LAND OF DREAMS
JOURNEYS

Back from Russia, with love

It was 60 degrees below zero in Moscow's long, dark, bleak winter. Even darker was Russia's mood amid massive street demonstrations and violent rollbacks of Gorbachev's glasnost reforms. My American staff had all been sent home and I was left alone to manage our TV news bureau with a handful of grim Russian helpers. I was enveloped in the gloom.

Almost every night came these brightest dreams of my hometown — though I had not even once visited Santa Barbara for some 15 years. I could see myself floating atop a beachside cliff, bathed in the blue, blue, blue of the sunlit sky echoed on the Pacific below. The Channel Islands framed the scene. I couldn't have been more wowed by a vision of heaven.

I hadn't thought much of returning to Santa Barbara. My home base was in Washington, D.C. My career was rooted. But I knew then if I was to stick through the Russian ordeal, there was a reward waiting.

And as I now look out at the Channel Islands on this crystal day from my Mesa-top home, I believe even more in prophetic dreams.

And now I have another dream for Santa Barbara. A vision that somehow we can use our unique blessings to serve as a beacon for others. Not as a beacon for where they could be, but for what they might be.

Santa Barbara is especially chosen for this role, for better or worse, whether we accept it or not. For the last several years, nightly and prime-time on millions of televisions across Central and Eastern Europe, the soap opera named for our city has been a consistently top-rated program. Ask a Russian who's never been beyond her home village to name an American city. If it's not New York, San Francisco or Chicago, she'll say Santa Barbara. Many Russians make pilgrimages here to compare us to their mythical image. I've met them on the street.

JULIANA J. deFRIETAS/NEWS-PRESS

Steven Van Hook wants Santa Barbara to serve as a beacon for what others might be.

Fame carries a price. People look at you harder, pattern themselves by your example. Let's let our famous city and bounteous blessings be worthy of more than a crop of tourist dollars. Let us show how we can fill all the finer aspirations of the human heart. Let us demonstrate that all the great strivings of our race can take root and flourish, even if in a single city. Let us hear our departing guests say, "Oh, that's how life can be! What can we do to make our own town so?"

When I returned from covering Russia's second revolution, I was a frequent speaker on the sad state of affairs in the former Soviet states. Almost invariably, some kindly audience member would ask, "What can we do to help?"

I would respond the best thing we as a country can do is to serve as an example, where a nation can survive and thrive on fair and honorable trade; where corruption isn't the rule of the day.

And, Santa Barbara, we can even do more.

— Steven R. Van Hook, Santa Barbara

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

Voices

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS ❖ MONDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2004

Ukraine journalist takes a brave stand

It is inspiring to see the News-Press give such prominence to the presidential election fiasco in Ukraine. Though a world away, there are many lessons for us to be learned here.

I got to know the Ukrainians well while living there for four years, producing media campaigns on social and economic reforms. They are a people with big hearts and an incredible patience.

It seems that patience has reached its limit with the fraudulent election of an old-guard oligarch. However, the "defeated" reformist has rallied hundreds of thousands of an inflamed public to the frozen winter streets, standing strong for the true heritage of a proud and worthy people.

One brave television journalist, signing the news for a deaf audience during a national newscast, ended her segment by flashing a bright orange ribbon around her wrist — the color of the reformist opposition — and signed that everything in the newscast had been a lie.

"Yushenko (the reformer) is our true president!" she signaled as she said farewell to her viewers, knowing the all-too-common bloody end of journalists who challenge the system.

Instead, hundreds of her previously cowed media colleagues embraced her courage, and began chanting to their shaken managers: "No more lies, no more lies."

The power of the press gets a free ride on the power of the people.

When the media, as the embodiment and guardian of the public's right to know, gets off its can and stands with the truth, then tyrannies will finally fall.

Steven R. Van Hook
Santa Barbara

CHOICE WORDS

One brave television journalist in Ukraine, signing the news for a deaf audience during a national newscast, ended her segment by flashing a bright orange ribbon around her wrist — the color of the reformist opposition — and signed that everything in the newscast had been a lie.

Steven R. Van Hook

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS
newspress.com

Editor
Santa Barbara News-Press
August 30, 1998

It's a true joy to regularly browse the *News-Press* online and catch up with the news from my native home, while I've been working in Ukraine so many thousands of miles and decades of development away from idyllic Santa Barbara.

Much of your news seems so remote from the fundamental issues we face each day here in Kiev in the revival of a demolished nation. Other of your stories feel right at home; small-town news with a global resonance.

So it is with the Isla Vista "3-strikes" plan, booting repeat rowdies out of local parks. A park groundskeeper's unenviable frustrated summation: "Enough's enough. We've tried to be nice to them, but what are you going to do?"

Indeed, that is the question. What do we do with those living on the edges of our civilizations, those who refuse to abide by our societal rules?

This is an issue freshly highlighted in fluorescent hues, now that our embassies abroad -- small lonely pieces of American soil in roiling seas of discontent -- are under ever more violent attack. For better our worse, our embassies represent the hand of America reaching out to the world. A stab at our embassies is a thrust at our heart. And now the very Heartland of America itself is in incalculable peril from all too potential terrorist threats of nuclear, biological, chemical and even cyber attacks.

Yes, Mr. Park Groundskeeper, what are we to do?

Sure, we can raise the barricades, and shift the undesirables even farther from our fine shores, or simply exterminate them. In some cases, that may be the only unfortunate resolution. Though let's not call this a solution, but an ideological defeat. And readily accepting defeat is just not the American way, as I see it from this vantage point some 180 longitudinal degrees away.

The world looks hard at America, certainly for what we are, but also for what we hope to be. It's a position that requires tremendous responsibility, whether we accept it or not.

What are we to do?

1) We must provide that everyone who wishes to enter our figurative "civilization" is granted a door to do so. It makes no sense to issue an invitation to the castle if the drawbridge goes unlowered. If we cannot do this in a spirit of goodwill, let us at least do so in enlightened self-interest, knowing we shall not escape others' misery and wrath.

2) We should maintain unflagging patience and resolve in our course. So many people live in worlds so removed from ours -- even in our parks -- it may take them much time to conceive such a golden society is even possible for them too, let alone plot the course to get there.

3) Let us ensure ours is a society worth aspiring to, where the ideals we profess are the same ideals we produce by. We must dust off musty assumptions, peer beyond our boundaries of comfort, and while counting our foes take stock of our own flaws.

We may shrug at such simplistic generalities as way too mushy to grip, especially when immediate fallout is in our face. But as world travelers know, when we become confounded by the constant compass changes navigating the terrain, it's the general heading that finally gets us home.

And we must be wary of a proclivity to associate suppressing the symptoms with rooting out the cause, while the disease festers into a malignancy infecting the entire body politic.

In the wise words of Uncle Remus, "You kin hide de fire, but what ya gonna do wid de smoke?"

Steven R. Van Hook
Kiev, Ukraine
SRVanHook@aol.com

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS/SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1994

Russian mafia makes fledgling entrepreneurs afraid

The row-upon-row of Russian faces stared at me, expectantly, anxiously, but furrowed with frustration.

Frustrated Russian faces, just look! It excited me. It was a reason for celebration, I thought. I told them why:

When I first entered what was then still the stagnant Soviet Russia, I was forever disheartened by the omnipresent Russian shrug, a gesture that said, "This is the way things have always been, and will always be. No sense in getting upset."

Such resignation was devastating in the face of so much work to be done. The work was not insurmountable; that lethargically passive attitude was.

Now, just four years later, the Russians are not only expecting that change is possible, but they are frustrated that it's not happening fast enough.

I did not speak to a single person who had not been terrorized or extorted by the Russian mafia.

Hallelujah!

