Gazeta Interviews Sasha and Lena Prokhorov  
Conducted by PJ Prather

Gazeta: So, how did you meet?
Lena: We met at college, during first year.
Sasha: Yes, we were both in the Philology department. There was also a diskoteka in our dorm. I was responsible for getting the lighting equipment and bringing it to the dorm - that made me popular.
L: You were popular anyway. You were tall and good-looking.
S: The moment I saw Lena I knew we would be in love for the rest of our lives.
L: So we danced. Just once, I think, but it was a slow dance. Then I helped you get a Christmas tree - well, a New Year's tree. That was the big holiday.
S: And I helped you get a tree. It's an all-day activity, so it was a big bonding experience.
L: Yes, so we bonded.
S: And we got married in 1990, in Russia.
L: We met in '82, so obviously it was a long romance.

G: Do you have any favorite Valentine's Day or Anniversary memories?
L: We usually go out for a nice dinner. Sasha is always very good about getting me flowers, also.
S: I try.
L: Just for the record, I don't like the color pink. But I do like flowers. Even pink flowers, I guess.
S: I think you like red ones better. And I can tell you, flowers don't just work for Valentine's Day.
L: So you are remembering some time that you were in trouble?
S: Well, I was going to say, for Christmas, there were flowers along with the presents under the tree. Even our daughter thought this was a good idea.

G: How is Valentine's Day celebrated differently in Russia?
L: There really was no Valentine's Day in Russia, except for maybe March 8.
S: Women's Day - it was sort of an equivalent in late Soviet culture. It was more of a political holiday, meant to celebrate the working woman.
L: This was the day that men gave women flowers and did housework.

G: What about wedding anniversaries?
L: Marriage anniversaries matter, but Russians aren't obsessed with them. Love is enough. When we lived in the Soviet Union, the divorce rate was huge. Both of our parents were divorced, and many of our friends. America saved us.
S: On the one hand, it helped because we could afford to buy our own apartment [instead of living with our parents, as many Russian couples have to do], and also the challenge of dealing with a new culture together brought us closer.

Continued on Page 2
G: What's it like to work together now?
L: It's good. No reservations there. The hardest was when he got tenure for a job, and I hadn't yet. I was never not working, but when you're also friends and colleagues [with your husband], sometimes a little competitiveness and ego comes out.
S: Along the same lines, I've always felt that Lena is more talented with languages than I am.
L: Please.
S: Come on! It's true.
L: Anyway, it really is great. When you have a problem, the other person is right there.
S: The same here. One obvious advantage is that we always give each other the drafts of things we're working on. When we have conferences or presentations we can practice for each other.
L: To be in the same small department, at the same small college, is very rare. We are very lucky.
S: Very lucky.
L: So, we love each other. We are very lucky.
S: Yes, it's great luck. And can I just say again, that I loved Lena as soon as I saw her. I just knew.
L [to me]: Do you believe that? [To Sasha]: I just thought you were tall and attractive. And popular, of course. I didn't find out you were such a good person until later on.
From the Russian House with Love: An Interview with Eric Muirhead, '08 and Annie Mosher Muirhead, '09

Conducted by Suzanne Reed

Suzanne: Eric, did you ever live in the Russian house?
Eric: I lived there for two straight years. I'm known in the Russian department as the "that" guy.
S: What does that mean?
E: I took two classes, neither of which was related to the Russian language and yet I lived in the house for two years and the entire Russian department knew me.

S: How did the Russian program bring you together?
Annie: We never would have met if I had not moved into the Russian house the second year he was living there.
E: I lived in the Russian house my sophomore year. I'm '08, Annie's '09, so I was a year ahead of her. And I lived there for a year and the very end of my first year in the Russian House all the students who were going to live there for the '06-'07 school year to come in and claim their rooms. And Annie walks in and my first thought is, "Oh wow! She's really cute. I wonder if she has a boyfriend." And, of course, she did.

E: So, the next time Annie and I really talked was at a party.
A: It was after the International House Dinner.
E: Where we performed, what I like to call the best skit in the history of "skit-dorm."
A: I think I was wearing a mustache.
E: Yes, you were.
A: And I might have been in an ушанка.
E: Yes, you were wearing my ушанка. We loaned it to you. And that night we played дурак.

S: Did you have any classes in the Russian department together?
A: Yes we did! One of the two classes that he took in the Russian Department was The Eastern Front, which is a fantastic class. If Lena ever offers it again everybody should take it.

