

# RUSSIAN HERITAGE

VOLUME XIV, ISSUE 1.

SEPTEMBER 2009

## Fall Meeting: Dinner and Program at the Hilton *Friday, 6:30pm, September 25 in St. Petersburg*

The first meeting of the fall season will be a general meeting for all members and friends of Russian Heritage at Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront (333 1<sup>st</sup> Street South) in downtown St. Petersburg. This is the location for the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Old Russian New Year's Gala on January 16, 2010 (see page 2), and our September meeting will give us a chance to taste the Russian foods prepared by the Hilton chef. The cost of the meal is \$15 and it will be a buffet of special Russian foods in the Demens Room of the Hilton. We need to know before the event the number of meals to order, so please send your checks to Russian Heritage, PO Box 14552, St. Petersburg, FL, 33733 by September 21, or at least RSVP by email (president@russianheritage.org) or by phone to 727-867-9148.

The program will focus on the summer program of USF students who studied in Russia this past summer, and other travelers who have recently spent time in Russia. We also want to welcome members of Russian Heritage who have recently joined our organization, and friends of Russian Heritage who might be interested in joining. Please plan to come and invite friends who you think would like to get to know us better. Students and young people are welcome to join us and will enjoy a deeply discounted rate for the meal.

## A Sharing of Talents *Sunday, October 18 at 3:00pm*

We have many talented people in Russian Heritage, and on October 18 we will have an opportunity to a sharing of these talents. If you would like to participate by singing, playing an instrument, reciting a poem, or sharing your unique talent, please contact our emcee for this event, RH Board Member Victor Peppard (813-300-4785) or email: victorpeppard@yahoo.com. Cooking is also a talent to share. Bring a favorite dish to share for refreshment after our afternoon of culture at the Peppard clubhouse on St. Pete Beach.

## SPIFFS Folk Fair *moves to November*

Traditionally the St. Petersburg International Folk Fair (SPIFFS) has been held in March each year. This year the event will take place November 5-8 in Albert Whitted Park in downtown St. Petersburg. Recently Russian Heritage has been sponsoring the Russian village and again will be presenting our Russian culture on Thursday and Friday for the school children and on Saturday and Sunday for the general public. We will need volunteers for our village. More details will be presented in the next newsletter.

## 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Old Russian New Year's Celebration

The 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Old Russian New Year Ball will be special this year because it is dedicated to the memory of one of the founders of Russian Heritage, Tatiana Vondersaar, who died April 12, 2009. The event will be held in the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton St. Petersburg Bayfront in downtown St. Petersburg on Saturday, January 16, 2010. You will be receiving your official invitation soon, but you can look forward to a night of dancing to the music of the Dazzlers, an appetizing dinner, a spectacular Silent Auction, and a general exciting time. Mark your calendars now for this special event.

## Russian Heritage Cookbook In its Final Stages

It's time to send in your final recipes and stories for the Russian Heritage cookbook that is being compiled at this time. We are still looking for additional recipes that might invoke a personal story from your life, making this book special and personalized. The book will include recipes, art work, stories, poems, and other interesting material.

Send your contributions (which will be recognized) to Mary Stenov at: [marystenov@yahoo.com](mailto:marystenov@yahoo.com). or  
Mary Stenov  
254 Colony Point Rd. S.  
St. Petersburg, FL 33705

## Funds Supporting Russian Orphanages and Children's Programs Severely Impacted by Current Financial Conditions

Former member of the RH Board Richard Rappaport has brought to our attention how the difficult economic conditions have affected efforts to help children in crisis in Russia. One organization that he supports, the Russian Children's Welfare Society, is making a plea for funds to support orphanages and other projects in Russia. He would like individuals as well as Russian Heritage to consider supporting efforts to make a difference. We will raise this issue at the Russian Heritage meeting on September 25<sup>th</sup>. See website: [www.rcws.org](http://www.rcws.org).