I have traveled to Russia since 1990 as a journalist and businessman, covering the falls of Gorbachev and communism, and the rise of a new nation. I managed a Moscow television news bureau and a newspaper joint venture. I lived in a Russian apartment complex as a Russian would. I could feel — as much as any foreigner with a pocket full of hard currency and an open exit visa — the futile harshness of their lives.

This recent trip, I was traveling to three Russian cities in the north, east and south, across the vastness of the country, holding seminars in public and media relations for business and government leaders.

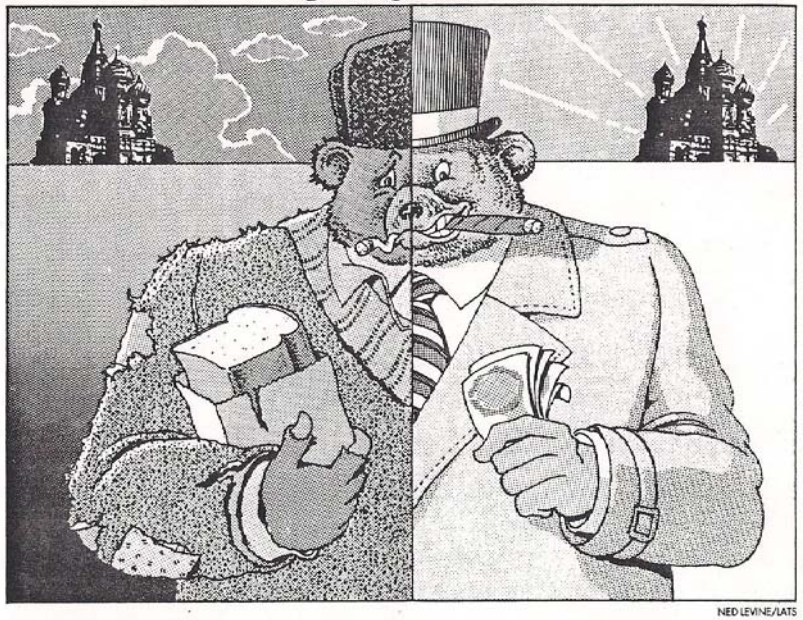
Once we got past their initial suspicions that public relations is simply a science to convince people that wrong is right, they were an eager audience. They could sense I care passionately about their lives. They warmed and opened up about their status and their state.

One Russian businessman said he was glad to see Boris Yeltsin portrayed as such a lush in the foreign media. He said this demonstrates to the world that successful reforms in Russia are not due to sound government, but to sound business.

Indeed, business is booming everywhere. You find privatized mini-malls, kiosks, convenience stores. But there are yet many forces holding business back: mercurial government decrees and stifling tax laws, poor infrastructure and even poorer citizens stunned by astronomical inflation.

And the Russian mafia.

I did not speak to a single person who had not been directly or indirectly terrorized or extorted by one of the so-called Russian mafias. I met energetic, clear-eyed, hopeful family people immobilized by fear, whispering of their ordeals in hushed tones.



NED LEVINE/LATS

One of the current mafia ploys in St. Petersburg is to stage a traffic accident against some middle-class citizen who has the hard-earned privilege of a car and home. The involved police warn the citizen to quickly settle an accident claim with the mafia.

So the hapless victim, typically devoid of savings, must often sign over his/her family's apartment for sale on the lucrative real-estate market, and move out to God knows where.

Good people don't know where to turn, knowing too well that the underpaid police could be on the mafia take.

The mafiosi control most every aspect of the Russian marketplace — who can open a business, stay in business, or must close a business. I was shocked to hear shopkeepers' reluctance to advertise their upstart stores out of fear they would attract mafia attention along with eager shoppers.

Mafia sharks prowl the airports seeking foreign patsies for rides into the city. (The mafia taxi rate from the Moscow Domodedego Airport to a Western-style hotel popular with travelers is $140 — I paid a gypsy cab driver $50, but he made sure that the money exchange took place well out of view along the side of the roadway.) The penalty for flaunting mafia authority is a brutal beating, or death. During my stay, a reporter for a Moscow newspaper was killed by a briefcase bomb after reporting on corruption and illegal arms dealing.

Perhaps the American and other Western mafiosi could hold a seminar for their Russian counterparts to teach them how to suck the life-force from a society, but without bleeding it dry.

Russian entrepreneurs are afraid to promote themselves. Charitable contributions are dwindling, since no one wants to demonstrate they have money to spare. Many foreign investors are afraid to even visit Russian cities, let alone plant roots there.

The mafia may be brutally set in the major cities, but much of Russia operates at a different pace. In one city in the south of Russia, the mafia, though pervasive, is not using such strong-arm tactics. One well-placed business source in Saratov assured me that virtually every business in the city pays a tribute to the mafia bosses, yet he sounds almost defensive of it.

The mafia, he says, provides a code of conduct for business not yet provided by professional societies or government regulation. If a business has a problem with labor or another business, the business owner contacts a mafia representative and the problem is quickly, quietly, efficiently resolved.

The Russian economy is evolving rapidly. The Russian "black market" — rampant in the '80s and early '90s — is no longer a disparaging term, it has simply become legitimate business. Perhaps the same will be true of the mafia . . . it may give way to guilds and unions and clubs enforcing their own rules of conduct.

Perhaps the Russian Orthodox Church will again provide moral leadership for a people stripped of any ethical belief system. Perhaps the pervasive fear now turning to anger will counter the mafia reign. Perhaps Russia's saving grace will once more be the *babushki* — the grandmothers and old women — who will tell their misguided children of their forgotten moral heritage.

The Russians are a remarkable people with a glorious past, and a glorious future yet to be. You can see the by the determination in their frustrated faces and fiery eyes that the forward momentum will not be reversed.

The question is no longer whether constructive change will happen, or even when.

The lingering question is, simply, will one be a part of the change or not.

Steven R. Van Hook is a public relations and media consultant specializing in countries of the former Soviet bloc. His Russia seminars this October were sponsored by the Krieble Institute.

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS/WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1996

COMMENTARY

VOICE FROM SANTA BARBARA/STEVEN R. VAN HOOK

Russia has tasted capitalism, isn't likely to turn back

So the Communists have been resurrected in Russia, much to the presumed delight of Western Cold War hawks and spy novelists. Life can be awfully dull without some bogeyman to deride.

Russia's recent parliament election — where Communists claimed more votes than any other party — does bode badly for Boris Yeltsin and other "reformists" come the presidential election in 1996.

But does this Communist victory spell an end to the reform movement in Moscow and across Russia's vast hinterlands? Has the time come once again to wring our hands over the looming red menace?

The White House says no.

"There will be new faces but the balance of power ... will remain roughly as it's been," said the president's spokesman.

Newly freed states surrounding Russia say no. And who has more to fear from marauding Communists than those republics of the former Soviet bloc — those that have already tasted the master's whip and polished boot?

From a leader in Moldova: "Russia will not base its policy on emotions and hasty decisions... no one will be able to get rid of the market economy."

And, for what it's worth, I say no.

As a Moscow-based television bureau chief in 1990-91, I witnessed the great fall of the Soviet Empire, the withering of Gorbachev's rule and the rise of Yeltsin's regime.

I heard the hosannas in the street as Russians stood nose-to-nose with tanks and they bravely declared an end to tyranny. It was a brilliant, shining moment in the often vast darkness of humankind's history. It's impossible to fathom that such a great leap forward would take such a giant step back so soon.

D.B. JOHNSON

What, then, is this election saying?

The writing has been on the wall since the fall of the much graffitied Berlin Wall: "So the shackled are free ... now what?"

Freedom is a fine sauce, but it doesn't necessarily fill the stew pot.

In the mayhem ensuing the demise of a well-entrenched Soviet system, some rather unsavory characters have bubbled to the top. Rather than a rule of law, Russia has fallen prey to the rule of the lawless. The Russian mafia controls virtually every street corner of business, exacting a tribute of steep taxation and paralyzing fear.

