

AH ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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10th ANNIVERSARY

July the 4th was the 10th anniversary of the dedication of the American Home. We had a gala celebration, complete with a variety of entertainment; plenty of good food (including delicious barbequed pork!); and red, white, and blue helium filled balloons that were released in lieu of fireworks. More than a hundred people were in attendance, including the visiting families of two of the teachers. It was a wonderful day!

NOTES FROM THE ALTONENS

Galya:

As you know, we celebrated our 10th anniversary in July. Ten years--when you think about it, it seems to be a long period of time, but when I try to recollect the first year of our work, it seems to be only yesterday.

A lot has changed. We have become a stable firm with a good reputation, with many friends, and with approximately 7000 former students, some of whom were among our 100 guests at the celebration. It was nice to see them again and to spend some time together.

On September 5 we began our 11th year. Some of the current more than 350 students are our old friends. They have been studying with us for 5 or more semesters. In addition to our regular classes, we are now teaching about 30 students at the chocolate factory in Pokrov. We are very fortunate to have two teachers from last year, Laura and Liz, available to teach these classes. They go to Pokrov two times a week. This is an interesting and challenging new opportunity for us. Among other things, the new copier this income helped us buy is saving the teachers a lot of time.

Thanks to the increasing popularity of our English program, the Home has become too small for us. In the evenings, when we have classes, office hours, and private students, every corner is occupied. We definitely need to add at least a couple of rooms. But this is only a dream for the time being, because it is too expensive for us now. [We will almost certainly need an outside grant before we can expand, or better yet, build a new facility. Please let us know if you come across any possible funding sources. --Ron] In the meantime, we will be able to start using the room in the attic--once we have cleaned it up and added heating and air conditioning.

This December we will be glad to see Nicole Merser-Brun and her husband Fred. They are coming for a couple of weeks to meet Nicole's old friends. She wants her husband to get to know Russia and her Russian friends. [On Nicole see Alumni Notes in the previous issue. --Ron] We would love to see the rest of you here. We remember you and love you.

Alexei:

First of all, I want to send my very best regards to all the people--both teachers and participants in other AH projects--whose dear faces and wonderful ideals we always remember and appreciate. Even though we are always busy with the things we have to do here to make the "wheels of our machine" turn smoothly--and you know how much time and effort this requires from all the AH team!--we, nevertheless, don't let our "veterans" disappear from our thoughts.

As you know, the AH's success depends on the generous contributions of its "dwellers." If you former inhabitants haven't fully recovered from the "intoxication" of your experience here, even just a few "drops of oil" for our wheels will be most welcome.

We have somehow survived ten challenging and fruitful years. The challenges have been numerous, sometimes even too numerous. This is why the fruits of our efforts haven't always been as big and juicy as we would like. But concrete things have been done, skills spread, and smiles provoked. The AH has been able to add its fruits to the basket of local changes.

Changes! How slow and painful they are! Vladimir is still far from being a beautiful and comfortable place, but some encouraging things have been happening lately. At least that's what, according to the public opinion polls, people think. The share of those who generally approve of the City Administration's activity is over 50 percent now. This positive attitude is at least partially the result of long expected "gifts" from the local government. For instance, this last summer most of the central streets received a new asphalt covering. And for the first time in many years the city found some money to spend on flower beds. But these changes may only reflect the efforts of the new Mayor (elected last March) to make a good first impression on the public.

More encouraging is the improving performance of local producers and service providers. The achievements of the latter are evident when you start counting the new shops, cafes and restaurants. Also, transportation in Vladimir has become much more convenient thanks to the numerous private buses and vans. If you are in need of a taxi cab, you can choose between at least a dozen competing companies.

Reopened industrial enterprises and all kinds of small businesses are providing jobs to many people who not so long ago were unemployed. They say (what a pleasant deficiency!) that we are short of properly trained workers and need to reopen trade schools. It seems (I'm afraid to fully believe it) that the time has come when a good education and proper training are being valued. From my own experience, it does appear that our young people are increasingly determined to study hard and to look to the future with optimism. At first I thought that I might have illusions about this promising appetite for learning because my experience was limited to students majoring in foreign languages, but my colleagues confirm that they are seeing a much more serious attitude in their students.

There is hope for the future--to which the AH can continue to make a significant contribution! You are always welcome to join us, dear brothers and sisters-in-arms!

