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MSAU students enjoying our presentaion

Ten Little Americans that Could

Activities

By Sara Hayden

Come one! Come all! Come learn about American education and student life! Come practice your English skills! Come listen to the Americans trying to speak Russian!

All of these phrases could have adequately advertised the presentation we put together for MSAU's student body. For months we had been lathered with information about Russian culture, education, and life in general. Finally, on March 27, we got the opportunity to give something back to the people here through a public presentation about our university and ourselves.

Most (if not all) of the Russian students know that there are Americans on campus. There's no hiding our presence - we sort of stick out. But, because of language limitations or a lack of free time, not all of them had been able to learn anything from us about American culture. Last Tuesday's presentation allowed them to practice their English listening skills, to learn something about education and life in

You Are What You Eat

Culture

By LeeAnn Tice

Throughout our stay in Russia, we have had the chance to taste and experience a new kind of life. Like in all countries, the food changes with the culture, and it is no different in Russia.

Russia is bordered by eight seas and has an abundance of rivers, ponds and lakes that provide a large variety of fish and seafood. In many shops and outside stands salted fish, fresh fish, sardines, and shellfish can be found. In every store you can pick up a loaf of bread that looks like it just came out of the oven. In Russia there is no pre-sliced, packaged with a twisty tie bread. I think what surprised us most was the availability of fresh fruits and vegetables. Russia imports produce from other Europeanan countries. If we walked outside today we could easily pick up fresh strawberries, cucumbers, the reddest greenhouse tomatoes, and sweet peppers. But all this food is no good if you can't cook it. This is where the hospitality of many of our Russian friends families come into play. Masha has become one of our dearest friends who enjoys showing us a good time in Moscow. Last Sunday she out did herself by inviting all 11 of us to her home in Majaïsk, located 2 hours outside of Moscow. Before arriving at her house, she graciously showed us many old cathedral and a battleground where the Russian army fought Napoleon years ago.

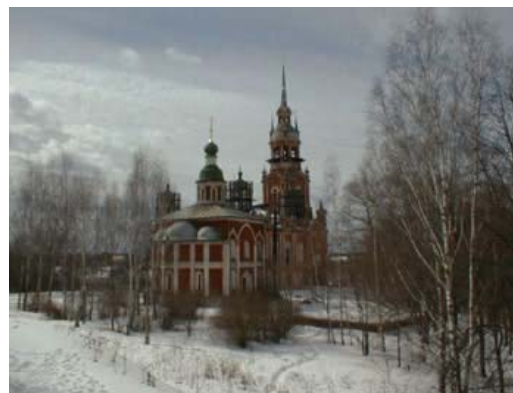
the United States, and to pose any questions plaguing their minds. Happily, the entire presentation went well, and, I think, was enjoyable for all in attendance despite the fact that it ran over two hours . . . It takes time to translate from English to Russian . . . and to translate some of our American-accent-tinted "Russian" into a language that the audience could understand. But everyone was very courteous of our efforts, even good-naturedly helping a couple of us pronounce a word or two.



Sara enjoying an herbal refreshment at the reception

Audience participation was not limited to repairing our Russian, however. From the very beginning we got the crowd involved by letting them borrow our famous "We are . . . Penn State!" cheer - slightly adjusting it for their university, of course. Then they made it "rain" by making different sounds with their hands and feet. They even helped us sing songs like "American Pie," "The Hokie Pokie," and the famous Russian song "Katyusha."

Towards the end of the presentation, with, perhaps, a little prodding from their professors, they had several questions for us ranging from how we know which courses to schedule (Russian students have a set curriculum based on their focus, staying with the same group of students throughout college) to whether or not American girls can cook. Even after the group was dismissed, several people came down (even those who couldn't speak English) to talk with us some more.



