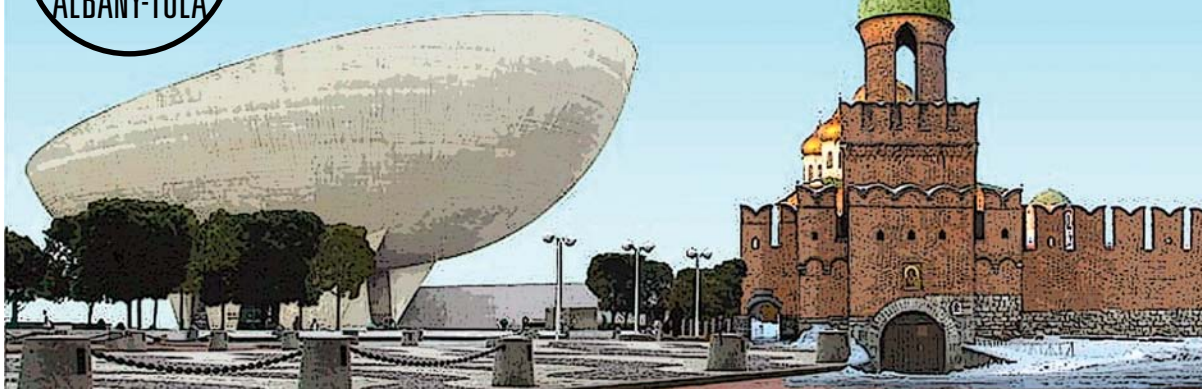




Connections



Spring 2013

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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

Open World 2012

The Open World Program kicked off on Friday, October 19th, 2012 with a welcome party at the home of former ATA board member Mary Emerson and her husband Brian. The Emersons and several other ATA board members hosted six leading Russian educators from Tula's two universities and the Educational Research Institute. Because our guests work as professionals in the fields of education and culture, their program focused on visits to area colleges and universities.

Some of the highlights of the 10-day visit included: a visit to the Cultural Education Center and tour of the State Capitol by New York State Assemblyman Jack McEneny, a trip to NYSEDA's Saratoga Technology and Energy Park in Malta, visits to the HVCC and Tech Valley High School campuses and a day of exploring RPI's signature experimental arts space, EMPAC. There was a special introduction to the Music Mobile program which Presenter Ruth Pelham explained to the delegates how music promotes cooperation, readiness to learn and teaches meaningful concepts. The Sage Colleges provided an in-depth discussion on how technology helps the mentally and physically disadvantaged.

Dr. Barbara J. Webster, Chair of the Education and Culture Committee and organizer of the Open World Program, played an important role in executing the busy schedule. She said: "The Open World programs have served as catalysts for deepening and widening the 20 years of cooperation that has existed between Tula and the Capital Region. World peace is built by individuals meeting individual one-on-one. Open World helps initiate this kind of partnership."



Bottom from left to right: Dan Robeson, Dean of the School of Management, The Sage Colleges; Lori Quigley, Dean of the Esteves School of Education, The Sage Colleges; Sergey Pukhanov; Irina Bolushevskaja; Barbara Webster, Albany-Tula Alliance; Denis Bychkov



Left to right: Denis Bychkov, Ekaterina Korableva, Dmitry Shmigirilo, Oleg Pantukhin and Sergei Kurdunov and Barbara Webster. Standing is Ruth Pelham, founder and owner of the Music Mobile.

Essay Contest Winners Visit Tula (Sept 2012)

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2012 Student Essay Contest winners Haewon Hwang (of Guilderland High School) and Rose Schneider (of Ichabod Crane High School) wrote 1500-word essays on Russian writer Leo Tolstoy's influence on the thoughts of world leaders that proved to be the most original among a dozen entries. Accompanied by board members Mary Emerson, Dawn Weinraub, and Videographer Sonja Stark, the girls were guests at

Tula State Pedagogical University for 10 days. The group explored Leo Tolstoy's estate, Yasnaya Polyana, attended the "Conference on the Life and Works of Tolstoy," and read portions of their winning essays to students at Tula Pedagogical. Stark posted two videos on the ATA Youtube channel that represent a small sample of some of the many activities and friends the girls made while visiting School #3 and home stays.



Haewon Hwang and Rose Schneider hamming it up during an annual Tula celebration when the city opens up the street for parades and pedestrian traffic.



Picnic at the summer home of ATA friend Elena Molchanova. Elena and her mother spent all day preparing a feast for 25 close friends that included fresh fruit and veggies from their own gardens. "The food was amazing. There are like 3-4 course meals at each meal!" said Haewon Hwang.

“I was so lucky to alleviate and educate the people on their assumptions of America. And if there is one thing I will never forget it's the food. Every course at every meal was mouth-watering...”

—Haewon Hwang

“Tula was not as much of a sensory overload as Moscow, but it was refreshing in that it seemed more real, more genuine and local.”

—Rose Schneider

Words from a Winning Duo

Haewon Hwang

I'm so grateful to have visited a city such as Tula on this trip. The first impression wasn't too good. Quite shabby—the buildings weren't in great condition, the roads were even worse if possible. But then we were exposed to the hospitality of the locals. And I truly understood how lucky I was to be in that situation, having nice and traditional dinner parties at the humble homes of simply brilliant hosts. I was so lucky to meet actual friends my age—I'm proud to say that we are still keeping in touch. I was so lucky to alleviate and educate the people on their assumptions of America. And if there is one thing I will never forget it's the food. Every course at every meal was mouth-watering, even for a semi-picky eater like myself. Two big cheers for Russian tradition and Russian food!