I've spoken with many energetic, clear-eyed, hopeful family people immobilized by terror, whispering of their mafia ordeals in hushed tones.

One mafia ploy in St. Petersburg is to stage a traffic accident against some middle-class citizen who has the hard-earned privilege of a car and home. The involved police warn the citizen to quickly settle an accident claim with the mafia.

So the hapless victim, typically devoid of savings, must often sign over his or her family's apartment for sale on the lucrative real estate market. Good people don't know where to turn, knowing too well that the underpaid police could be on the mafia take.

A spirit of criminality has pervaded the country, and the people have recoiled in horror. But now that flash of fear is growing into a flame of retribution, and the mafia cowards — as is so true of bullies everywhere — will surely turn tail.

Russia has also seen an influx of swarming corporate pirates, many from our own stateside towns, slavering over the wealth of Russia's abundant natural resources. I've seen too many of my American compatriots come into Russia looking for easy pickings rather than partners.

Granted, Russians may have made some bad choices. But this is not a nation of dummies; and we'd better be wary of thinking so.

What the Russians want is not so different from what we Americans want — a land of good laws, economic opportunity safety in their streets and peace of mind in their homes.

Is the Dec. 17 election demanding a return of the Communist state? No. It is saying something else,

America is certainly no stranger to demagogues exploiting the public's discontent.

something we Americans should easily understand. The Russians are saying "no" to foreign invasion, "no" to crime, "no" to a growing schism between the rich and the poor.

And America is certainly no stranger to demagogues exploiting the public's discontent.

I can recall weeks at a time in Moscow's gloomy winter when I could not find eggs or orange juice, even with a pocket full of hard currency and my American Express charge card. Now throughout most of Russia's large cities you can find whatever you want, providing you can afford the steep price. Given even more products, better distribution and protected competition, the situation will steadily get better.

Now that Russians have had a tempting taste of the abundant benefits from partnership in the global economy, they will not readily turn away. I'd bet my borsch on it.

Steven R. Van Hook is a media relations consultant specializing in Russia and Eastern Europe.

Empire in Transition

A steely, ominous greyness, a complex mosaic of shadows and light permeates both the Russian terrain and it's people. Mary Kay O'brien says that "the history of Russia is written on their faces." Many are yet dazed by the transformations that have swept through the country over the past five years. The old and the new clash like thunderheads above Red Square; the electricity of change leaves Soviet generations confused, while post-cold war children dream of a greater future. Conflicts between the old and the new, between shame and humiliation, joy and despair--a sense of affirmation and renewal even in the face of the worst--these were impressions common to both Steve Van Hook's and Mary Kay's stories. While interviewing them, I felt they could have spoken endlessly, perhaps for days about Russia. In an e-mail exchange, I told Steve that my piece on Russia was becoming an epic, and that perhaps in the tradition of Tolstoy, this was only fitting! (While in Russia, Van Hook was able to send me electronic mail via CompuServe, one of today's premier on-line services). Mary Kay shared with me copious photos, postcards and memorabilia which added an even greater dimension to the tale. I thank both of them for their candor, a wealth of information, and, perhaps more importantly, pursuing the art of conversation with me.

Steve Van Hook has worked for more than ten years in public relations, including media work and negotiations in Russia, as well as providing domestic public relations services in the United States. He is the founder of Worldwide Media Relations based near Santa Barbara, and is a member of the Public Relations Society. He worked a number of years in social services and completed graduate coursework in Counseling Psychology before turning full-time to journalism.

Since Dostoyevsky is my all time favorite author, the first question I asked Steve via e-mail was whether he had visited the author's grave. "I did not visit Dostoyevsky's grave," he wrote,"but after I made several references to his writings in my St. Petersburg seminar, a history professor from the University took me on a tour of Dostoyevsky's early and later-life dwellings. I visited the apartment where he wrote Crime and Punishment, and the home where he spent his last few years of life writing the Brothers Karamozov. While in Perm at the foot of the Urals, I also passed the jail where he was held on his way to Siberia. All very inspiring and motivating me to once again pick up Fyodor's books from my dusty shelves, and even try to work my way through the Russian editions. A remarkable man--certainly a medium for timeless truths."

When Steve Van Hook first entered "cold war" Soviet Russia, he found himself somewhat dispirited by a thick, hanging sense of resignation in the attitude of the Russian people. Four years later, Russians not only expect change but often feel it's not happening fast enough.

Steve has trekked to Russia since 1990 as a journalist and businessman. He covered the fall of Gorbachev and communism, and the emerging new nation. He managed a Moscow television news bureau and a newspaper joint venture. "I lived in a Russian apartment complex as a Russian would. I could feel -- as much as any foreigner with a pocket full of hard currency and an open exit visa -- the futile harshness of their lives."

Recently he traveled to three Russian cities in the north, east and south, spanning the entire country, holding seminars in public and media relations for business and government leaders. Winning their confidence was not easy, but once they saw that Steve's motives were in earnest, they became receptive and enthusiastic. They shared openly about their lives and their country.

Steve said the fall of the Soviet State was and is "like the civil war, the depression, and watergate all rolled into one." Old eyes view current "reforms" with mistrust while younger generations eagerly anticipate "capitalist" influences.

The empire fell so quickly that there was scarcely any infrastructure left at all. In the absence of governmental and economic stability, many forms of "entrepreneurial" enterprises have rushed in to fill the gaps--most notably of course (and most covered by western media) is the Russian Mafia, or black market. Though Yeltsin proclaimed a decree against the mafia, that decree doesn't prevent them from flourishing and inspiring a commingling of fear and respect among the Russian people, a role formerly assumed by the KGB. (A similar, now laughable statement was made in our own history by Herbert Hoover, who claimed that there was no organized crime in America.) Older Russians are still under the conditioning that when something is decreed from on high, that decree stands. Such is no longer the case in the current tumultuous state of affairs. And though the mafia aggressively holds considerable power in the bigger cities, much of Russia operates differently. In one city in the south of Russia, the mafia, though pervasive, is not using such strong-arm tactics. One well-placed business source in Saratov told Steve that virtually every business pays a tribute to the mafia bosses, yet he says they provide a code of conduct for business not yet provided by professional societies or government regulation. Businesses with problems contact a mafia representative and the problems are soundly and efficiently resolved. Steve hopes that the current mafia may evolve into guilds, unions and clubs that will be able to develop a more stable, less fear-based system of doing business.

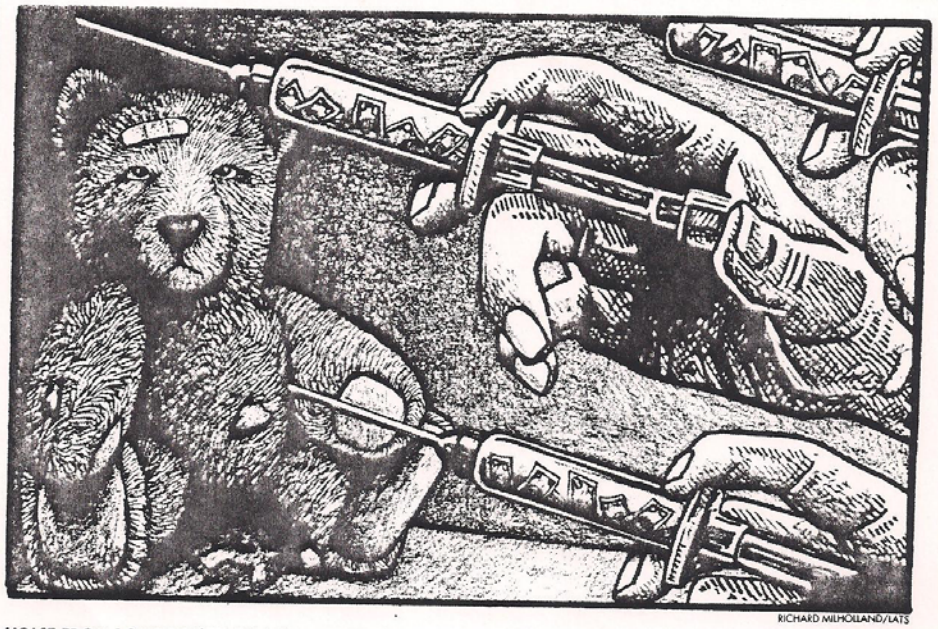
In the midst of the tempest that is presently Russia, Steve Van Hook remains optimistic. He thinks that through citizen's exchanges, constant dialogues throughout the cities the country may actually creep toward a more genuine form of democracy than has yet to be seen in the world's history.

