

RUSSIAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH

Celebrating Russian April in New York State 2015



“We and our allies owe and acknowledge an everlasting debt of gratitude to the armies and people of the Soviet Union”

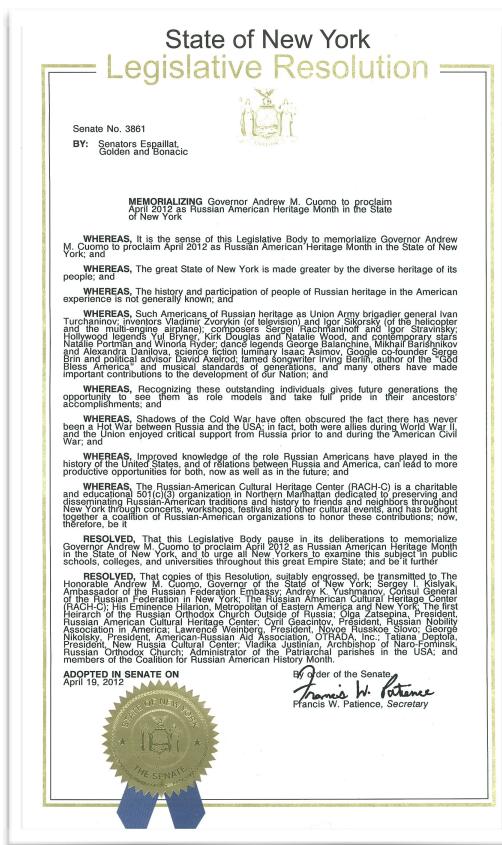
– *Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy*

Among many anniversaries of 2015, the most important is the celebration of 70 years after the end of WWII, when the Soviet Union and the United States were allies in a Great Victory over fascism.



IT'S ABOUT TIME!

Most groups represented among the citizens of the United States are recognized by a week or month celebration in some or all of the 50 states. Russian Americans however; were early to arrive but late to be noticed.



The New York State Senate was first in the nation to adopt a resolution supporting a month to recognize the contributions of Russian Americans. Democrat Senator Adriano Espaillat, was joined as co-sponsor by Republican Majority Leader Dean G. Skelos, and Senators Golden, Bonacic, and Felder.

The idea is growing. This year the legislature of the State of Washington passed a resolution with similar language; that “there be active efforts to examine the subject of Russian American heritage and culture “in public schools, colleges, universities, and other venues.” With “events and activities supporting interest and attention to Russian American history and how Russian Americans have retained their cultural identity while contributing significantly to the enrichment of Washington State and America.”

RACH-C, the Russian American Cultural Heritage Center may have started the ball rolling in NYS but if this keeps going there soon could be such celebrations in states all over America. Dr Olga Zatsepina, President of RACH-C who recruited the members of (RAHM) – the Russian American History Month Coalition is already responding to requests for advice on working with State Governments to achieve government recognition of Russian American Month. It's about time.

This year Russian compatriots have much to celebrate with several important anniversaries to help us remember: 70 years of the end of World War II and the establishment of the UN, accomplished with the joined forces of the Allies; United States and the Soviet Union, the 175th anniversary of the birth of world-renowned Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, a guest of honor and conductor at the 1891 official opening of Carnegie Hall, the 155th anniversary of the birth of Anton Chekhov, whose work forever changed the face of theater and influenced many American playwrights. In this journal you will read articles dedicated to one of the most important anniversaries celebrated in 2015. □

Russian-American History Month

Activities and publicity for the Month (including this journal) organized and conducted by The Russian American Cultural Heritage Center (RACH-C). www.rach-c.org

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MEMORY ACCEPTS NO BOUNDS

The victory over fascism is the greatest achievement of the civilized world but for the victorious powers of World War II it was a remarkable feat for which they each can claim the greater role. Yet none can deny the worth of their comrades.

Considering the US involvement in the fight against the Nazis, for instance, we need note that this war brought the US military not only to fights in Europe but also in Africa, and in the Pacific Theater of Operations. Yes, there are some differences in the perception of the Second World War. For Russians, the war was and still remains "sacred" - the Great Patriotic War; focused on the memory of the high price paid for that Victory by the Soviet people: 6.3 million servicemen killed or died of wounds sustained; 4.5 million missing. General demographic losses including lost civilians in the occupied territory and increased mortality in the rest of the USSR from adversity of war - 26.6 million people.

The victory over Hitler gave Americans pride in their country and its heroes - Dwight Eisenhower, George Patton, Henry Arnold and hundreds of thousands of nameless, ordinary soldiers who fought and died for peace in Europe and throughout the world. No one would dare to say that American soldiers did not bravely lay down their lives for the cause of liberty or that American citizens did not knowingly suffer great deprivation while selflessly devoting all their nations power and resources to save the world.

The Americans embraced and supported their comrades in deeds and, as importantly, in respectful words; "History knows no greater display of courage than that shown by the people of Soviet Russia ... We and our allies owe and acknowledge an everlasting debt of gratitude to the armies and people of the Soviet Union ... The gallantry and aggressive fighting spirit of the Russian soldiers commands the US Armies admiration ... I join in admiration for the Soviet Union's heroic and historic defense ". These are the words of the higher ranks of the US team, recorded on film, included in the American documentary "Why We Fight. The Battle of Russia "(directed by Frank Capra, 1943). The quotes are attributed to; Henry L. Simpson, Secretary of War; second - Frank Knox, the Secretary of the Navy; third - Chief of Staff of the US Army George Marshall; fourth - General Douglas MacArthur, commander of US forces in the Pacific.

