

# MARIENTAL & LOUIS

**DAYS OF YORE**

**SEPTEMBER 2005**

**ISSUE EIGHT**



Topics:

Editor's Comments  
A German-Russian Proverb  
Feature Story  
Whispers

German Russian Proverb:

We feasted  
We made merry  
We added up the  
costs,  
We wept.

## Editor's comments

**May God help all the unfortunate people from the hurricane disaster areas. We don't always realize how lucky we are. When a catastrophe like this happens – I always say that I'll never complain about anything again. But .....**

**This is the final segment of Allen Salzman's interesting story about his trip to Russia. It was very well written and I hope you all enjoyed it. For those of us, who will never get the chance to travel over there, we at least can have an idea of how it is now. Thank you Allen.**

**We began again.....**



Good Friday, April 9<sup>th</sup>. Day trip to the Tom River, and the Tiga forest. I was shown ancient petroglyphs, created by some Siberian peoples dating from the 4th to the 1st millennia BC. If anyone had told me last year I'd spend Good Friday, on the banks of the Tom River in Siberia, examining ancient petroglyphs, well you know the rest. If my old Geology Department advisor at UNL

could see this.

April 10<sup>th</sup> shopping for gifts. In my travels, I have purchased things for my wife and the children. Things that would be too expensive otherwise are **very** affordable in other parts of the world. This trip was no exception. Besides the obligatory Siberian Vodka, the shawls and Metrishka dolls and small hand painted boxes, A Siberian mink fur hat, a "*Shyapka*" and a Tea Service.

The Tea Service is a story. I wanted to take home some Russian china of some type for Carol. I'd heard it was very good quality. So with Viktor, Galina and interpreter Boris we went to on the better "Magazines" (stores) to look for something I could pack home. I selected what looked like a look looking Tea Pot, another smaller pot and two cups and saucers. It had 18-century figures painted on them, a white-silver type of finish, and gold trim. I said I'd like to purchase this and Boris conveyed my decision. It occurred to me to ask who made it, "Duvlova", "dove", the sign of the dove is on each numbered piece.

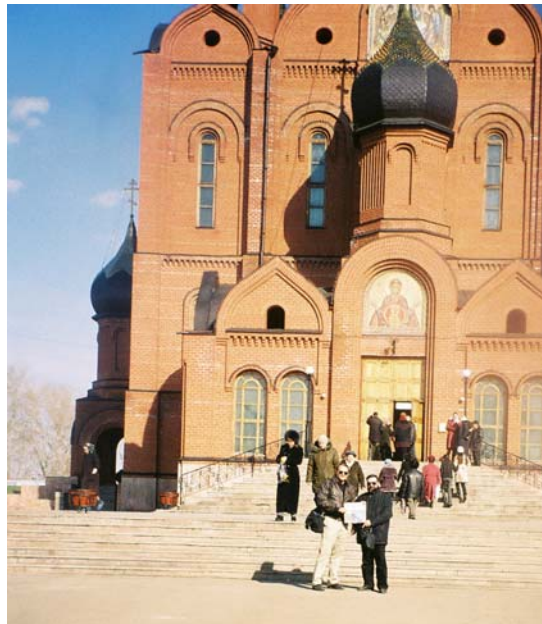
Boris replied, its very good quality, from a suburb in Moscow”, “How many pieces is it?” “34 pieces” Boris replied. What! “How the hell am I going to get this home?!” I don’t dare mail it. It’ll never get home. Then I did my conversation of ~28 Rubbles to the Dollar, and it came out to only \$42.00! Jokingly I asked the one of the four young attractive sales women waiting on us, “How much for the whole store”. Boris interpreted, and they gave me a sly smile. In character, Galina reminded me so much of my own mother, a consciences shopper. Petite Galina Salzman, 62 years old’, had these four beautiful sales girls check each piece, and the two tea pots I asked her to pick out for herself, for the right “ring tone”, and she had them very carefully check for *any* imperfections. She had them replace some pieces. I left there with this entire Tea Service in box approximately 15”x13”x20”.

The other items I purchased I was able to pack in existing luggage and a bag Viktor gave me. This box containing the Tea Service traveled with me in the back of “uncle Genady’s” little LADA to the Lutheran Seminary I spent one night at in Novosibirsk, I carried it with me and packed it in an overhead bin on Siberia Airlines from Novosibirsk to Moscow, Through the Moscow subways to the apartment I stayed 2.5 days at in Moscow, had to split it up to get it onto the Delta flight to JFK, then through four half awake U.S. Customs examinations at JFK. Then carried it on with me from JFK to DIA. When Carol first opened it she did not have the reaction I anticipated . . . this caused me very great consternation. However, as she continued to take out piece after piece, her reaction changed. Each piece is covered in “mother of pearl”, hand painted, with gold trim. It all made it in one piece.