CHANGES & ADDITIONS

This fall, as Galya notes, thanks in large part to the extra income from three classes that are being taught at the chocolate factory in Pokrov, the School was able to purchase what will hopefully prove to be a much better copier than we've had in the past. In addition to being rated for 15,000 copies a month, it does automatic double sided copying! This should save a lot of time—and some paper.

Andrei and the remodeling business have moved out of the AH into quarters of their own. This means that after some work has been done, the room in the attic will be available as a quiet getaway for the teachers.

One of our former students, Andrei Stakhovsky, has taken on the part time responsibility of keeping the AH in good repair—under the supervision of Alexei. (Alexei is also trying to keep the yard in good shape.)

CURRENT PROJECTS

We are going to TRY to get a grant that will allow us to offer some extended workshops for area English teachers during our regular summer session this next spring. An ESL specialist from the State of Washington, Marilynn Abrahamson, spent a week in Vladimir the end of September giving presentations for both the AH and area teachers. She also brought a lot of teaching materials with her. Besides teaching ESL classes back in the States, Marilynn is an experienced grant writer!

(Unfortunately, we didn't get a grant for curriculum development from the Soros Foundation. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. We will continue to look for outside support for special projects. If any of you come across any funding possibilities, please let us know.)

In addition to the never ceasing efforts to find ways to improve the English Program, we are continuing to pursue other projects. At the moment, we are trying to put together a U.S. tour this next fall for the wonderful a-capella choir, Amadeus—which many of you have heard perform at the AH. So far we've arranged for two concerts in Bloomington-Normal, one at Illinois State University and one at a local church, and we are in the process of contacting other possible venues. If any of you know anyone who might be interested in booking a performance, please let us know—or have them get in touch with us.

The ISU women's basketball team has donated over 50 good quality smaller balls—suitable for the girls' and younger kids' teams in Vladimir. (Now if we can just get some adjustable backboards, so that the youngest kids won't have to keep trying to shoot at a 10 foot high basket. If any of you happen to know a possible source for the backboards, please let us know.) We hope to be able to send at least one women's team coach to Vladimir for some clinics this next April. We arranged for a boy's high school coach to put on some clinics in April 2000 and for two Vladimir coaches to come to BN in June 2001. The basketball program is a special interest of Alexei's. (See "Other Projects" on the web site for more info on our efforts to support basketball in Vladimir.)

We hope to send at least two tour groups to Russia this next summer, a "criminal justice" group May 13-27 and a "quilt group" June 23-July 7. (The criminal justice group will probably be taking most of the donated basketballs with them. On previous trips they've taken donated used medical equipment for the children's hospital in Vladimir and donated children's shoes for the orphanage we regularly try to help and an organization for handicapped children.) Both tours are open to the general public, and the criminal justice tour can be taken for academic credit through Illinois State University. If you know anyone who is interested in either tour, they can get more information on our web site.

The criminal justice tour will be the fifth such trip we've organized for ISU. This is a part of our ongoing effort to promote contacts in this field. In this connection, last spring Valentina Spiridonova, the AH's attorney (and Sasha's and Lena's mother), made an extended visit to Illinois to see her son. While she was here she met with two judges and observed their courts in action and toured the county jail. She had a great visit. (After spending a very successful year at Lincoln College in Bloomington-Normal, Sasha has moved on to DePauw University in Indiana—where he has helped organize a speech team and is doing very well with a major in computer sciences. Lena is finishing her law degree in Vladimir and working for her mother.)

Also in this field, we are helping one of our students, Masha Yumatova, apply to the ISU graduate program in Criminal Justice Sciences. She will be graduating from the Vladimir Juridical Institute in the spring. With any luck—and enough financial aid—she will be entering the two-year MA program at ISU this next fall. The combination of the criminal justice exchanges—which began in 1994—and our English Program laid the foundation for this very special opportunity for Masha. (Besides our regular D level class, Masha is currently taking a special TOEFL prep course at the AH.)

THE NEW GANG....

Following are some brief notes about the 2002-03 teachers. I'll do my best to persuade at least some of them to contribute their personal observations to future newsletters. For now, see the "preliminary comments" from Linda and Heather below. –Ron

David Johnson

David is returning for his second year. He is the Lead Teacher. He skipped summer school at the AH this year to return to the States to finish work on his MA in Russian Studies at St. Cloud State University in Minnesota. The rest of the gang report that David is doing an excellent job as their fearless leader!