Steve says he's going back soon. It's difficult to convey the sense of awe he exuded about Russia when I interviewed him. Steve e-mailed me a quote that he thinks sums up his feelings about Russia:

"Everything in you is poor, straggling, and uncomfortable; no bold wonders of art, no cities with many-windowed tall palaces built upon rocks, no picturesque trees ... Everything in you is open, empty, flat; your lowly towns are stuck like dots upon the plains ... there is nothing to beguile and ravish the eye. But what is the incomprehensible, mysterious force that draws me to you? Why does your mournful song, carried along your whole length and breadth from sea to sea, echo and re-echo incessantly in my ears? What is there in it? What is there in that song? What is it that calls, and sobs, and clutches at my heart? ... Russia! What do you want of me? What is that mysterious hidden bond between us?"

Nikolai Gogol, *Dead Souls*

Steven R Van Hook is a public relations and media consultant specializing in countries of the former Soviet bloc. His Russia seminars this October were sponsored by the Kiieble Institute



RICHARD MILHOLLAND/LATS

VOICE FROM LOMPOC/STEVEN R. VAN HOOK

Glimmers of hope on Russia's horizon

There is a Russian word — "koshmar" — which means nightmare, a horrendous, terrifying dream. It's a word I heard often during my extended assignment in Moscow over the final months of Gorbachev's rule in 1990-91. Russians young and old used it to describe their dreary, hopeless lives amid the turmoil and uncertainty.

It certainly was a bad dream. The most basic of life's staples were difficult to come by. Billions of rubles were recalled, life savings snatched away. Any hope that remained for reforms had been blasted by the tank fire on Baltic citizens protecting their reach for freedom.

Soldiers once again patrolled the streets of Moscow. The stateside corporate office closed our TV news bureau fearing for my staff's safety. I returned home despairing for Russia's future.

But there I was again in Moscow, just weeks ago, watching the military ring the Parliament building. The circumstances seemed so familiar. There was this very same structure — the White House — which once sheltered Boris Yeltsin's nascent democracy from the old-guard communists staging their unsuccessful 1991 coup. Tanks prepared to fire upon the recalcitrant deputies inside refusing to relinquish their power (and their substantial perks). Once again, it seemed to be a defining moment dividing Russia's future from Russia's past.

Yet just half a mile outside the perimeter of all this turmoil and media hype, the Russian mood was one of resolute indifference. The people I spoke with in Russia are more concerned now with the day-to-day difficulties of existence.

"I'm a patriot, not to my country," said Oleg, a young Russian who joined me for dinner with his new bride. "My allegiance is to my family, earning money, finding food, taking care of my own. I have no time to think of anything else."

This is the new Russia the young will inherit; devoid of communism's stifling yet secure grasp, and bereft yet of a free market's abundance. From this, however, has come the understanding that political systems are not changed by changing politicians, but by changing the will of the people.

The Dec. 12 election throughout Russia for a new Parliament bodes well if truly democratic and reform-minded officials are brought to power.

A new spirit of initiative and self-improvement has settled on Moscow. While the government factions fight for their rule, business is finding its way. Today's Russia underscores the adage, "Capitalism is what happens when you leave the people alone."

Everywhere you see new signs of successful entrepreneurship.

The Dec. 12 election throughout Russia for a new Parliament bodes well if truly democratic and reform-minded officials are brought to power. But this is not from where the salvation of Russia will come. The young people recognize this.

"I don't care if they're communists, socialists, capitalists or anarchists — just give me good business," says young entrepreneur Sergei Orlov.

Well-meaning Western executives and technicians are volunteering their expertise through programs such as the Peace Crops, the Kireble Institute, and the Citizens Democracy Corps, teaching basic business principles and production skills to young and eager students throughout the former Soviet empire. Western companies are braving the vagaries of the region to form joint-venture operations and establish corporate footholds in the fertile financial soil.

Far in the distance, perhaps a decade or so past the peaks, you can see dim horizons of hope. New visions, new relations between governments, new technologies tapping the skills and resources of this rich country are moving it into new realms of possibility.

Koshmar is a word I heard not once during my most recent stay. Instead, one catches tentative talk of hopes and dreams that may yet come true.

Indeed, perhaps around the world we can now let go of the long night's ghastly specters, wipe away the sleep still clouding our eyes, and plan for the new day ahead.

Steven R. Van Hook, a former news director for an NBC affiliate in Oregon and a onetime News-Press paperboy, managed an independent TV news bureau in Moscow in 1990-91. He now lives in Lompoc, where he handles government affairs for the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce.

ЗВЕЗДА
Основана в ноябре 1917 года
14 Октября 1994 года

Что "накопали" ревизоры?

Вчера заместитель заведующего отделом Контрольного Управления Президента Российской Федерации А.М.Дятленко, возглавлявший специальную рабочую группу, ознакомил губернатора Б.Кузнецова и его ближайшее окружение с результатами двухнедельной деятельности в регионе.

В информированных кругах считают, что «ревизоры кое-что накопали». Давать какую-либо информацию журналистам Анатолий Михайлович отказался, сославшись на то, что «документы носят служебный характер». В ближайшие дни руководство областной исполнительной власти должно представить в Контрольное Управление Президента объяснения по вскрытым в ходе проверки фактам.

А. ГОРЧАКОВ.

ПАМЯТЬ

Свеча в патронн

В субботу в Перми произошло событие, каких ни в России, ни в странах СНГ еще не было, - открылся памятник ребятам, погибшим в Афганистане.

Сто сорок наших земляков сложили свои головы на той войне. Двое - без вести пропавшие. Память об Афгане, через который были пропущены миллион солдат Советской Армии, сегодня смывается. А ведь война шла почти десять лет. Пятнадцать тысяч погибших, в десять раз больше инвалидов...

Тысячи пришли на открытие памятника. Приехала в Пермь братва из Азербайджана, Армении, Узбекистана и даже из Прибалтики. Молился возле памятника двадцатичетырехлетний Николай Росленко, украинец. Рыдал, припав к постаменту, тридцатилетний вертолетчик Борис Аркбаум (майор). Рядом стояли на коленях эстонец Ма
Вот она
Для нее
Отдадим.
Семь лет
жены поче
погибших
Ах, войн

Депутаты всех созывов, объединяйтесь

В минувшую субботу в Перми учреждена Ассоциация депутатов Пермской области (АДПО).

В новое добровольное объединение вошли более 70 бывших депутатов разного уровня. В их числе и весьма именитые - Б.Коноплев, А.Насонов, А.Белорусов... Интерес к новой общественной структуре проявили и некоторые нынешние депутаты Законодательного Собрания и Пермской городской Думы.

- Наша главная задача, - заявил с трибуны конференции бывший член малого облсовета, профессор химии университета Г.Халдеев, - сделать Пермскую область богатым и процветающим краем.

