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A newsletter of the Albany-Tula Alliance • A sister city program of Albany, New York and Tula, Russia • People to People, City to City

The Celebration Continues in September!!



After a busy spring filled with visits from the Open World delegation, Education & Culture essay and Olympiad contests, the Albany-Tula Sculpture Dedication, and the premiere of musical Road to Paradise, the Alliance is now

looking to September for the next round of 20th Anniversary Celebrations.

That's when we unveil **"Getting to Know You: A Retrospective Exhibit"** at the Arts Center of the Capital Region from September 9 – 22nd. Organized by members of the Development Committee, the retrospective will include:

- **The Memory Project** — video clips of some of the Alliance's earliest members in the Capital Region and in Tula.
- **Children's art** from students in Tula's Polenov Art School.
- **Folk art and objects** from collections of Albany-Tula Alliance Board members and friends.

- Educational displays on **collaborative public health initiatives** through the years, including gerontology and environmental health.
- An historical perspective on **education and art exchanges**, including the winning essays by Capital Region entrants from our recent essay contests.

Yasnaya Polyana Returns

Also coming in September are 10 members of the Yasnaya Polyana Orchestra under the direction of Viktor Sinkovskii. The first visit in several years by this popular folk art ensemble will feature a special performance at the Arts Center of the Capital Region on September 18th. Stay tuned to your mailbox and to www.albanytula.org/events for dates, times, and ticket information.



Viktor Sinkovskii, left, and members of the Yasnaya Polyana Ensemble will return in more numbers as the Yasnaya Polyana Chamber Orchestra to the Capital Region for performances in September 2011.

Apologies for Website Difficulties

After proudly announcing the launch of our new Website in the last issue of Connections, the Alliance experienced a crash that disrupted both the English and Russian sides of the site for two months. We apologize to those of you who attempted to get information, contact us, or to sign up for our email announcements during this time.

Email Sign-Up — Please Try Again!

These problems have now been rectified. We would appreciate it if those of you who attempted previously to sign up for email news announcements would return to www.albanytula.org/contact once again and enter your name and email in the "Sign up for e-news" box.

If you experience ANY difficulties with this or any other function on the site, please don't hesitate to contact us at 518-768-7010 or contact@albanytula.org. Thank you!



Sculpture Dedication a Shining Occasion

The sun broke through after a week of rain to shine on the dedication of The Albany-Tula Sculpture, a steel globe commissioned from area sculptor, Steve Kroeger. The globe, featuring a prominent bridge connecting the

Capital Region and Tula, Russia, was the focal point of a ceremony hosted by Albany Mayor Gerald D. Jennings. Joining him in addressing the public gathering and news cameras were Chair of the Alliance Gerald Shaye,

guests from Tula State University and the Lev Tolstoy Tula State Pedagogical Institute, as well as Albany County Executive Mike Breslin, Congressman Paul Tonko and Assemblyman Jack McEneny. Founding Alliance Chair Charlotte Buchanan dedicated the sculpture by placing a flourish of roses on the bridge. Richard Miller, Esq., accompanied by Findlay Cockrell, sang both the US and Russian national anthems and concluded the ceremony with a rousing "Getting to Know You."



Charlotte Buchanan and Steve Kroeger

Barbara Jancar-Webster presented certificates to the winners of this year's Education and Culture essay and Russian Studies Olympiad contests. The winners will travel to Tula in September with a chaperone from the Alliance. (See page 3 of this newsletter.)

Alliance Debuts Musical *Road to Paradise*

A little over a year after Board Member Dawn Stuart Weinraub first viewed a one-woman performance of *Road to Paradise* in Tula, members of the Albany-Tula Alliance brought her translation of the musical to life for a Capital Region audience. The abridged version presented here as part of the Alliance's 20th anniversary celebration substituted narration — presented by Benita Zahn — for much of the play's original dialogue and several musical numbers. The performance featured the playwright herself, Vera Trofimova,



Playwright Vera Trofimova introduced *Road to Paradise* at The College of St. Rose.



Alyssa Pyle and Michael Aniolek performed the lead roles in *Road to Paradise*.

in a key role. Vera traveled from Tula with her husband Roman Afanasev, also the musical's arranger, to participate in the production.

The musical is a whimsical mix of Broadway-type solos and ensemble chorales. The story line deals with the universal themes of false pride and infidelity, with courage and redemption. The performance, staged on May 22nd at The



Ensemble members included adults and young performers from across the Capital Region and upstate New York.

College of St. Rose, was followed by a champagne reception at which Chair Gerald Shaye toasted and thanked the playwright and arranger, the music director Corine Salon of Schenectady, Benita Zahn, Dawn Stuart Weinraub, the young performers who traveled from throughout the Capital Region and upstate to participate, and the numerous sponsors and donors who made the performance possible.



