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russia days 2001—a smash hit!!!

If you missed out on Russia Days this year, you missed out on a spectacular cultural experience!

Over the course of our week-long celebration of Russian and Eastern European culture, we hosted more than three thousand people at various events.

From puppet shows to lectures and firesides to festivities, we had a BLAST! This year we added a new event held at Thanksgiving point, featuring just about everything from delectable food to energetic song and dance.

Russian artists, vendors and Russia Days supporters lined the busy main promenade and came together to create a lively and enjoyable atmosphere.

As festival-goers visited the different booths, they took in the exciting sounds of Russian folk music accompanied by enthusiastic cheers from the audience.

We had the privilege to welcome the prestigious BYU International Folk Dancers, the Utah Regional Ballet, Narodna, and Robert de Prague as performers and they did a marvelous job bringing the beauty and enthusiasm of Russian culture to us.

Russian delicacies were at a premium and lines stretched long to snatch them up. Sergei and Jennifer Dengin, and Sergei’s parents: Nadia and Nikolay provided a marvelous booth replete with the tastes, sounds and feel of Russia.

any of their other wonderful foods, be sure to join us next year for a second chance!

As always, the staff of the Utah-Russia Institute enjoyed visiting with those of you who were able to make it out to the various activities we hosted during the week.

We are amazed and gratified by how quickly the program is growing and hope to see our numbers soar once again next year.

We appreciate your participation in helping to create and sustain these events. Russia Days just wouldn’t be possible without your support!
Terrorism and the World of Aviation: A Russian Perspective

Given the recent tragic events in New York City, Washington, DC, and Pennsylvania, we decided to seek out a Russian perspective. So, on Thursday, September 20, 2001, Dr. Sergei Chernyshev, Deputy Director of the Central Aero-Hydrodynamic Institute (TsAGI), Russia’s equivalent of NASA, lectured at Utah Valley State College on “Terrorism and the World of Aviation: A Russian Perspective.”

Dr. Chernyshev began by expressing his profound sadness at the tragedy that occurred on September 11, and reaffirmed that the Russian people are strong in their support of American efforts to bring those responsible to justice.

Terrorism, as Dr. Chernyshev said, is a problem not unfamiliar to Russia. For many years, the Russian government has been fighting a group of terrorists in Chechnya, a region in southern Russia. As he pointed out, many of the terrorists in that region also have connections with Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan, the prime suspect in the World Trade Center attack.

Dr. Chernyshev talked about the responsibility of Russia and other advanced countries to protect their technological advances and prevent dangerous technology from falling into the hands of those who would use it to harm innocent people.

Dr. Chernyshev addressed the question of what security measures are in place and/or need to be implemented to prevent future attacks such as we saw on September 11. In Russian aircraft, he said, they have built stronger doors to protect the pilots from intruders from the main cabin. The doors are closed and locked before the passengers even board the plane, much unlike the American system where pilots often greet passengers as they board.

In addition, he talked about the work on an anti-collision system that will prevent a plane from crashing into another plane or building whether by accident or by intent. This system is still a work in progress.

When asked about using air marshals on the planes, he had little comment except to state that the expense for such a program would be significant.

Following the lecture, Dr. Chernyshev showed films about several Russian aircraft that have a higher maneuverability than American aircraft and which might be helpful in combating the danger of terrorism in the world.

The hope, according to Dr. Chernyshev, is not to eradicate technological advances simply because of the danger of misuse, but to instead advance so quickly technologically that the civilized world will always remain a few steps ahead of those who would wish to turn these tools into weapons of mass destruction.

History of the Russian Orthodox Church

This year, in addition to learning about the folk culture of Russia, we wanted to explore some of the religious morays that accompany it. We were fortunate to find Father Basil at Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Salt Lake City who was willing to host a lecture on the subject.

On Saturday, September 22, it was my great pleasure to attend the prayer services at this church. The music was beautiful and the words from the Scriptures were enlightening and uplifting. I was impressed with the surroundings, the ambiance, the devotion of those who attended to worship.

As I listened to the services, I had many questions about the different symbols used in the church and was grateful that some of these would be explained in the lecture that followed.

Directly following the prayer services, we enjoyed a lecture by Victoria Michailova, a professor of Russian at Brigham Young University, originally from Saint Petersburg Russia.

She began with the early history of Russia—a time when the country was settled primarily by paganistic nomads.

Vikings, traveling through Russia to trade with the Byzantine Empire to the south, found the Slavonic people firmly entrenched in paganistic beliefs, even as the European world was turning more strongly to Christianity.

In 955, Olga, then regent of Kiev, traveled to Constantinople where she was baptized a Christian.

Although her baptism did not mark the acceptance of Christianity in her society, it did set the stage for the “Baptism of Russia” under the direction of her grandson, Vladimir.

Vladimir, when he came to power, realized the significance of religion in a struggle to unite a people and so he decided to choose carefully the religion that would be most beneficial for his country. Representatives from Judaism and Islam came to him. But he rejected Islam because Muslims are forbidden to drink alcohol. He rejected Judaism because the Jews had no homeland and he did not want his people to end up as wanderers.

