

THE TATTLE- TAEI

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERUS EXCHANGE

АМЕРИКАНСКО-РОССИЙСКИЙ ФОНД ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНЫХ ОБМЕНОВ

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ALBANY BUDDIES CAPTURED BY RUSSIAN SPIRIT



Mike & Fred ride in a 1937 motorcycle.

“Russia? Why go to Russia?”

That was my first reaction when my buddy, Mike Thorpe, returned from Kursk in 2004 and excitedly began telling me about his adventures,” said Fred Garavelli, Albany fireman and EMT. “The more I thought about what Mike told me, the more intrigued I became. When the 2006 trip was announced, I took my chance and have never regretted it.”

Mike Thorpe tells of his own involvement after hearing about the 2002 trip from his wife’s friend, Darlene Cardillo. “She had been to Moscow and Kursk in Russia and shared all these fascinating stories and photos. I began to feel excited about signing up for the next trip which was coming up in April of 2004. I was looking forward to walking in Red Square and the Kremlin as well as visiting museums and churches, but I especially liked the idea of staying with a Russian family while in Kursk. The time with my host family proved to be one of the very special highlights of the trip. My family, the Karamyshevs, went out of their way to make me feel like a welcome and pampered visiting relative.”

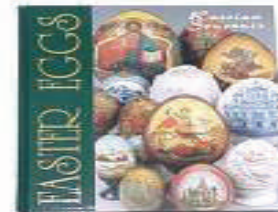
The word of mouth trail extended even further as Mike upon returning home, excitedly told another of his buddies, Jim O’Rourke, about visiting Kursk schools and the children’s hospital. Jim also signed on with THE AMERUS

EXCHANGE, LTD for the 2006 trip and the three amigos found themselves on the road to high adventure in Moscow, Kursk and St. Petersburg.

Jim speaks about the experience that he shared with his old and new friends, the other members of TAEI’s 2006 group, with amazement at the spirit of the Russian people. “After living most of my life in The Cold War with the USSR, I was so surprised by how warm and generous they are. Each of us travelers stayed with a Russian family during our stay in the City of Kursk. We were treated with such kindness by our host families, the staff of the schools that we visited and even at the cultural sites that I began to feel like I didn’t want to leave. It caused me to ponder how the Cold War lasted so long between two peoples with so much in common. The strong family bonds are felt very quickly upon arriving at the host home. There is a very expressive love shared between the generations of children, parents and grandparents. It was also very easy to see how happy many Russian people were to have the Russian Orthodox Church openly back in their lives. We were in Moscow during Orthodox Easter and got to see the thousands of worshippers attending the beautiful ancient services.”

Mike and Fred expressed their wonder at the Russian spirit as displayed in the ubiquitous monuments to the heroes of The Great Patriotic War or World War II as we know it. So many Russian families lost members during that period that it is a constant presence in schools, parks and city streets. Kursk, a Hero City, was the site of fierce battles and nearby, in the little town of Svaboda, the three Albany buddies and their Russian interpreters and friends visited the headquarters bunker of the famous Kursk Tank Battle of 1943. “At the bunker, I was reminded of the reverence for the heroes of the past expressed by my host family,” Fred recalls. “Mike and I met one of these living heroes, a veteran of The Great Patriotic War. He took us for rides on his 1937 motorcycle meanwhile expressing his preference for the old days over ‘The New Russia’ of today. This was history coming alive for me.”

The three Albany pals paused in their memories to say, “We wish that our Russian families and friends could come to New York. Our homes will always be open to them.”



DATES TO REMEMBER:

Educators, business people, service and medical professionals, consider joining THE AMERUS EXCHANGE 2008 trip to Russia. Your skills are needed to help build the peace.

Need a passport? Get it now! Visit your local post office or go online for details.

Prior to December 2007, think about this opportunity. Contact us to get more information.

Visa invitation information must be sent to Kursk by TAEI. **Dec. 1, 2007**

Send your passport, 2 passport-type photos, visa application, visa fee to TAEI. **Jan. 15, 2008**

Pre-trip briefing **Mid-Mar. 2008**

TAEI TRIP TO RUSSIA (includes Moscow, Kursk and St. Petersburg) **April 2008**

Graphic from:
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**THE AMERUS EXCHANGE,
LTD is dedicated to building
international, cross-cultural
relationships that
encourage the development
of democratic ideas.**

-TAEI mission

JOE'S JOURNAL

A letter from TAEI representative, Joe Rustick, who is teaching and studying at The Regional Open Social Institute (ROSI) in Kursk, Russia during the Spring semester.

Hi, everyone!

Let me give you a brief explanation of what has been eating up all my time here in Kursk. Classes are going well. I'm starting to get the feel for what the direction of each English class that I teach is going to be. I am also starting to make friends with the students. Last Friday I went to a school competition held for the fourth year students. The purpose of the competition was to pick Mr. ROSI and Miss ROSI. A guy and a girl from each department competed in the areas of talent and intelligence for the titles.

On Sunday I joined the third year students along with my Russian teacher at a presentation of Russian culture in which lots of different youth groups from all over the Kursk region performed. The kids ranged in age from 5 to 16 years old.

My use of Russian language is getting better each day. My teacher must be very good although it is strange that I am learning Russian through French. Although she speaks English and French, my teacher only speaks to me in French and Russian. There are a ton of vocab words with all their different endings to learn. I have been practicing their use a lot and trying to remember them all.

Tatyana Vladimirovna Tsyrlina, the vice-rector of ROSI and professor of English, has been having me correct student English translations. Today I finished going over an 85 page book on preschool education methods including personal essays by school teachers. I have worked on this project for 4 weeks. Since today is the deadline for finishing the task, I am left with a quite a few more essays that could still be improved.

Although it is starting to get warmer here, it has also been raining a bunch lately. Everything is damp and the ground everywhere is muddy. It definitely isn't much of an improvement over the ice and snow. They don't salt any of the roads or sidewalks so everything is constantly under a sheet of ice. I have fallen three times already.

My host family is really nice, and I'm able to communicate fairly well with all of them. The father is especially easy to talk to. Anna speaks English but she works so I'm often home first and talk with the rest of the family in Russian before she gets there.

I have to be going now, but I will try to keep you better informed in the future.

*Love from Kursk,
Joe*