In those most trying times, the United States and Russia were allies, joined in the sacred struggle against fascism. Today, while ideas of neo-Nazism and even terrorism grow more and more popular and in some cases entire countries devote themselves to revising the outcome, not just of World War II, but actually the whole history of the civilized world, Moscow and Washington choose to stay at opposite poles. But on May 8 and 9, on the streets of many US cities there will be parades of veterans, Russian and American, who remember what it was like to share the struggles and ideals that defeated tyranny, and among them will be those who embraced each other on the Elbe.

У ПАМЯТИ НЕТ ГРАНИЦ

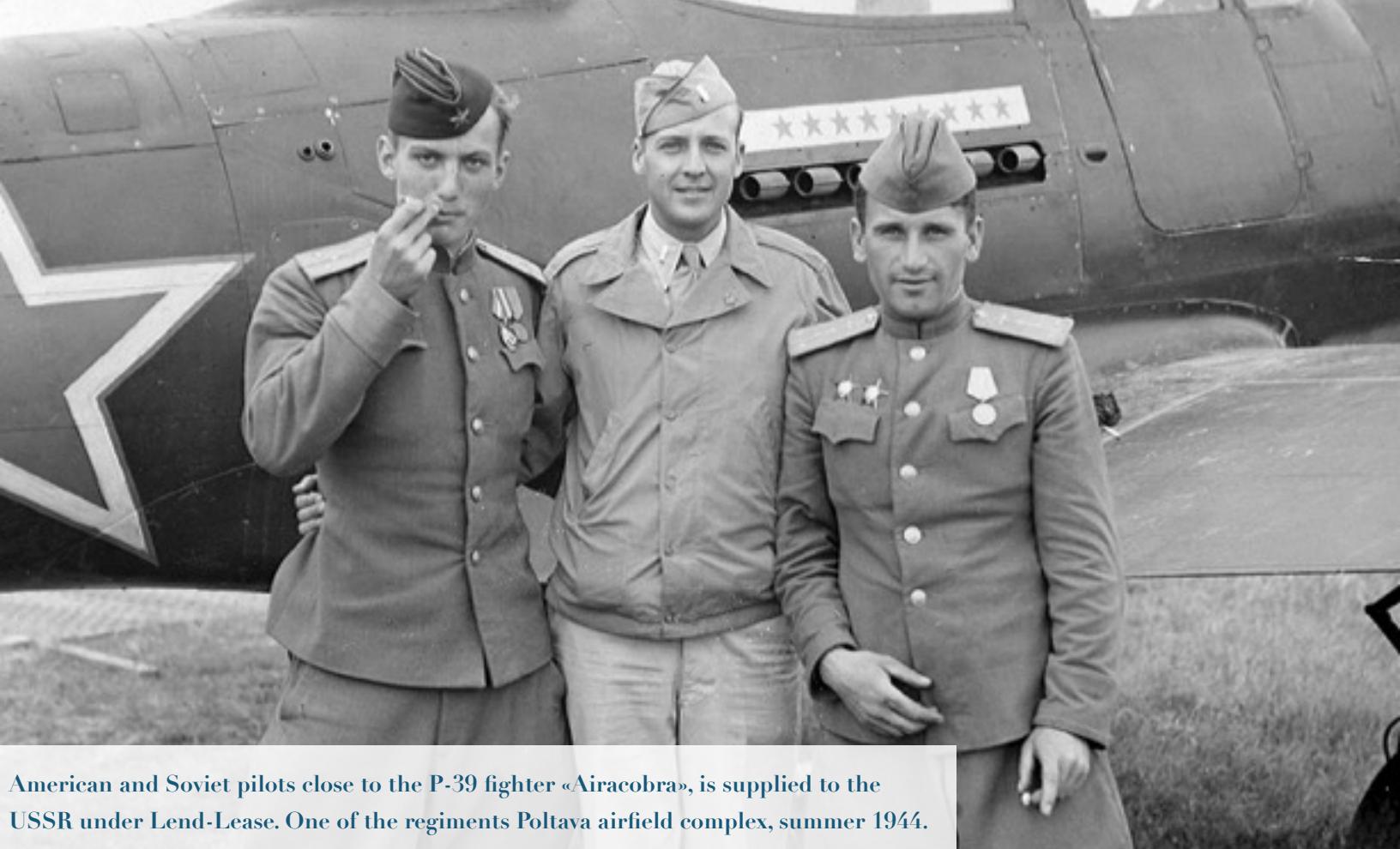
Победа над фашизмом - это величайшее достижение, которое цивилизованное человечество старается относить не на общий счет, а на счет стран-победительниц во Второй мировой войне. Говоря об участии США в борьбе против нацистов, стоит отметить, что эта война включала для американской армии бои не только в Европе, но и в Африке, на Тихоокеанском театре военных действий. Да, есть некоторые различия в восприятии исторической важности Второй мировой. Для россиян эта война была и остается священной, Великой Отечественной. Высокую цену заплатил советский народ за Победу: 6,3 млн. военнослужащих убиты или умерли от ранений, 4,5 млн. пропали без вести. Общие демографические потери (включающие погибшее мирное население на оккупированной территории и повышенную смертность на остальной территории СССР от невзгод войны) — 26,6 млн. человек.

