Culture and Conversation.** (p. 3)

October 2, 2004 **Program on Sister Churches in the Two St. Petersburgs.** (p. 3)

October/November **Russian Film Showings.** We are planning to show several Russian films this year, probably in late October and November. We could use your suggestions. Some are suggesting we show mainly recent films. Some think we could also show classics. Some feel we should show only films with subtitles. Some think we might show some in Russian without subtitles. Some think we should show the films at Eckerd College. Some think it might be good to have showings in different part of the Tampa Bay area.

Two "older films" primarily for children have been suggested. One is "The Bluebird of Happiness" (СИНЯЯ ПТИЦА), starring Elizabeth Taylor, Jane Fonda, Eva Gardner and others (they would speak Russian with English subtitles), made as a joint venture in 1975. Another suggestion was to have a double feature with the American "Mary Poppins" followed by the Russian version (1983), which follows roughly the same story, but with other songs.

Send your suggestions, and/or requests, including what times you would be most able and willing to come, to our new email address: [HeritageRussian@aol.com](mailto:HeritageRussian@aol.com).

November 7, 2004 – January 2, 2005 **Art Exhibit at Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art "FINDING FREEDOM: 40 years of Soviet and Russian Art."** More information on this exhibit in Tarpon Springs will be in the next newsletter.

January 15, 2005 **Old Russian New Year Celebration**

January – May, 2005 **Events Associated with the End of the Siege of Leningrad and the End of WWII in Europe.**

March 16 – 20, 2005 **SPIFFS 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Folk Festival at Tropicana Field**  
This year's theme is "Festivals and Holidays Around the World."



## Lakewood and St. Job's Russian Orthodox Church Sister Churches in the Two St. Petersburgs

A program on the special relationship between two churches in the two St. Petersburgs will be held in the Fellowship Hall of Lakewood United Church of Christ (2601-54<sup>th</sup> Avenue South in St. Petersburg) on Saturday, October 2 at 7:00 p.m. These two churches established contact in 1987 when Gorbachev's policies of Perestroika and Glasnost made such pairings possible. This was also one of the first contacts to be established between organizations and institutions in the two cities of "St. Peter".

Lakewood UCC has hosted Russian delegations on four occasions, including two visits from priests from St. Job's. Father Adrian Dolzhikov came for the Christmas season in 1989, and Father Vladimir Sorokin was part of a four-person delegation in 1995. Pastors Jim Prickett and Phil Smith were involved at the early stage of the pairings, and Phil Smith spent two weeks in Leningrad in May 1991. In July 1993 a delegation of UCC church people from Pinellas County, including four from Lakewood UCC led by Pastor Kim Wells, visited St. Job's Church in St. Petersburg, while participating in a program of study and tourism at the St. Petersburg seminary. Professors Bill and Vivian Parsons of Eckerd College were a part of the 1993 delegation, and also visited St. Job's on six other occasions, including the original contact in 1987.

In July of this year Professor Parsons visited St. Job's once again, and met with three of the priests from our previous relationships. He will speak about these contacts, bring you up to date with some of the recent happenings there, and show a unique video about St. Job's church in St. Petersburg, Russia. All members and friends of *Russian Heritage* are welcome. For further information, call (727) 864-8235.

## RUSSIAN CULTURE AND CONVERSATION

*A non-credit course offered by SPC*

*At the Florida International Museum*

Instructor: Helcna Kazakova

The 10-week class begins Wednesday, September 29.

6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Presentations about Russian life, literature, art, religion, and traditions. Learn about the language, the Russian alphabet, and conversational phrases.

*The fee for this non-credit course is \$75.00*

For more information: call 727-895-5334 or

727-341-3241

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*This is the second in a series of three articles about special Russian dogs written by our Russian Heritage secretary and dog lover, Peggy Newton.*

## SAMOYED – RUSSIAN DOG FOR THE AGES

Out of wind-swept snow drifts of ages past, the Samoyed comes to us today as he appeared centuries ago. Forged by thousands of years of protective breeding by arctic Samoyed nomads, he remains now as then - herder of reindeer, puller of sleds, warmer of families in their reindeer skin chooms.

His name - Samoyed - came from the name for the humans with whom he had been allied for centuries. It was a collective description of tribes living in the region between the Yamal and Tamyr Peninsulas within the Russian Arctic Circle. Literally the name means "he who eats himself". The conquering armies of the czars had seen the natives drink reindeer blood and had incorrectly assumed they were cannibals.

The Samoyed dog's character and abilities were forged by the work expected: strength to pull many times his weight; endurance to withstand the brutal cold; agility to turn on a dime retrieving wayward stock; a kind, gentle and loving nature as companion and friend.

The Samoyed's devotion to all humans is unparalleled - bred for centuries as a family dog - to warm his sleeping masters, to be safe with children, the aged and infirm.

His almond shaped eyes are rimmed with charcoal to cut the sun's glare and deeply set to protect from cold. His ears are alertly pricked and thick with fur to prevent frostbite. His tail is swished over his nose to warm his breath while lying curled in the snow. But it is long enough to carry over his back to clear the sled traces. The Samoyed's outer coat deflects the snow while his soft, thick undercoat insulates him from the elements and provides his human family with the warmest of clothing.

A perfect creation - a masterpiece of timeless design and function - and yet so much more.... He is known as the Christmas dog who carries the spirit of Christmas the year through because of his famous "Sammy Smile". Nomadic Samoyed herdsmen prized their dogs as objects of beauty and joy in their bleak, desolate environment.

The Samoyed is always smiling. His sense of humor and adventure make him unique. He loves nothing more than to work for his family.

But, he is not always a perfect obedience dog - with good reason. Imagine him the lead dog on a sled team forging its way across the wind-swept tundra. He is given the signal "Gee" (soft g) to turn right. To his right he discovers an abyss unanticipated by his human passenger. The Samoyed exercises his own judgment and does not obey.

There is an interesting twist on the Samoyed's story in America. The first Samoyeds were brought to this country in 1904 by the Belgian Princess de Mercy Argenteau who had been given Moustak by the uncle of Czar Nicholas. The Princess lost her fortune in this country and died in Tampa in what is now the Belmont Heights area. A museum of what remained of her possessions opened in the pink streets of St. Petersburg in 1926 but her possessions vanished in 1929. A few months before her death, the Princess, breeder of Chow Chows and Collies, had published her autobiography dedicated to her half brother...and her beloved Samoyed.

-Peggy Newton