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20...21...22...23 *By Andrew Roach*



As you travel from the U.S. to Russia some things in life never change. One, there are always taxes, and two, there is always death. Okay, death and taxes aren't issues that we are too personally involved with here, but at least with death, the process towards it still continues. Yes, the aging process. But, aging can be a happy time, especially among our small group of young students. Aging is fun! Birthdays!! We all love birthdays and we are no different here in Russia. In the past month we have been fortunate to have four birthdays within our group. Starting things off back on February 24, we celebrated Samantha's 23rd birthday. Then on March 2nd it was Jamie's 23rd, followed by Joe's 20th on the 9th, and Samra's 22nd on the 23rd.

Just like back home, we celebrate birthdays to our utmost. In place of our Tuesday night group dinner we have a Tuesday night birthday bash. Around a long table in the celebrant's room food prepared by our exquisite cooks abounds. Especially welcome are our friends who stop in to celebrate with us and sometimes they also bring tasty food. It is at these soirees that we have been introduced to delicious Russian champagne and scrumptious Chinese food. And of course, there is always a dessert of some sort, complete with

A Time to Sing, A Time to Dance *By Joe Bollinger*



So many things I anticipated when preparing for this experience in Russia. I got all the vaccinations, packed my warmest clothes, learned about the culture, the city-- everything, I thought. I thought that I had a pretty good grasp on what we would be doing here. Well, I forgot one little thing in the midst of all the pre-departure madness - that we would have FREE TIME!

Although we have been busy with classes, we frequently find free time to gather in each other's rooms and just "chill". During those times of gathering, anything can happen and something memorable usually does. Often a discussion set to background music progresses into something both entertaining and unifying.

At the end of almost every busy day several of us will sit around and strum away on the two guitars that we purchased at the beginning of the semester. Singing and occasionally dancing usually accompany the strumming. Samra and Samantha practiced the words and music to a song by the artist Jewel and performed it during a presentation that we gave the other week here at the university. Even I have learned to play a few songs on the

candles. Birthdays wouldn't be right without cake and candles.

And of course, there are gifts. These have ranged from flowers, to books, to a terrarium. Russian souvenirs, flags, and paraphernalia have also been given. These are festive times. It isn't possible for us to stop our aging process, but we sure have fun celebrating it!

guitar during our gatherings.



Although people always associate the most productive aspects of life with work and study, our free time has been the most meaningful. I appreciate this time and the memorable events that take place therein. It has provided us all with an opportunity to better get to know each other, our foreign friends, and ourselves.



*Tracy Hoover and Valery Chumakov discussed the project at Penn State in October last year.
cr: T. Bruening*



*Joe, Samantha, Samra and Dax gathered for the evening jam session.
cr: Samra Willyoung*



Leadership: A Profile of Tracy Hoover By Erik Kelling



The class is called Leadership Development in Agriculture and for the last three weeks our newest professor Dr. Tracy Hoover has been teaching us how to become more effective leaders.

Tracy is a native of Pennsylvania, having been born and raised in Pottstown, Chester County. Her interest in agriculture started when she worked for a

Collective Hardship By Bethany Nelson



Finally, after almost three months in Russia the weather has warmed up enough for us to begin traveling to farms and other agricultural facilities. Because everyone in our group was interested, it was a very exciting day as we loaded into the minibus and headed two hours out of the city to see our first collective farm Borets. After a bumpy ride, we arrived at Borets. We were greeted by one of the men who worked as a farm manager. At this point we began

small animal veterinarian during her high school years. This interest landed her at Delaware Valley College, with a major of Animal Science. After receiving a bachelor's in animal science, she went to Penn State where she received a master's in Animal Science.

Upon completion of her master's, she next started on a Ph.D., however, her interest was now focused on Agricultural Education. She worked on her Ph.D. for a year, then took a three-year break to teach. From 1985-88 she taught Agricultural Education and advised a FFA chapter at Big Spring High School in Cumberland County, Pa.

In 1988, she ventured back to Penn State to finish her Ph.D. Following completion of her Ph.D. in 1990, she went on faculty at Penn State where again she taught agricultural education. In 1992, she took a job teaching at the University of Florida where she currently works. Her responsibilities at Florida are twofold. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in Agricultural Education and she has a 20 percent extension appointment, so some of her time is devoted to Cooperative Extension.

