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***Editor's Note:** This is the eighth and final issue of the Newsletter for the 2001 Study in Moscow Collaborative Program. While this issue is not required for our classes, we decided to compile a farewell issue that reflects on our experiences here, describes some of the last things we have come to realize and appreciate, and gives our readers a look into our trip to St. Petersburg.*



Seeing the treasures at Peterhof

Once upon a time...

A summary of our experiences

By: Wade Taylor

Once upon a time there were eight American students who had a desire to travel, explore and learn. These eight students shared a common interest in meeting new people and learning about new cultures. So there came a time in each of their busy lives when they learned about a program that would take them to Russia that had the potential to satisfy each of their wishes. Soon they were all on their way to an experience that they would never forget.

Once they arrived some of them were greeted with friendly warm smiles of their Russian peers that they would spend quite some time with. With them they had good times, happy times, sad times, and many fun times along their journey. In their

Family Fundamentals

The structure of Russian family life

By: Theresa Lynn

After having been in residence here in Moscow for four months I've had an opportunity to get to know a few people and to come to a better understanding of the structure and nature of the Russian family. I have discovered them to be strong in their interpersonal relations, self-sacrificing for one another, and totally devoted to their elderly.

It is extremely common to see mothers and daughters, of all ages, and elderly gentlemen walking together in the street arm in arm. Our 19 year old student associates are all dedicated to their mothers in a way that is evidenced by the common statements, "I have to call my mom," "My mom told me..." and very often, "I miss my mom." Every single one of these students still lives with their parents and plans to continue this arrangement up to marriage and some even after marriage. The few students who reside in the dorm Monday through Friday for classes go home EVERY Friday night, and some more often.

Besides loving their homes these young people go home to work. Now that it is spring almost all families are busy in their vegetable gardens. Unlike hobbyist American gardeners, Russian families plant food for survival for the coming year and all Russian families were given a small plot of land for this purpose in the early 1990's. Though enough food is readily available everywhere, it is quite expensive to the average

first weeks they visited many cathedrals, museums, and architectural wonders. Soon they were taking Russian language class and wondered if they were ever going to learn to speak it. After some time they were striking up simple conversations with Russian storeowners, commuters and other Russians they were exposed to.

With the first American professor, Dr. Briers, they spent time in class and traveling in and out of the city. They watched Russian folk dances, visited museums and several companies like Monsanto and the famous tractor testing facility, and joined in on an end of winter festival. Within no time they were becoming comfortable with the Russian ways and were on to their experiences with the second professor, Dr. Buffington. During this time they went to a Russian ballet, folk dance, farms, and trips to the cities of Vladimir, Suzdale, and Mozhaysk. Their last professor Kay Rockwell took part in excursions with the group to Sergi Posad, Zeppelin Caterpillar and a boat trip on the Moscow River.

Lastly this group and some other Russian counterparts took a trip to St. Petersburg where they spent time in museums, palaces, cathedrals, and in a lovely hostel. Through all the times spent on this journey the eight American students gained many great new friends, made contacts, and learned more than they could have ever imagined. As they prepare to depart back to the States they will miss all the times spent here in Russia and will look forward to new experiences in the future.

Baltica from the Baltic Sea

Our tour of THE Russian brewery

By: Graham Rupe

On Friday May 4th, seven students, including myself, set out to learn how our favorite beer, Baltica, was produced. When we first arrived in Russia we were interested to try many different things, including domestic beers. Since our entire group was twenty-one years old or older, we had some basics for comparison when it came to beer.

Russian whose wages have not increased with the rapid inflation rate.

One particular young student goes home (to another city) almost every night to cook for her father and help him with their four cows and garden. Her responsibilities are heavy but she never complains. It is her life and her joy to be a valuable member of her family.

Grandparents living with their families is more common than not. Another young student has fondest memories of her grandfather "nanny." He still lives with her to this day.

Families are tight in Russia; dependent on one another, supporting one another, and totally devoted to each other.



Masha and her tri-generational family

A Week Away From Home

Our trip to St. Petersburg

By: Amanda Allbritton

After a semester of hard work and classes in Moscow, our group set out for a luxurious vacation in St. Petersburg, Russia. Situated roughly 60 degrees north latitude, St. Petersburg is Russia's most northern, major city and is neighbored by Finland and Estonia. We took the

Of course there is always an exception in every group. Since Nila continues to think that the best U.S. beer comes from some microbrewery in Pennsylvania, we cannot use her opinion.