## Two Russian Letters: X (KH) and O (OH). A Brief Lesson.

Two Russian letters that are often difficult for Americans to pronounce are "X" and "O". The "X" is usually spelled *kh* in English and has the sound similar to *ch* in the German word *Buch* (book) or the Scottish word *loch*. The Russian "O" is a problem primarily because when it is not accented, it has the sound of *ah* rather than *oh*. The Russian word *молоко* (milk) has three "o"s, but the first two sound like *ah*, while the third is accented, and is *oh*, so the word sounds like *ma-la-kó*. That is why the Russian word *хорошо* is pronounced *kha-ra-sho*. When you look at the article on *Khokhloma* (Хохлома) on the next page, remember to pronounce the word *kha-khla-má*!

### *Russian Cultural News. Continued on p. 4*

*(Mainly provided by Nadia Yevstigneyeva)*

Sergei V. Mikhalkov, 96, a poet and writer who wrote three versions of the Russian national anthem (including the Soviet version of Stalinist times and the current Russian version) in addition to many poems for children, died August 27, 2009 in Moscow.



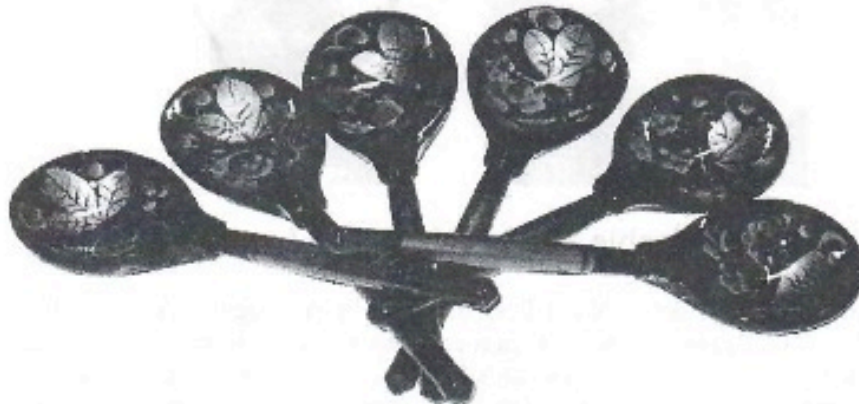
## Golden Khokhlomá (Хохломá)

The style of Russian Khokhlomá painting was born over 300 years ago. Khokhlomá is the name of a small Russian village in the former Semenovskiy district on the left bank of the river Volga. In the 17th century it was a place where craftsmen from all the nearby towns and villages brought various handicraft items to markets. Merchants bought these attractive goods and marketed them not only in Russia but abroad as well. Thus colorful wooden articles (plates, vases, jars, dippers, spoons etc) had become associated with the name of this trade village Khokhlomá. The documents of the 17th century said that such crockery, especially with golden shadow was very popular among noblemen at the Tsar's Palaces. The golden effect was achieved due to the tin application as one of the ingredients.

In the 19th century Khokhlomá items were exhibited at most National and International shows. The International Paris exhibition of 1889 pushed forward export of Khokhlomá articles drastically. Especially the trade companies from Germany, UK, France and India brought quite a lot of Khokhlomá items.

Today Khokhlomá is created in the same tradition as it was in the 17th century and produced throughout Semenovskiy district of Nizhny Novgorod area.

For hundreds of years Khokhlomá has amazed the world and is still doing so. It is truly a gem of modern folk art. Even today it develops its tradition of freehand improvisational ornamental painting.



Examples of this beautiful Khokhlomá art work are available for purchase at "Vladimir's Collection" at 201 1<sup>st</sup> Street NE in downtown St. Petersburg.

## Johnny Depp to Play in Russian Fairy Tale in the city of Ufa.

One of the most highly-paid Hollywood actors is going to star in a Russian children's fairy tale movie that will be shot in the capital of Bashkiria, in the Russian Federation. According to the film director Alexander Vakhitov, he had a 20-minute conversation with Johnny Depp, and the popular actor agreed to play in the movie. "It will be a children's fairy tale and Johnny will play the main character in it" – he boasted. The film director keeps it secret what the film is about and what kind of character Johnny Depp will be playing. The film director added, that Johnny Depp had no idea where the city of Ufa is located, but he did agree to take part in the project for free.

## Ground Waters Endanger Motherland Monument in Volgograd

In recent years ground waters have been approaching the base of "Motherland Calls!" which is Volgograd's major sculpture towering above Mamayev Kurgan, and one of the "Seven Wonders of Russia" featured in the Russian Village at the SPIFFS Folk Fair in March.