Many people at home might be wondering how a teacher from the University of Florida got mixed up with our program. While at Penn State, Dr. Hoover became good friends with Dr. Thomas Bruening who invited her to teach in Russia. She chose to take this opportunity for a couple of reasons. The first reason was that it was a good opportunity to get international experience. The second reason was that it was helpful for her job because it is a good stepping stone for her goal of becoming a full professor. In my interview with her, she rated her experience in Russia as excellent. Our class with Dr. Hoover is held two days a week in 6-hour blocks. This is along time to have one class, however, she did an excellent job in braking up the time with

to learn how a collective farm works.

Collective farms are communities that work together in various forms of agriculture to reach a common production goal. Borets employs 1200 people, but must support 3000. This community has its own housing, school, hotel and restaurants, not only agriculture. It has 6000 hectares of land, and 56% of that is used in crop production. They primarily grow potatoes and grain, such as wheat, barley, soybeans, and oats. They also produce some beets and have fields for forage. Everything grown is directly utilized in some way on the farm, in its raw form or processed for baking products. Borets also has over 60 hectares under glass, where various vegetables are grown year round. The major crops are tomatoes and cucumbers.

Our next stop was the dairy farm. Here, they have their 2000 head herd split into four 500 head tie-stall barns. Their cows produce approximately 4,000L/cow/year. Although this isn't ideal by the U.S. production standards, one must remember that the economic strain has made conditions less than ideal on the farm. They also have on-site milk processing facilities, so the milk is treated and bottled right at the farm. They also maintain and repair all of the equipment needed to run their large crop operation. They have 10 potato harvesters, 8 seed combines, and 90 tractors. Much of the equipment is old Soviet machinery and not all of it is operational, but they make do with what they have.

Collective farms were hit very hard with the fall of communism and particularly by the August '98 economic crisis. Currently, Borets has no profit at their operation. They are barely breaking even or producing enough to keep its people sustained. Therefore, they have had to look for other means of extra income such as the on-site wood production facility that was opened recently. Many things that are

little breaks and group activities.

Perhaps even more important to Dr. Hoover than teaching is her family. She and her husband Ron have been together for 15 years. They have two daughters: Meghan who is 11, and Allison who is 7.

manufactured go to the upkeep of the farm facilities, such as windows, doors, and furniture. However, they also sell some of their wood products for a small profit. This farm and many others are seeing tough times right now, but they are all doing what is necessary to survive.



Day by Day Schedule *By Samantha Rodgers*



Mar 14 Took a trip to the Pushkin museum that contained articles from around the world. It was a very sunny day, nice for a photo shoot around the Kremlin.

Mar 15 Had Tracy Hoover's class and scheduled for the midterm already. Started to prepare presentation that was to be given to the English speaking Russia students.

Mar 16 Russian class with Lidia and sang the Russia song "Katyusha" thoroughly. Jaime and Andrew attempted to find tickets for a Russian Folk Dance at Olympic Village, but unfortunately they got lost. Ran though university presentation with Tracy for practice.

Mar 17 Happy St. Patrick's Day! Had Tracy's class until 3:30 pm and then headed to the university to put on presentation for the student body. Some of the group then headed out that night for a nice Irish beer.

Mar Met with Valery Chumakov in the

Mar 20 .Some of group headed out to the circus again and the other half hung out on Old and New Arbat street. At night the film "Contact" was viewed using our classroom VCR while the Latin club Labamba was also the night scene for some.

Mar 21 First Day of Spring--we are looking really hard for the signs. Went shopping again at Ismylovski Park. Viewed "Forest Gump" and then became homesick

Mar 22 Had Tracy's class which included the midterm; 40 questions, not bad.

Mar 23 Had seminar with Vladimir Soldatenkov from VOCA who told us about the programs within Russia. Russian class with Vera for four hours since we missed a class previously. Samra's birthday concluded the day at Pizza World for some good Italian food.

Mar 24 Class with Tracy, she returned the midterm back to us. Viewed "Shawshank Redemption" with the Russian girls for a movie review due for Tracy's class.