Возглавил Ассоциацию бывший заместитель председателя Пермского областного Совета народных депутатов В.Черепанов, а его заместителями стали бывшие члены малого Совета Г.Халдеев и В.Бабушкин.

А. СОБОЛЕВ.

Синим пламенем

От неосторожного обращения с огнем в 2 часа ночи занялся лесопильный цех деревообрабатывающего завода в Чайковском.

Часть строения сгорела. Предполагаемый ущерб - 40 миллионов рублей. Незадолго до пожара в цехе проводились ремонт отопительной системы и сварочные работы.

В. АЛЕКСАНДРОВ.

Коротко

«Паблик рилэйшнз - ключ к успеху» - такова тема семинара, открывающегося завтра в культурно-деловом центре Перми. Организован семинар институтом Крибла - независимой неправительственной организацией США.

В прошлом году институт уже проводил в Прикамье региональную конференцию по вопросам технологии политической деятельности. На этот раз семинар проводится для специалистов бизнеса и политической сферы, поддерживающих связь с общественностью. Проводит его профессиональный американский журналист Стивен ван Хук.

* * *

В Перми прошла конференция регионального отделения партии Российского единства и согласия.

Участники сбора обсудили задачи партийной организации об-

РЕЙД «ЗВЕЗДЫ»: Ч

На чью ставим,

Пермь

Несмотря на достаточно большие предложения на поставку картошки и овощей со стороны, закладка их идет медленно. На сегодня заложено разве что около трети запланированного объема. Впрочем, руко-

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Coup not staged

To the Editor:

I read with bemusement your coverage of former U.S. Ambassador to Romania David Funderburk's presentation to the John Birch Society in Arroyo Grande, where he asserts the August coup in Moscow was an elaborately staged plot between Gorbachev and Yeltsin. Such questionable suggestions from such a seemingly credible source as the former ambassador cannot go unchallenged.

As a journalist who has followed developments in Moscow for a number of years and lived there for six months just prior to the coup, I met and covered Gorbachev and Yeltsin on several occasions. I can assure Mr. Funderburk these two leaders were anything but the best of buddies involved in such a scheme. He would receive similar assurances from any number of his knowledgeable colleagues working at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, including the esteemed former ambassador John Matlock, or current ambassador Robert Strauss.

Mr. Funderburk says his suspicions of consipracy were further aroused when he saw video of Pizza Hut delivering 200 pizzas to the crowd protecting the Russian Federation Building. "How serious is this coup?" he asked. Perhaps Pizza Hut knew if the coup succeeded, it could have been one of the first casualties. Did Mr. Funderburk miss the video of the brave men, women, young boys and girls standing nose to nose with tanks — the defending victims crushed beneath the wheels of armored vehicles?

Are the widespread suffering and despair among Russia's masses also part of the scheme solely to elicit western aid and passivity? If the so-called conspirators were so clever to pull this off, it's hard to believe they couldn't have come up with a plan clever enough to tap their country's vast supply of resources and talent to avoid this mess in the first place.

While Mr. Funderburk's Cold war rattlings may be good for generating headlines and speaker fees, they do little to further a true understanding of the situation as it exists.

Steve Van Hook
Lompoc

OPINION

John L. Shields, editor and publisher
Wayne R. Agner, managing editor

THE LOMPOC RECORD

Friday, February 21, 1992

Moscow traveler: Yeltsin a 'buffoon'

By Jack Magee
Record Staff Writer

LOMPOC — Russian leader Boris Yeltsin is not likely to last long, a former television reporter in the former Soviet Union said Thursday.

Lompoc native Steve Van Hook, who said he once interviewed the leader for two hours, called Yeltsin a "buffoon" who is not nearly as good a statesman as Mikhail Gorbachev, who survived last summer's attempted coup only to be deposed by Yeltsin.

"I don't think he will last the year out," said Van Hook, who recently became governmental issues director for the Santa Maria Valley Chamber of Commerce.

"I don't think he's the figure we'll be dealing with in years to come."

Speaking to the Lompoc Valley Chamber of Commerce monthly luncheon at the Dollar Bill Restaurant, Van Hook largely read from notes he made during two stays in Moscow, the first for six months in 1990-91 and the second for a month, leaving just a week before the August coup.

"This is no time to be bullish on the Russian bear," he said, painting a bleak picture of life in the post-communism country as well as during the previous decades.

Military security, once so tight, is now so lax that he photographed a jet warplane without interference.

"Either they weren't watching or they didn't care," Van Hook said. Under the old regime, he said, he could have been shot.

Van Hook said he went to the Soviet Union for six months in 1990-91 for the Sun World Corp., returning for a shorter visit in July "to find the situation even worse."

He had taken two years of Russian language years ago in college.

Sprinkling his speech with anecdotes and observations, Van Hook related that:

• A 25-year-old Russian entrepreneur commented that "The world owes our country much for demonstrating that communism doesn't work."

• "Russia is not a very happy country" and his first sights in Moscow "turned my stomach," with a meat market displaying "half heads and carcasses, birds and bugs" with "raw, salted fish" a common meal.

• "Russians do love flowers," selling them on almost every street corner in Moscow.

• In Moscow now, a crowd of 10,000 people is now considered merely a demonstration.

• He mostly ate eggs and ice cream. Russian remedy for a cold, he said, is "Raspberry jam and honey — and lots of vodka." If you sneeze, the Russians say, "Your next statement will be truthful."

• He tried but failed to explain the American high school prom phenomenon to Russians. The people there couldn't relate to it. One woman told him she had seen few happy days in her 30 years.

• Soviet physicians were amazed when told the money American doctors might make; Soviet doctors made only 200 rubles a month.

• He left for Moscow on Sept. 29, 1990 from Dulles Airport in Washington, D. C., in the company of departing Soviet diplomats, "rude, chubby stewardesses" on a "tattered plane."

• "The most important thing before going over there is to develop an understanding of the people."

• Soviet families are closer than American ones, several generations maintaining close contact. Those who migrate miss their homeland terribly and have trouble adjusting to our stricter education standards.

Scott Niquette/Lompoc Record

Not bullish about the bear

Steve Van Hook, a former television reporter, describes his impressions of the former Soviet Union, which he visited twice, leaving just before the August coup attempt.

Although born in Lompoc Hospital in 1958, Van Hook said his family then was living in Buellton. He attended Jonata Elementary and Santa Barbara High schools and the University of Oregon in 1986.

He worked for a weekly newspaper, then returned to college and got his degree in 1986. He then switched to television news, working in southern Oregon and California before getting the chance to go to Moscow.

Business

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS / MONDAY, OCTOBER 31, 1994

on the move

Van Hook

Steven R. Van Hook of Worldwide Media Relations in Lompoc is traveling to Russia to hold a series of seminars in St. Petersburg, Perm and Saratov on effective public relations in business and government.

The trip is sponsored by the Krieble Institute, a non-profit Washington, D.C., organization that has been sending volunteer Amercian business people to countries of the former Soviet black since 1988.

Van Hook is a Santa Barbara native, and has worked in print and broadcast media for 15 years, including positions as anchor and news director for an NBC affiliate, and bureau chief of a Moscow television news service.

Van Hook attended Santa Barbara High School and Santa Barbara City College, and he earned his bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Oregon.

LAST FALL, MOSCOW

A FIRST-PERSON LOOK AT AN EMPIRE IN UPHEAVAL.

BY STEVE VAN HOOK

For 12 years I've dreamt of myself as a reporter in the Soviet Union. I worked two and three jobs at a time to put myself through journalism school at the UO. I followed the developments in Moscow, brushing up on my Russian as able. My first reporting job was as a volunteer at an Oregon Public Radio station. From there, I became a television news reporter, then bureau chief, then a news director and anchor — all the while with an eye on Russia. Finally, after years of working and waiting, I am employed as executive producer for a Moscow-based television news bureau.

