



# American-Russian Cultural Cooperation Foundation

Strengthening ties through art and culture

## NEWSLETTER

[www.a-rccf.org](http://www.a-rccf.org)

August 2011

## The Opening of "The Tsar and the President" in St. Petersburg

### Insights and Observations after 40 years

by George Hambleton

What an honor, privilege and pleasure it was to represent the American Russian Cultural Cooperation Foundation at the "Tsar and the President" exhibition opening at Tsarskoye Selo in St. Petersburg on April 26. The changes in Russia from the time I helped open air service from New York to Moscow, some forty years ago, were overwhelming. The staff of the State Museum, Tsarskoye Selo, could not have been more helpful, or more impressive. Olga Taratynova, Director of Tsarskoye Selo, who

lives in St. Petersburg with her daughter, would certainly have been considered a "Grande Dame" in the time of the Tsars. In addition to being clearly in charge of the large and beautiful facilities of the Museum, she is very nice, and a pleasure to work with.

Much has been said in conjunction with the "Tsar and the President" exhibition – about Russia having contributed to both the creation (Catherine the Great) and the preservation (Tsar Alexander II) of the United States. But, what has the United States done for Russia? We can't claim a role in the creation of Russia. Our Chairman, James Symington, has pointed out that Russia had been developing as a great country for a thousand years before the first American flag was raised – but we can claim a role in the preservation of Russia.

Few young people today, in Russia or the United States, know that during the "Great Patriotic War" 14,750 American military airplanes were flown to Alaska, turned over to Soviet pilots, and flown via Yakutsk all the way across Siberia. At one point, some twelve percent of the Soviet Air Force was made up of American lend-lease airplanes—greatly relieving the pressure of the long siege of heroic Leningrad. The Nazis were occupying the hills at Tsarskoye Selo at that time.

But, what is new and exciting in Russia today? The changes in Moscow and St. Petersburg defy description. Russia is

booming—charging ahead, on the crest of a wave of oil and gas money. To those of us who knew Russia forty years ago, the standard of living today is amazing. At a reception in Moscow or in St. Petersburg, it is difficult to tell the Russians from the Americans, except that the Russians are better dressed—and better turned out. My wife Diana's notes from conversations and other impressions may be of interest: Makeup—great figures—high heeled boots—tight jeans! Gold mini-domes—glimpses of Rue Saint-Honoré in Paris! Metropole Hotel aged and decrepit—other hotels luxurious. Cell phones were everywhere, and we understand that 40 million have access to an unrestricted internet.

We were impressed with the large number of luxury stores (Hermes, Armani, Chanel) (in the 1960s the only perfume available in Russia was called "Svetlana's Breath"!)

There were many signs of prosperity in Moscow and St. Petersburg—few of poverty. We did not see western discount stores, but Walmart is coming! There are lots of McDonalds, Starbucks, and fast food restaurants, as well as very luxurious restaurants and night clubs. (When I lived in Moscow, the nearest night club was in Helsinki!) We noticed hundreds of banks—

both Russian and foreign. The huge city of Moscow is now beset with traffic problems and bumper to bumper gridlock, with many European luxury cars. Outdoor advertising, particularly on the sides of buildings, is out of control in Moscow—and overwhelming!

Airline terminal buildings in Moscow are beautiful—but in St. Petersburg, sadly, run down. Mr. Putin says he plans to modernize 117 airports at a cost of 300 billion rubles. St. Petersburg should be the first!

Some American companies have expressed concern about the regulations governing business in Russia, but almost all who have seriously entered the Russian market are doing extremely well. Mr. Medvedev and Mr. Putin have both spoken about reform, but the greatest of all Russian reformers said:

"May justice and mercy reign in our courts, and may everyone enjoy in peace the fruit of honest labor under the shelter of laws equally just to all, equally protecting all!"

*Tsar Alexander II*



(from left to right): Sergey Balan, Deputy Director of the State Archive (Moscow); George Hambleton, Board Member, and his wife Diana; Michael Bishop, Guest Curator, Lincoln exhibit [photo courtesy of [www.tzar.ru](http://www.tzar.ru)]

## Pictures (artifacts, documents and sculptures) at an Exhibition

Much has been written about the “Tsar and the President” exhibition and the attention it has garnered, first in Moscow, and then in St. Petersburg. There can be no exhibit without people and institutions willing to lend. This exhibition would not have been possible without the generosity of the following, who graciously entrusted the rare and historic pieces that comprise this dynamic exhibition to us:

Abraham Lincoln Library and Museum at Lincoln Memorial University (*Harrogate TN*)  
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (*Springfield IL*)  
Michael F. Bishop (*Washington DC*)  
Chicago History Museum (*Chicago IL*)  
Embassy of Ireland  
Clark Evans  
Ford’s Theater National Historic Site  
John Hay Library at Brown University (*Providence RI*)

Seth Kaller, Inc (*White Plains, NY*)  
The Library of Congress  
Lincoln Heritage Museum (*Lincoln, IL*)  
Massachusetts Historical Society  
Mark Rabinowitz (*Alexandria VA*)  
Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site (*Cornish NH*)  
Shapell Manuscript Foundation (*Israel*)  
James L. Swanson (*Washington DC*)  
The Hon James W. Symington (*Washington DC*)  
ARCCF Collection (*Washington DC*)

Images and reproductions courtesy of the National Archives and Records Administration, Seward House Museum (*Albany NY*), White House Historical Society and the Naval Historical Center were also used in this exhibition.