Open World Visitors

In April 2011, the Albany-Tula Alliance hosted six Russian educators under the sponsorship of the Open World Leadership Program of the U.S. Library of Congress. The Alliance has been the recipient of Open World grants for the past ten years, and is grateful for the support Open World has shown for our efforts to strengthen and de-

velop cooperation with Tula, Russia. This year's theme was "new approaches in education," with a focus on the innovative role of U.S. community colleges in developing curricula to train a workforce that needs complex skills. The group spent a week in the Capital Region, visiting institutions of higher education, including our com-

munity colleges and Empire State College, known for its distance learning courses. The action-packed week included:

- Touring the Capitol building with Assemblyman Jack McEneny and meetings with Assemblyman Bob Reilly, Senator Neil Breslin, and an introduction on the Assembly Floor by Alec Brook-Krasny
- Serving as jury for the final round of the Alliance's first Russian Studies Olympiad
- Visits with Union Graduate College's School of Management, Schenectady County Community College, Empire State College, Hudson Valley Community College, the new TecSmart Campus in Malta, and SUNY Central Administration



Left to Right—Top: Andrey Borisovich Kopylov, Warren Reich, Gerald Shaye, Olga Yevgenyevna Shumilova, Nina Reich, Evgeniya Sergeevna Istomina. Middle: John Webster, Aleksey Nikolaevich Ivutin, Dr. Yelena Viktorovna Simonova, Viktoriya Ivanovna Ivanova, Kristina Krawchuk, Tatyana Valetinovna Zolotova, Nadezhda Alekseyevna Dudik, Susan Jacobsen. Bottom: Barbara Jancar-Webster, Dawn Stuart Weinraub, Sonja Stark, Yana Geogevniya Shalimova, Mary Emerson, Brian Emerson.

We thank all of the Alliance members who made the visit possible and look forward to supporting new cooperative efforts, such as offering courses through distance learning.

Capital Region Contest Winners to Travel to Tula

The Albany-Tula Alliance is pleased to announce that three Capital Region students have earned a chaperoned trip to Tula in September 2011. Education and Culture Committee Chair Barbara Jancar-Webster presented the awards on May 20th during the dedication of the Albany-Tula Statue (see page 2). "We are very proud to be able to recognize the initiative and talent of these young people," she said.



During this 50th anniversary year of the first manned flight in space by Cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, eleventh-grader **Wyatt Smith** of Clifton Park won the 2nd Annual Albany-Tula Alliance Student Essay Contest with his essay

on the role the space race might play in maintaining world peace and technological cooperation. Wyatt has been homeschooled since 5th grade and has augmented his homeschooling since 9th grade by taking classes at Union College and RPI, where he has earned straight A's. One of a select group of students in New York state in competition math, he is also a National Merit and AP scholar, a passionate musician and athlete, and is training as a counselor at a national camp for highly gifted children.

Accompanying Wyatt to Tula will be Russian-Studies Olympiad winners **David Connor** and **Alessandra Pratt**. The Olympiad is modeled upon a highly successful American Studies

Olympiad created last year by Professor Sergey Pukhanov of Tula State University. First-place winner David, a junior and honors student at Tamarac High School, has studied Russian since 7th grade and recently visited Moscow and St. Petersburg. He has participated for the past four years in the American Councils for International Education's Olympiad of Spoken Russian, and in that organization's Russian Essay Contest, earning silver medals in both. Alessandra is an honor roll student at North Warren Central School, where she participates in school athletics and serves as Class Treasurer and in the Foreign Language, school newspaper, yearbook, and Varsity clubs.



Reflections from recent Tula Visitors

In April 2011, the Albany-Tula Alliance hosted the winners of the 2010 American Studies Olympiad organized at Tula State University by Professor Sergey Pukhanov. The Olympiad was a three-part academic contest open to students interested in learning about America, and supported by members of the Alliance and teachers from the Schenectady High School, who also served as judges. The two winners were Evgenia Sergeevna Istomina, a graduate of Tula State University, and Yana Georgevniya Shalimova, a second year student at Lev Tolstoy Tula State Pedagogical Institute. Both stayed in the home of Board Member Sonja Stark, who also treated them to a week of touring that included trips to New York City, Boston, Saratoga Springs, and the Adirondacks.



From Evgenia Istomina

Despite the fact that I was far from home, relatives and friends, in Albany I never felt neglected, because my hosts surrounded me with warmth and care, sometimes sacrificing even their own interests and needs. Albany and the surrounding cities struck me with their beauty and fine architecture. Some really gorgeous sites produced a tremendous impression on me and offered me great pleasure. At the same time the surrounding nature always was much like that of my native country.

Though the educational activities were informative, most memorable were

the many activities not envisaged by the program. Commonplace activities like going to the movies or walking the dog actually help people to get better acquainted and learn more about each others' countries and cultures. We shared in many such experiences, which helped create for me the understanding that deep inside we are all the same, despite differences in our habits, views, inclinations and tastes.