My notes begin the day of my arrival.

September 30, 1990: Touchdown in Moscow after a final approach over a Russian birch tree forest. I could swear I heard church bells! A friendly exchange of gifts with my Soviet surgeon co-passenger (I brought some cheap Snoopy pencils, he has some cheap Soviet lapel pins), and a two hour wait at *Sheremyetevo* for my ride to show up. A quick tour of Moscow: Red Square, the meat market, the Arbat Street sharks and pickpockets, the first of many Russian meals of raw salted fish. Then my two-bedroom apartment with two balconies in the center of the city near the Kremlin (a prestigious home) — and sleep.

October 3: Three scenes have turned my stomach in somersaults since I've been here: the Russian meat market (half-heads and carcasses of unidentifiable creatures hang proudly on display while picked at by birds, bugs and careful shoppers) and the KGB Lubyanka prison just down the street from our office (home of the infamous torture chambers and midnight death wagons). And the prissy women's journal publisher here to announce a Russian version of her magazine soon to be available on Soviet kiosks. Angry women surround her, yelling that articles on high fashion and gourmet recipes are not welcome in a city where they can't afford to buy potatoes. The magazine's dinner reception at the four-star Savoy reminds me of the scene in *Doctor Zhivago* where inside all was fine and festive, while beyond the warmth bedraggled Russians trudged along the street, hoping to survive the winter. I step outside, feeling more comfortable with them.

October 6: After two hungry days while I learned to find food, I think I'm adapting: With chunks of instant milk floating in my instant coffee beside my bowl of tepid instant oatmeal, life looks luxurious. The military here is everywhere, on every corner, riding the trains and the streetcars, walking to work, living in regular apartments, not separated on bases apart from the civilians. It's hard to believe they would shoot on their own people, knowing them and their hardships. "Oh yes, they would shoot," says Yelena, my cynical Soviet ladyfriend. We interviewed Russian Tsarist Prince Andrei Golitsyn, who had brought out his finest rarities of crackers and chocolates and whiskey, an impoverished sad-faced man with ambitions of somehow regaining power. We snacked beneath the portraits of old Russian nobility, the subjects of a nostalgia resurgence in Moscow. I said to CBS reporter Jan Chorlton-Petersen, "I feel a little guilty about having so much while so many Russians have so little." Her reply, "If you feel guilty here you will never survive."

October 10: A ride in a motorcade! To tape Gorbachev in the Kremlin, only a few feet away! Such a palace! The

art! The fine furniture! The efficient KGB guards! My intent interest made them especially wary. We're covering John Phalen, the New York Stock Exchange CEO, meeting with Soviet officials hoping to establish their own stock exchange. "A stock market is not the answer," says Phalen, "it is a mechanism to the answer." He adds, "Money comes from heaven, but we spend it on earth." I like that. "This is not a time to be bullish on the Russian bear," said one stock exchange official, befuddled by the overwhelming work ahead to bring about a free market system. One reporter observed, "Most Russians are concerned with stocking their markets rather than marketing stocks."

October 12: I've been visiting Soviet offices we deal with to see how they work. My impression: They don't. Never have I seen so many people making so much noise while accomplishing absolutely nothing. Supports my hypothesis that the degree of results one achieves is inversely related to the amount of noise one makes while doing it.

October 25: Today we taped about 200 Pentecostals camped out at *Sheremyetevo* airport after, at the last minute, they were denied exit visas to the U.S. by the Soviet government. Hand-washed clothes hung from the rails and blockades. Mothers cried at us that their children were denied access to the bathrooms. Our camera followed one father and his daughter — because of that the guards let them pass to the toilet. The Pentecostals (persecuted here, in part, because of their odd habit of speaking in tongues) clustered and prayed and refused to leave the building, afraid they wouldn't be allowed back in. Some had been waiting for 10 years to get out of the U.S.S.R. What became of them? I don't know. The "news" had moved on. Also today at *Sheremyetevo* we covered a Hollywood/Soviet joint-venture movie being shot on an Aeroflot passenger jet at the end of the runway: *Icons*, about drug smugglers in Moscow, starring Roman Polanski. A Russian played a Marine, an American played a Soviet soldier. The drabness of Moscow suddenly became theatrical, surreal. Art is much more palatable than life.

October 28: On a high, slow, single revolution of Gorky Park's giant Ferris wheel overlooking the city skyline and the Moscow River, I kissed the lovely Russian woman beside me at the top of our turn, telling her I'd remember the kiss each time I spied the wheel, visible from many parts of the city. Such talk has little effect on the Spartan women here. She did glow, however, at the wedding ceremony in the Russian Orthodox cathedral, and the rich Italian ice cream with a shot of something alcoholic on it at the "*Mezh*" left her "truly contented — a rare feeling in Moscow," she said.

October 30: During today's solemn memorial march at a newly dedicated stone from one of the Stalinist prison camps, old and young Russian fingers held up pictures of the many thousands dead at the hands and guns of the Soviet Committee for State Security, the KGB. "Lord forgive us. Lord forgive us," the choir sang. A soothing, melancholy, amplified voice recited the names of the dead as thousands marched. A crush of people like a handshake squeezed the breath out of me. I was warned that in such a crowd one misstep, a trip, could mean a trampled death. Ahead of our surge (I was helpless to move any way but one) was a patch of weed-flowers. "Save those flowers!" a *babushka* yelled at me. I held up my boom mike as a spear and gently said "*tsveti*" ("flowers") to the oncoming flood of people. "Oh, *tsveti*," they replied, and parted around me. From behind, CBS Bureau Chief Barry Petersen commented I deserve the "Order of the Flowers" award. The Russians do love their flowers, one of the few products in abundance here.

November 1: Everything in Moscow works just fast enough to keep you from turning murderous or revolutionary, but slow enough to keep you demoralized and lethargic. The lines, the phones, the bureaucrats.

"In Russia, they pretend to pay us, and we pretend to work." — Anonymous.

November 4: My limited knowledge of Russian sometimes gets me into trouble. Like the time our cleaning lady was tearfully telling me her daughter (a ballerina) had either died, or had left for Iraq. I wasn't sure of which. I fumbled for an appropriate response. Or this evening. I was having dinner at my home with Natasha — a young, beautiful, witty, educated, blue-eyed Russian who speaks very limited English. In my poor Russian, I was telling her a joke I'd heard: "A man goes into a market and asks the keeper if he has a scale. The keeper says, 'Yes, do you have any food?' " I didn't know the Russian word for "scale," so I pantomimed it. She grinned, paused, and then asked to see my dollars. My face twisted in surprise. I repeated it to make sure I understood what she was asking. "Yes, please let me see your dollars." (Prostitution is rampant in Moscow. A recent survey revealed 70 percent of high school girls would consider prostitution for hard currency.) She knew my thoughts — "How could I have been so mistaken about this sweet, lovely lady?" — and she laughed. She took my dollar and pointed at the Treasury seal with the scales of justice — the word I hadn't known in Russian. I blushed, excused myself for a horrible mistake, and excused myself outside for a cigarette (a filthy habit I've resumed in Moscow, mostly in self-defense. Everyone here smokes. You can't escape it).

November 5: Moscow is a little like South Africa. A privileged class from abroad with its hard currency, catered to by special shops, hotels, restaurants. Guards at the door ensure no Russians get by (unless it's one of the prostitutes who shares part of her take). I feel dirty whenever I visit one of the *beriozki* (hard-currency only stores). One American Embassy worker told me at a party, "They created this awful system, why should we suffer?" Another American says, "Damn right I use the *beriozka!* Especially the ones that take only credit cards — keeps the Russian mafia goons with their hard currency out." One Russian friend says,

"Those who *are* guilty for our system feel no shame, why should you? You are not to blame." Says another Russian, "If it weren't for Westerners, we'd have no such places . . . fine examples for us to see and aspire to." My pessimistic Russian ladyfriend says, "I think we will never have such wonderful things for ourselves — we just won't." Natasha, who resents hard-currency shops, consoles me, "What are you to do? Starve?" I wonder what rationalizations they use in South Africa.