Rose Schneider

Tula was not as much of a sensory overload as Moscow, but it was refreshing in that it seemed more real, more genuine and local. Vendors along the highways leading to this city sell apples and mushrooms they've picked. The city's tourism seems more geared to Russians, who are more likely to know that Tula is the "Samovar Capital of the World" or that it is a "Hero City," rather than foreigners. They have their own local problems like the roads with tire-sized potholes that they joke have been preserved in all their awfulness since they stopped the Germans in World War Two (the Great Patriotic War, they call it). They have their own local icons and historic sites too. Leo Tolstoy's beautiful estate is preserved right outside the city.

ATA Chair Visits Tula in December 2012

Personal Summary by Jerry Shaye

At the invitation of Prof. Yuriy Chadaev, the head of the Innovative Business Incubator at TSU, ATA Chair Jerry Shaye traveled to Tula arriving on November 12 as their guest for six days. To read the full summary, visit the ATA website.

"I visited two exceptional schools in Tula. The first visit was to Lyceum #4, which came to my attention as the result of Dmitry Shmigirilov's visit during the Open World program to Albany in October. Dmitry is the Deputy Director of Lyceum #4 and

the school is modern, clean and beautifully equipped. The very enthusiastic assistant Director, Elena Davydova speaks fluent English and their Director, Vera Sochnieva, are extremely interested in working with a partner school here.

At the invitation of Anastasiya (Nastya) Astapova, the Director of International Sales of Tulskeya Garmonj, I was able to have a tour of their musical instrument factory and a long conversation with their General Manager. They liked the report prepared by Union Graduate College students.

One of the best meetings I enjoyed while in Tula was meeting with Galina Prokhorova and Victor Sinkovsky, the Director of the Yasnaya Polanya Orchestra, at the new Arms Museum. The new museum boasts a striking architectural design and is only now being filled with works and promises to be a significant tourist attraction."

“ (They) are extremely interested in working with a partner school here. ”
—Jerry Shaye



Jerry Shaye visits the new Tula Arms Museum.

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Business Committee Video Conferences Continue in 2013

The Business Committee of the Albany-Tula Alliance will continue to hold periodic videoconferences with Prof. Yuriy Chadaev, Director of the Innovative Business Incubator at Tula State University. Prof. Chadaev's students are ready to carry out market research on behalf of Capital Region businesses seeking to enter the Russian market. Sharing of best practices in business acceleration with our friends and colleagues in Tula will become a regular part of the Business Committee's activities. We will discuss how we can collaborate with another proposed business incubator to be developed at the Tolstoy State Pedagogical University with their Rector, Vladimir Panin, and the head of their International Relations Office, Zhanna Fomicheva, during their visit to Albany in mid-May, 2013.



Jerry Shaye visits Yasnaya Polyana—home and museum of the writer Leo Tolstoy.

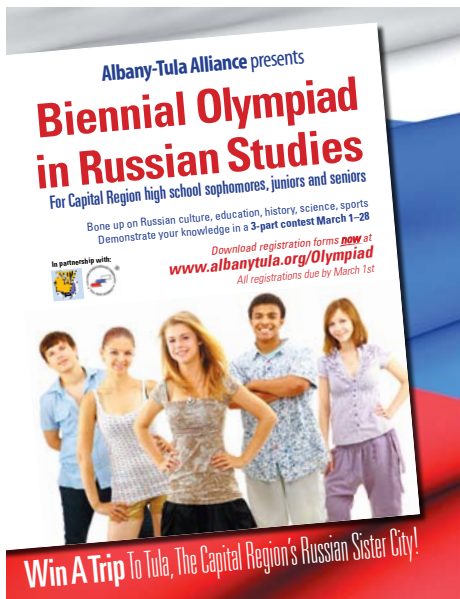


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A Capital Region Alliance

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Russian Olympiad 2013 in Full Swing

The ATA recently announced the winners of the biennial Russian Olympiad: Margarette Keesee, a junior from Guilderland High School and Will Heatley, a sophomore from Tamarac High School in Troy both won 1st place. For more information, visit www.albanytula.org/olympiad.

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Teachers Invited to RSUH in May 2013

Members of our Education Committee, Bonny Einstein and Dawn Stuart Weinraub, have recently received exciting news. They have been selected to be teacher-delegates at an international symposium to be held in May 2013 at the Russian State University for the Humanities (RSUH) in Moscow. Their trip of a lifetime is made possible by a generous travel fellowship from the American Council of Teachers of Russian (ACTR).

Einstein is a North Colonie 6th grade Russian schoolteacher and Weinraub is a retired French and Russian language teacher from Emma Willard.

While at the conference, Einstein will present a paper on North Colonie's 6th grade Russian program and the Russian Mural that her students painted at Shaker Junior High School in the spring of 2011. The Russian program is made possible with a grant received from the New York State Council on the Arts. Weinraub will describe the Alliance's cross-cultural educational contests and Olympiads to encourage critical exami-

nation of each other's cultures to see ourselves as others see us.

RSUH is truly a cosmopolitan institution of higher learning and Einstein and Weinraub will present their papers alongside fellow ACTR teacher-delegates from such institutions of higher learning as Brigham Young University, University of Texas-Austin, Northwestern University, Arizona State University and Uppsala University (Sweden).

During the May trip, the teachers will be hosted by Tula State Pedagogical University and provided with a tour of Tula schools as official representatives of the ATA. They will deliver prizes to students of English who competed in this year's Essay Contest – writing essays on issues that young people face in both countries.

Einstein hopes to work with her new Russian colleagues in Tula School # 3 to set up a sister-school relationship that will involve Skype conferences with her 6th grade classes at North Colonie.