The cathedral in Masha's hometown, Majaïsk

Her tactic in showing us all these sights was to make us very hungry. It worked. Soon enough we arrived at her home to be greeted by her mother and grandmother. We sat down at a table, adorned with dishes of traditional salads, bread, and drinks. First we stuffed ourselves with beetroot salad (finely chopped beats with vinegar and carrots), a salad containing peas, carrots, potato, tuna, and mayonnaise, and of course, our favorite crab salad. Then the main course came: pork chops covered with cheese and mushrooms and lots of potatoes. We ate to our hearts content. And then we had a torte for desert her mothemade.



Masha and her family

There have been many other occasions where some of us had the opportunity of visiting a Russian's home. In many cases the parents do not speak English, but that doesn't stop them from communicating. Russians have hospitality that we have seen nowhere else. They are always happy to give half of their home away.

For me, the best part of the entire afternoon was when I first looked up at the crowd and realized how many of the students in the audience have become good friends of ours over the past couple of months. Their support and camaraderie have been incredible throughout the entire experience, and, when I saw all of them smiling down on us as we spoke, all of the work put into the presentation was completely worth it.



Suzanne wading for drier weather to come along

Drizzle, Drizzle, Drizzle

Weather

By Danielle Cowden

We thought we were home free. We thought the bad weather consisting of strong winds, snow, and freezing temperatures was over. Last week, the weather was simply gorgeous. The sun was shining, the birds were singing, and best of all, we did not have to wear five layers of clothing just to stay warm when we ventured outside our hostel doors. To sum it up in one word we were **WRONG!** It may not be snowing but the rain has been pouring down. Deceived by the beautiful sunshine and warmer temperatures all week, I was hoping to have nice weather

Farewell to Dr. Buffington

People

By Matthew Brubaker

After 29 years of teaching in the United States, Dr. Dennis Buffington, professor of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, came to Russia to teach in an international setting for the first time. He taught his Biological Systems course that deals with understanding how various environmental influences on animals, plants, harvested produce and microbes need to be taken into consideration when determining the requirements of engineering systems (such as barns or storage facilities) to enhance the efficiencies of these biological systems. For the purpose of gaining new experiences in a different part of the world, Dr. Buffington chose to take the opportunity to teach in Russia. While always having positive interactions with students, this international teaching experience has been the most positive for him. The interactions with both PSU and MSAU students have been the most memorable part of his time here in Russia



Dr. Buffington

Dr. Buffington is an alumnus of Penn State with both his B.S. and M.S. degrees in Agricultural Engineering. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota. From 1971 to 1985 he was a faculty member at the University of Florida in Gainesville. In 1985 he came to Penn State serve as a professor and the Head of the Department of Agricultural and Biological Engineering until 1996. Since 1996 he has

during the weekend for some more sightseeing. Nevertheless, what did I see when I looked out my window Saturday morning? Persistent drizzle, the kind that only exists to ruin your weekend. Now that the work week has started anew, the rain continues making everything it touches muddy. I truly believe that yesterday was the dreariest day I have ever seen in my twenty years. Staying cozy within hostel doors only makes us want to sleep. I hope that the weather will break soon and we will once again feel the sun's warmth upon our faces.



The group at Lenin Joint Stock Company

Milk Does A Body Good

Education

By Christin Ondusek

Together eleven American students came to Moscow with differences spanning from age to life experiences. However, there is one similarity amongst all of us... we wait for each new day to teach us something different. One particular class, Intag 397B Russian/American Agricultural Seminar, has taught us to respect the differences and similarities in our nations' farming practices. We have traveled to several cooperative farms, located in the Moscow region. Presentations of facility layouts and productions, tours of the farm and lunch are provided for all involved. It was wonderful to be able to witness the milking of 900 Holstein cows, watch the processing of this milk and then taste the final product. Also,

served a three-way appointment with Penn State doing teaching, research, and extension.