November 6: The towering Foreign Ministry, Ukraine Hotel and Moscow University buildings, the Kremlin, Saint Basil's Cathedral, the church onion domes, the city streets — all lit up so bright tonight on the eve of the Russian Revolution celebration. Such a beautiful city it can be! Such a shame every other night of the year it's kept so much in the dark.

November 8: At a cheap B-grade movie about the life of Jesus at a typically crowded Russian theater, my doe-eyed companion cries untypical tears, saying for 73 years God has been exiled from Moscow, but now He is welcomed back with such longing.

November 10: Today we had an hour-long interview for the BBC with Boris Yeltsin (president of the Russian Federation and perhaps the next leader of the Soviet Union) at the "White House," the federation headquarters. I have a hard time fathoming why this buffoon is so adored in Russia, while Gorbachev is held in such low regard.

"All we have is our hope, because our plans never work."
— Yuri Livshits, Russian physician.

November 11: Russia has perfected the circus. All the performers and stage hands move in well-coordinated efficiency, a rare encounter in Moscow. Acrobats, lions and tigers and bears, barely clad women, Cossack horsemen and endearing clowns perform with a live band and low-tech light show. Rather than a standing ovation, the Russian audience applauds in rhythmic unison. "Circuses and soda pop will mollify the masses," my Machiavellian friend in the States used to say.

November 12: The Russian ruble is basically worthless and somewhat bewildering. There are three exchange rates: the business rate of roughly two rubles to the dollar (the rate used on my American Express card, which I brandish only in the *beriozka* store for hard-to-find items like eggs and orange juice), the six rubles to the dollar tourist exchange rate, and the black market rate of 15 to one (my driver with "good connections" makes the exchange for us at the *Ukraina* Hotel — home of the Moscow mafia). A very large meal at McDonald's for two runs 50 rubles, or about $3.50 (that's a quarter of the average Russian's monthly wage of 200 rubles, such as my surgeon friend makes). Doctors advise people to beware of radioactive rubles and kopeks from Chernobyl, and not to carry them in their front pockets.

November 14: Moscow has the largest McDonald's in the world ("because we're a hungry country," says our bookkeeper, Natalia) and certainly the longest McDonald's line — on a weekend the wait is four hours for a "fast food" meal. Lunch is like a trip to a distant world, where people are friendly and helpful, floors and tables are clean, food is identified as something other than "meat," life is bright and musical. My Soviet lunch partners eat mesmerized by the glamour. Russians don't care much for the food, but love the fantasy.

November 15: I suppose it's easy for me to remain hopeful about Russia's future. I have my American passport and visa for an escape of my choosing. I have a pocketful of hard currency — my meal ticket for the food-starved winter ahead. How would I feel if I were stuck here for life, no hope of America's abundance ever again? Would I be one of the countless drunks pacing the streets at all hours and temperatures? Riding the crowded subway, I too despair.

November 21: At my neighborhood *beriozka*, a Soviet state-controlled TV *(Gosteleradio)* crew burst in to tape the wide assortment of products available to Western shoppers with credit cards. One Russian clerk told them to get out. The Soviet producer snapped back, "We have permission — don't forget your place!" and pointed the camera at me. This video ought to ruffle a few Russians. Nearby, a long line waited for sausages at a state food store.

November 25: Big problem: I think I'm falling in love with Natasha. Her sadness is beginning to seep into my psyche; such a pathetic life in Moscow. What to do?

November 27: Last night a thief broke into our Volvo parked just outside my door. He broke a window and was evidently chased off by the car alarm; there was nothing inside worth stealing. "I'm so sorry for my people," says Oleg. "You are a guest here. Our criminals are very cruel." As I vacuum up the glass on the ground from the broken car window, Oleg comments a Russian would never clean up after himself like this. "That doesn't seem very socialist," I reply. "Yes it is," says Oleg. "A Russian doesn't see it as 'his' mess, but as 'our' mess — something he is not personally responsible for."

November 28: I tried explaining the high school prom to Natasha after American girls getting ready to go popped up on the home video we were watching: the rich bedroom, the beautiful white dresses, the stretch limo waiting outside, the boys in tuxedos, the giggles and gaiety. I feel a horrible loss for Russian children who never know such frivolity. They surely know they are missing out. Their frustrated, hungry lives, their haunted eyes. What is to blame? Government? Russian docility? Natasha says she's lived but a few happy days.

December 5: Russians love intimate gatherings; friends and family huddled around a small table adorned with breads, meats, liquor and the ubiquitous *samovar* (a large ornate pot of hot water — an ancient symbol of hospitality). Conversation is cordial yet intense, usually covering the western taboo topics of politics, religion and love. Drinking is vigorous; it's considered bad manners not to drain your glass after one of the plentiful and poetical toasts. This

"In Russia, this is the difference between an Optimist, a Pessimist, and a Realist: an Optimist learns English, a Pessimist learns Chinese, and a Realist learns to use a machine gun." — Soviet joke.

evening my Russian coworkers and I stood shoulder to shoulder around an office desk munching on bread, meat and chocolate, sipping cognac, celebrating the 50th birthday of our cleaning lady, Zoya. Our talk: how difficult it was for her to find these meager morsels. (Unlike the American custom, it is the duty of the Russian birthday celebrant to throw his or her own party.)

December 9: Today I visited Lenin's Mausoleum. He looks too real to be real. The head of *Gosteleradio* was fired when a guest on a talk show suggested Lenin be buried. Many Russians suggest it nowadays. Lenin along with Communism.

December 16: As I wrap it up in Moscow, Natasha tells me I'm like a dream: a brief sweetness, then you wake up to reality the next morning and it's gone. I tell her I believe dreams are closer to ultimate reality than life is; maybe that's why I like sleeping so much. She tells me she's afraid to dream, afraid to hope. I tell her I will try to arrange a visit for her to America, a promise I hope to fulfill.

December 30: The desperate food shortages in Moscow have intruded on my relative margin of comfort. The lines at the *beriozka* stores have grown long — mostly Russian mafia and prostitutes with their ill-gotten *"valyoota"* (hard currency) buying up luxuries like liquor and chocolate. Even the checkout line at the "credit-card only" *beriozka* wraps around the store. For eight days I've been unable to find eggs and ice cream (my main staples). Yet Zoya, our cleaning lady, gifted me a New Year's bottle of Hungarian champagne. Lord knows how she found or afforded it.

January 3, 1991: Today I shot the raising of the flag at the new Israeli consulate, the first time the blue-and-white Star of David has flown in Moscow for 23 years. Since I was shooting for Israeli Television, they cleared the Consul General's office of the crowd of correspondents so I could have an exclusive interview. The look on the reporters' faces as they were ushered out — especially CBS's cocky Jonathan Sanders — was worth all of my hardships here. As the video was fed over the *Gostel* satellite uplink later in the evening, I could hear the Jerusalem control room workers cheering as the flag was raised and the Israeli national anthem was sung. The new consulate expects to process 400,000 Jewish emigrants in 1991, likely draining yet more of the educated and skilled workers from Russia.

January 5: As part of the move toward a market economy, the Soviets have stopped subsidizing "luxury items" like car parts, furs and (gasp!) *beriozka* stores. The prices have doubled since the first of the year when the change took effect. A dozen eggs now costs me about four dollars. Every night lately I've been having dreams of home — the same vivid dreams I used to have about Moscow.