Победа над Гитлером подарила американцам гордость за свою страну и ее героев - Дуайта Эйзенхауэра, Джорджа Паттона, Генри Арнольда и сотни тысяч безымянных простых солдат, сражавшихся и погибавших за мир в Европе и во всем мире. Никто не посмеет сказать, что американские солдаты погибали зря, как не зря терпели лишения американские граждане, оставшиеся в тылу, самоотверженно отдававшие все свои силы, чтобы спасти мир.

«История не знает большего примера храбрости чем тот, что был показан людьми Советской России... Мы и наши союзники бесконечно благодарны и навсегда обязаны армии и людям Советского Союза... Умение и агрессивный боевой дух русских солдат вызывают восхищение американской армии... Масштаб и грандиозность русского вклада можно считать величайшим военным достижением во всей истории...». Это слова высших командных чинов США, записанные на кинопленку, вошедшие в американский документальный фильм «Почему мы сражаемся. Битва России» (режиссёр Франк Капра, 1943). Цитаты принадлежат - Генри Л. Симпсону, министру войны; вторая – Франку Ноксу, министру флота; третья – начальнику генерального штаба США Джорджу Маршалу; четвёртая – генералу Дугласу Макартуру, командующему американскими силами на Тихом океане.

Тогда США и Россия были союзниками. Тогда их объединила священная борьба с коричневой чумой. Сегодня, когда идеи теперь уже неонацизма и терроризма становятся кое-где все более популярными, когда целые страны уже идут по пути пересмотра итогов не только Второй мировой войны, но и всей мировой истории, Москва и Вашингтон предпочитают оставаться на разных полюсах. Но 8 и 9 мая по улицам городов пройдут парадом ветераны, и среди них будут те, кто обнял друг друга на Эльбе.

By Alexei Osipov



American and Soviet pilots close to the P-39 fighter «Airacobra», is supplied to the USSR under Lend-Lease. One of the regiments Poltava airfield complex, summer 1944.

U.S.-SOVIET RELATIONS: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEND-LEASE

During World War II, the United States began to provide significant military supplies and other assistance to the Allies in September 1940, even though the United States did not enter the war until December 1941. President Roosevelt proposed a new initiative that would be known as Lend-Lease. The United States would provide the Allies with the supplies they needed to fight Germany, but would not insist upon being paid immediately.

The U.S.-Soviet alliance of 1941–1945 was marked by a great degree of cooperation and was essential to securing the defeat of Nazi Germany. Without the remarkable efforts of the Soviet Union on the Eastern Front, the United States and Great Britain would have been hard pressed to score a decisive military victory over Nazi Germany.

Following the Nazi defeat of France in June of 1940, Roosevelt grew wary of the increasing aggression of the Germans and made some diplomatic moves to improve relations with the Soviets. Beginning in July of 1940, a series of negotiations took place in Washington between Under-Secretary of State Sumner Welles and Soviet Ambassador Constantine Oumansky.

Finally, during the Congressional debate concerning the passage of the Lend-Lease bill in early 1941, Roosevelt blocked attempts to exclude the Soviet Union from receiving U.S. assistance.

The most important factor in swaying the Soviets eventually to enter into an alliance with the United States was the Nazi decision to launch its invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. President Roosevelt responded by dispatching his trusted aide Harry Lloyd Hopkins to Moscow in order to assess the Soviet military situation. By the end of October, the first Lend-Lease aid to the Soviet Union was on its way. The United States entered the war as a belligerent in late 1941 and thus began coordinating directly with the Soviets, and the British, as allies.

In spite of the differences in the opinions on war tactics, the defeat of Nazi Germany was a joint endeavor that could not have been accomplished without close cooperation and shared sacrifices. Militarily, the Soviets fought valiantly and suffered staggering casualties on the Eastern Front. When Great Britain and the United States finally invaded northern France in 1944, the Allies were finally able to drain Nazi Germany of its strength on two fronts. Finally, two devastating atomic bomb attacks against Japan by the United States, coupled with the Soviets' decision to break their neutrality pact with Japan by invading Manchuria, finally led to the end of the war in the Pacific. □

By Yulia Valieva

LESSONS OF THE PAST, HOPE FOR THE FUTURE

The years of the terrifying war sink deeper in our minds; however, the heroic deeds of people who rose to defend their homeland will always remain in people's memory. It has been 70 years since World War II ended but the events of the wartime live in the minds of its veterans and remain available in books and war movies.

We must cherish the memories of those tragic days and pass them from generation to generation in order to learn and grow from them. That is why "Victory Day" has become sacred for each of us. We have to thank the older generation for their Great Victory but, each day we see fewer and fewer of those who actually fought in the combat. On the eve this major anniversary, I would like to tell you about one of them, my father – Aleksey Mikhaylovich Farfel.

In 1941 when the war broke out my father was just 10 years old. He lost his loved ones and his home during the war. In those harsh days children joined the adults in the same ranks. He was orphaned in 1943 (his mother was killed in the bombing during the evacuation, and his father perished at the front). He tried to find his distant relatives and became a tramp, traveling across the country to the region where they had relocated. Children grew fast in those terrifying and sorrowful years.