Linda Harris

Grandmother and an ordained minister. For the past three years she has been working with women at risk, orphanages and schools in two Russian communities. She wants to teach English effectively and to learn Russian. She wants to continue to provide concrete help to Russians in need and teach ESL.

Heather Kaye

Taught English as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Lithuania. On returning to the States she earned an MA in TESOL at Eastern Michigan University. She then taught part time at two junior colleges for several years. Her undergrad major focused on Russia and Eastern Europe, and following her stay in Lithuania, she wanted to spend an extended period of time in Russia--but not in Moscow. In addition to her ESL training and experience, Heather is an accomplished musician (piano and organ) and a puppeteer.

Jenne Pross

Graduated as a Music major (violin) and Linguistics minor from the University of South Carolina in May. Jenne received very strong recommendations from the Russian faculty at USC—which has sent four previous teachers to Vladimir. Jenne is continuing to study the violin in Vladimir, while teaching English and learning Russian.

Moultrie Townsend

Moultrie taught English for the Peace Corps in Russia. He had to end his tour early for medical reasons and decided that he wanted to return and finish what he had started. He majored in Political Science and French at Presbyterian College.

Ted Walls

After high school Ted spent four years in the U.S. Marine Corps and participated in Desert Storm. He then did a variety of things, ending up as a licensed massage therapist, which he continued to practice while earning a degree in Cultural Anthropology at Wayne State University. He is pursuing a PhD in Anthropology and plans on doing his field research in Russia.

Jonathan White

Just graduated from the University of South Carolina with a double major in Russian and Media Arts, with an emphasis on TV production. He was highly recommended by Jenne and the faculty at USC. Jonathan sees this year as an opportunity to explore his future options. (Who knows, he might end up working for a television production company in Moscow.)

Part-timers

In addition to the above full time teachers, Liz Bird (Carleton College) and Laura Meany (Colgate) have returned to study fulltime at the Pedagogical University and teach one course each—and share the teaching of a third class—at the chocolate factory in Pokrov. (The factory was recently purchased by Kraft Foods from a German company. The staff now needs to learn English.) In addition, Julie Spears (University of Chicago) has also returned to study. She's offered to substitute teach when needed.

It's a great team!

THE FIRST YEAR

By Sandi (Schneider) Wulf, 1992-93

(See Alumni Notes)

The first year of the English program at the Home sounds so different from what it is like today – I'm very envious of the current teachers and their students.

Our time in the Home seems so primitive compared to today. Getting supplies ... creating our lessons plans from what few materials we had ... everything was a challenge. We were novices, finding our way through an uncharted world. We made it up as we went, and, thankfully, it all came together.

Though everything did come together and we were able to have an effective program for our students, it did not happen without a lot of preparation, ingenuity, and long hours of hard work.

One of our primitive but ingenious projects was to make dialogue tapes for our students. We wrote, produced and duplicated audiotapes that our students could listen to at their leisure. In the end, we got the tapes made, but not until Alison, Chris and I could finally get a hold of ourselves, stop laughing and read the scripts.

I remember finally being able to use video in our lessons after we got two American TV sets and VCRs the beginning of the spring term. We had the Russian debut of *The Princess Bride* for some of our more advanced students. This being one of my favorite movies, I was excited to show it to our students, discuss the plot and their opinions of the movie. [*We recently started adding book-video sets to the collection of teaching materials. These include To Kill a Mockingbird, The Old Man and the Sea, and Animal Farm.* –Ron]

The first year in the Home was one filled with many challenges, but also many rewards. We had wonderful students and a great staff and did our best to provide an effective and fun program.

NOTE: The fact that enrollment went from something like 80 students that first fall to 170 in the spring and 250 the next fall strongly suggests that, despite the inexperience, the limited teaching materials, and all the other problems, something was being done right. –Ron

A NOTE FROM ONE OF THE BUILDERS

From Ric Mancuso (Helped collect and install the stereo equipment—and helped do whatever else needed to be done in the run up to the July 4 dedication.)

