

MONTHLY

APRIL 2025

Russian Cultural Garden Magazine

Preserving Russian Cultural Heritage in America

Discover This Month



ARTICLE BY KEN KOVACH, MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**"SISTER CITIES: CLEVELAND, OHIO AND
VOLGOGRAD, RUSSIA – SINCE 1990!"**

Cleveland has 28 sister cities — quite a significant number, especially compared to larger U.S. cities. These partnerships carry considerable historical, economic, and political importance.

In 1985, residents of Shaker Heights and Cleveland Heights successfully established a partnership with the Soviet city of Volzhsky, and soon after, Clevelanders began pursuing a similar collaboration with Volgograd. Although initially rejected in 1989, the agreement was officially formalized in 1990. Such partnerships helped ease tensions between the USA and the USSR and promoted the spread of Russian culture.

Economic cooperation also benefited both sides — supporting the USSR's economic goals while bolstering Cleveland-based companies. The success of the Volgograd partnership inspired Cleveland to further expand its international ties.

Since 1990, I have visited Volgograd and Volzhsky 19 times and organized numerous delegations with the support of the Council for International Programs USA (CIPUSA). During the COVID-19 pandemic, we held monthly ZOOM meetings with over 100 students from the USA (Cleveland) and the Volgograd region, as well as Arkhangelsk. This led to the formation of the “4 Cities for Peace” coalition, uniting Portland (Maine), Arkhangelsk, Cleveland, and Volgograd.

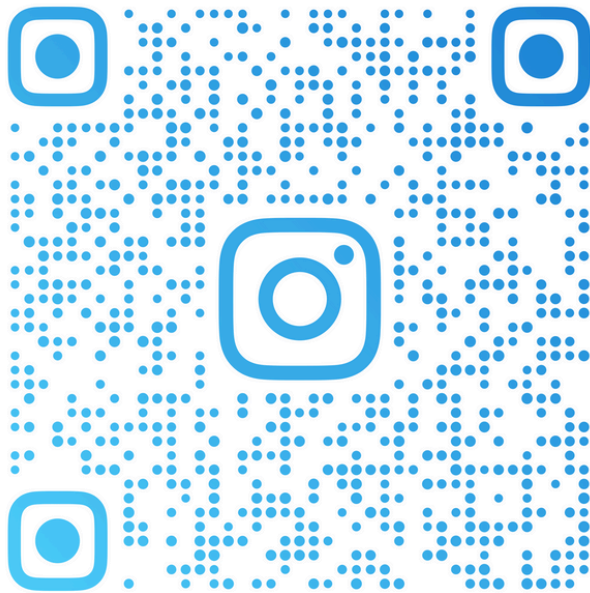
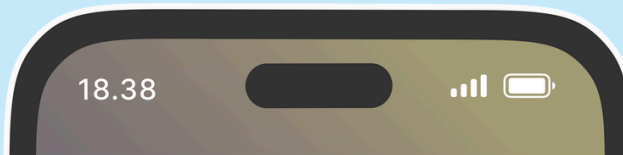
This year marks the 35th anniversary of the Cleveland-Volgograd partnership, as well as the 80th anniversary of the Meeting on the Elbe on April 25, 1945, when Soviet and American troops joined forces at the Elbe River, effectively splitting Germany and hastening the end of World War II in Europe.

If you are from the Volgograd region or have relatives there, feel free to contact me at coachicbc@gmail.com or phone: 216-704-7322.

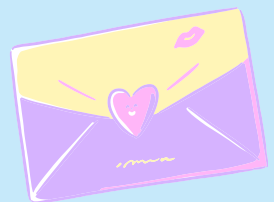
I'd be happy to share more about our collaboration!



**WE ARE ON
INSTAGRAM!**



RCGCLE



ZODIAC IN SHOCK: WHAT AWAITS IN APRIL 2025



ARIES:
YOU'LL BE LIKE A HORNED
ENERGIZER BUNNY —
DRIVING EVERYONE CRAZY
WITH YOUR HYPERACTIVITY.
THE STARS SUGGEST SLOWING
DOWN, OR YOU MIGHT BURN
DOWN THE HOUSE INSTEAD OF
JUST A CANDLE.



TAURUS:
FOR A GOOD MOOD,
YOU ONLY NEED THREE
THINGS: SLEEP, FOOD,
AND A LITTLE MORE
FOOD. EVERYTHING HAS
ITS TIME — ESPECIALLY
DESSERT TIME!