The soldiers of the 133rd Tank Regiment picked up little Aleksey, who was hungry and suffering from cold. They persuaded their commander to let them keep him in their military unit, since they were unable to send him to the back land... The Soviet Army became his home and the soldiers treated him like a son. He was just a child and they all wanted to indulge him.

In August of 1943 Aleksey Farfel was declared the son of the regiment; he was just 12 years old then. Having violated the military instructions, the commander assumed responsibility for the child's life, which was an unprecedented step. It was hard to predict what would happen to his unit tomorrow, and he did not know if they would be able to break through the tenacious cordon and reach the Russian forces or how many people would be killed during the next counterattack...

My father told me that they had made a little uniform out of a regular uniform just for him and also a pair of boots made to measure out of huge tarpaulin boots. When they found a good moment, the soldiers taught him arithmetic and made him write dictations to learn Russian. He reminded them of their own children, since many regiment officers and soldiers had left their kids somewhere in the back land.

Later the 133rd Tank Regiment adopted two more boys. We have a family album where my father still keeps lovingly his wartime photos. In one picture he is wearing a military uniform and is standing side by side with his friends, little soldiers and boys like him.

It goes without saying that the presence of boys in the regiment made the soldiers still more intransigent, helping them fight with the brutal enemy.



My father told me he had a compelling desire to look like a real soldier and become a Soviet warrior. Surely, the commanders would not allow him to participate in the combat, since he was just a child. However, despite his young age (he was just 12), he performed other soldier duties as best he could. Sometimes he worked 12 and even 16 hours a day in the infirmary, where he helped nurses take care of the wounded. He also worked in the kitchen and helped the fighting men to maintain and polish the armored vehicles. Together with the adults, little soldier Aleksey Farfel did his best to make the Great Victory happen.

Later, my father, Aleksey Mikhaylovich Farfel, became a professional military man. He is a veteran of World War II and the USSR Armed Forces. He spent 42 years serving in the army, was awarded numerous medals and retired in the rank of colonel.

Today, at 84 years of age, he lives in the U.S., in Orlando, Florida, together with his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. I am now and have always been deeply proud of my father. On Victory Day (May 9) we are going to drink the "frontline one hundred grams of Russian vodka" to Victory!

I would like to thank all World War II veterans (Soviet veterans and US veterans) and make a low bow to them. Dear veterans live long and teach your great grandchildren how to become people of integrity and live a useful life. Wishing you all good health and happiness! Let us always have peace in the world and clear sky above! □

By Mikhail Farfel

It's Russian-American History Month!

Visit russianamericanhistorymonth.org for more information and upcoming events.

THE UN'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY

In 2015 the calendar for April is marked with an anniversary of great significance to US-Russian relations and the whole modern global political set-up. On April 25, 1945, the United Nations Conference on International Organization was convened in San Francisco, during which the Charter of the United Nations was drafted leading to the creation of the one and only truly universal organization.

Conceived during WWII as an alliance of nations who pledged to fight against the Axis Powers (the name "United Nations", coined by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt was first used in the Declaration by United Nations of 1 January 1942), the Organization was formally created in 1945, when its Charter was signed in June and ratified by China, France, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and by a majority of other founding countries later in the year. United Nations Day is celebrated on 24 October each year since then.

Today the international organization that was created to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, ...to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, ...to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom" is made up of 193 Member States. The mission and work of the United Nations are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter.

The UN serves as a forum for its members to express their views in the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, and other bodies and committees. A member country, independent of its size or population, has equal rights and opportunities to freely express its views and to participate in the everyday work of the United Nations. By enabling dialogue between its members, and by hosting negotiations, the Organization has become a mechanism for governments to find areas of agreement and solve problems.

This unique nature of the Organization has helped it to always be in the center of international relations – not only during the high-level week of the General Assembly, that brings heads of states and governments of all countries to the UN Headquarters every September, but on the every day basis, as all UN members have their official representatives in New York. Thus, it is no accident, that the absolute majority of international crises are discussed and get resolved under the aegis of the United Nations and many heads of diplomacy globally had UN experience in their careers. Famous "Mister Niet", USSR Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, served as his country's Permanent Representative to the UN, as did the head of Russia's modern diplomacy – Mr. Sergey Lavrov.

For many decades now the UN Security Council has been the floor for the diplomatic fencing bouts between Russia and US exchanging cascades of touchés for Team East and Team West. The Korean and Vietnam wars, Middle East conflicts, Cuban Missile Crisis, and clashes in Africa are just a few of those international issues that were debated, contained or resolved in the UN. The intensity of diplomatic exchanges never subsides. But, thanks to the United Nations, countries manage to find ways to overcome rivalry for the common good.



Due to the powers vested in its Charter and its unique international character, the United Nations can take action on issues confronting humanity in the 21st century, such as peace and security, climate change, sustainable development, human rights, disarmament, terrorism, humanitarian and health emergencies, gender equality, governance, agriculture, and more.

Mandates of specialized organizations and agencies that belong to the United Nations family cover practically all spheres of human life – from food, healthcare and education to telecommunication, space exploration and culture.

In its work the UN relies greatly on the involvement of general public. Over the recent years the role of non-governmental organizations and the private sector has grown exponentially in the operations that UN conducts globally. As the international organization accumulates knowledge and experience, it builds up the heritage that is studied and analyzed by the academic community. Partnerships with universities, colleges and leading think tanks have become traditional as the UN extends its outreach to the young people. Of good assistance in that are the new technologies: in addition to the traditional media such as UN Radio and TV, as well as printed publications, the United Nations is now actively present in the Internet. Organization's website and multiple accounts in social media as well as live webcast of meetings directly from the UN Headquarters increase awareness and involvement of each and every human being in the life of the global community.