I just finished a retreat for our local jazz society that involved discussion groups. The topic was “what has been your most memorable contribution in your life.” Of course the *Serendipity project* came to mind. I explained the impact of this project on my life and mentioned the majestic print of the American Home that hangs over the mantle in our home as a remembrance. [One of these prints hangs in the AH’s living room. –Ron]

Especially since 9/11 we should try to conceptualize a house being built in every foreign land reaching out in an effort to build a bridge to our brothers and sisters everywhere.

I look forward to having a reunion of spirit of those who were involved in this great project.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS....

Linda Harris:

First Impressions of Vladimir

I was surprised to find that Vladimir was such a large picturesque city, with wide streets and lots of trees. The architecture of the buildings and churches, some of which are very ancient, is truly beautiful. I was amazed at the number of flowers I saw everywhere which had been planted with purpose and then cared for properly. This was unlike a lot of cities in Russia which just don't have any flowers except wild flowers along the country roads or in window sills. [As Alexei notes, the new City Administration made a special effort to plant a lot of flowers this year. –Ron] I was most disappointed that some of the really lovely churches have been allowed to deteriorate and are in need of so much repair. The open markets stimulate all of ones senses and offer a huge array of produce, clothing and other products. The history of the city also astounds me, in part because we have no cities in the U.S. that are 1000 years old with buildings many hundreds of years old which are still in daily use.

First Impressions of the American Home

Well, it looks just like an American rambler house with a two-car garage, front and back yards with lots of grass, flowers and trees. It could be located in "anywhere, U.S.A.". It was interesting to see that some of the rooms which

were originally decorated like bedrooms are now used for offices. My favorite place is the backyard because it really reminds me of home.

The American kitchen and bathrooms are pretty nice also. The classrooms and teachers office in the basement are adequate and cozy. The teachers have christened each classroom. They are called Chicken Head (because Gosha the cat likes to eat chicken heads on the carpet in the basement), Ted's America (Ted is always talking about how things are in his America), The Ghetto (because it has no windows) and The Deep South (because so many of the teachers this year are from the southern part of the U.S.). This year's teachers are from very diverse backgrounds and education and this makes for different points of view and interesting discussions. The Russian staff and our host families are just super and have done everything possible to make our first weeks of acclimation to Vladimir, the School and the culture much easier and less stressful than they could be. I am so pleased at my decision to teach this year and am looking forward to keeping everyone updated on my year in Vladimir at the American Home!

Heather Kaye:

The first day of classes at The American Home was full of surprises for me. At 4 PM, a flock of students entered the basement, and we (the teachers) noticed one thing: they were very young! The average age seemed to be 14. Indeed, my 4-o'clock group is made up of energetic teenagers, thrilled to be trying out their English with a native speaker. The approach that I try to use -- a variety of teaching techniques including dialogs, exercises, songs, and games -- seems to excite them. In this group I have some kids who carry around CD-walkmen and wear feathered clothing, and I have a few kids that have shared amazing stories with me. One 14-year-old boy, Vanya, has lived in Vladimir for only two years. He's from the Kamchatka Peninsula, which is near Japan and the island of Sakhalin. He's in Vladimir with his father and many cousins, also "transplanted," but his mother has not joined them yet. She's still an 8-day train trip away! Another girl, Dasha, commutes to Vladimir from the rural vicinity of Suzdal, a 20-minute bus ride out of town. She participates eagerly in class, often blushing at her first efforts to speak English.

As the evening progresses, the age of the students increases. My 5:45 group has 10 teenagers, mostly ages 15-16, and three adults. It is a challenge to integrate these ages, but actually the presence of the adults has directed the attention of the teenagers to more serious topics. In this advanced group we are able to discuss the issues of present-day Russia, especially the business world, and the young people are taking a look at their dreams and goals in terms of jobs and money. I notice that there is a lot going on in these students' lives outside of The American Home -- work, preparation for university exams, and heavy loads of homework from their high school classes. Two of the adults in this group have immediate needs for effective business communication, as they work for firms in Vladimir.

Finally, at 7:30, I have a group of 20-somethings who let nothing go by without questioning it first. This is an advanced group, like the 5:45 class, who utilize my time at The American Home to its fullest extent. They come for office hours and make extra appointments to converse in English, to find out how to get into universities abroad, or to get extra explanations about class work. They are not afraid to question my opinions, or ask for more facts, or ask something like, "How much do you make as an American Home teacher?" I encourage whatever discussion comes up, but in this group students will actually ask questions themselves to keep the discussion going. Many of them are university students in business and law. Quite a few, however, work in business. One of these students, Alex, works for the Customs House in Vladimir, and taught himself English by memorizing every word in his dictionary and 25 poems!

