Ambassador Saudabayev of Kazakhstan

In April, the Utah-Russia Institute was privileged to host the Honorable Kanat Saudabayev, Ambassador of Kazakhstan. Accompanying him were his wife and son.

Ambassador Saudabayev and his family enjoyed their stay in Utah, but most particularly the evening they spent with Jazz celebrity, Karl Malone.

Other highlights of the trip included numerous business meetings, a meeting with Governor Michael Leavitt, a meeting with Senator Orrin Hatch and, lest the meetings become too burdensome, a game of golf at Thanksgiving Point.

In addition, the Ambassador lectured at Utah Valley State College on the vast resources that are available in Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan is the 9th largest country in land area and is second only to Saudi Arabia in proven oil reserves. In addition, natural gas and other resources are available in large quantities in this country.

Ambassador Saudabayev and wife pose with Utah Jazz star, Karl Malone after dinner at his home

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Ambassador of Ukraine

The Ambassador of Ukraine also visited Utah last month. He gave a rousing lecture to a packed house at Brigham Young University and then was privileged with a command performance by the BYU Folk Dance Ensemble.

After the dancers had finished the performance, the Ambassador, moved nearly to tears, paid them the highest compliment possible—stating that they had captured not only the movements of Ukrainian dance, but the feeling behind it.
RASG Russian Cooking!!!!

Have you ever wondered what the secret is to that delicious borscht you have heard of? Have you ever asked a Russian for a recipe and been frustrated with the ambiguity of the answer? If you have, now is your chance to learn firsthand about Russian cooking!

On Friday, May 11 at 6:30 pm at the Wahl home in Salt Lake City, all parents are invited to attend the Russian Adoption Support Group cooking class. Please call Jenny Davis at (801) 222-8897 to RSVP and for directions.

The class will be taught by UVSC student Nadya Alekseeva. Nadya was born and raised in Latvia and recently began her studies here at Utah Valley State College. She also works at UVSC’s food services.

Mothers for Children of Russia

The orphanages in Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union are in a deplorable state. There is not adequate fuel to heat homes and buildings, food supply is insufficient, hospitals lack equipment and medical supplies.

A group of mothers in Salt Lake City, upon learning of the dire suffering of Russia’s children, established a foundation called Mothers for Children of Russia. Since the establishment of the foundation, lifesaving medical equipment, food, and medicine have been donated to orphanages in Vladivostok and Nahodka.

Because of the difficulties associated with shipping to Russia, monetary donations have proven to be the most effective means of helping these orphanages. Even a dollar can help to buy vitamins for a malnourished child.

Children are suffering. We MUST do something to help.

If you would like more information on this organization and on how to become involved, please contact Elsie Gerald, a South Jordan resident, who was recently appointed Area Chairman for the Foundation.

Elsie Gerald
Mothers for Children of Russia
9674 South 1630 West
South Jordan, UT 84095
801-253-0547

Russia Days and Russian Children’s program

Plans for “Russia Days—2001” are underway, and we hope that this year’s program of events will be as entertaining and alluring as those that were scheduled last year.

Russia Days has gained increased support and public interest over the past few years, and we hope to perpetuate this trend. This year’s program will include performances by the Utah Regional Ballet, local folk dance groups and musical ensembles.

In addition, we hope to include a children’s program. This program will consist of Russian song and dance. We would like to include as many children from the Russian Adoption Support Group as possible.

This is a GREAT opportunity to get your whole family involved in Russian Culture!

If your children are interested in being involved with this performance, please contact Jenny Davis at (801)222-8897.
May 9 - Victory Day in Russia, a national holiday which remembers the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II and honors 20 million Soviets who died in the war.

Europe heaved a collective sigh of relief upon the close of World War II. Fighting ceased on May 2nd, 1945 and was followed by the official surrender of German troops on May 4th and 5th. After years of devastation, the war ultimately ended at midnight on May 8th, 1945. Declared Victory Day, May 9th was established as an observance to be held in remembrance of the tremendous effort that Soviet citizens invested in defending their country throughout the war.

Before the war’s end, Nazi Germany continued to force attacks upon the Soviet Union with great hostility. With tremendous determination, the Soviet Army maintained strength in pushing German troops back to Berlin. This continued defense was instrumental in the defeat of Hitler’s forces. Considering the collective effort exercised by Soviet citizens, they eventually recognized the event as a "patriotic war." Today, Russians continue to appreciate the patriotic nature of their involvement in the war.

Victory day celebrations in Russia are centered around honoring the countless number of citizens that participated in the defense of their republic. A day of feasting and collective celebration, Victory Day truly signifies the patriotism in the hearts of Russians worldwide. On this day, flowers are laid on the graves of those who died in battle and living veterans wear their medals in public. This display of military participation is more and more impressive as each year passes, considering the declining number of living World War II veterans in Russia. As a special honorary gesture, the Russian President sends letters of recognition to the veterans, who are often invited to participate in the widespread parades and public addresses in various cities throughout Russia.

In Russia, nearly every family has a relative that was involved with the war. A significant theme on this holiday is the public’s commemoration of the many individuals who died while fighting for the Soviet Republic, though living veterans are also celebrated. During the war, those who couldn’t participate in battle were sent to manufacture firearms—a task which was certainly no more pleasant or simple than combat itself. Undoubtedly, the patriotism illustrated through Victory Day helps to represent the strength of Russian heritage and their determination throughout the course of world history.

Just a reminder:

Russian classes through UVSC’s Community Education program will continue throughout the summer. Please keep an eye out for further information.

Upcoming Events

May 1-2 Spring and Labor Holiday
May 7 Victory Day
May 11 RASG Cooking Activity
June 12 Independence Day

*Russian Class will begin again in June, dates to be announced
Correction Corner

We’d like to apologize for some slight confusion that may have arisen from the April 2001 newsletter article titled ‘Faberge’ or ‘Pysanki’: Traditional Icons of Russian Heritage and Faith. The title should have read ‘Faberge’ and ‘Pysanki’: Traditional Icons of Slavic Heritage and Faith. As many already know, Faberge eggs are primarily considered to be Russian artifacts which originated from observance of the Easter holiday. Pysanki, however, are Ukrainian in origin and are decorated differently than the richly elaborate and extremely limited Faberge eggs. What we primarily intended was to describe the different symbols that are used in Slavic Easter and apologize for implying that Faberge and Pysanki are interchangeable references.