(Continued on Page 4)
E: Ask Lena about that class. It's legendary.
A: It was team taught with the German department, so Bruce Campbell and Lena team-taught it. And it was a fantastic class and he [Eric] was completely obnoxious in it.
E: Well, I need to talk about why I was obnoxious. There were the perfect stereotypes in that class, because you had the German students who would self-isolate themselves on one side of the classroom, who would sit there looking completely stoic and quiet. And then you had the Russian students on the other side of the classroom being loud and boisterous and really annoying. Tim Lee was in that class and he was sort of the patriarch of our time in the Russian department. He and I would get in trouble because we would make a lot of sound effects during lectures.
A: And they were involved in the so-called guns and ammo part of the Eastern Front.
E: Because the class was really supposed to be how Germans and Russians remember the war. And thanks to a lot of us it turned into why World War II was awesome. So we had to read this short story called "The Stalin Organ," which was about Russian rockets. And Lena is going on and on and on about how significant this was and how big of a boon it was to the Russians and what psychological effect it had on the Germans. And at the perfect cue Tim Lee and I just start going "pyooopyoopyoo" [laser gun sound effects]. And all the Germans just started looking at us like, "What the hell is wrong with these guys?" And Lena just goes, in her Lena voice, "You know, sound effects aren't really necessary." We had already started dating at this point, so Annie just sort of buried her head in her hands.

Suzanne: So, you've had a Russian class together, but have you traveled to Russia together?
E: No, but there's a romantic story there.
A: Right. When you [Suzanne] and I were in St. Petersburg together, did you ever try to send anything at the Russian post office?
S: Yes! Once. But there was this horribly long line, so I eventually left without sending anything.
A: Ok, because I stood in that line multiple times to send him letters.
E: She picked the worst possible time to go to Russia. That was the summer of 2008 right after I graduated and I went into the Army right after I graduated. I was in Basic Training getting ready to go to Officer Candidate School. In Basic Training the only communication you have with the outside world is letters. You can't use the phone or computers or anything. The only communication you have with the outside world is letters, so they are like gold. And I told Annie right before I left: "I am going to need you to help get me through this." Because it was absolutely horrible. So, she would send me letters to Fort Bennington, Georgia from St. Petersburg, Russia, so that I could have letters during Basic Training. And then I would send letters to her parents so they could forward them to Annie in Russia. The funniest thing about that was that all though Basic Training I was getting letters postmarked St. Petersburg, Russia, so all the drill sergeants were just like "What the hell, Muirhead?"
A: Especially when I sent him a postcard of Lenin's body.
S: Does the Russian language or Russian culture still play a role in your lives or household?
E: We need a tour. [Via skype videochat they show me around their apartment].
So we’ve set up our apartment here and we’ve got little smatterings to remind us of the Russian House. Above our windows we have the St. Petersburg soccer banner. We have the odd model tanks.
A: And the Soviet hat.
E: Panning over in front of the TV we have my trusty ушанка, which got me through several Williamsburg winters. There’s a Russian tea set up there in the kitchen.
A: We’ve got Russian stuff everywhere.
E: Our house is basically decorated like a peasant’s hut in Siberia.
A: The craziest thing is this. So, my dad volunteers at the Newseum in Washington, DC. And they had a bunch of stuff on clearance in their gift shop one day including this giant poster of Red Square on my birthday, which is also the city’s birthday.
E: So the first thing you see when you walk into our apartment is Red Square.

A: And Eric doesn’t speak a lot of Russian...
E: It’s mostly curse words and phrases of confusion.
A: Yes, but we use the phrases of confusion very often.
S: Can you give me some examples?
A: Почему? Что ты делал? Что это такое?
E: Я не знаю!

E: Our wedding was basically a Russian house reunion. Three out of my four groomsmen were veterans of the Russian House and one of them had been dating a person who lived there, so he was there pretty much all the time too. Her [Annie’s] maid of honor was a veteran of the Russian house.
A: My roommate Michelle Kelly.
E: And there were a hundred other Russian House alumni who came to our wedding.
A: We also had шашильк at our wedding.
E: I moved into Russian House the very beginning of the 2005-06 school year. All my best friends from William and Mary are Russian House alumni; I met my wife through the Russian house. In short, the Russian House will always be my русский дом.
A: I love my husband, I love the Russian House and I never would have met him if I hadn’t convinced my roommate that we were going to live there.
E: I think the only way our wedding could have been better is if we had actually had it in the Russian House.
Interview with Mary Catherine and Dan Burke
Conducted by Emily Pehrson

Gazeta (G): How did the Russian program bring you together?
Mary Catherine (MC): It’s pretty simple actually. I was in 9:30 am Russian drill and I introduced myself to Caroline Adams, who actually also found her husband in that class, and it turns out that Dan was one of her good friends. After class she pulled me aside and introduced me to him. It’s funny, because the only reason he was in that class was because he got a really bad housing lottery number, so he moved into the Russian house and then decided to take Russian.