When not working for the university, Dr. Buffington enjoys gardening, woodworking, and antique restoration of old woodworking tools and furniture as hobbies. He grew up on a farm near Elizabethville in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania. His wife Anna Carol and he have been married for 32 years and have two daughters, Kristin and Melanie, who are also Penn State graduates. Dr. Buffington loves teaching. For him, each year of teaching is more interesting and exciting than the year before. After having such a great time teaching in Russia, he hopes to be given the opportunity to return to again next year.



Dr. Buffington and the Russian students

Dear Olga,

By Barbie Berrang, Natasha Polalishna, and Natasha Logachava

Olga is our Russian cultural advisor. People throughout write to her asking her for suggestions and advice about Russian life...

Dear Olga,

I found a letter that my great grandmother wrote when she was a child about her favorite Russian food. What's the secret behind making the infamous Russian blinis? I must know.

we were shown the greenhouses that supply the cucumbers, tomatoes and lettuce, which flood the markets of Moscow. Even more impressive is the storage facilities which house the cabbage and potatoes for Moscow's winter sales. I've never seen anything comparable to the magnitude and volume of output produced by such farms. Also, we were pleased to discover that MSAU (Moscow State Agroengineering University) has produced many of the directors and engineers we meet at the farms. On our own time, we try to discuss what we've seen. For example, LeeAnn recognized certain details that I overlooked; hence, we were able to learn from each other. The knowledge I've gained here is invaluable and would not have been afforded to me without the help of many different people in both the American and Russian educational system. These trips provide a greater understanding of the status of Moscow agriculture with a greater insight into international agriculture.

To read and learn something from a book is completely different from living it. I have a better understanding of what American agriculture can provide for its people and the world. Again, I'm reassured that life is good in the States and that we should do more to help other countries reestablish their agricultural systems. These simple excursions that each lasted no more than 10 hours have given us a lifetime of knowledge.



Thank you.

Sincerely Yours, Iwanna Lern

Dear Iwanna,

I would like to tell you a few words about my favorite food. I'll speak about milky blinis. To cook the blinis, you will need:

- 3 cups of wheat flour
- 10 yolks
- 3 cups of milk
- 2 tablespoons of sugar
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- add salt to taste

If you have all these things you can begin to cook the blinis. First of all, you should place the yolks in the bowl and after adding salt and sugar, you should mix the concoction. Then you need to add the wheat flour, the butter, and the milk. Then knead the thin dough.

The dough must be well mixed. You should take into consideration that the better the dough is mixed, the better the blinis will be. After this, you should cook the blinis in a skillet like pancakes.

I'll recommend you to eat the blinis with the sour cream. It's the best food for celebrating Maslenitsa (the celebration of the coming spring), which is also known as the Pan-Cake week holiday.

Always Eating, Olga

Contributed By: Natasha Logacheva

Dear Olga,

Religious holidays occur throughout the year in every culture. Some of my favorite holidays are Christmas and Easter. How do the Russian Orthodox Christians celebrate Easter and what are some of their traditional activities?

Sincerely Yours,
Anita Findanegg

Dear Anita,

Easter is one of Russia's most celebrated

Samra milking the experience for all its worth



Dr. Buffington still suffering from jet lag

holidays. The word Easter is derived from the Greek word pascha which means the coming of spring. This Christian Holiday celebrates the coming of spring and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Annually, Easter is celebrated on a different date each year but it always occurs during the Spring Season. It is on the first Sunday after the spring equinox and the full moon (from April 4 to May 2).

The Easter Holiday and the coming of spring symbolize new life. People begin to eat eggs and milk products and present gifts to their friends. There is a reason why the Russians begin to eat eggs on Easter Saturday. During Lent, it is forbidden to eat eggs. After the end of Lent, people are glad to taste them again. The eggs that are used for Easter are painted in different colors. This year Easter will be celebrated on the 30th of April. Happy Early Easter, Anita.

Yours Truly,
Olga

Contributed by: Natasha Povalishna

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