So these are the students that I have at The American Home. The work is demanding, but the benefits are great. In my first month in Vladimir I have found the students here dynamic, interesting, and eager. I look forward to getting to know them as I work and live here. The year has great things in store.

THE TEACHING BUG **By Matt Golden, 2000-01**

Time never fails to lend perspective. This has certainly been the case with regard to my experience teaching at the American Home. It was a year ago that my tenure there ended. At that time, I was relieved. Teaching is not easy. It remains one of the most difficult tasks that I have ever undertaken. And when I left Russia, it was with the assumption that my teaching career had come to a close. However, distance and reflection have given me considerable insight into what a truly rewarding and gratifying experience working at the American Home proved to be.

Having explored various career tracks over the past year, I have decided to return to teaching English. Strange as it sounds (and no stranger to anyone than me), I miss teaching. I miss the interaction with my students. I miss the opportunity to listen to and argue different perspectives with individuals on the other side of the world. I miss the challenge and variety that accompanied my days at the American Home. Every day began anew. No lesson, no question, no ninety-minute period in the classroom was ever repeated. There was a constant variety of questions and an even greater variety of answers. The work, no matter how demanding, was stimulating and engaging, not to mention rewarding. Watching a student's progress makes teaching especially worthwhile.

Additionally, the American Home gave me the opportunity to see, first hand, a unique and entirely new world. You work and socialize with a Russian staff every day. There are the interactions with your students both in and out of the classroom. There are excursions to local institutions within the community. Likewise, groups come from all around the surrounding area for the simple opportunity to interact with you. And both parties learn from these encounters. Add to this the opportunity of living and in a small, quintessentially Russian town.

Taken as a whole, working at the American Home was an amazing experience, one I would like to repeat. So I have decided to continue teaching English in Russia. As I embark upon this endeavor, I will remember the American Home with fondness and respect; not just because of the opportunity it provided me, but because of the impact it had on me, both past and present, and as I look toward the future.

COMMENTS FROM A STUDENT IN OUR RUSSIAN PROGRAM

Background: For those of you who don't know, the AH is "licensed" to teach Russian to foreigners. This grew out of the tutoring we have provided for the teachers from the beginning of the English program.

Peter York is a graduate of Illinois State University. After taking my Russian politics course he went on a study trip to Russia and, figuratively speaking, fell in love with the country and decided that he wanted to learn the language. I suggested he enroll in our intensive program the next summer, which he did. And that was the start of something big.... -Ron

By Peter York

Since attending the intensive Russian language program at the American Home the summers of 1999 through 2001, I have completed a master's degree in international affairs at the University of Pittsburgh and begun work at the International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX) in Washington, DC. Currently, I administer the US Government funded FREEDOM Support Act Undergraduate Program, which brings approximately 300 undergraduate students each year from the former Soviet Union to study at American universities. The time I spent at the American Home truly shaped my career plans and gave me valuable experience with educational and cultural exchanges.

The three summers in Vladimir gave me the opportunity to meet many interesting and kind people. I carry many wonderful memories of the American Home staff and the American teachers I met each year. Also, I am happy to announce that my fiancée and I will soon be adding to the ever growing number of Russian-American married couples brought together through their connections with the American Home. Again, I would like to thank everyone involved with the American Home project. It has truly been an important part of my life.

NOTE: Peter's fiancée is Natasha Goncharova, the daughter of Olga Goncharova, one of our Russian tutors. The wedding date will be set after Natasha's visa interview at the U.S. Embassy. Wish them luck!

WEDDING BELLS

On Saturday, April 27 Alan Mosely (1998-99) and the AH's former "first secretary," Anya Morozova, were married in Moscow—where both were working. (See the first newsletter re Anya's job in Moscow.)

Any writes: The ceremony and reception were both a success, I think. We had more than 30 guests for dinner which took place in a cosy Georgian restaurant near the Novodevichy Monastery. The place attracted us because of its beautiful location and artistic atmosphere. Galya and Alexei were our honored guests. Both Alan and I were very pleased they came; it was really nice to see them in Moscow!

