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MESSAGE FROM THE CENTER – WINTER ISSUE 2003

No type of institution better embodies the "Open World" idea than the library: it is ideally an open, inclusive repository of the human past, a gateway to the global electronic community, and a meeting-place for people from all backgrounds. Recognizing the central role that libraries play in civil society, the Open World Leadership Center this year invited some 200 of Russia's leading information managers to participate in the Open World Program. This issue of the *Open World Alumni Bulletin* is dedicated to their important work.

Participants in Open World 2003's library-focused programs included federal and regional cultural officials who oversee libraries; administrators of Russia's national, regional, research, academic, and children's libraries; and heads of local library systems and libraries affiliated with cultural institutions.

As with the majority of our delegations, the information managers' introduction to the United States began, appropriately enough, at my own institution, the Library of Congress. Most participants next attended a major library-related event, such as the January meeting of the American Library Association in Philadelphia or the National Book Festival that First Lady Laura Bush and I co-hosted in Washington, D.C.,

in October. (A special highlight of the festival for me was discussing contemporary Russian literature with our visiting Open World delegates!)

The response the Center has received from the Americans who hosted these exchanges has been overwhelmingly and enthusiastically positive. All appreciated the window onto Russian culture and history that these visits afforded them, their colleagues, and their community. "Our knowledge and awareness of the Russian Federation has increased tenfold," said one host in a typical remark. Hosts also reported picking up new ideas from their Russian guests on reading promotion, programming, and library management. And I know that many were fascinated to learn about how the library community in Russia has been affected by — and is helping shape — dramatic social and economic change.

I recently had a very special opportunity to discuss the role of libraries and librarians in a civil society with attendees at BibliObraz, a book festival for Russian school librarians, teachers, and students hosted in Moscow by Russian First Lady Ludmila Putina. The visit reminded me that librarians everywhere are like navigators, piloting patrons through a sea of knowledge, helping develop the informed citizenry essential to a democratic society.

James H. Billington
The Librarian of Congress
Chairman of the Open World Board of Trustees



Open World delegates gather around Dr. and Mrs. Billington (center, seated) at the 2003 National Book Festival in Washington, D.C.

FIRST WORDS FROM "PROJECT HARMONY"

Dear Open World Alumni and Friends across the Russian Federation and the United States:

Traditionally, the beginning of the new year is a time to review our past accomplishments and develop our future plans. Open World Alumni Outreach Program staff can proudly say that thanks to the enthusiasm, efforts, and professional input of dozens of people working on the program, support from partner organizations, and the sincere interest and creative attitude of the alumni themselves, the program was successful!

Over the last nine months (from April through December 2003), the Open World Alumni Outreach Program has:

- launched the Open World Leadership Center's new English/Russian website;
- published two issues of the Open World Alumni Bulletin;
- conducted three conferences (in Khabarovsk; St. Petersburg; and Novokuybyshevsk, Samara Region);
- held four professional development workshops (in Petrozavodsk, Tula, Kaliningrad, and Ekaterinburg);
- organized three IT seminars (in Tolyatti, Kemerovo and Yaroslavl); and
- made it possible, with the help of 26 regional alumni coordinators, for more than 2,000 alumni to meet regularly with each other. During these

meetings, alumni could recount the brightest memories of their U.S. trips, share new ideas and plans for professional and personal growth, discuss their successful participation in regional programs and projects, gain new skills in information technologies, and simply expand their horizons.

Key professors and senior lecturers at Russian universities, and experts, consultants, trainers and facilitators of the Likhachev Foundation, the Russian Library Association, the NGO School, Best Training, the Siberian Civic Initiatives Support Center, the Open Institute of Public Health, TACIS, and Healthy Regions worked with us on the Alumni Outreach Program.

The Open World Alumni Outreach Program's goals were also successfully met thanks to cooperation from various programs administered in Russia by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, American Councils for International Education, American Centers and Corners in Russia, and Project Harmony, Inc.

There is no branch or agency of government not represented by Open World alumni, no field of expertise not covered by them, and no aspect of the outreach program that cannot benefit from their contributions.