(G): Have you been to Russia together?
(MC): Yes, we actually went to St. Petersburg together in 2005. After we got married, people have asked how we knew we could work as a married couple, and we tell them that if we could survive six weeks together in St. Petersburg, we could definitely handle getting married.

(G): Do Russian culture or language still play a role in your life together?
(MC): Yes! It is partly because I am in grad school for Soviet history, so a lot of what I do, whether reading papers or teaching classes, I can come home and discuss with him. Recently we also hosted a Russian culture night at our house, where we watched Hunt for the Red October and made Russian food. Dan and I had to explain to all of our friends who don’t speak Russian what was going on and why it was that Sean Connery had a bad accent in the movie.

(G): Did you have a really memorable moment in the Russian program together?
(MC): Yes, definitely. One of the moments I have never forgotten was in second year Russian when we were learning how to propose. Dan had to practice proposing to me years before he actually did! We got engaged in my senior year, and he was older so he had already graduated. Bella walked into the classroom and asked [in Russian] if we had any news that day, so I responded that Dan and I were getting married. She didn’t believe me at first though!

(G): What particular aspect of Russian culture do you two enjoy together?
(MC): Mostly food and films . . . Russian language and culture is my job, so I’m always working with that, but as a couple we really enjoy the food and films.
Как русские относятся к дню святого Валентина?

By Suzanne Reed

Праздник День святого Валентина пришел в Россию с Запада. В основном он популярен среди молодежи. За последние годы ночные клубы начали устраивать тематические вечеринки и проводить большие акции в честь праздника. Юноши и девушки в России празднуют точно также как в Америке или в других странах. То есть влюбленные обмениваются открытками или, как говорится, валентинками. Мужчины дарят цветы или драгоценности женщинам. Пары ходят на свидания. Бывает такое, что даже друзья дают друг другу подарки. Один вопрос указывает, что в России около 81% людей в возрасте от 18 до 24 отмечают этот праздник. Но, как вы наверно уже догадались, среди старших поколений, праздник гораздо меньше отмечается.

Отношение к нему бывает ни только равнодушным, но и совершенно отрицательным. По самому экстремальном мнению, именно как у членов националистических движений, праздник считается чужим. То есть многие думают, что он представляет вредное влияние иностранцев на общество, и что он никакого места не имеет в русской традиции. С другой стороны, те, кто любят этот праздник, отстаивают аргумент, что любовь и выражение любви никак не могут быть плохими, и поскольку праздник даёт повод всегда этого, то он хороший. И те люди считают, что происхождение праздника совершенно ни при чём.

Хотя также распространение и циничное мнение, не отсутствующее и на Западе, что праздник является еще поводом, как и Рождество и прочим, для коммерческого выгода. И хотя он совсем не вреден, к празднику не нужно относиться по-серьезному.


Famous Russian Couples

By William Sinnott and Robin Parrish

Anna Karenina and Count Vronsky— The two famous literary characters engaged in an illicit and ill-fated romance in one of Tolstoy’s most famous and most oft-adapted works.

Larissa Volokhonsky and Richard Pevear are possibly the most famous pair of contemporary translators of Russian literature. Together they have written award-winning translations of Russian classics, such as The Brothers Karamazov, Anna Karenina, The Master and Margarita, and Dead
Gazeta, the only Russian-language newspaper at William & Mary, is written and produced solely by students who have an interest in Russian language and culture. Gazeta’s goal is to enhance students’ understanding of the Russian language by providing a regular opportunity for them to read and write in Russian, and to provide insight into modern Russian culture and cultural history. Gazeta is published monthly with glossed vocabulary, to ensure that second-year students of Russian can read the newspaper without dependence on a dictionary.

**Cartoon**

By Robin Parrish

Дилемма Раскольникова

Я привлекла много внимания... Все абсолютно точно понимают, что я только что сделал... Это конец всему!!

Все всё понимают... Мой подарок не будет для Сони сюрпризом.

Робин Парриш

Continued from Page 7

Souls, among many others. They collaborate on their projects, but their relationship is not limited to work—they have, in fact, been married for the past nineteen years. Emperor Nicholas II and Empress Alexandra—The last royal couple in Russia, their marriage was troubled by their son’s illness, allegations of scandal, and the political and social turmoil of the last decades of the Empire. Crocodile Gena and Cheburashka—While not a couple in the romantic sense, the animated duo are two of the most beloved characters in Russian popular culture. Ruslan and Lyudmila—The subjects of Pushkin’s first great work, the story elements derived from traditional Russian folktales.

**Announcements**

-Submissions for the next issue of Gazeta are due Friday, March 4. The theme for this issue is Women’s Day/Army Day.
-Submissions for the third issue are due April 1st. Details to come.