



Tidewater Ukrainian Cultural Association

Newsletter No. 50, November 28, 2011

<http://tuca.us>

Our 2011 Christmas Party:

This year the Tidewater Ukrainian Cultural Association (TUCA) will be celebrating the Ukrainian Christmas season on **December 18 (Sunday)** in the Williamsburg area. We attempt to alternate the location each year between the Southside and the Peninsula to best serve the geographic dispersion of our membership and last year it was held Southside.

Through the gracious hospitality of Father Alex Shuter, we are able to hold the party in the church hall that is part of Ascension of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church in Williamsburg (directions are at the end of this article). There is an attached kitchen that can be used for any heating of food.

The TUCA Board will be providing the normal party material (plates, silverware, etc). Additionally the Board has arranged for the purchase of varenyky/pyrohy (potato filled) for the party. We will also provide soft drinks for the children attending the party. Other beverages should be brought with you if something different or specific is desired.

We also request that people attending bring a prepared dish to share with the group. The preferred dish, if possible, would be a Ukrainian style item that is appropriate to the season.

We will have a "For The Children Fund" collection box for voluntary donations, where all funds will go to support a children associated effort in Ukraine. We will have information available concerning past activities that TUCA has sponsored.



2006 Christmas Stamp:
Svyaty Mykolai as a person who brings the Christmas gifts for children, the feast of which is marked on 19 December (OS). It is supposed, that children should find their Christmas gifts under their pillow on that morning.

The TUCA Board has authorized some small gifts for attending children. We would like to include a program pageant this year centered on children. We are allowing time in the schedule of events for any child who would like to perform. We encourage children to perform according to their interests (poem, songs, musical instruments, etc.).

Now for the specifics:

When: **Sunday, December 18, 2011 scheduled from 4PM to 7PM**
Where: **Ascension of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church
114 Palace Lane, Williamsburg, VA 23185**

Directions (off of I-64):

- Take exit 238 on to VA-143 E toward Williamsburg/Colonial (and go 0.7 mi)
- Turn right onto VA-132 S (go 1.2 mi)
- Take the 1st right onto US-60 W/Bypass Rd (go 0.8 mi)
- Turn right onto Palace Lane ... (go 0.1 mi.) ... Church will be on the left

Questions concerning the party can be directed to me (Myron Bilyj, Phone: (757) 850-1873, Email: crusier27@cox.net).



Jacques Hnizdovsky Christmas Card

UKRAINIAN RIZDVO (CHRISTMAS) - Ancient Traditions:

Since pre-history, the ancient tribes and nomads that populated the lands of present day Ukraine have celebrated the winter solstice, the shortest day and longest night, that foretold the season is changing, that spring, warmth and sun were on their way, that shortly the earth will again be re-born.

With over a millennium of Christianity, our Ukrainian ancestors fused new Christian beliefs and practices with symbolic, archaic traditions of lunar themes and ancestor worship. The reverence for animals, leaving an empty place setting at the table, kutia (wheat berry dish) and uzvar (fruit compote), non-meat and non-dairy dishes, the didukh (sheaf of wheat), all had special meanings steeped in symbolism.

Today's most important tradition is the whole family sitting down to Sviata Vechera (Holy Supper) on Christmas Eve, an event permeated with lunar significance. The meal begins with the appearance of the first star in the sky, varenyky/pyrohy are crescent shape reminiscent of the moon and, for Ukrainians, fish is a lunar symbol. The most prevalent myth is that the traditional 12 courses represent the 12 Apostles. They do not, as the Apostles are not at all involved in the Christmas story. The number represents the 12 cycles of the moon, the 12 months.

There are many regional and local variations of the 12 dishes and the order in which they are served. Whether a basic kutia begins the meal or a sweet kutia ends it, for that evening, we are surrounded by and connected to our ancestors.