Elena Boukovskaya, Open World Alumni Outreach Program Manager

Now we are working on the 2004 plan of action. We have created a new forum for alumni suggestions and wishes for the development of the program, which can be found at www.openworld.gov/phpBB2/index.php. Do not get left behind — together we can make our program even more interesting and useful!

We wish all of you much happiness and health in the New Year!

Sincerely,

Elena Boukovskaya
Open World Alumni Outreach Program Manager

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Founded by the U.S. Congress in 1999, the Open World Program has enabled nearly 7,000 citizens from all of Russia's 89 regions to see the U.S. democratic process and market economy in action and to exchange ideas with their American counterparts, thereby helping build mutual cooperation between the Russian Federation and the United States. The Open World Program is conducted by the Open World Leadership Center, an independent legislative branch agency, which works cooperatively with the U.S. Department of State and other U.S. executive and judicial branch agencies.

To sign up for free electronic program updates or to be removed from mailout lists, visit www.openworld.gov. In Russia, the *Bulletin* is mailed to alumni without access to e-mail.

Anna Shtakelberg
St. Petersburg
Head of the "Petersburg Book" Library-Center
Open World 2003
Theme: Library Management
Host Community: Bellingham, Wash.
Host Organization: Academy for Educational Development

St. Petersburg can literally be called the library capital of Russia. The country's oldest libraries are located here: the Library of the Academy of Sciences, the Russian National Library, the 200-year-old St. Petersburg State Theatre Library, as well as a number of other libraries with national status. There are about 2,000 libraries in St. Petersburg (76 university libraries, 99 college libraries, 750 school libraries, 115 professional association libraries, 190 public libraries, and many others). St. Petersburg's libraries house the lion's share of Russia's national literary treasures.

The deep qualitative changes in our country in the past 10 years have also affected libraries.

There are significant changes in the way Petersburgers read. Today they most often visit libraries to conduct research, do homework, learn new skills or a new profession, and study foreign languages. These new trends coincided with dramatic changes in the country's and the city's book markets. The number of publishers and booksellers greatly multiplied.

The total capacity of St. Petersburg's library collections is declining. In 1990 there were 16,377,000 library books; by 1999 this number had decreased to 14,740,000. The number of books per reader decreased from 17.5 in 1990 to 13.6 in 1999. (For Russia as a whole this number declined from 9.7 to 9.3.) Since the early '90s the number of new books received by libraries has steadily declined. As the Ministry of Culture reports, St. Petersburg is at the bottom of the list of Russian regions according to this index. IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) recommends that public library collections be renewed over the course of 10 years. Ten percent of the books should have been published within the last two years and 30 percent to 40 percent of the books should have been published within the last five years.

The public libraries of our city do not meet this standard, because the majority of their holdings were published before the 1990s. This is mostly due to insufficient funding for the purchase of

essential literature; moreover, the cost of books goes up from year to year.

From the moment of its founding, St. Petersburg, as the capital of the Russian Empire, was one of the country's book centers. In the 18th-19th centuries, two-thirds of all Russian books were published in St. Petersburg. Nowadays, Petersburg is the second-largest publishing center in Russia. Approximately 800 booksellers and book publishers are based in the city. Because licensing for publishers has been suspended for the past three years, it is difficult to determine which publishers are still publishing and in what categories. A number of publishers export their entire press run beyond the city limits. It is just as difficult for libraries to track what appears on bookstore shelves. Libraries simply do not have the clout to secure the passage of a local law to require that they receive deposit copies from publishers. Even the Russian National Library does not get about 30 percent of the locally published books.

Given the above-mentioned conditions, the Committee on Culture of the St. Petersburg City Administration, in cooperation with the non-governmental St. Petersburg Book Center, began in 1998 to implement the "Petersburg Book" Library-Center project under the auspices of the Lermontov Municipal Central Library. The Library-Center puts out information on St. Petersburg publications, non-book products, authors, publishers, book illustrators, translators, book wholesalers and retailers, libraries, and the history and current status of the book business in St. Petersburg. Plans are under way to create one electronic resource that will be open to all participants: librarians, readers, booksellers and publishers.



Readers flock to the book fair held in Velikiy Novgorod by the "Petersburg Book" Library-Center.