GEMINI:
IN APRIL, YOUR TONGUE
WILL MOVE FASTER THAN
YOUR THOUGHTS.
PROMISING SOMETHING
IMPOSSIBLE? THE STARS
RECOMMEND READING
THE FINE PRINT.



CANCER:
YOUR SENSITIVITY WILL GO
OFF THE CHARTS—YOU'LL
BE CRYING OVER CAT FOOD
COMMERCIALS. THE STARS
ARE GIFTING YOU A TISSUE
AND A CAT TO GO WITH IT.



LEO:
YOU'RE THE KING OF
APRIL, BUT YOUR CROWN
WILL SLIP FROM ALL THAT
SELF-ADMIRATION. TAKE A
HUMBLER SELFIE, OR THE
MIRROR MIGHT CRACK.



VIRGO:
THE ORDER IN YOUR HOME WILL
DRIVE YOUR NEIGHBORS TO A
NERVOUS BREAKDOWN—THEY
MIGHT CALL AN EXORCIST FOR
YOUR VACUUM CLEANER.
RELAX, A LITTLE DIRT ISN'T THE
END OF THE WORLD.



LIBRA:
YOU'LL TAKE SO LONG
CHOOSING BETWEEN PIZZA
AND SUSHI THAT THE
DELIVERY GUY WILL RETIRE.
THE STARS SUGGEST
FLIPPING A COIN.



SCORPIO:
YOUR VENOM IN APRIL WILL BE
PURE HONEY—EVERYONE WILL
FALL FOR YOUR SARCASM. BUT
DON'T STING YOURSELF BY
ACCIDENT; THE STARS CAN'T
STAND WHINING.



SAGITTARIUS:
IN APRIL, THE STARS ADVISE
YOU TO ARGUE LESS AND SMILE
MORE—IF ONLY BECAUSE IT'S
AN EASIER WAY TO AVOID
RANDOM CONFLICTS... AND
WRINKLES!



CAPRICORN:
WORK LESS, OR YOUR BOSS
MIGHT THINK YOU'RE A
ROBOT. THE STARS WHISPER:
TAKE A VACATION AND EAT
SOME ICE CREAM.



AQUARIUS:
BRILLIANT IDEAS WILL POUR
OUT LIKE FROM A CORNUCOPIA,
BUT HALF OF THEM WILL BE
NONSENSE. FILTER THEM, OR
YOU'LL END UP BUILDING A
ROCKET OUT OF CARDBOARD.



PISCES:
YOU'LL BE SWIMMING IN
DREAMS UNTIL YOU CRASH
INTO A DEADLINE. THE STARS
ARE THROWING YOU A
LIFELINE—SET A TIMER ON
YOUR PHONE.

MASLENITSA 2025: HOW IT WENT!

On March 2, 2025, we celebrated Maslenitsa with joy and grandeur! Our event gathered a record number of guests—many traveled not only from neighboring cities but also from other states to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of a traditional Russian folk festival.

Guests enjoyed fragrant blini, hot tea, traditional treats, and, of course, a rich entertainment program. Lively contests, folk dances, energetic music, and vibrant performances created the spirit of a true celebration. Smiles, laughter, and joy filled the entire day!

We thank everyone who joined us and are excited to share photos from the event:
[[link to photos](#) 📷].

Want to see more Maslenitsa highlights, including guest interviews and behind-the-scenes moments? Follow us on Instagram!

Thank you for being with us! See you next year!



VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH – ALEXANDER OKHAPKIN

If you didn't recognize him in the photo, let us remind you: in December, Alexander played the Nutcracker at the children's Christmas party, and at Maslenitsa, he brilliantly embodied the role of Solovey-Razboynik! Alexander put his heart and soul into organizing the events and has become an essential part of our big team. His enthusiasm, creativity, and kindness inspire everyone around him. Without him, our celebrations wouldn't be as magical!

Alexander, thank you for your hard work, talent, and genuine dedication!



HOW DID YOU FIRST LEARN ABOUT THE RUSSIAN CULTURAL GARDEN, AND WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO BECOME A PART OF IT?

We first learned about the Russian Cultural Garden on June 4, 2023, when we attended a rally dedicated to Alexei Navalny's birthday. There, we met activists who told us more about the garden. We were pleasantly surprised to discover such a place in Cleveland that brings together Russian culture, art, and history. Since then, we have been actively participating in the garden's events, supporting and contributing to the development of a space where Russian culture finds its reflection in the heart of Cleveland.

IF YOU COULD DESCRIBE YOUR VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE IN THREE WORDS, WHAT WOULD THEY BE?

