



TRAFFIC
Oct. 28-Subject arrested on Flamingo Road for DUI and booked into Clark County Detention Center.

THEFT
Oct. 27-Bike stolen from Thomas Beam Engineering building
Oct. 27-Bag stolen from McDermott Physical Education Center.
Oct. 28-Truck containing construction equipment stolen overnight from the baseball field.

FRAUD
Oct. 26-Subject committed forgery, passing bad checks and obtaining money under false pretenses during the San Gennaro Feast at the Thomas & Mack (9-4-93).

SEXOFFS
Oct. 26-Male subject was revealing the lower half of his body to students walking by the west side of the Boy Scout complex. Person filing the report would not sign a complaint.
compiled by Tonya Lomeo

THE REBEL YELL

University Officials look toward Russia for educational guidance

BY TONYA LOMEO
STAFF WRITER

When communism fell in the former Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain was dropped, the United States took an avid interest in probing the Russian lands.

Within the last month, UNLV seems to have become part of that probing process. Two university officials have taken the opportunity to visit Russia and view the educational system in an effort to hopefully improve their own.

Robert Ackerman, vice president of Student Services, visited nine universities in the cities of Moscow, Volgograd and St. Petersburg on his tour with the organization People to People. He explained the group, composed of administrators much like himself from across the U.S., was looking at "what they (Russians) do there in terms of providing activities outside the classroom."

"We look at the process of education so differently," Ackerman said. The Russians do not have many outside activities, whereas it is a priority for American universities to provide students with extra-curricular experiences.

Victoria Usnick, UNLV professor of mathematical methods and director of the math clinic, also spent the first week in October in Russia.

During her stay, Usnick visited elementary schools in Moscow, observing why Russian students score so much higher on math tests.

What she found was Russian teachers "put more emphasis on geometry and algebraic concepts in the elementary levels." She added that there were also "more verbal interaction between teachers and students" during math sessions in Russian schools.

The way the countries look at the educational system is very different, said Stephen Rowland, professor of geology. Rowland spent eight months working in Siberia as a Full Brite lecturer at the Novosibirsk University while doing research on fossil sponges approximately two years ago.

The universities in Russia are different because their training "is much more specific," he said.

Students don't choose the courses they take, he explained. It

is all predetermined for their line of study.

"Once you are trained in a field, it is almost impossible to switch," Rowland said.

Research, which is a requirement for American university professors, is unheard of by Russian professors, Rowland added.

Also, students do not pay for tuition to go to school. The state pays the tuition fee along with issuing students a \$6 monthly stipend, Ackerman said.

There is a certain prestige in being a student in the former Soviet Union as the number of students allowed into programs is limited.

The problem, Ackerman said, is that many of the materials used in classrooms are outdated, a complaint he heard from some faculty members.

"What is common place (for U.S. students) is rare (in Russia)," Ackerman said.

Usnick agreed that much is taken from granted in the U.S. She described an incident in which she gave a Russian instructor about 100 UNLV pencils. The teacher, she said, was practically in tears, saying the donation would last over a year. Pencils are expensive, Usnick added.

"We take so many things for granted in our educational system," Usnick said.

Rowland said "a lot of the flavor of the university reminded me of Berkeley in the 1960s - 30 years behind the times.

Russian children are obligated to attend school through the ninth-grade level, Usnick said. To continue on with their education, students have to take a test which will place them in a special school for their field.

Those tests, Usnick said, are oral exams as are most exams given in schools.

Cutting the lines between both systems are students like Slava Marchenko, a freshman in the Col-

lege of Business. Marchenko comes from the city of Saratov which is an hour south of Moscow.

In Russia, Marchenko worked as an interpreter for the Peace Corps, which is where he met volunteer David Roberck who helped him get into an American university.

The biggest difference between the systems, Marchenko said, is the practice of regular testing in classes. In Russia, he explained, students only take finals.

But Marchenko said he is very happy to be in the U.S. where he gets to "meet people of many different backgrounds."

He sees his experience in America as "a better opportunity to help my country."

Usnick said she has been incorporating the insights from the Russian educational system into her teaching at the university over the last three weeks. She is having slides made to show her students what a Russian classroom looks like.

The exchange of ideas has not been all one-sided. The Russians, too, are looking at what they consider to be the assets in the American educational system.

Usnick explained the Russian teachers are very interested in changing their system to be more like the U.S., while the U.S. is looking to mimic the system in place in Russia. That irony, he ventured, stems from the "American need to be No. 1."

The Citizens Ambassador Program, which facilitated Usnick, is hoping to hold another educational conference in two to three years. According to Usnick, they wanted to hold it in the U.S. but there is a problem with financing the Russians. Russian teachers only make about \$30 a month and could never afford to fund the trip or miss the work.

Conversation partners talk up storm

BY HEATHER SUBRAN
STAFF WRITER

The UNLV Volunteer Conversation Partners Program is designed to help international students learn English, and become familiar with American culture.

Vicki Holmes, director of the English as a Second Language program, said, "Basically I was interested in profiling this intercultural exchange. We started it last year on a smaller basis and we just had a few volunteers from the community who were willing to work with international students communicating in English."

The Conversation Partners Program includes students from over 45 countries, including Afghanistan and Spain.

According to Maria Ortega of Argentina and a student of UNLV, "The program helps very much. My partner helps me to talk English. I am very shy and sometimes I am afraid to talk because I am afraid that I will say something wrong, but my partner helps me. The program gives me confidence. I am encouraged to speak."

A partner may take the international student to plays, museums or for a day at the mall. After their initial introduction as student and tutor, they are encouraged to develop a friendship.

"Our students have had few opportunities to speak in English," says Holmes, "and even though their writing may be good, and they may have tremendous knowledge of grammar...they don't get the chance to talk, so we've

expanded the program this year."

The program has gotten well over a hundred volunteers from the community. Among these are senior citizens, professors on campus, and other faculty members. By volunteering their time to communicate with the students they, in turn, learn a great deal about foreign culture.

These volunteers seldom have much knowledge of the foreign language. According to Holmes: "There are many reasons why they volunteer. One is, they just like foreign cultures and they want to know more about it, and the best way to know foreign culture is to know the people. Another thing is a lot of them like young enthusiastic people, and then a lot of them just want to be helpful."

The volunteers are not expected to be grammarians. All that is needed is a generous spirit and an interest in other cultures. Another part of the Conversation Partners program is an exchange program, where English speaking students who are studying Spanish can become acquainted with a Spanish student. Therefore both students benefit, each learning a foreign language.

Senate

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Economics; Sen. Joe Martin, Business and Economics; and William Romero, Liberal Arts.

Fisher stated, "My contribution is that I've stimulated people to think and not just let every bill that comes in front of us fly through."

Romero noted, "I fell in love with the Senate during my first term, and the Senate is where it was and where it will always be for me."

Romero was chosen as Sena-

tor of the Year by secret ballot. This is the second time this honor has been bestowed on Romero. He and Fisher are both three-year veterans of the Senate and have served under two different administrations.

Neither Romero nor Fisher will be returning to the 24th Senate. Fisher is graduating and Romero wanted to give another student the opportunity to be on the Senate.

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