### **Orthodox Easter service April 11<sup>th</sup>.**

I packed my luggage said had my last *Zaftrak*, and my last daily message at the Sanatorium. Time to checkout. Told the women behind the desk, “*ochen spaseba*”, *much thanks*. The night of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> I spent at Viktor and Galina’s.

Easter in the Russian Orthodox Church is as big as Christmas here in the west. On the evening of the 11<sup>th</sup>, for a half an hour, Hermann and I attended an Easter service at Kosminsky Sabor Orthodox Church that lasted from 11:00 pm to 4:00 am. People were filing past the alter. Men are not permitted to cover their heads. Women are, so women wore these beautiful shawls or their fur hats. The service was magnificent. The monks chanting, the incense, the architecture. were worship was at it’s most genuine. No theatrical “techno-Jesus show” here. The people here want something that in image, music, thought and deed, is *completely distinctive* from their secular lives. In their manner of devotion and their attire, I could see that these people brought the best of what they are to worship. Anything less I was told, is the sin of disrespectful apathy. How



ersatz the “casual/contemporary” services in this country seem to me now.

Our family as a group separated three very different ways, three generations ago. My grandfather Henry and my grandmother Anna were from Balzar and Frank, immigrated to America escaping Stalin’s genocide. Here in America, my own mother had kept us together as a family after the tragic death of my father. The family of Alexander and Paulina Salzmänn had survived Stalin’s famine, deportation during the Second World War, and the Cold War. The Salzmänn’s in Germany had survived the Berlin bombings and the barbaric Soviet occupation. As a group of families we’d been separated by death, geo-politics, wars, and distances on a global scale, for approximately 100 years. However, that was all in the past now. In spite of it all, we had grown in numbers, gotten stronger and better educated with each generation. It was April 12<sup>th</sup>, Easter, a time for resurrection. This day of resurrection had so many meaning for us. Indeed, I was told even the Russian Orthodox Church and the western Christian church’s celebrated Easter the same day.

Viktor Salzmänn had designed the roof for a new church. I wasn’t sure the denomination. We attended a short Easter Morning Service there. South Koreans had helped with the construction. That gave me a perspective of how far east I was, and how far west I’d have to travel before I was home. After the service, we went back to Viktor and Galina for a short “*abiet*” (lunch), and more “tea and pictures”, as Boris would say.



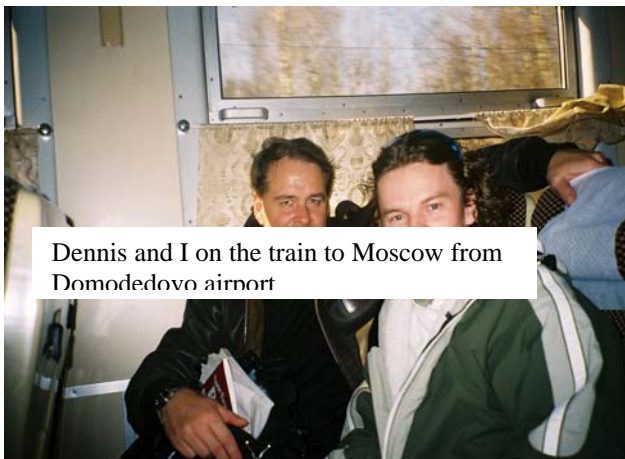
Later we went to Galina’s brother’s uncle Genady for an Easter Dinner. Everywhere you heard “*Vosres Xristo*”, and people would reply “*Xeistos vas Zie Vaistnu*”. My best translation is “Risen Christ” replying “Christ has risen”.

