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Mission Statement
The purpose of URI is to promote mutually beneficial humanitarian, cultural, educational, commercial and technological projects in order to foster greater understanding, friendship, free enterprise, civil society and a strong democracy among and between the citizens of the Russian Federation and the state of Utah in particular and the United States in general.

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Trip to Russia

In mid-November, Dr. Rusty Butler traveled to Moscow to examine facilities for a potential UVSC study-abroad program.

Together with a former BYU professor, now living in Moscow, Dr. Butler visited Moscow State University facilities and dormitories where such a program could be conducted.

The former BYU professor, Natasha Getmanenko, would likely be involved in the program. She is also helping UVSC’s hockey club recruit Russian players to come to UVSC for ESL studies and to play hockey.

While in Moscow, Dr. Butler met with officials of the Foreign Ministry as well as with officials of the City of Moscow in his role as Russian Honorary Consul General. The City wishes to pursue cultural exchanges with Utah as it did during the successful Moscow-Utah Youth Games of 2003 and 2004.

Of note, Dr. Butler was invited to meet with exiled former Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev at his dacha outside Moscow. This was a cordial reunion with the former head-of-state whom UVSC hosted in Utah in September 2004.

Kolachki

Ingredients
1/2 lb cream cheese (at room temperature), 1/2 lb butter (at room temperature), 3 cups flour, 1 lb finely ground walnuts, 1 egg, 1 cup sugar, water

Directions
Preheat oven to 375F. Mix butter and cream cheese until smooth. Add flour, and mix again until smooth.
Roll dough into 3 balls. Refrigerate dough to keep it from drying out. The dough can be refrigerated for 1-2 hours, but it is not necessary. Roll out 1 ball at a time and flour lightly. Roll dough out in flour or granulated sugar so it doesn't stick. Cut dough into squares or circles using cookie or biscuit cutter.

Flatten the dough down and add the walnuts and egg, and the sugar, and about a teaspoon of water to obtain a sticky consistency. Add the walnuts and add the water to obtain a sticky consistency. Add a teaspoon of filling to each piece of cut dough. Roll squares into logs. Fold circles over and seal with a fork. Bake for 10-15 minutes or until lightly browned.

UPCOMING EVENTS

В полночь звездочка на небе загорится,
Мир наполнится пусть светом и теплом,
Чтоб скорее всем мечтам заветным сбыться!
С Новым Годом! Мира, счастья! С Рождеством!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
In old Russia, Christmas was as colorful as the country itself, a happy, festive time lasting from December 25 through January 7. Gifts were exchanged and families celebrated with a wonderful Christmas Eve dinner followed by attendance at Otstoyat, the service at a Russian Orthodox church.

Christmas trees went on sale three days before the holiday with most decorations made by hand. Many fathers were enlisted to carve matryoshka dolls to hang on the tree. The little dolls came in various sizes, all of which could be stacked so they would fit together inside the largest doll. Some children opened their gifts on Christmas Eve, but others were told that Grandfather Frost, the Russian equivalent of Santa Claus, wouldn't come until they were sleeping so they would find their gifts under the tree on Christmas morning. Russian cities had no fireplaces so Grandfather Frost made house calls.

After the 1917 revolution in Russia the religious celebration of the holiday was replaced by the Festival of Winter. The Christmas tree became a New Year's Eve tree; Christmas dinner became a New Year's dinner and Grandfather Frost arrived on New Year's Day. The country's calendar was changed so that it was 13 days ahead of the old one and Christmas became January 7. Christmas followed New Year's!

In 1991, Russia enjoyed its first official Christmas in over 70 years. Some Russian families are indicating a preference for traditional customs and Grandfather Frost is once again arriving on Christmas rather than New Year's. Christmas is again the time when gifts are exchanged, and New Year's has its original traditions of fireworks, parties, and other such festivities. The Russian people of today are now allowed to embrace the customs of a genuine old Russian Christmas.

Source: http://hoover.archives.gov/exhibits/christmasworld/russia.html