



Barbara Coish, Chairman
Tel: 603.898.9520
Email: bacrdh@aol.com

WINDHAM

Sister City Committee

9 Golden Brook Road, Windham, NH, USA 03087



John Breda, Jr., Vice-Chair
Tel: 603.556.5028
Email: jbreda@comcast.net

TRIP TO SUZDAL, APRIL 2007

John Breda, Bruce Moeckel and Barbara Coish traveled to Suzdal, Russia from April 20 to April 29. Unfortunately Bette Williams who planned to travel with the group was not able to go on the trip.

The first thing that we noticed upon arrival at Sheremeteivo Airport was the beginning construction of the new terminal there. There was also work being done on the runways. The improvements to the airport will be a very pleasant change in the first impression for tourists to Russia.

The group was welcomed to Suzdal by our host families, with whom we spent the weekend. On Monday, we were welcomed by Mayor Sergei Godunin at which time we shared updates regarding each of our towns and exchanged gifts. We were the guests of the mayor for lunch at a lovely new restaurant, where we continued to share the hope for continued and increased cooperation between our towns.

The following day, we were treated to a daylong tour of new hotels and bed and breakfast style places for tourists to stay. Since Suzdal continues to be a tourist destination for Russian citizens as well as foreign visitors, these new places are a wonderful addition. Many of the businesses have joined together to form a group similar to our Chamber of Commerce by which they hope to encourage more tourism by their joint efforts. We were shown a rough draft of a planned small information center to be located just outside the town gates. They envision even having Suzdal's four sister cities having information displayed there.

We were carrying monetary assistance to the Orphanages #3 and #5. Presently all orphanages are funded by the federal budget and are quite well supported. It was suggested that we split our donation and give support as well to the hospital, which is in great need of renovation. The consensus of the three Sister City members who were there in Suzdal was to split the donated money and also give support to the hospital.

To explain the organization of the government in Suzdal now is a bit complicated. There are two mayors in control of different aspects of services housed in the same Administration Building. The support of education and medical services falls under the Ryon budget and Mayor Ivanov. The Ryon encompasses the Town of Suzdal and four outlying districts as well. During a visit to Mayor Ivanov, he described the changes and renovations already made to the hospital and the polyclinic, however as he explained there is still much to do. In a later visit to the hospital, the improvements were evident as well as the areas still in need of renovation. The Director of the hospital, Andrei Mnyov, who spoke quiet well in English, was very thankful for our support of the hospital renovations.

The group visited the library and its Director, Galina Nasadova. Once again we had carried several books in English to donate to the library. A very nice small collection of these books is beginning to take shape. We were presented with two books of poetry by local Suzdal poets. These books will be donated to the Nesmith Library.

Two large duffle bags of fabric donated by Windham folks were carried to the Quilt Club. This club continues to be an avenue for women to share not only their craft, but their lives as well. They have won many awards for their group created quilts, which have been entered in competitions around Russia and Europe.

The group visited the rebuilt fire station. During previous visits the station was viewed in various stages of destruction and reconstruction. Recently the men of the fire service occupied the finished building. The entire reconstruction took three years during which time the firemen lived in tents through all seasons of weather.

A visit to Vladimir occurred on Thursday at which time in addition to shopping, the group visited an exhibition of needlework authored by Klara Suchareva. She is a former physician who because of an illness no longer can practice as a doctor. She has founded a school, where she teaches many forms of embroidery. She has authored two books, which she presented to the group as a gift.

Friday, the group made a visit to the local newspaper. As usual, the group discussed the current visit and the impressions relative to changes that have occurred in Suzdal. An article on our visit, along with photos appeared in the April 28th edition of the Suzdal News.

Many days, John Breda was separated from the group and spent his time teaching in various schools and colleges. These visits to the schools are John's main passion. He loves interacting with the students and having them use their English skills to communicate with him. An exchange of a few students of English and their teachers of English is planned for the fall. Final plans are still in the works, but the exchange should occur in late October early November.

Although the Suzdal Administration would like to have Windham visitors to their town in August for the celebration of the town anniversary, because of conflicts, the next planned trip will be once again in April during school vacation 2008. So many positive changes have happened over the last five years in Russia, that it is a pity that people who visit Russia for the first time in the future will have never witnessed how advanced infrastructure has become in a short time. The thing that never changes over time is the hospitality and friendship of Russia's people.



(L-R) John Breda, Bruce Flanders, Bruce Moeckel, Klara Suchareva, and Barbara Coish



New Suzdal Fire Station



Windham's Sister City sign in Suzdal



New incubator at the Orphanage



New hospital ambulance



New kitchen at the orphanage