Natalie, Hermann’s wife had finally succeeded in contacting the Russland-Deutsch “Wieder-Geborn” (Born Again) German

cultural group. They invited us to a play at 2:00 Easter Sunday afternoon. When we arrived, they could not believe an American was there. I was introduced to a number of men and women. One woman, Nina Der Wald reminded me of my own dad’s sister, aunt Vera. She had a mature grace and beauty. In German, she told me of the deportation and how the children, millions of them died as child labor in the mines and the frozen forests, after they had been torn from their mother arms. And the hundreds of thousands of Germans that had gone back to Germany. Her sad but hopeful blue eyes said it all. She asked me if there were any German-Russian organizations in America? Asked her if they had Internet access at this office. They did, so I showed her the AHSRG website. She was astounded. Hermann and I went to the auditorium to attend the play they wanted us to see. The narration was in Russian, but the songs were in German. The actors were in

Lederhosen, the actresses in Dirndls. It was like festival in Bavaria. The music was like the dances my parents took my brother and I to when we were little. When the performance ended, I was introduced. They were so glad to meet me. Later that day we went to uncle Genady's son's home for another incredible dinner. More "tea and pictures".

April 12<sup>th</sup>, time to depart for Novosibirsk. I had *abiet* at Viktor and Galina's said my goodbyes to them and Boris my interpreter. Packed everything into the LADA. Uncle Genady and his wife Nina and I headed for the Lutheran Seminary in Novosibirsk. The drive went well enough the weather was raining and snowing part of the trip. The roads were no better. We stopped at the roadside Inn we'd stopped at on the way to Kemerovo. Galina packed *abiet* (lunch) for us. We ate in the car as the rain came down and watched some "Novey Ruskys", *New Russians* file out of their Mercedes SUVs', with body guards looking over the area, us included. In Russian "uncle Gena" said, they must be important people, laughing at the irony if they only knew who we were, and that I was a U.S. citizen. Novosibirsk traffic was horrible. We arrived at the Lutheran Seminary in the slow steady rain. I gave uncle Gena and Nina a sincere good-bye. Shook hands with pastor Litkin and entered the Seminary. I attended part of the evening service. Thank full that the trip had gone as well as it did. I took a shower. That evening I went to a Chinese restaurant with pastor Alexi and his wife. They both spoke very good English. I tried to sleep on a fold out chair that night at the Seminary. At 5:00am pastor Litkin woke me and I quickly packed my things and headed for the airport. The pastor and I spoke of how Russia was changing and how the Lutheran Church was all but wiped out. Now things were starting to re-build. My luggage barely made it under the 20kg limit, so I didn't need to pay a fee. Said a quick but thankful good-bye to pastor Litkin. I shuffled along with everyone else and boarded an IL-86 again for Domodedovo in Moscow. The flight was uneventful, and the service was *atlechna* (wonderful). Arriving at Domodedovo, and after the long lines though arrival corridors, I met Dennis, a nephew of Galina's who with two other cousins lived in Moscow. He held a sign "Alen Zaltsman". I'd made one more critical connection. We collected my luggage, Tea Service and all. And boarded the train for Moscow. We purchased our subway tickets and went to the apartment I'd stayed at the beginning of my trip. I'd left some clean clothes there. Hermann had switched the SIM card in Anton Salzman's mobile phone. So I had that to



Dennis and I on the train to Moscow from Domodedovo airport

call people in Moscow, if needed. I spent the next 2.5 days at Irena's apartment, with her live-in and her daughter. That night I went to Dennis's apartment and his he shared with two other cousins. All spoke some English; Dennis had been in the Soviet Army in

Chechnya. Dennis gave me two gifts, a balalaika and Russian “soldiers vodka” canteen. All three were trying to get businesses going. Moscow is like this everywhere, people with naive optimism. At least 75% of Russia’s wealth is in Moscow. Helen Dyakonova, originally from Kemerovo showed me more of Moscow. We visited the Pushkin Museum, and the Russian Orthodox Temple of the Rescuer. This was a magnificent structure that the Communists had been torn down, built a swimming pool, then demolished that and rebuilt a church, down to the last mosaic tile. I had another day of trekking around Moscow. Helena and I talked about many things. It was good to speak with someone who had such terrific English. I purchased a meal for Irene and Helen at a restaurant overlooking the Moscow River. They told me that Russians are gaining personal wealth, but the corruption is so accepted that there is no money to change the big infrastructure. “People are paid in White money and Black money”. The White money is your paycheck that is maybe 20% of your monthly wage. The other 80% is the Black money (similar idea to the Black Market). “This money is cash that you receive in an envelope. “So you see how everything is a cash business”. “And Allen, how do you get credit if you can’t prove how much you earn”? I thought, more serious changes are ahead for these people.