Baltica beer production started in 1990 under the order of the government. They wanted to produce a good beer in Russia that would compare to other high quality brands in Western Europe. After the reconstruction in 1993, Baltica became a privately owned company. Improvements in the process and increases in production are being made so quickly, that every piece of equipment that was in place in 1990 has already been replaced. Last year alone Baltica produced close to one billion gallons of beer.

Baltica is prided as one of Russia's best companies. They do many things that many other companies in Russia do not do. They provide most of their seven thousand employees with swimming pool facilities, gym facilities, places to sleep and a beauty salon. Along with this, they have one of the best employee benefit and salary programs in Russia.

Over the last eleven years Baltica has grown into the leading beer producer in Russia and is starting to export beer around the world. In fact, Wal-mart is considering distribution of this fine beer. Baltica's production facilities are state of the art and are being improved every day. Baltica seems to be a good example for all new companies. The future is looking very positive for this company and I hope to see their product back home.

"Dasvidania, Drusia" (*Farwell, Friends*)
Goodbye isn't enough...
By: Casey Saxton

This is our last week here in Moscow, and all the classes are done, the bags are packed and we are leaving. Some are leaving maybe for the last time, for others this is the first of many trips back to Russia. We as a group have experienced much and we have learned about a country that we really knew nothing about.

After all the goodbyes have been said there will

overnight express train to find a city quite different from our beloved Moscow: much more European and less Soviet. To give some insight on the differences, I will share a bit of the history of St. Pete.

In 1703, Peter the Great ascended the throne and after traveling through Europe, started to make significant changes in Russia. In 1712, Peter decided to make St. Petersburg Russia's capital (and so it remained until 1917). Catherine the Great continued to make changes in St. Petersburg and Russia grew into the great European power Peter the Great had envisioned one hundred years before. Under her rule, many of the palaces, churches, museums, and monuments were created or completed. The influence of both of these "Great" rulers can be strongly sensed in St. Petersburg.

Over the years, St. Petersburg has been buzzing with underground discussion groups working out alternative ideas and philosophies, and Russia experienced a golden age of literature with Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol writing their seminal works and Dostoevsky and Turgenev launching their literary careers. St. Petersburg is also home to the Decembrist's Revolt, the Bolshevik uprising, and the October Revolution of 1917.

This young city has much to offer adventurous tourists such as us. We saw the Hermitage, Palace Square, St. Isaac's Cathedral, the Admiralty, Peterhof, Catherine Palace at Pushkin, the Peter and Paul fortress, the battleship Aurora, and the Russian Museum. Most of these visits were narrated by Lena, our insightful tour guide. Sadly, we found that most of the city was destroyed in WWII; so many of the things we saw had just recently been restored.

In addition to all of the tourist attractions, we randomly spent an evening partying with the Marines at the US Consulate in St. Petersburg. We also watched the drawbridges rise at two in the morning and saw ships pass through. Some of us took boat rides through the lovely canals that fed into the Neva River. Some spent an afternoon bathing in the sun on an island, while others watched the sunset over the Gulf of Finland. It

remain the memories of this place we call Russia that it has changed us. Some more than others, but all of us have changed in our individual ways. We will remember it always. I am writing this article sitting in St. Petersburg just thinking and wondering where the time has gone. I remember the first night I was getting off the plane in Moscow. It seemed like only yesterday that I walked into the classroom and met my “family” for the next four months. The time has flown and I have had such a wonderful experience here that it will be difficult to let go. But the times change, doors open and doors close.

If I can leave one thought in everyone’s head, it is not my own but someone else’s one worth sighting. The father of a family I had the privilege of visiting during my time here said, “Let the governments be governments and the people be friends regardless of what our governments are doing.” These are good words to live by. The next time you see your country getting into an argument about different issues, remember just because they are fighting doesn’t mean that you should hate someone you don’t know anything about.

I know that I will never look at Russia in the same light. To my Russian friends, saying goodbye will be very difficult. While I hate goodbyes, I would much rather say it now than slip away in the night with never a word said. So I say goodbye to everyone, to my friends and to my new family. I hope we meet again.

Questions? Comments? [E-mail Us!](#)

was a pleasant and well-deserved trip for our group. It was a beautiful city, but it does not hold the place in our hearts that our Moscow does.



Nila and Graham soak in the culture at the Hermitage

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A toast to our new friends!

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