The United Nations helps this world that speaks so many languages (six of which - Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish - are the official languages of the Organization) to communicate using the universal language of tolerance, compassion and mutual respect.

The ever-changing times and new reality demand that the Organization evolves. Much is done to create new specialized bodies and committees, to respond to the new challenges, to accommodate interests and needs of all Member States. All that is to maintain the status of the one and only truly universal organization for the benefit of the whole mankind. □

By Anton Uspensky

THE 175TH BIRTHDAY OF THE GREAT COMPOSER – PYOTR TCHAIKOVSKY

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, the foremost world-renowned Russian musician, graduated from St. Petersburg Conservatory where he studied piano, flute, organ, music theory, and composition from 1862 to 1865. His modern, Western-oriented education at the Conservatory helped distinguish Tchaikovsky from other composers and musicians of the time. He became the first Russian full-time composer and, in his work, managed to reconcile the Western styles he studied with Russian traditions to create a very distinct Russian sound.

To this day, Tchaikovsky is considered one of the world's most vivid and famous composers. He wrote more than 80 musical pieces, including ten operas and three ballets. Among his most famous are the orchestral fantasy *Romeo and Juliet* (1869), the ballets *Swan Lake* (1875) and *The Nutcracker* (1892), *Piano Concerto No. 1* (1875), the opera *Eugene Onegin* (1879), and *Symphony No. 4* (1878). These works and many others are cherished parts of the international classical repertoire. In recognition of his contributions, Tchaikovsky was honored by Emperor Alexander III of Russia in 1884.

Tchaikovsky's exposure to Western music encouraged him to go beyond Russia. He was the first Russian composer to make a lasting international impression, appearing as a guest conductor in Europe and the United States, and leading the grand opening of Carnegie Hall (then known as Music Hall) in 1891. After his performances in New York, he gave concerts in Baltimore and Philadelphia that were resounding successes as well.

Tchaikovsky was surprised by his own popularity in the States and observed, "People in the United States know my work better than they do in Russia, in my own home." After his death, a notebook entitled, "My Trip to America" was found in his pocket. In it, he described his surprise at American hospitality: "In other countries, if somebody comes up to you and they're



Portrait of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
by Nikolai Kuznetsov (1840-1893)

nice, you suspect, 'What do they want?' Here in America, they don't want anything. They just want to be nice."

Today we can hardly imagine our culture without music by this incredible composer. The *Nutcracker*, for example, has become an American Christmas tradition. And his stirring 1812 Overture is favored for American Independence Day fireworks displays and other large public celebrations – so much so that it has come to be perceived by many as a quintessentially American sound. □

By Galina Wall (www.russiancenter.org)



THE PRINCE VLADIMIR YOUTH ASSOCIATION

The Prince Vladimir Youth Association was founded in New York and is Celebrating the 1000th anniversary of the memory of its guiding star the Great Prince St. Vladimir. This youth association is actually heir to a series of “Vladimirsky clubs” of Russian youth established in the USA in the 1950’s. The new association will be based on the traditions of those clubs, but it also will adapt to today’s world and create opportunities for those interested in helping their local communities.

The first Vladimir Youth Conference was organized in Cassilville, New Jersey in 1951 on the holiday commemorating St. Vladimir. The forum gathered 150 participants from 17 “Vladimirsky Clubs” from New York, Brooklyn, Cleveland, Paterson, Lakewood, Seacliff, Los Angeles, Washington, Canada and even Australia. The primary goal of the conference was to share experiences in social service and culture as a necessary element of youth life in everyday reality; development of new ideas for local communities.

Following traditions and rules of earlier “Vladimirsky Clubs”, the new organization will emulate St Vladimir, the Gatherer of the Russian lands, that is, seek to unite youth through strengthening their historic past, and make people more aware of Russian culture and traditions of Russia.

The main goals of The Prince Vladimir Youth Association are:

- To gather youth to preserve the cultural legacy and traditions of their historic homeland both among young people and the descendants of various generations.
- To organize conferences and symposiums on questions of morality, social service, culture and philanthropy and arrange for pilgrimages and trips to Russia and abroad.
- To assist youth’s participation in charitable and social service among their compatriots and the needy, elderly and lonely.
- To help restore historic landmarks in the US and Russia;
- To support the moral upbringing of youth using the finest examples of the Russian emigration of old; preserving and disseminating the best experiences of the Russian diaspora.

Representatives of the Prince Vladimir Youth Association took part in an international youth conference, which was held in Germany in December 2014. The conference was devoted to the use of new technologies in youth work and promoted the exchange of experience in charitable, social and missionary activity in modern society. The association representatives spoke about projects that had been done in these fields. Based on the example of “Vladimirsky Clubs” working with the poor, elderly and homeless, the Prince Vladimir Youth Association reached an agreement with the Food Bank of New York to gather food for the needy, including Russians, in the weeks before Thanksgiving. In conjunction with parishes of New York and Long Island, 1,890 pounds of food were gathered, which was enough for 1,609 Thanksgiving meals.