Sviata Vecherya (Holy Supper) Dishes:

Kutia (boiled wheat berry/honey/poppy-seeds).
Kolach (a braided ring-shaped bread served with honey).
Borsch (meatless).
Ushka (tiny ear-shaped mushroom varenyky).
Fish (fried, sautéed, pickled or in aspic).
Holubtsi (meatless stuffed cabbage rolls).
Varenyky (potato or sauerkraut).
Sauerkraut and peas.
Beans lima or broad, (mashed with garlic).
Mushroom gravy.
Compote (from dried fruit).
Pampushky, Makiwnyk jelly-filled donuts, poppy-seed roll for desert.

Submitted by Olena Boyko

Bazaar Table:

TUCA will have a variety of Ukrainian items and artifacts for sale that may be just that extra something special for under the Christmas tree. We have pysanka kits, small and large painted wooden eggs, Ukrainian cookbooks and children's coloring books. We will also sell donated Ukrainian themed items, so bring whatever takes up excess space in your home.

Submitted by Olena Boyko,

Saint Nicholas Day:

Before Coca-Cola promoted the jolly bearded man in the red suit, before mass marketing, there really was a holy man who gave gifts. St. Nicholas is the special saint of Ukraine. He was given a fortune when his parents died, and he gave bags of gold (some say dropped from the chimney, landing on the

stockings drying on the mantel below) to daughters of widows. These mysterious gifts enabled the maidens to have a dowry and therefore marry and have a decent life. Many other miracles were attributed to him, including praying for a storm to subside while on a ship traveling to the Holy Land; praying for a dead sailor who returned to life, saving many people from death from a famine in Myra (where he was the archbishop).

Prince Volodymyr brought back tales of the Saint to Ukraine from Constantinople. The Prince had gone to Constantinople to be baptized.

It was a time of lots of fun in Ukraine on St. Nicholas' day. People would have friends over, ride sleighs around the village to see if the snow was slippery. And it was a special holiday for young children, who would receive gifts from St. Nicholas, because he is the patron saint of children (also of sailors). "Angels" would accompany St. Nicholas and the children would be quizzed on their catechism. In Ukraine, as in much of Europe, St. Nicholas' Day, December 6 (Dec 19 OS) is the day for gift-giving. Many Ukrainian communities in the U.S. have a St. Nicholas celebration, in the local church parish hall. (The Ascension Church in Williamsburg has one on December 11)

Christmas Day:

In Ukraine Christmas is celebrated for three days, after the feasting of Svyatyj Vechir on Christmas Eve. Since presents were given on St. Nicholas Day, on Christmas day it was the custom for all members of the family to have some new clothing.

Carolers would visit homes in the village, continuing to each home throughout the following weeks until Yordan (Epiphany -- January 6 or January 19 OS). The home of the priest was the first home to be visited and enlivened with the sounds of beautiful singing.

Caroling was something special, both for the carolers and the ones visited. The family would join in with the carolers, singing many carols, and offer the visitors something to eat and drink, and possibly give a donation for a worthy cause.

The Ukrainian greeting at Christmas time is "Khrystos Razhdayetsia!" (Christ is born). The reply is: "Slaveete Yoho!" (Let us glorify him).

Submitted by Elaine Hampton.

A Subtle Reminder:

Everyone knows that the New Year (2012) will shortly follow our Christmas Party. It would therefore be appropriate to remind TUCA members that annual dues for 2012, still only \$20.00 per family, will be due very soon. We would appreciate it if you would bring your checkbook to the party and hand a check to Lucy Halunko, our treasurer. A donation to our Ukrainian orphan children's fund would also be appreciated.

Christmas Greetings:

The TUCA Board wishes all our members and their families, our friends and our supporters a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Bountiful New Year. May the Child whose birthday we celebrate at Christmas grant all of us peace, tranquility, happiness and many blessings. Let us not forget that Christmas is about Christ and not about "black Friday" and "shop till you drop", to see just how many packages can be stuffed under the Christmas tree.

Khrystos Razhdayetsia!