January 7: It's officially Christmas Day in Moscow. Yeltsin proclaimed it so after he was petitioned by the Moscow Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church; Gorbachev followed suit and declared it a Christmas holiday in the republics as well. It's the first Christmas in Russia since the Revolution. No one seems to know how to celebrate it, but everyone is enjoying the day off.

January 10: Russians are an interesting combination of extremes: unrestrained greed and self-promotion countered by expansive philosophical and soulful depths — each trait bountifully real and straightforward. In comparison, Americans appear in an in-between muddle, often frosted in bullshit. I'm not sure if it is the Russians' self-centered side that has fostered this ineffective system, or the horrible Soviet system that has advanced the "get-out-of-my-way-and-give-me" attitude. I do know that a self-serving approach to life (so pervasive here) inevitably leads to mistakes as one misses the greater perspective available to a more transcending viewpoint ("enlightened selfishness," the New Agers call it). By looking out only for one's self, one misses the bigger picture of one cooperating within the context of all else; a necessary awareness, I believe, for true enduring success. Fascinating how the national and individual personalities reflect each other.

January 24: My departure has been delayed long enough for me to witness the collapse of Gorbachev's *perestroika* and *glasnost*. Newfound press freedoms have been restricted in response to critical coverage of the Baltics' repression. As of the first of February, Gorbachev will assign the military to patrol the streets of Moscow — ostensibly to "protect the people from hooligans," but more likely to protect the Kremlin hooligans from the people. In an alleged crackdown against black marketing, Gorbachev has recalled 50- and 100-ruble notes (about one-third of all Soviet currency in circulation). Citizens throughout the Union were given three days to turn in their rubles under very strict guidelines and KGB supervision. The new rules allow an exchange of up to 1,000 rubles of the large notes, but many people here have amassed savings of tens of thousands of rubles over decades, stashed under mattresses and hidden in dark corners, waiting for the day when there might be something worth buying. Stunned laborers, farmers, pensioners, family men and women stand in long bank lines, terror in their eyes as lifetimes of work and savings are snatched away. Fury and frustration hang in the air as a flammable gas. I fear an igniting spark is imminent.

Steve Van Hook '86 is a freelance television producer in the Washington, D.C., area. He visited the Soviet Union again this summer (where he found the situation still "dreadful") and asked Natasha to come to the U.S. She has failed so far to obtain a visa.

THE WASHINGTON POST THURSDAY, MAY 31, 1990

Glasnost Express: The Magazine Marketeers

By Eleanor Randolph
and Paul Farhi
Washington Post Staff Writers

Soviet consumers may have trouble finding soap on their grocery shelves, but soon they may be able to buy Consumer Reports. And Mother Jones and Organic Gardening and Harper's magazines, to name a few.

Under the name Glasnost Express, Massachusetts businessman Richard R. Rowe has worked out an agreement to send the Soviets about 20,000 U.S. magazines or newspapers every week.

He has also persuaded about 20 U.S. magazine publishers to start selling their publications to the Soviets—and here's the key—for rubles that are worthless outside the Soviet Union.

"Until now, getting into Russia has been virtually impossible. To get on a newsstand over there is really difficult," said Kitty Carroll Williams, Business Week's vice president for circulation. "For us, it is an opportunity to get into the market . . . but it is a long-term commitment. We don't expect any immediate revenue."

Business Week's international edition and other pub-

See MEDIA, D4, Col. 1

MEDIA, From D1

lications plan to use their rubles to help pay for their news operations in Moscow. Others are simply giving the rubles to a foundation set up to use them for U.S.-Soviet relations.

It may seem a bit odd for a business deal, but Glasnost Express is only the latest in an increasing number of exchanges, joint ventures, gambles and experiments as publishers in the United States and the U.S.S.R. have begun, trying to take advantage of a slightly freer marketplace of ideas.

Some U.S. publishers are printing Russian versions. Some Soviet publications are printing editions in English for Americans.

Some, like Vladimir Yakovlev, a 31-year-old Soviet entrepreneur who founded a Soviet publication called Commersant (translated as "businessman" and akin to Barron's), announced this week that he is starting a U.S. version.

The weekly, which was founded in 1908 and suspended after the revolution until earlier this year ("for reasons beyond its control," as the newspaper puts it), has a circulation of about 350,000, he said. The cooperative publication, which is not subsidized by the government, advises Soviet readers about how to start a business, where it's risky to invest and how to attract hard, cold greenbacks.

Yakovlev, who announced this week that he wants to start selling 50,000 copies here starting in September, said he is working in cooperation with a Chicago investment firm called Refco Group.

How much is Refco in for?

"This is a commercial secret," said Yakovlev, whose understanding of how to deal with the media is as good as his near-flawless English.

Hearst Corp. and Izvestia are also trying two versions of the same publication—a 16-page weekly that will be issued in two languages by journalists from both organizations working in Hearst's Washington bureau.

The first issue is scheduled to be out on the Fourth of July.

Hearst Vice President Lee Guittar said yesterday that the Independence Day edition will be a prototype distributed free to leaders in both countries.

"There was no consideration that we might want to sell the test issue," Guittar said. Charging for it later? "We haven't crossed that bridge yet."

One of the old hands at selling to the Soviets is Frank Cutitta, president of international marketing services for International Data Group. Cutitta's company has been publishing PC Mir—the Soviet version of PC World—for about two years.

"We make our money by selling ads to Western companies for hard currency," he said. The companies that advertise in a PC magazine are, as you might expect, computer companies.

PC Mir sells out its 50,000 copies in a matter of hours, he says. "We have been moderately successful on the advertising side," Cutitta said, adding that U.S. export control laws still limit their advertising base.

PC Mir may have been the advance guard, but it led a small army of newsletters, faxed newspapers, magazines and other publications from the United States into the Soviet Union.

"There have been a whole slew of them. I can barely keep track any more," said Soviet trade expert Robert B. Cullen of the number of U.S. publications beginning to appear in the Soviet Union.

"A lot of these publications are jumping into a market that really isn't that suitable," Cullen said. "While it is true that there is a huge potential market, it is still only potential. At the present time, the problem for advertisers is not getting people to buy [their product]; your problem is just getting something on the shelf for them to buy."

There are other problems. "You can't just enter as a businessperson looking to do a deal," said Cutitta. "You have to enter as an educator."

Trying to get the Soviets to publish an ad, Cutitta brought in the heavy artillery. "They were having trouble making up their minds until we said, 'Look, it'll bring in $3,600 in hard currency.' The Soviet ad manager who approved it said, 'Perestroika is in!' "

For those on the Soviet side, the United States is a very green pasture—a place full of a special kind of readers, readers who pay for newspapers and magazines with dollars.

Some Soviet publications have been available in this country for years, of course. Soviet Life and Moscow News have been published in English here for decades. And selected bookstores have sold Soviet books, magazines and newspapers, usually months or even years late in some cases.

But the reading list has suddenly gotten much longer.

"Basically what's happened is that publications in the Soviet Union have gone on a for-profit basis," said Blair Ruble, director of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies at the Woodrow Wilson Center here. "Editors are looking for ways of turning a profit and getting their hands on hard currency. I think this has more to do with the for-profit motives of the publications than the state of Soviet-American relations."

Sun World Corp. has bartered office space in Moscow for distribution of a Soviet magazine in the U.S.—Literaturnaya Gazeta, or Literary Gazette in this country.

Sixty thousand English copies of the magazine go to newsstands and to selected "opinion leaders" and educational institutions. In return, Sun World gets Moscow office space for its three news employees, who provide news footage to American television stations.

The company is trying to get advertising, and so far one company has agreed to buy space: Aeroflot.

"If someone distributed a Russian publication in the United States 10 years ago, I would assume there would have been at least a CIA and FBI investigation into the matter," said Steve Van Hook, a producer at Sun World in Washington. "Now we send the CIA and FBI copies."