We would also like to gratefully acknowledge our Guest Curator, **Michael F. Bishop**, for locating and obtaining items that tell a compelling story, and our Registrar, **Jennifer A. Schansberg** of Artsy/Cartsy, for overseeing the loaned objects, and ensuring the exhibition got safely to and from its destination/s.

### Franklin’s Armonica

The story of Benjamin Franklin “inventing” electricity is widely known by young students around the world, despite not being particularly accurate. But like his counterpart Lomonosov in Russia, Franklin was a prolific creator, credited with inventing such widely known devices as bi-focal eyeglasses, the Franklin stove and, building on his earlier experiments with electricity, the lightning rod.

And in 1761, Franklin added to



Benjamin Franklin, demonstrating the Armonica

this already impressive portfolio an entirely new way of creating music: the armonica. His idea builds on the idea of the “glass harmonica,” whereby a musician repeatedly rubs a series of multi-sized glass or crystal bowls to create a deeply resonant and eerily beautiful sound. Franklin thought to automate this process by mounting 37 bowls together on an iron spindle, turned by virtue of a large foot pedal.

**Fact:** In some places, the armonica was known as a “*hydrodaktulopsychicharmonica*,” which is Greek for “harmonic device to produce music for the soul by fingers dipped in water”

Armonica players would wet their fingers, sometimes adding a trace quantity of chalk to them as well, and then touch the rims of the instrument’s many bowls. Each glass segment on the device was fully color-coded — A’s were dark blue, B’s were purple, C’s red, D’s orange, E’s yellow, F’s green, G’s blue, and white was used for the accidentals. The hefty device, about the size of a small player piano, was therefore capable of playing the same range of music as any other concert instrument of its day.

For several decades, the armonica gained a small degree of popularity around the world, with musical pieces created for it specifically by the likes of Mozart, Beethoven and others. Sadly, by the early 1800’s, the novel instrument had all but faded from use due to changes in musical fashion and a recurring superstition that the melancholy harmonies could lead listeners into intense depressions. We are very pleased to have an armonica on hand at this year’s gala and look forward to what should be a very special performance.

### Giants of Science Gala



A special surprises Lomonosov Embassy Russia, b taken pla of honor **Award** is will be w collabora star, Lom staged d the spirit Please co for your

## Letter from the Chairman

Dear Friends,

It is with feelings of autumnal warmth and gratitude for all our friends and supporters that I submit this report. It is written in the afterglow of the remarkable exhibit on Lincoln and Alexander II which captured the imagination and admiration of so many Russian citizens in Moscow and St. Petersburg, if one may judge from the extraordinarily positive reactions registered in the museum Guest Books of both cities.

On August 17, 2011, as the exhibit concluded and the historical objects and manuscripts were returned to their respective lenders, my only regret was that their exposure in Russia was of limited duration and in only two cities. So, it was enormously gratifying to learn, on that day, over lunch at Washington's Metropolitan Club, that the entire exhibit and the message it conveys have been preserved for future generations. My luncheon guests were **Alexander Vershinin**, Director General of the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library, and his colleague **Pavel Kiselev**. Mr. Vershinin assured us that the Library is preparing a virtual-tour video to have as part of their electronic library, where it can be viewed in perpetuity as an enduring record of US-Russia comity in a time of trial.

A word of special thanks must go to our Board Member **George Hambleton** and his wife **Diana** for flying the Foundation flag in St. Petersburg's legendary "Tsarskoye-Selo" during the grand opening of the exhibition there, our many donors and supporters for their help over the years, and most certainly to **H.E. Ambassador and Mrs. Sergey Kislyak** and their very fine staff for their valuable guidance and steady support.

And, it is with great anticipation that we look forward to our "**Giants of Science**" evening at the Russian Embassy, thanks again to the Ambassador's hospitality, on Wednesday, October 12, in celebration of Russia's immortal genius **Mikhail Lomonosov** and America's beloved **Benjamin Franklin**.

Don't miss it!

James W. Symington



## About the Foundation

The American-Russian Cultural Cooperation Foundation was created by prominent American enthusiasts in cooperation with the Embassy of the Russian Federation. For nearly 20 years, the A-RCCF has worked to increase trust and understanding between the people of America and Russia, and to facilitate a better climate for American-Russian cultural diplomacy, through the mutual appreciation and exchange of arts and culture. Through its multiple ties to Russia, it organizes major exhibitions in leading museums, arranges performances by prominent Russian and American artists, and produces programs commemorating historically important events celebrating our joint pages of history and common heritage. An award is presented annually to those who have made a significant contribution to American-Russian cultural relations.