The "Petersburg Book" Library-Center is a totally new project — nobody before us has created anything like this. We started organizing book fairs displaying books from different publishers;



Anna Shtakelberg

every day we targeted different audiences. Library acquisition staff had an opportunity to obtain firsthand information about how one company's books differ from the others', how they are more suitable or more interesting for certain libraries. This is also profitable for publishers, especially small ones, because not all of them can afford to advertise their products.

These book fairs accomplish two goals simultaneously: we introduce new books and provide an opportunity for anyone to purchase books directly from the publishers without any surcharge. For the city of St. Petersburg, purchasing books for libraries is a problem not only due to lack of funds, but also due to the situation of the book market. Old sources of books for libraries, such as so-called book collectors, in these new economic times increase book prices by 40 percent, while bookstores have a 100 percent to 110 percent markup. That is why our exhibits are of real help to libraries.

Not only do library representatives come to us, so do private individuals looking for a book they cannot find.

We have organized several publisher-sponsored book fairs in Estonia and the Russian regions of Novgorod and Pskov, as well as in other cities. Our first experience was back in May 2000, when we traveled across Estonia in 10 days. More than 50 publishers participated in our exhibit. Publisher representatives got an opportunity to talk about their products. For Estonia it turned into a big cultural event, complete with a fashion show and lectures on classical music.

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Tatiana Kuzmishina
Samara
Head of Information Technologies Center,
International Institute of the Marketplace
Open World 2003
Theme: Library Management
Host Community: Kent, Ohio
Host Organization: Academy for
Educational Development

In 2001, UNESCO adopted the Information for All program. This program addresses the challenge of providing public access to information to help bridge the gap between the informationally "rich" and informationally "poor." In other words, this particular program contributes to solving the problem of informational inequality.

Historically, society has had a variety of informational institutions tasked to store, process and release information in general and deliver documents in particular. These institutions are libraries, archives, museums, etc. With the advent of electronic information the number of such institutions has increased. Commercial and non-commercial organizations that provide storage of information and access to it have appeared. Foreign countries' experience shows that, as earlier, libraries play a major role in distributing information. Libraries are designated as the cornerstone in building a civil society.

Why are libraries chosen?

As a social institution, the library has to consider modern conditions unique to its community and

the community's demands. The library's mission must correlate with the community's interests and needs as well as meet the expectations of society. Professor Margarita Dvorkina of the Russian State Library states in her compilation of lectures *Library Service: New Reality*: "Do not fail to live up to a patron's expectations, satisfy his informational needs, make information accessible to him — this is the main social function of a library."

Indeed, nowadays libraries — traditional informational institutions — still meet the community's expectations by providing equal and open access to information in any form. During our visit to the Cleveland Public Library we observed the role of libraries in the local community. For example, the library actively supports an information link between the community and government offices, providing users with actual information on different social issues. This service increased the library's standing in the community. We were greatly impressed by Director Andrew A. Venable Jr.'s story about the library's pre-election discussions with users on a local tax increase designated to support and develop the Cleveland Public Library.

More and more countries are entering the information age, including Russia with its multitudinous regions where occasionally libraries are only assigned a secondary role. Unfortunately, as in the old days, very often a library is considered to be just a warehouse for books and its possibilities in the new age of technology are underestimated. Samara libraries are actively engaged in

mastering new information technologies.

Thanks to financial support from the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, as well as from many foreign foundations, Samara's local libraries' technological capabilities are on such an advanced level that they can provide services to patrons that include access to information in almost every possible format. Today we can talk about a functioning hybrid information environment in libraries, where you can obtain not only printed materials but also electronic documents housed in the library (i.e., CD-ROM) or distributed over the Internet, where traditional library methods live in harmony with new information technologies.

International visits and studying the foreign library experience play an important role in the professional development of Samara's librarians. These librarians — Open World alumni — share their American experiences with each other. They have a better understanding of common trends in the development of modern libraries. They try to implement what they saw in the United States in their own libraries. The qualitatively different level of work in foreign libraries provides guidelines for solving everyday library problems and provides hope that Russian libraries will occupy a worthy position in the global formation of an expanding informational society.

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Following the first successful venture, the Baltic Russian-language publishers we met in Estonia came to St. Petersburg to hold a reciprocal book fair.