Mar 25 Visited "Lenin's Farm" which consisted of cows for livestock and production in berries for juice and jam. Received free cartons of apple juice. News about Yugoslavia makes us nervous. Had a cocktail party for Samra's birthday and did the "Vengabus".

Mar 26 Russian class with Vera. Headed out to get some recent newspapers to read about the situation in

- 18 morning. Waited for a bus to our first collective farm for over an hour after they tried to smash 14 students into a small minivan. After finally deciding that the situation was not safe, we all climbed into the infamous "Grey Bomber".
- Mar Had Russian class with Lidia.
- 19 Later that night we attempted to see a choir from New Jersey but got lost along the way (we determined we were lost when the bus was turning around to start his trip again). Ate at Starlite Diner and then got to see fireworks behind St. Basil's Cathedral.

Yugoslavia. To be on the safe side, we were advised to keep a low profile and our trip away for the weekend was postponed.

- Mar Some of the group played Frisbee
27 for four hours in a snow and slush filled field. Others visited a convent. Spent a quiet night at home in the hostel.

Happy Birthday, Samra!



Our Presentation By Lincoln Rodgers



On Tuesday, the sixteenth of March, our group gave a presentation to some of the students at Moscow State Agroengineering University. Our Russian language professor Lidia Tenchurina and Vice Rector Valery Chumakov suggested that we give a presentation and organized a location and time for us to hold it. On our side, most of the credit has to go to Bethany Nelson, who volunteered to direct our part of the presentation. She did a wonderful job orchestrating what we were going to talk about and helped handle the administrative details.

Finally, as everything was settled, we were ready to hold our presentation. First, Bethany introduced us and spoke about the INTAG program. Then Samra Willyoung gave a brief introduction to Penn State University and talked about her major of Ag Sciences. Each of us then spoke briefly about our respective



Moscow Weather Report Dax Fleckenstein



As Bob Dylan once said, "Times they are a-changin' ." Just when we had all forgotten the true color of the sky; behold--the clouds hath departed and revealed the blue splendor contained within. Despite our doubts, sunshine and spring are heading to this part of the world.

I think I speak for everyone in the group when I say that it couldn't have come at a better time. We are in the middle of our semester away from home, and we now grasp the reality of our situation. Everyone seems to be rather homesick for their friends, family, and familiarity. The cold and gray weather did not make this any easier for us.

Without warning one particular day two weeks ago, it suddenly became sunny, and with a few exceptions, has stayed that way to date. Everyone's mood has lifted tremendously and we no longer hiss and spit when someone approaches


majors. Bethany concluded the presentation by telling the students what we have been doing since we came to Russia and opened the floor for questions.

After we answered several questions about American agriculture and what we have been doing since arriving in Moscow, the formal part of the presentation came to an end. However, a more informal type of presentation then followed it. We moved our chairs around to the front of the desks and began the kind of informal socializing that seems to follow most occasions here in Russia. First, the Russians sang songs to us, so of course we had to sing them our songs. Andrew Roach even gave a demonstration of his juggling talents that are considerable. This continued until we had exhausted our limited repetoir of songs and it was time to go.

Despite our nervousness the presentation seemed to go very well. I think the Russian students appreciated the effort we put into it. We are expecting to give another presentation about our program to some of the faculty and interested students here at MSAU. Next time we'll probably have more confidence in our ability to give a good presentation.

and attempts to converse.

The snow and ice are now melting at a rapid pace and the landscape is being transformed slowly from frozen tundra to an open sea dotted with the occasional island of brown, oozing muck. We don't mind skirting daintily (or stumbling) around the water and the mud as long as that warm, life-giving sunshine keeps streaming our way, and we can pack away our hats and gloves. We are all anxious to see what Moscow and Russia look like without a thick covering of ice and snow to hide it. Soon enough the sun will dry the water up, the land will become green, and we will all romp and frolic in the lush meadows and babbling brooks as we did when we were but young school children.

 E-mail us your questions/suggestions:
[Dr. Thomas Bruening \(Project coordinator\)](#)

Class Schedule	
Mo/Thu	Communication course Thomas Bruening Marcus Twyford 9 am to 4 pm
Tue	Russian Language 9 am to 12:30 pm
Wed with	Russian Ed System Evgeni Shmelev 10:50 am to 3:00 pm
Fri	Various field trips