Also, the concept of organizing an initiative to help sick children who come to America for medical treatment were welcomed with enthusiasm among youth. In addition, a proposal was offered at the German conference to create a web-based project that



facilitates the interaction between volunteers who are looking to help and those in need. The basic idea was to create two databases - one of volunteers listing their demographics, and availability. The second - of those in need, their demographics and things they need help on. Members of Prince Vladimir Youth Association believed that this database will not only attract the largest possible number of young people for works of charity, but will also help to strengthen links between youth organizations and a modern society.

According to historical information, the first project of the “Vladimirsky Clubs” in Australia was a concert of youth in July of 1956, dedicated to the memory the Great Prince St. Vladimir. The choir performed and gathered a large number of local residents and representatives of the Russian emigration.

Continuing in established traditions, among the projects planned for 2015, the 1000th anniversary of St Vladimir’s repose, will be a Paschal concert on April 17, at St Vladimir Memorial Church in Jackson, NJ. In addition, Prince Vladimir Youth Association plans a three-day program in autumn of 2015, dedicated to the memory of Prince Vladimir. The event will open with a reception and a youth choir concert making way for presentations focusing on the role that Prince Vladimir played in uniting the people of the Russian lands.

As a receiver of traditions and precepts of the “Vladimirsky Clubs”, the Prince Vladimir Youth Association will contribute its work to maintain the experience gained by previous generations and attract youth with modern approaches in the affairs of the charity, culture, social service and philanthropy. □

*By Nadya Grankina,
Youth Coordinator – www.youthpv.com*



SCOUTING: A SHARED VISION OVER TIME & SPACE

St. George Pathfinders is a scouting organization composed of young Americans of Russian descent. In addition to following scouting methodology, our mission is to maintain ties with our cultural heritage and help children develop the critical values of Faith, Tradition, Leadership, Duty and Community. ORUR (Organizatsiya Rossiiskikh Yunih Razvedchikov) or St. George Pathfinders of America as we are known in the United States, is a global Russian scouting organization which considers its roots to be the Russian scouting movement started near St. Petersburg, Russia in 1909.

Four large Chapters based out of New York, Washington, DC, Los Angeles and San Francisco comprise the U.S. division. Chapters are also found in Europe, Australia and Russia. Since its foundation in the U.S. in the late 1940's, St. George Pathfinders has played a pivotal role in educating generation after generation of Russian-Americans. A non-profit organization, St. George Pathfinders provides a rich cultural environment in which children have the opportunity to forge lifelong friendships, learn their cultural identity, maintain Russian language skills and grow into productive and respected leaders of our society.

In his 1988 letter to St. George Pathfinders of America, President Ronald Reagan stated "...your organization reflects the rich ethnic diversity from which America draws its strength and vitality. Through your Scouting program, you help to preserve the dynamic heritage of your Russian forbears while simultaneously encouraging dedication to the ideals upon which this Nation was founded."

It is notable that since its founding the organization has thrived on the enthusiastic volunteerism of its scout leaders, counselors and support personnel. There are no paid staff in the organization



A parade at the 2004 jamboree

— all members donate their time, money, and effort for the greater good of the young scouts in their care. The goal of the leadership of St. George Pathfinders is to forge tomorrow's Russian-American leaders by providing enriching Russian language and educational programs, sponsoring cultural exchanges with Russian and other world-wide scout affiliates, developing new leadership courses, producing a wide variety of activities and continuing to conduct both summer and winter camps in the pristine forests of this beautiful country.

The youth of St. George Pathfinders are proud to call themselves Russian-Americans, the bearers of two great cultures, and honored to be part of a global Russian scout family. □

*By Scout Master Tatiana Zacharin-Geringer
President, Eastern American Region*

WWII REMEMBERED AT “CHILDREN’S FESTIVAL”



Children's Festival of Russian Culture (Fort Tryon Park, 2011)

This year's Russian American History Month is dedicated to the 70th Anniversary of the end of WWII - Victory Day. They say youth care nothing about this historic period, but that does not speak for the youth groups from US states who will be dancing and singing nostalgic sounds of the 40s at the 9th Annual RACH-C “Children’s Festival of Russian Culture.” WWII veterans will be touched by how intuitively the children sense the spirit and importance of those days.

RACH-C, the Russian American Cultural Heritage Center began this festival to support parents and organizations of children in the Russian American community who are committed to preserving the best of Russian culture and history for their children and their friends.

Over the last decade, RACH-C's efforts expanded to include concerts, conferences, seminars, publications, and other heritage events. More recently, RACH-C worked to recruit 50 organizations that form the Russian American History Month Coalition, which convinced the NYS Senate to endorse a “Russian American History Month in NY State”. This April we celebrate that recognition for the 4th year.

RACH-C respects and regularly collaborates with other cultural and educational organizations who strive to raise pride and recognition regarding the Russian community in the general population, among them; The Russian Nobility Association in America, BBT- School of Russian American Ballet, Russian Center NY, Russian Children's Welfare Society, Russian Folk Ensemble “Golden Rooster”, Diana Bagrationi Foundation, and Russian Youth of America. □

www.russianamericanhistorymonth.org / www.rach-c.org

ANTON CHEKHOV: A RUSSIAN WRITER OF UNIVERSAL STATURE

Anton Chekhov was born in 1860 to a middle-class family in the town of Taganrog on the eastern shore of the Sea of Azov in southern Russia, the third of six surviving children. Born a year before serfdom was officially abolished in Russia, Anton himself was the grandson of a serf. His tyrannical father bankrupted the family when Anton was still a teenager, forcing the latter to work odd jobs to pay for his own living expenses and education. Anton soon took almost complete responsibility for his family's financial burdens, supporting them and paying his way through medical school by tutoring and selling stories and feuilletons to various newspapers. Chekhov would never make much money as a physician, treating those of his patients that could not afford his services for free and often spending several hours of the day driving out to see them.