Within the last five or six years the level of ground waters has risen by almost two which is not fastened onto the pedestal but is maintained there due to the gravity force. The sculpture "Motherland Calls!" is the center of the memorial complex built on Mamayev Kurgan in memory of the crucial Stalingrad battle. The monument is a 25-meter figure of a woman stepping forward, with a sword 33 meters long and weighing 14 tons in her right hand. The total height of the sculpture is 85 meters. The sculpture is resting on a 16-meter high pedestal.



## Gogol More Recognizable Than Pushkin and Lermontov

According to opinion polls the works by Nikolai Gogol are the most recognizable among books by classic Russian authors - the majority of the Russians correctly name the author of *The Dead Souls* (70%) and *The Inspector General* (63%). Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman* rates second, with 59% of people having named the author correctly; the third is Lermontov's *The Hero of Our Time* with 54 per cent. Nikolai Gogol rates third among the most reread Russian classics, with 9% returning to his works after finishing school. The top two are Alexander Pushkin (14%) and Leo Tolstoy (11%). Among other reread authors the Russians mention Lermontov (7%), Dostoevsky (6%), and Chekhov (5%). 62% of Russians have not reread the classics after finishing school.



### Film on Joseph Brodsky Wins First Prize in Film Festival

The first prize in the feature film category at the Vyborg Film Festival went to Andrey Khrzhanovskiy's *Room and a Half* dedicated to poet Joseph Brodsky. It is a touching and sentimental contemplation on the Soviet era and tragic life of the famous poet. The feature film is based on Brodsky's essays. The poet's drawings and excerpts from his biography are intertwined with his prose texts. An award was also given to Alisa Frejndlikh for the best female role in *Room and a Half*.

### Exhibition in Memory of Aleksander Solzhenitsyn in Moscow

Moscow is hosting the traveling exhibition "In Memory of Aleksander Solzhenitsyn". The traveling book exhibition is aimed at demonstrating Solzhenitsyn's books in various cities of Russia and abroad. It presents books from the collection of the Solzhenitsyn family, and many of them are unique. The exposition includes editions by more than 70 publishing houses and translations into 34 languages – 234 books in total. The exposition also presents the writer's personal belongings.

### 100 Heirs of Alexander Pushkin Get Together in Moscow

The First World Congress of Pushkin's Descendants was held in Moscow in July 2009. 100 heirs of the poet participated in the event in connection with the 210<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the poet's birth. Altogether there are 234 descendants of the poet in the world today, 85 of them living in Russia and 149 dwelling abroad. Pushkin's family tree has 58 branches, i.e. families presently living in Russia, France, Belgium, Germany, the USA, Switzerland and other countries. A large branch of his descendants live in Great Britain and some of them became related with the royal family.

## Membership Dues 2010

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 fill in the following form, and send it with your dues, to:

Russian Heritage, PO Box 14552, St. Petersburg, FL 33733

Please check one:

Student \$0;  Individual \$15;  Family \$25;  Sponsor \$100 or more.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

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

I would prefer to receive my newsletter by  email, or  regular mail.

In the space below, please share with us your background and interests in Russian culture.





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St. Petersburg

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## Andrew Lloyd Webber Could not Complete *Master and Margarita*

The illustrious British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber started but could not complete his musical based on Mikhail Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita*. "I have decided to stop working on it, since I do not know how to complete it" – he confessed. "It is a very complicated novel, it has no end, and that is the problem" - Andrew Lloyd Webber said. "I understand that the audience would like to see Margarita disappearing somewhere with Woland, and not with Master, but that is not a very good idea" – the composer concluded.

## Museum of Brothers Karamazov to Appear in Staraya Russa.

The museum of Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* will be established in Staraya Russa. This small town of the Novgorod Region became the prototype of the town in the novel and here most of the chapters of this world famous book were written. The new museum will have six rooms. The visitors will see the living room of Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov, the room of Yekaterina Ivanovna Verkhovtseva, the monastic cell of the Elder Zosima, the kids' room, the anteroom, and the tavern. The exhibition halls go beyond just the setting of the novel, thus, in the "Yekaterina Ivanovna room" one will see exhibits which tell about the life of Russian women in the 19th century.