Tired, frustrated, but still volunteering!
Tough, but worth it.

WHAT IS THE MOST MEMORABLE EVENT OR MOMENT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED DURING YOUR VOLUNTEER WORK?

The most memorable event during my volunteer work was, without a doubt, the New Year's party! I never could have imagined that one day I would find myself playing the Nutcracker straight out of a fairy tale.

WHAT VOLUNTEER TASK TURNED OUT TO BE THE MOST CHALLENGING FOR YOU, BUT ALSO BROUGHT YOU SPECIAL PRIDE?

Playing the Nutcracker at the New Year's party... I had never done anything like that before! It was unfamiliar, nerve-wracking, and even a bit scary. But when I stepped onto the stage and saw the children looking at the fairy tale characters with wide-eyed wonder, believing in the magic of the story, all my worries disappeared. The emotions were indescribable! In the end, I felt so proud that I pulled it off and became part of this celebration.



JOIN THE TEAM OF VOLUNTEERS AT THE RUSSIAN CULTURAL GARDEN!

LOOKING FOR NEW FRIENDS IN CLEVELAND? VOLUNTEERING AT THE RUSSIAN CULTURAL GARDEN IS A GREAT WAY TO MEET NEW PEOPLE AND BECOME PART OF A FRIENDLY TEAM!

IT DOESN'T REQUIRE A PERMANENT COMMITMENT – YOU CAN HELP WHENEVER YOU HAVE THE TIME AND DESIRE.



INTERESTED? EMAIL US AT
RUSSIANGARDENCE@GMAIL.COM.
 WE'LL BE HAPPY TO HAVE YOU ON BOARD!

EDITOR'S PICK



We are looking for an architect or landscape designer!

Dear friends!

The Russian Cultural Garden of Cleveland is looking for a talented architect or landscape designer to create a design for our space. We plan to develop sketches and projects for installing unique compositions that will highlight the cultural heritage and beauty of our garden.

If you would like to contribute to the development of the garden or know someone who would be interested, we would be happy to hear from you!

Email us at russianguardencle@gmail.com

Let's work together to make the Russian Cultural Garden of Cleveland a place that inspires and delights!





DID YOU KNOW?

Interesting Traditions and Celebrations in April:



Folk Omens of April:

- If April 1st is warm, the summer will be hot.
- A rainy April means a good harvest.
- "April with water, May with grass" - the more meltwater, the better the harvest of grasses and cereals.



Cosmonautics Day (April 12th):

This day is dedicated to the first human spaceflight – Yuri Gagarin, who orbited the Earth on April 12, 1961, aboard the spacecraft "Vostok 1." The day is marked by themed events, exhibitions, and screenings of films about space around the world. We would like to remind you that in Cleveland, in the Russian Cultural Garden, there is a bust of Yuri Gagarin. The monument was unveiled on August 25, 2019.

Yegoryev Day (April 23rd):

On this day, Saint George the Victorious, the patron saint of warriors and farmers, was honored. He was also considered the protector of livestock, so in villages, rituals were held to protect horses and cows, often involving the first drive of the animals to pasture after the winter.

Opening of the Land (Late April):

In the villages, they would say: "The earth is waking up, it's time to plow!" It was believed that the first work in the field should begin with a prayer, otherwise, the harvest would not be plentiful.



Support the Russian Cultural Garden – together we are creating the future!

Dear friends,

We continue to actively work on new projects to help the Russian-speaking community of our city grow and thrive. Organizing such events requires significant effort and resources, and currently, most of the expenses are covered by the personal funds of our volunteers.

The Russian Cultural Garden is a non-profit organization, and any support from you helps us maintain our garden and organize events for all of us. All donations go directly to improving the garden and implementing new initiatives.

You can support us by sending any amount via Zelle to the email: russiangardencle@gmail.com, with the note: "Donation for Russian Cultural Garden."

Your help, regardless of the amount, is invaluable.
Together, we can do even more to preserve culture and strengthen our community.

Thank you for your support!



Subscribe to the Russian Cultural Garden Magazine!

Want to stay updated on the most interesting events, projects, and news related to the Russian Cultural Garden? Subscribe to our monthly newsletter and stay in the loop with all the important updates!

How to subscribe?

Send an email to russianguardencle@gmail.com with the subject "I Want to Subscribe!", and we'll add you to our subscriber list.

Each issue includes:

- Stories and facts about the Russian Cultural Garden
- A review of past events
- Announcements of upcoming events
- Exclusive interviews and materials
- And much more!

Stay connected with our culture
and history!