This exciting and fruitful trip has enriched me so much, and has opened my eyes to so many things. I hope these impressions don't just pass away like wind upon the waters. I hope that in future the friendship between our two cities will grow and develop continually. I hope to see once again all those people who made this trip unforgettable, who made it a dream come true.

“ This exciting and fruitful trip has enriched me so much, and has opened my eyes to so many things. —Evgenia Istomina ”

From Yana Shalimova

When I started to learn English at school, my teacher told me that we learn languages to have an opportunity to communicate with English-speaking people, to read books of foreign authors in the original, and to travel to other countries. Since that time it's been my dream to travel and to put my knowledge into practice, to see historical places and observe customs I have read about. So it was quite a surprise for me when I learned that I was a winner of the 2010 American Stud-



ies Olympiad and that my main award was a trip to the Capital Region!

Now a month has passed since that trip, but I remember my American holidays every day! I got to know many facts about American history and culture when I visited museums in the Capital City and New York, made tours of Albany, Boston and Saratoga. I was also impressed by people: they are so sociable and polite, they are never indifferent to your problems (when we found a cat lost in Central Park in New York, so many people stopped and asked us whether they could help). Those members of the Alliance who met us, who invited us to their houses, who accompanied us to the places that we visited were very kind and attentive. It was the greatest pleasure to talk with them, to get to know something about their life and their customs, to tell them about Russian language and traditions. I was really fascinated by these people, who are always ready to help and to do a lot of voluntary work besides their jobs and other duties. Last month the 20th anniversary of the Alliance was celebrated and I hope that it will prosper for many more years and the relations between our cities will develop and become stronger.

My trip made me believe that dreams come true, but we should never forget that we must work and make some effort (as I did when prepared for the Olympiad) to achieve what we want.

Internships for Russian Professionals

The ATA Business Development Committee is seeking to arrange internship opportunities for Tula and Capital Region professionals. The ideal intern is a professional with some experience in his or her field, able to self-finance the trip for one to several weeks. The Albany-Tula Alliance assists by looking for companies willing to employ such individuals for a non-paid internship, and finding in-home stays if needed.

We are currently seeking Capital Region companies in the fashion and public relations industries to host interns from Tula. Several talented and

experienced professionals have contacted the Alliance in recent months asking if we can help them find brief, non-remunerative internships with U.S. companies:

Sergei Pechenin, a marketing and public relations professional from Tula, Sergei is looking for a two-week internship in a PR, marketing, or advertising agency in 2011 or 2012. Sergei has been helping the Alliance with the Memory Project, a video documentation for the upcoming exhibit, "Getting to Know You."

Tatiana Klimova, an internal communications specialist for a manufacturer of retail goods, is seeking an internship in public relations with an American company in 2011 or 2012. Tatiana is helping the Alliance translate our Web content into Russian.

Albina Mikhaylina, owner of fashion design studio Design Centre Albifa, LLC and organizer of The Russian Fashion Show in Albany, NY in 2000, is looking for experience in management and marketing in clothing production and related industries in 2011 or 2012.

Tula State University Incubator Program



Dr. Yuri Chadaev with Alliance Chair Jerry Shaye.

Dr. Yuri Chadaev and Vladimir Panarin from Tula State University spent a very productive week in February visiting business incubator resources in the Capital Region and New York City. The visit, organized by Greg Johnson and hosted by Mel Chudzik of Union College Graduate School of Management, involved meetings with incubator directors, venture capitalists, and successful area businesses that had originated in local incubators.



Professor Vladimir Panarin

Dr. Chadaev, who heads a relatively new business incubator at Tula State University, followed up upon his re-

turn to Tula by establishing the first of what we hope will become an ongoing knowledge-sharing forum. In April, owners of companies in the TSU incubator met with the Alliance Business Development Committee via teleconference to share information about their business goals and to lay the groundwork for establishing business relationships between our two business communities.

We are very excited by these developments and believe our new connection with Dr. Chadaev and Professor Panarin will greatly assist our effort to connect businesses in the Capital Region with businesses in Tula.

Connections

is a periodic publication of the **Albany-Tula Alliance, Inc.**

A 501 c (3) organization receiving mail at:

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Albany-Tula Alliance is a grass-roots, not-for-profit volunteer organization composed of citizens of Albany and the surrounding Capital Region of New York State, partnered with citizens of Tula, Russia. We have come together to provide mutual support and inspiration and to carry on a long-term program dedicated to the growth and well-being of both communities.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 16–July 1: Grand Circle Travel Tour, Russia Revealed

September 9–22: Getting to Know You: A Retrospective Exhibition at The Arts Center of the Albany Region.

September 18: Yasnaya Polyana Chamber Orchestra performs at The Arts Center of the Albany Region.

***Getting to Know You:
20 years as a Sister City***
 A Retrospective Exhibition from the Albany-Tula Alliance

September 9–22, 2011
 The Arts Center of the Capital Region • For information: 518-768-7010

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