This pilot project revealed the importance of such an information center. But it also showed that it would survive only with serious municipal support.

Now we are in the process of reviewing different suggestions. We also continue to work on the creation of a database on St. Petersburg publishers (we still don't have such a database).

In October 2003, I was fortunate to participate in

the Open World Program and visit American libraries. I met with colleagues, a state senator, Bellingham Mayor Mark Asmundson, Whatcom County Executive Pete Kremen, the director of Orcas Island's Friends of the Library organization, and many others. Although I have been working as a library director for about 15 years, this visit changed my outlook immensely, and now I look differently on the library's role in the community and government. The problems of American libraries are understandable to us, but we differ in our solutions. I found it very useful to talk to library lobbyist Steve Duncan, who told us about relationships between legislative authorities and libraries in the United States.

Now, after this visit, I found it natural and easy,

as a professional and a library administrator, to approach the city administration to propose legislation on providing libraries with a fee-based deposit copy of local editions, and to attract public attention to library functions and problems. I would like to thank those who prepared and implemented the Open World Program. You gave a new stimulus to our project's development.

*Alumnus Profile: Elmir Yakubov
Director of the Khasavyurt City Central
Library System
Open World 2003
Theme: Library Management
Host Community: Glen Ellyn, Ill.
Host Organization: Academy for
Educational Development*

It is no secret that there are still places with the potential for ethnic conflict within the territory of multinational Dagestan. One of the reasons for this is the lack of access to reliable information. As a result, libraries are emerging as centers of public life. They are destined to become spots where citizens can carry out peacekeeping measures.

The library system of Khasavyurt, the northern gateway of Dagestan, is a network of public libraries and libraries of educational establishments such as schools, colleges, and university branches. The libraries see it as their mission to become centers of social and civil initiatives for a new generation of citizens. It is a serious and crucial job for the future of the region, and one that libraries previously did not attempt to fill.

Having encountered terrorist acts close to home when car bombs twice went off not far from the central city library, the libraries of Khasavyurt initiated a range of activities aimed at building bridges between diverse social groups by involving the community in the municipal decision-making process. The libraries contributed to the development of coalitions to solve problems. Judging from local experience, they have been highly effective in uniting the efforts of organizations that had previously not worked together on solving key tasks. The libraries succeeded in recruiting specialists to work on projects. As a result, good working relationships with local authorities were established. Partnership relations and informational, financial, and human resources have enabled the community to achieve a more substantive and organized realization of civic goals.

Professional and public discussions, meetings and trips helped us to deal with challenges suc-



Refugee children display books they received at a party hosted by Khasavyurt librarians.

cessfully. Trips to the United States stimulated new, creative ideas for the regions' libraries. Chakaray Magomedalieva, Head of the New Technologies and Library Marketing Department, became an Open World Program delegate in March 2003, visiting libraries in Ohio, while I visited libraries throughout Du Page County, Ill., two months later.

Our small delegation traveling on the Open World Program included librarians from less troubled regions of Russia, who did not always understand my emotional state when I spoke of the problems of my fellow countrymen living 10 kilometers [6.2 miles] from Chechnya. I was amazed to see sincere compassion in the eyes of the Americans. No matter whom I met, whether they were university professors, housewives, musicians from the Chicago Philharmonic, or school librarians, I always felt support of our minute steps toward strengthening the fragile peace of the North Caucasus.

I saw many well-equipped libraries where there were many computers and patrons (to my surprise, young patrons, including even the very young). Kindhearted colleagues from the libraries of Illinois shared their work experience in complete detail. Hospitable hosts tried to give us the best they had. We were flattered. However, most importantly, we felt that people were sincere in their feelings; they showed us that there is no such thing as "someone else's

problem." In fact, tanks and planes can appear at any house.

This life-giving optimism, the ardent desire to meet people halfway, is the greatest lesson of my trip. When I shared my impressions with my coworkers, one young woman said, "No wonder. After all, the program is called 'Open World.'"

"The world, open to mankind. Man, discovering the world": these words are now the motto of our library. New projects inspired by what was seen and recognized on the two-week trip are aimed at assisting our valued patrons in discovering the world for themselves and opening themselves to the world. We would like to help our citizens follow the example of our friends across the ocean in solving complex life problems with the support of a civil society. Without this support, peace in the region cannot be sustainable.