Dissatisfied with his contact with these religions, he sent out representatives to seek out the “perfect” religion. When these representatives visited Byzantium, they were amazed and

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Elder Neuenschwander Visits UVSC

For those of you who attended the Russia Days fireside at UVSC on Sunday, September 23, you may have been a bit surprised by the subject matter. Due to the tragic events of September 11, Elder Neuenschwander felt the need to discuss the future of the world and in particular, of our country. He told attendees not to falter in light of recent events, but to hold fast, stay strong and look to the Lord. He said that the world understands peace as the absence of violence, but Christ extends peace, not in the absence of something, but in the presence of love.

Although the subject matter was not what was anticipated, all who attended were uplifted by Elder Neuenschwander’s message.

The Frog Princess

On Monday, September 24, more than 300 people crowded into the American Fork Library to see a wonderful puppet show presentation of the Frog Princess put on by members of the UVSC and BYU Russian Clubs.

The Frog Princess is one of the most beloved fairy tales in Russia and there are several different versions of it. The version presented by the two clubs is of an old king who tells his sons to get married so that he will have a chance to see his grandchildren before he dies. They are unsure of how to choose a wife, and the old king tells them each to shoot an arrow and whoever brings it back will be his wife.

The first son’s arrow falls into the courtyard of a merchant, the second into a nobleman’s yard, and the youngest—into a swamp.

So the three sons return with their wives—a merchant’s daughter, a nobleman’s daughter, and a frog.

The king wants to test his new daughters-in-law and asks them each to sew a shirt. Surprisingly, the frog’s shirt is the most beautiful.

Then the king tells them to make a loaf of bread, and the frog’s is the most tasty.

Finally, he asks them to present their wives at a ball. Of course, the frog’s wife is quite disheartened as he fears that people will laugh.

However, at the ball, the frog is a beautiful princess and everyone is amazed to learn that an evil man, Koschei the Deathless, has cast a spell on her, turning her into a frog.

Koschei arrives at the ball and kidnaps the princess.

Ivan, the princess’s husband, chases him down, kills the villain and they live happily ever after.

Celebrating the Beauty of Pysanka

In Slavic tradition the egg represents life and rebirth, which is why decorated eggs serve as one of the most significant trademarks of Slavic Easter celebrations. Unique to Ukrainian culture are the lavishly decorated eggs known as pysanky.

As with years past, we were fortunate to include a hands-on experience with pysanka decorating as part of our Russia Days celebration, provided under the skilled guidance of talented local pysanka artist Ingrid Hersman. Ingrid has had many years of experience with the art of pysanka creation, which accounts for her amazing talent as well as her ability to provide knowledgeable instruction for those who attend her classes.

This year we held our pysanka activity in the West Valley area of Salt Lake Valley at the Aspen Village apartment clubhouse.

As with years past, we had a wonderful turnout of individuals eager to learn the art of pysanky while in turn testing their creativity. Participants learned the symbolism behind different colors, patterns and shapes.

With designs and color schemes in mind, everyone began the creation process that shapes the magic of pysanky. As the timely decorating and coloring process neared its end, the beauty of the personalized pysanky was revealed.

Anyone who has ever had the privilege of working with Ingrid would agree that the experience is simply wonderful. Next year, make it a point to join us in the fun!

Picnic in the Park

At our picnic in the park, on Thursday, September 27, we had the opportunity to sample some wonderful Russian dishes including delicious Ukrainian Borscht and charlodka, a Russian apple dessert.

We had a lot of fun playing games and the company was GREAT!

Unfortunately, our entertainer, Robert de Prague, was ill and unable to join us for the event.
History of the Russian Orthodox Church (Continued from Page 2)
impressed by the beauty, strength and prosperity of the Byzantine Empire.
They reported back to Vladimir who, in time, accepted Orthodoxy and declared
it to be the new state religion in Russia. In 988, Russia was baptized into the Or-
thodox Church.

In addition to this brief discussion of Russian history, we were privileged to hear
from a couple of Victoria’s students on the subjects of paganistic beliefs and
symbolism in the church. These mini-lectures were very informative and raised
many questions.

After the lectures, Victoria and Father Basil fielded questions for about an hour
from the audience.

All in all, it was a wonderful experience and all who were privileged to attend
were granted a unique window into the Russian soul.

Salad Olivier
(White Russian Potato Salad)

Source: Olga, Editor of Rus-
sianfoods.com

This salad is the creation of
a French chef, M. Olivier,
who in the 1860s opened a
fashionable restaurant in
Moscow called The Hermit-
age. The present-day ver-
sion has veered quite far
from the original, but Salad
Olivier continues to be a
favorite hors d’oeuvre and
side dish for entrees.

1 whole chicken breast,
poached, boned, and skinned
1 pound all-purpose potatoes,
boiled in their skins and
peeled
4 large dill pickles
1 cup cooked fresh or frozen
peas
1 medium onion, finely
chopped
1 cup Mayonnaise
2 hard-boiled eggs, peeled
and quartered
1 small can of diced black ol-
ives
8 sprigs parsley

Cut the cooked chicken
and potatoes into 1/2-inch
cubes. Also cut the pickles
into 1/2-inch cubes. In a
large bowl, combine the
meat, potatoes, pickles,
olives, green peas, and on-
ion. Add the mayonnaise
and mix gently, so those
ingredients are not
mashed.

Refrigerate the salad until
serving time (but for no
longer than 4 hours).
Serves 6

NOTE: I am still waiting for pictures from some of our Russia Days Events. When I receive them, I will post
all pictures on our web site. Thank you for your patience.