Though he referred to medicine as his "lawful wife" and literature as his "mistress," the latter nevertheless proved to be a far more lucrative endeavor for Chekhov. His short stories made him a literary celebrity in Russia, though his plays would only achieve a similar recognition in the last years of his life. Both are now considered monuments of world literature; his plays are

second only to William Shakespeare in terms of global productions. Chekhov was also an avid social reformer, advocating for reforms of the nation's prisons, which he laid out in his nonfiction book, *The Island of Sakhalin*. The book was inspired by his trip to the penal colony on Sakhalin Island on the Russian Empire's eastern fringe, where he witnessed rampant embezzlement and inhuman prison conditions, including brutal floggings and sexual slavery.

Universally acknowledged as one of history's greatest playwrights and short story writers, Anton Chekhov would have celebrated his 155th birthday this year. After Shakespeare, his works have received more film adaptations than those of any other writer. At Chekhov's death in 1904, Leo Tolstoy was the only other Russian author that could compete with him in terms of critical recognition and popularity. While Chekhov's work fell out of favor with Soviet authorities after the Bolshevik Revolution, Constance Garnett's early translations of his stories and plays brought him recognition as a groundbreaking modernist writer in the Anglophone world. Chekhov's work was eventually rehabilitated in the USSR, with characters like Lopakhin from *The Cherry Orchard* heralded as forerunners of the "new Soviet man," though by that point he had already secured his place as one of the world's greatest literary masters.

In America, his plays helped to lay the groundwork for modern theater. His nephew, Michael Chekhov, and establishments like New York's Group Theatre and Lee Strasberg's Actors Studio used his plays to create a revolution in the American theatre. His theatrical works became the models for a new kind of psychological drama and gave rise to the concept of method acting, itself inspired by the Russian director Constantin Stanislavski, Chekhov's earliest and greatest interpreter. Chekhov's influence on American playwrights, screenwriters, directors and actors is incalculable, and his stories and plays continue to be among the mostly widely read, staged, and adapted works of literature the world over. □

*By Oleg Ivanov,
Freelance writer &
Ph.D. student at UCLA*



Celebrate Russian April!

Visit russianamericanhistorymonth.org for more information and upcoming events.

SERGEI DOVLATOV WAY – IN NEW YORK

A Queens street has a new literary moniker. At a special ceremony hosted by Councilwoman Karen Koslowitz (D-Forest Hills) on September 7th, the corner of 108th Street and 63rd Drive was officially minted “Sergei Dovlatov Way.” It’s the first time a Russian writer’s name has christened a New York City street.

Dovlatov, a famous Russian writer and journalist who co-founded a Russian-language weekly newspaper called The New American in 1980 and later published several short stories in the New Yorker, emigrated to New York from the Soviet Union in 1979.

He lived on 108th Street, and often portrayed his Queens neighbors — captured with sparse yet witty prose — in his writings. One novel, “A Foreign Woman”, depicts his Forest Hills community of Russian immigrants. Dovlatov died in 1990.

The process to commemorate the writer began a couple of years ago when a group of fans lead by Alex Rubin hoped to place a plaque acknowledging Dovlatov on the building of his former New York home. Plaques recognizing Dovlatov’s literary contributions had already been placed in Tallinn, Estonia, as well as Ufa and St. Petersburg, Russia. The New York plaque was approved in November 2013.

That victory inspired more action. Soon after, the group asked Koslowitz for help in renaming the street. They launched an online petition on the site change.org and spread the word in online, TV, radio and printed media.

The petition ultimately had almost 20,000 signatures. On July 9th, Mayor de Blasio signed the law to co-name the street, among 62 other new thoroughfares across the city.

Katherine Dovlatov, the late writer’s daughter who translated her father’s novel “Pushkin Hills,” published this year, into English, remarked on the touching honor. Support to rename the street came from all parts of the world.



Photo by Dennis Samsebeskaal

“Sergei Dovlatov’s life was closely connected to three cities,” she said, explaining that in the Russian cities Leningrad — which became St. Petersburg — and Tallinn where he briefly resided, Dovlatov discovered and confirmed his love for writing.

It wasn’t until he moved to New York that he fulfilled his dream of becoming a published author, ultimately publishing 12 books.

“It is in New York where he became what he always wanted to be: a published author, a professional writer,” Katherine Dovlatov said. “For this, and for much, much more, my father loved America. And we think it is fitting, once again, it is New York that has embraced Sergei Dovlatov’s contributions to world literature, by being the first city to name a street after him.”

Tugging on a string attached to fabric concealing the new sign high above the crowd, Koslowitz, Dovlatov and Dovlatov’s brother, Nicholas, unveiled the new street sign to a round of applause.

Dovlatov’s close friend Alexander Genis, a Russian-American writer and culture critic who wrote a book on Dovlatov attended the ceremony. Svetlana Dorofeeva, 25, who teaches Russian language and literature at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa., visited New York for the weekend — largely to attend the ceremony.