Our projects are aimed at continuing our previous work with those who require special care: children, retired citizens, refugees, and the disabled. The projects, which uniquely encourage interagency cooperation, do not merely add to, but multiply the potential for peacekeeping, enabling the transfer of tried and true methods and techniques of creating activities to a wide range of libraries and NGOs of the region.

Irina Novikova
President of the Association of American Centers and Corners
Deputy Director of the Nizhniy Novgorod American Corner
Open World Facilitator
Open World 2002 Participant
Theme: Federalism
Host Community: Atlanta, Ga.
Host Organization: Open World Leadership Center



Irina Novikova

In 1993, the first American Center in Russia was opened in Moscow [in the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature], giving Russians citizens interested in the United States access to the most recent and reliable information about the country. Soon after its opening, four more centers were founded in other Russian cities. The program was amply successful, and after a few years the idea to create “minicenters” (Corners) was born. The Corners would replicate the services of the Centers on a smaller scale, maintain the same goals and functions, and be more accessible to the public and self-supportive. This is how the American Corners program began.

U.S. economy, etc., as well as videotapes, computers, a copier and a printer. Many Corners are equipped with a TV set and a VCR.

“During three years of work, thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of many people, especially Eric Johnson, library attache of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, the American Corners program has become a real information network with its own professional team, web portal (www.amcorners.ru), system of communication, association and logo,” writes Olga Voronina, Information Resource Center Director at the U.S. Consulate General in St. Petersburg, in the June 6 issue of the Russian journal *Library*

role in the life of the Corners, and there are many examples of fruitful collaboration. For instance, in Perm an alumni club was created on the premises of the local American Corner. In Samara, Kazan, Velikiy Novgorod, and other cities, Open World alumni actively use American Corners’ space and equipment to conduct meetings, seminars and conferences. Alumni know that they are always welcome in every American Corner, and staff are always eager to help them.

In addition, their trips to the United States often stimulate alumni to study English and arouse their interest in American culture, history and politics. The American Corners’ collections of literature, videotapes and CD-ROMs can satisfy the needs of the most demanding visitor.

For those who want to study English, many of the American Corners’ directors offer English classes. Advanced students can attend lectures, roundtables, and discussions with native English speakers, and watch movies without subtitles.

There are a lot of options for cooperation. All alumni can find something interesting and useful to them.

In 2003, many American Corners directors visited the United States as Open World facilitators for delegations of librarians. This program gave librarians and facilitators an opportunity to receive firsthand information not only about the work of American libraries, but also about American cultural traditions, because they had a chance to spend a few days living with American families. This contributes to the professionalism of American Corners directors, who will use their expertise to help you locate the information you need.

At the November 2003 conference “Libraries and the Local Community” organized by the Open World Alumni Outreach Program, Olga Lisitsina, Director of the Arkhangelsk American Corner, concluded her presentation on the American Centers and Corners in Russia with the following words: “The presentation topic of one of our American speakers was ‘How I came to love Russia.’ His lecture was a great success and I think the listeners — if given the opportunity to respond to his presentation with one of their own — would tell how they came to love America.”

This is not an isolated example.

Our program provides an opportunity for ordinary people from both countries to get to know one another better, and thereby promotes mutual understanding between Americans and Russians.

AMERICAN CENTERS AND CORNERS IN RUSSIA



The first Corner was opened in Velikiy Novgorod in 2000. Over the next three years, 20 more Corners were established in Russia. Four new Corners are scheduled to open in 2004.

The American Corners program is a partner project between the U.S. government represented by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow on one side and [individual] regional libraries in Russia on the other side. A signed agreement between the partners states that the Russian library will provide space and qualified English-speaking staff while the U.S. Embassy will provide a basic set of materials on American history and politics and the

Science, “Pacific’ Harbor for new Columbuses: U.S. Embassy in Russia’s ‘American Corners’ Program,” p. 10

In addition to providing information resources, American Corners staff offer a wide range of different cultural and educational events. Activities include American-style holiday celebrations, movie screenings, meetings with English speakers, seminars, conferences, and American Culture Days.