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## The Lomonosov Gold Medal

In 1959, the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS) began awarding the LOMONOSOV GOLD MEDAL, the Academy's highest honor, to scientists in recognition of outstanding achievements in the natural sciences and humanities. In 1964, the RAS began presenting two awards annually, one to a Russian and one to a foreign scientist. Since then, 11 Americans have received the coveted Lomonosov Gold Medal:

1964-1976	None awarded to American scientists.	2000	<b>Charles Hard Townes</b> , quantum electronics (leading to the development of the maser and laser)
1977	<b>Linus Carl Pauling</b> , chemistry and biochemistry	2001	<b>Alexander Rich</b> , nucleic acids / functions of ribosomes
1987	<b>John Bardeen</b> , physics	2003	<b>Michael E. DeBakey</b> , cardiology
1989	<b>Hans Bethe</b> , physics	2004	<b>Edward N. Lorenz</b> , theory of general circulation of the atmosphere and theory of chaotic attractors of dissipative systems
1993	<b>John Kenneth Galbraith</b> , economic and social sciences	2006	<b>Rodney Charles Ewing</b> , nuclear fuel cycle and nuclear waste management
1994	<b>James D. Watson</b> , molecular biology		
1997	<b>Frank Press</b> , physics of solid Earth		

The evening awaits you at this year's Gala. "**GIANTS OF SCIENCE**" will be full of exciting surprises—you will not believe the entertainment planned for our special evening of honor! Mikhail Lomonosov was a spectacular human being (Wikipedia anyone?). At this celebration at the Russian Embassy, Americans will pay tribute to a man whose work influenced not only the development of science but the world. The 300th Jubilee of Lomonosov is a *force majeure* in Russia! Celebrations have been taking place throughout the year, with their grand finale planned for November. Our gala special guest will be **Dr. G. Wayne Clough, Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution**. This year's **Foundation Award** is a sculpture specially created by Russia's Artist of the People, **Alexander Bourganov** (who flew with us all the way from Moscow). It is presented in recognition of over 150 years of scientific cooperation between the SI and the Russian Academy of Sciences. In pairing the incredible Russian Lomonosov, with our own Benjamin Franklin (who are also invited) all will be revealed as the dialogue between them begins to unfold, the music begins to play, and the fun begins—all in celebration of celebrating American-Russian cultural (and scientific) cooperation. Seating is limited. Contact Elise at [arccf2011@spotonevents.biz](mailto:arccf2011@spotonevents.biz) (202) 531-0862 for ticket information, and watch for your invitation in the mail.

## Comments from the **State Museum “Tsarskoye Selo”** Exhibition Guest Book

Огромная благодарность за возможность увидеть подлинники, свидетельствующие о двух великих событиях в истории России и США. Прекрасная выставка. (Translated: *My most sincere thanks for the once in a lifetime opportunity to see the original [documents and artifacts] that bear witness to two greatest events in the history of Russia and the United States. This is an excellent exhibition.*)  
• Mrs. E. A. Logvinova

This exhibition is a very informative learning experience. The two historical figures differ so much in the circumstances of birth, upbringing and education, they belong to two very different nations, yet they were so close in their understanding of the need to reform their societies, in their efforts to improve the whole world and free their people.  
• Mr. Aristarhov

This is an absolutely unique, incredibly educational exhibition. Thank you to the American historians who sent us these precious original artifacts. The exhibition tells the story of the long-lasting friendship between the USA and Russia, and allows to learn more about American history. What is clear is that we were friends and, of course, are, and will be friends. The only big issue I had was the absence of an additional catalog with all the original documents, so generously loaned to us by the Americans, reproduced in their entirety. As for the design of the exhibition, it was very well presented, everything was conveniently explained.  
• Mrs. Merenkova

Thank you so very much for this remarkable exhibition! We [the older generation], unfortunately studied a very different view of Russian history. The parallels [between Alexander and Lincoln] were very well drawn. I have learned a lot about Alexander II and his reign. I wish the current relations between our countries were as cordial.  
[Name withheld]

We were genuinely moved by the Russo-American exhibition dedicated to Alexander II and Abraham Lincoln. They entered history with Great Deeds -- liberation of the slaves in their countries. [Alexander II] liberated 22 million serfs and [Lincoln] emancipated 8 million slaves in the USA. Our thanks to the Russian and American organizers and to the Tsarskoe Selo museum.  
• The Guselnikov family

This remarkable exhibition presents clear proof that genuine reformation is never simple. True, deep reforms can only be appreciated by the future generations, not contemporaries. This is why the fate of these great reformers, Lincoln and Alexander II, was so tragically similar. Our sincere appreciation goes to the organizers for such a memorable and convincing exhibition.  
• Prof and Mrs. Sinaisky

## American-Russian Cultural Cooperation Foundation

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**300th JUBILEE of MIKHAIL LOMONOSOV – Annual Gala – Russian Embassy – October 12**  
**Seating is Limited – Reserve Now!**

ARCCF relies solely on contributions from interested supporters to foster its projects. We are a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law. We welcome your questions and comments at: [APotemkin@A-RCCF.org](mailto:APotemkin@A-RCCF.org).