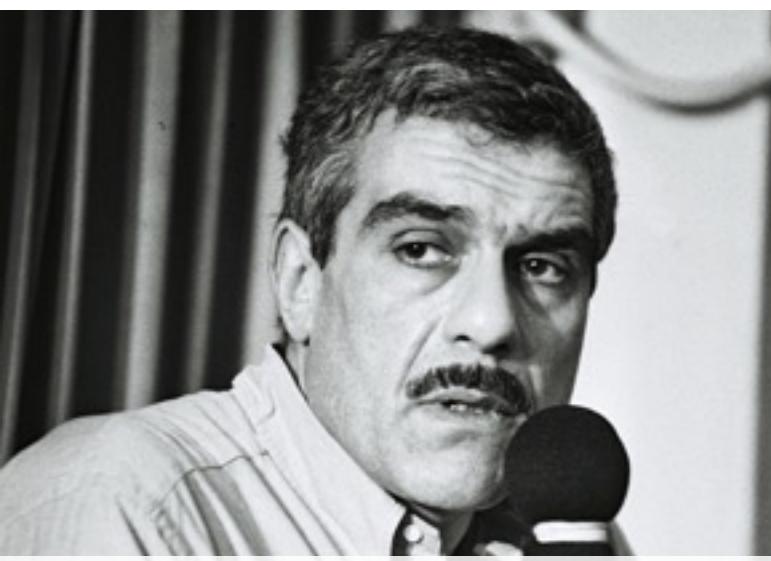
She was first introduced to Dovlatov in high school in Murmansk, Russia, when her teacher went off-curriculum and read the author’s works aloud.

“I love his sense of humor and he is so ironic,” Dorofeeva said. “He was very self-criticizing, he was honest, he was not afraid of speaking up.”

Dorofeeva said she often thought of Dovlatov’s novel “The Suitcase” while packing her own suitcase before leaving for the United States. “He, in a very beautiful and funny way, described these feelings. I think it was important he would write about sad things in a funny and easy way so that we would laugh at each other,” she said.

She, like many ceremony attendees, hopes the sign will compel people to discover Dovlatov’s work on their own. □

By Alex Rubin



Sergei Dovlatov in 1986 Photo by Nina Alovert

SELECTED EVENTS

“RUSSIAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH” draws the attention of American audiences to the history of Russian-Americans and the role they have played in the history of the US. Events and activities have been organized in various locations in New York State. – For complete listing of events, go to www.russianamericanhistorymonth.org



BENEFIT CONCERT

Mar. 27, 6PM: A Benefit Concert celebrating 175th Anniversary of Pyotr Tchaikovsky to support the Sloan Kettering Cancer Center & Downside Up, a Russian non-profit organization, provides support and advice for families raising children with Down syndrome.



PASCHAL CONCERT

Apr. 17, 6PM: Youth concert remembering the 1000th anniversary of Prince Vladimir.

Hosted by the Prince Vladimir Youth Association



SWAN LAKE IN HD

April 22, 1PM: In this production, Anthony Dowell aimed to return to an authentic version of the choreography created by the great Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov for the Mariinsky Theatre in 1895.

Presented by Symphony Space & Royal Opera House Cinema/Ballet



ALEX SOLDIER: OBJET D'ART

Apr. 6-30, 12-5PM: A private VIP exhibition. Meet the artist and enjoy cocktails and hors d'oeuvres while previewing his latest collection of extraordinary jewels and objets d'art.



9TH INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL OF RUSSIAN CULTURE

Apr. 18: Children's folk ensembles perform songs and dance for WWII veterans and their families. *Presented by The Russian American Cultural Heritage Center*



MUSICAL OLYMPUS FESTIVAL CONCERT

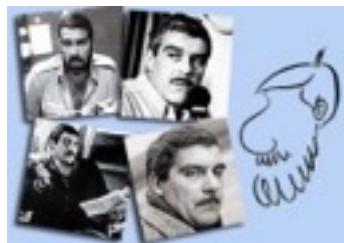
Apr. 22, 7:30PM: A chamber concert of classic masterworks featuring participants of the International Musical Olympus Festival.

Presented by The Musical Olympus Foundation



YURI'S NIGHT

Apr. 12: Ever since 2000, the idea of Yuri's Night has given way to space-themed parties and events around the world in April, celebrating both Yuri Gagarin's launch making him the first human in space and, 20 years later, the launch of NASA's Space Shuttle.



THEATRICAL PRESENTATION BASED ON THE LIFE WORK OF SERGEI DOVLATOV

Apr. 12, 3PM: Literary Theater Dialogue presents “Life is Too Short...” *Presented by the Queens Library, part of their Russian Festival 2015*



HISTORY TOUR OF THE ST. NICHOLAS CATHEDRAL

Apr. 18, 7:30PM: Fr. Alexander Golubov, gives a tour on the buildings history and architectural innovations.



CONCERT DEDICATED TO THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VICTORY DAY

May 7, 5PM: A grand concert of Boris Tenin, the renown composer and laureate of many international festivals of Russian songs, and his friends.



“THE SPRING BALL” OF THE RUSSIAN NOBILITY ASSOCIATION IN AMERICA

May 8: *The Russian Nobility Association in America* will celebrate its 36th annual Spring ball and its 82nd year in 2015 with a wonderful ball at the Hotel Pierre in New York.