The majority of American Corners’ patrons are students. Alumni of U.S. government-funded exchange programs make up the second-largest contingent. Open World alumni play an active

*Ludmila Kulikova,
Senior Researcher,
Russian National Library.*

The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups. (IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto, 1994.)

What is the role of the modern library in the local community? What new trends in library development have appeared during the last few years? Which reader services should be fee-based? These and other issues were covered during an Open World alumni conference "The Library and the Local Community" held at the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg Nov. 21-23, 2003.

The theme and location for this conference were not arbitrarily chosen. Some 200 participants visited the United States on Open World's library-oriented program in 2003. The knowledge they gained in America can be implemented and is already being implemented in Russian libraries. The conference had as its main objective giving Open World alumni the opportunity to discuss their projects to develop their libraries and to share their experience.

Twenty-seven alumni from 18 Russian cities participated in the conference. They represented different types of libraries from the Central and North-West regions of Russia. Vladimir Zaitsev, General Director of the Russian National Library, opened the conference. U.S. Ambassador to Russia Alexander Vershbow welcomed participants. The ambassador highlighted that he had come to St. Petersburg specifically to participate in three library events. This fact underscores Mr. Vershbow's attitude to libraries and their importance. Eugeniy Kuzmin, Head of the Library Department, Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation; Vera DeBuchananne, Program Manager for Alumni Coordination, Open World Leadership Center, Washington, D.C.; Ekaterina Genieva, General Director of the Rudomino Russian State Library of Foreign Literature; Eric Johnson, Regional Library Officer for Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Moldova, U.S. Embassy in Moscow; and others were our honored guests at the conference.

Each participant was given the opportunity to present a project. The projects of nine alumni were discussed at the conference. You can find detailed descriptions of these projects on the Open World website's forum at www.openworld.gov/phpBB2/viewforum.php?f=40

A separate session was devoted to the U.S. Embassy's American Corners in Russia program. Eric Johnson and Olga Voronina, Director of the Information Resource Center of the U.S. Consulate General in St. Petersburg, told about the history of this program and its future development. Presentations by American Corner directors focused on particular features of the program in various regions.



U.S. Ambassador Alexander Vershbow, right, Vladimir Zaitsev, General Director of the Russian National Library, center, and Open World's Vera DeBuchananne, left, open the alumni conference on libraries held in St. Petersburg in November 2003.

Participants devoted special attention to the panel discussion "Should a Library Charge User Fees?" During this session alumni discussed many urgent questions regarding this topic. Following this discussion we opened a forum on the Open World Leadership Center website for continuing the debate. Please visit it at www.openworld.gov/phpBB2/viewforum.php?f=46

The conference ended on an optimistic note. Many participants noticed its main characteristic: an opportunity to express oneself, to discuss sore subjects and jointly find the optimal solution. "My presentation was devoted specifically to how a library and govern-

ment authorities can establish closer relations," noted Svetlana Akhmetdinova of Yaroslavl. "Our city has successful experience in this field. We even succeeded in getting a salary increase. And I really hope that our positive experience will help others."

"I was curious to learn how other regions are financed, how they solve their problems," said Ekaterina Barinova of Vologda. "I wanted to understand why the authorities and the local community are often dissociated and how other libraries overcome this. After the conference I got some concrete ideas on how to attract attention to our library and I hope to implement these ideas upon my return."

Congratulations to the U.S. Embassy's Eric Johnson and Alex Khilkov!

On Dec. 26, 2003, Russian Minister of Culture Mikhail Shvydkoi honored Moscow-based Regional Library Officer Eric A. Johnson for his work managing U.S. government library programs in Russia and Open World Program Coordinator Alexander Khilkov for his work coordinating the Open World Program in Russia. Both honorees worked with the Ministry of Culture to send 198 Russian library managers and specialists to the United States on the Open World Program in 2003. Without them we would not have had this issue dedicated to libraries! Johnson and Khilkov are the first U.S. Embassy staff to receive such awards, which cited their "major contributions to the development of Russian-American cultural cooperation." In the photo below, both men stand in the back row holding Open World signs high; Khilkov is at center left, Johnson at center right.