#### **April 16<sup>th</sup> Time to depart. . . .**

The next morning Irena and her live-in Alexi arranged to have a taxi to take me to Sheremetyevo – 2. I had budgeted my Rubbles perfectly. My last 500 covered the fare to the airport. No Rubbles to exchange for a fee. The taxi was a beat-up old small station wagon type of a car. The driver was a pleasant sort, he spoke a little English, and drove like a bat-out-a-hell. I had completed the last connection and was on my way to the airport. I was thinking about the trip, not knowing if I was just lucky or blessed, or if really anyone could have pulled this off sans any show-stoppers. During this crazy taxi ride, as I was trying to put this trip in perspective and figure out why I needed to make all this happen, I heard the radio station playing a Russian version of Nik Kershaw’s “*The Riddle*” from 1985. This weirdness has got to end I thought to myself. As we came to a screeching halt at the Sheremetyevo – 2 terminal, I paid the fee and said “*Spaseba, Dobre Dein*”. “*Thank you, Good Day*” he replied “*Spaceeba Americanitz*”. Ahead of me, I had a 9:40 hr flight to JFK, then over hour hours from JFK to DIA.

Hordes of people were checking-in. I nearly lost a bag. I was able to carry on the Balalaika, and the aforementioned Tea Service. Sheremetyevo – 2 in Moscow is one of those international airports where “*in a day your can see everyone in the world go by*”. I thought to myself, the last time I used that expression was in January 1997. I was standing in front of the Winter Garden Plaza, facing the World Trade Center. Myself and an employee of mine, had just left a meeting at an exclusive fitness club there. We had lunch at Windows on the World. My God what strange times these are. The communications revolution and the fall of geo-political barriers had made it so easy to travel the world, and had allowed me to make this journey. Moreover, the same progress of world events allowed terrorists to kill people I had worked with.

Waiting to board the Moscow to JFK flight, eating a sandwich and knocking back a large bottle of duty-free Baileys, I noticed that I was surrounded by American couples and newly adopted babies. They were trading experiences with others that had completed only their first trip. I had not heard any American English in a while, it sounded strange. Flying to JFK, I sat next to an Irish Investment Banker living in Moscow who, every four weeks, traveled to New York to see his son and his Russian ex-wife that would not go back to Moscow. We traded observations on the country. Still I could not sleep much. I landed at JFK, baggage in tow I went through four Customs checkpoints, conducted by half awake personnel. Made some calls while waiting for the next flight. Traded stories with a guy who had a horrible time in Moscow. Flying from JFK to DIA, I remembered an old Jerry Raferly song "*Home and Dry*". I made it though the terminal at DIA, up the stairs. There was Carol. I was never so glad to see that student nurse I hit-on at "Uncle Sam's" in college. Physically I was home. Mentally it takes longer. I was gone March 31<sup>st</sup> to April 17<sup>th</sup>. Traveling from east to west gives you the worst jet lag. I unpacked a few things. Then slept for at least 24 hours.

In May, we attended Carol's nephew's wedding in Lincoln. I had a chance to tell my mother, her husband Mervin, and my uncle Herb Salzman and Diane White of the German-Russian Museum everything. The next day I took my family to my father's grave before attending church at First Presbyterian. The gravesite area was always a quite place. The urbanization around Lincoln Memorial Park is disdainful. Dad is buried in a corner of the cemetery called the "Garden of Peace". There is a large tablet, carved as an open book. The passage is 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:7-8. I made them understand that, "they are the latest and greatest". "Anything I've done will be eclipsed by your own successes". I told them that my greatest concern for them was that through apathy, fear or complacency, they would not realize what they are capable of. In that they would cheat themselves out of life's gifts. And would live a life of excuses followed by regret.

I must comment that I met people in Siberia that deserve America more than some people here. I know it's cliché', and people have heard it before, but living here in this country is far more than a right, it's a privilege.

I strongly encourage anyone whose people were Volga, of Black Sea Germans or any interested others, to visit the [American Historical Society of Germans from Russia](#). It has a strong useful international network. Family, adventure travel, past and present history. It's all there. A cultural portal to the other side of the world. My eternal thanks to these people, who keep the faith.

Allen Salzman, (LHS '74', UNL '79')  
Wheat Ridge, Colorado

## **WHISPERS:**

Are you on the right road?

Genealogy research defines taking the road to discovery. There are traffic lights, stop signs, many turnings and cars stuck in traffic. In the country, narrow lanes are fringed with trees, obscuring views of towns, few cars and dead ends. Highways have slippery curves, rest stops and fast-moving vehicles, while exits lead to other byways or tollbooths!

Sometimes we may have a map, while at other times, we are in uncharted territory.