On the honeymoon Alan and I went to Egypt. We spent a FABULOUS week there. We made a one day trip to Luxor, and the rest of the time we spent on the beach and diving.

We were planning to move to the States together in July. But because of the global slowdown in the visa issuing process (the NY Times wrote about it on Oct. 13 and 14), I am still in Moscow.

In August Alan started his graduate studies in International Relations at Columbia University. I very much hope to be able to join my husband in New York soon.

Alexei writes: I can testify that the wedding party brought together very nice and friendly people--both Americans and Russians--and everyone was absolutely happy for the newlyweds. At the festive table Galya and I sat next to Alan's former students and Anechka's colleagues from work, and we enjoyed the warmth of their very special attitude toward the couple. It means that within a pretty short period the two managed to captivate many hearts and to make really good friends in Moscow. Phillip (the best man and a wonderful "toastmaster") confirmed that Alan and Anya, being people of special kindness, managed to become a part of their "American community" surprisingly quickly. Thus my conclusion was that Alan and Anya will have to leave lots of really good friends in Moscow when they move to the US, but, due to their special talent for attracting good people, they are sure to find many new friends in New York. Needless to say, they looked happy and excited. Although they failed to frame their thoughts into any impressive speeches, they did say, we believe, the most important thing: they have never felt ill at ease with each other and they have never been sorry about a moment spent together. They make a great couple, who, evidently, are able (without any effort!?) to understand each other! So it was a wonderful party of joy, happiness and unequivocal confidence that they will succeed and be happy.

ALUMNI NOTES

Sandi (Schneider) Wulf, 1992-93—one of the AH's first three teachers

After I returned from Vladimir I started working for the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) as their Assistant State Director. While at NFIB, I lobbied the Illinois General Assembly on behalf of Illinois' small business community.

I left NFIB and later joined the Illinois Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (IAMIC) as President. I have now been with IAMIC for six years. I still lobby the Illinois Legislature, but also lobby Congress when needed. In addition, I produce all of the Association's publications and plan meetings for the members.

I serve on the Board of Directors for the Illinois Society of Association Executives, and I earned the Certified Association Executive designation in 2001.

On a personal note, just a few months before I left for Vladimir, I started dating Martin Wulf. (Honestly, one of the things that I think most intrigued him about me was that I was going to be living and working in Russia for a year – not a common endeavor for a girl from central Illinois.) After I returned from Russia, we picked up dating again. We were married in October 1998. We now have a one-year-old wonderful, beautiful, smart, (how many other adjectives there are!!) daughter, Lauren. We have a great life here in Springfield, Illinois.

I look back on my time in Vladimir with so many wonderful memories. We had a lot of fun, met some great people and got to learn a lot about another culture. I wouldn't trade my memories of that great place for anything in the world.

NOTE: Sandi and her husband are expecting their second child.

Karen Kohn, 2000-01

After returning to America from Vladimir, I moved out to the Midwest to see unknown territory within my own country. In some ways it felt very foreign to me here in Illinois: the cornfields and the chatty salespeople were different from what I was used to in suburban Boston. I have been able to keep using my Russian at my job in the Slavic and East European Library at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. I'm a graduate student in

library science at the U of I. I feel really lucky to have a job at the third largest academic library in the country and one of the best Slavic collections.

At work I read Russian fairly often. I often skim tables of contents or encyclopedia articles and, unlike in a class, I don't have time to look up every word. I have picked up words for things like index, volume, and edition. People also assume that I can figure out Ukrainian or expect me to navigate web sites in Czech or Polish. I can't quite, but it's a good challenge to try. A lot of what I do involves looking at library catalogs to locate specific books or articles for patrons. Lately I have been working on a bibliography of reference books on religion in Russia. It will be a guide for people researching the topic. It's been a daunting but interesting task.

When I graduate in December I will most likely not go to another Slavic library. I'm hoping to work in a library within a non-profit organization. I want to find some way to keep up my Russian—maybe by finding a conversation partner. I miss Russian hospitality, walks in the park, snow, and shashlik. I have kept in touch with a few students, but not as many as I'd hoped. However, the ones who write give me news on the others. I hope my Z1 students are still studying and having fun at the American Home, and that I will get back there to see them someday.