Conference attendees

Evgeniy Negulyaev
Ekaterinburg
Head Librarian of the Research Library of
Ural State University
Open World 2003
Theme: Library Management
Host Community: University Park, Pa.
Host Organization: Academy for
Educational Development

In May 2003, Evgeniy Negulyaev and Igor Krutikhin, Vice-Director of the Regional Research Library of Saratov State University, created the Electronic Libraries discussion listserv in Russian (diglib@mlist.sgu.ru). The listserv's main purpose is to serve as a virtual discussion room for information exchange among librarians developing and using full-text electronic resources.

The listserv covers:

- technologies needed to create e-libraries;
- interfaces to access electronic resources;
- analysis of Russian and foreign projects;
- development of joint projects;
- Q&A and consultations;
- information about conferences and trainings; and
- news.

From the beginning this listserv was designed as an open resource. Anyone can participate in it, regardless of position, workplace, etc. Subscribing/unsubscribing to the list is completely automated and currently is not moderated. (A description of the registration process is located at <http://lib.usu.ru/outsidenews.asp?id=67>)

All messages sent through the list are archived at <http://mlist.sgu.ru/pipermail/diglib>, and anyone can learn about the list's activities.

Listserv participants have already begun collaborating:

- joint projects are being discussed; and
- a specialized distance-learning course on technologies that create electronic resources is under way.

A significant amount of news is distributed through the list. For example, in September, eight announcements about conferences, trainings, and seminars devoted to the creation and use of e-resources were published in this mailing list.

Natalia Dianova
Head of the Automation Department,
Korolev Samara State Aerospace
University, Scientific-Technical Library
Open World 2003
Theme: Library Management
Host Community: Indianapolis, Ind.
Host Organization: Academy for
Educational Development

Knowledge gained during my visit to the States was very useful for me like no other during my involvement in a project to create an intercollegiate regional media center based at Korolev Samara State Aerospace University.

The media center will encompass the following departments:

- creation and processing of information resources (media library);

- development, testing and certification of educational electronic editions and resources;
- informational and analytical center of educational electronic editions and resources;
- conversion of printed materials into digital format (media laboratory);
- continuing education and training for teachers;
- telecommunications; and
- digital reference services.

The goal of the program is to unite the information resources of institutions of higher education in Samara Region to create an accessible information delivery system using the latest technology.

Objectives of the program are:

- pooling of the information resources of institutions of higher education located in the city of Samara;
- developing means of support, certification

and licensing of educational media resources for different educational levels;

- providing students and academic staff with access to information resources;
- mastering technologically advanced training methods for academic staff;
- implementing expert, analytical, and consultative-instructional support services for the Samara region's educational institutions;
- developing regulatory, instructional and organizational standards to introduce an innovative system of education support based on new information technologies;
- providing training and continuing education for teachers and other categories of personnel in the region.

The work on creating this media center continues. We are looking for partners to collaborate with on our media center. We also wrote a letter to our [local host] coordinators in Indianapolis, with whom we hope to cooperate.

The Democracy Commission Small Grants Program

The U.S. Embassy's Democracy Commission, through its Small Grants Program, supports democracy-building initiatives that promote civil society in Russia, including the following priorities:

- free flow of information (including support for independent media);
- transparency in government;
- association building;
- rule of law and legal reform;
- conflict resolution;
- market economics;
- human rights;
- gender equality;
- women's empowerment and women's rights;

- ethnic and minority equality;
- public awareness, advocacy, and development of volunteerism in alleviating a wide range of urgent concerns, such as trafficking in human beings, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, drug addiction, corruption, integration of the disabled in community life, etc.;
- tolerance issues, combating extremism and xenophobia; and
- civic education.

Projects must use the official application form. To request an application, call 095-728-5242 or send an e-mail to MoscowDC@state.gov, or download the application materials. Applications are only accepted from registered Russian nongovernmental and noncommercial organizations, and may be submitted anytime during the entire calendar year.

For detailed information, please visit www.usembassy.ru/programs/demcomr.php

Tolerance Grants Initiative

The Tolerance Grants Initiative of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow was established in 2002 to enable the Embassy to provide assistance to indigenous nongovernmental organizations seeking to promote tolerance and understanding among various religious and ethnic groups in Russia.

For detailed information, please visit www.usembassy.ru/programs/tolerancer.php