

**Bulgarian-
Macedonian National
Educational and
Cultural Center, Inc.**

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Preserving Tradition - Promoting Understanding

May 2012

From the Chairwoman Emerita

Patricia Penka French

A NEW ORGANIZATION TO SERVE YOU BETTER!



Incoming BMNECC President Ken Service presents me with a plaque from the board, honoring my 17 years of service as President.

Those of you who have visited the Center in recent months were able to enjoy spacious private parking for the first time in the Center's 80 year history! Thanks to substantial grants from the state and county we were able to acquire the properties adjacent to the Center last year and remove several dilapidated buildings to make way for the new parking area. In the years ahead we are planning other expansion projects to serve you better.

To spur these new developments we've been more focused than ever on strategic planning initiatives. Early in 2012 we conducted a survey of over 500 members and constituents. The results provided us with valuable feedback and ideas for new programming. To that end, we have restructured our organization, appointed several new officers and created new board committees to carry out our goals. After 17 years as President of the BMNECC, I have decided to step down from running the day-to-day operations of the Center. As Chairwoman Emerita, I will remain active in fundraising activities and major events. My tenure as BMNECC President has provided me with some of the most rewarding experiences of my life, and I thank all who have supported me through the years.

Our new President is Ken Service, a 17-year board member who has chaired the Finance and Capital Campaign committees for many years. He has a long history as a public relations manager for area universities and corporations and is currently Executive Director of the Pittsburgh Council on Higher Education. Edward Markoff is Vice President of Operations. Ed, a retired Alcoa executive, was President of the Bulgarian Macedonian Beneficial Association (BMBA) for 10 years and has been an active BMNECC board member and officer for 17 years. Polina Hristozova, a native of Bulgaria, is Vice President of Membership and Development. A Development DBA for UPMC, Polina has served on the board for five years. Don Ickert continues in his role as Treasurer. Don, a partner in the Bates, Barksdale, Ickert and Company accounting firm, has served on the board for five years. Long-time board member Angel Roy continues as Secretary. She is an Inside Sales Manager at Triumph Interiors and has managed our Soup Segal program since its inception in 1999. Walter Kolar continues as Executive Director, a role he's held since 1995. Walt was Managing Director of Duquesne University's Tamburitzans for 40 years.

We have many new committees, all chaired by board members. Greg Jordanoff chairs the Marketing, Membership and Sales Committee. Don Ickert chairs the Finance and Compliance Committee. I chair the Development and Fundraising Committee. Walt Kolar chairs the Building, Grounds, and Facilities Committee. Elsa Limbach chairs the Education and Culture Committee. David Kremen chairs the Executive, Nominating and Governance Committee. Dana Spiardi chairs the Communications and Processes Committee.

On behalf of our entire board of directors, we look forward to serving you during this exciting era of growth!



Before and after: the dilapidated building in the top photo were removed to create the new parking lot, shown below.





Calendar of Events

WWW.BMNECC.ORG



BMNECC at Pump House Market - Sundays thru October starting May 6	10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Salsa Dances - May 12, June 9	9:00 pm - 1:00 am
Special Late Night Vecherinka - May 19	10:00 pm
Pittsburgh Folk Festival - May 18 - 20	Check Times
Ladies Star Club Movie Night - May 25	7:00 pm
Combined Cajun and Zydeco Dance - June 2	7:30 - 11:30 pm
Soup Segal! - Returning in early September	9:00 am - Noon



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Drop us a line to subscribe to our email newsletter: **bmnecc@gmail.com**

POP SINGER TANYA BOEVA ROCKS THE CENTER!

Bulgarian pop sensation Tanya Boeva delivered a rousing 2-hour performance to a wildly enthusiastic group at the Bulgarian Center on Friday, April 27. Ms. Boeva's energetic, cabaret-style show got the crowd off their seats and onto the dance floor, where they rocked the night away.

Ms. Boeva is one of the pioneers of Bulgarian pop-folk and is the recipient of numerous awards, including Bulgaria's prestigious Golden Orpheus award for musical excellence.



She began singing at age 2 and made her stage debut at age 13. After 14 years of performing with numerous bands she launched a successful solo career in 1997 and has released 9 studio albums since that time. She's performed in a dozen major American cities, including Los Angeles, Dallas, Las Vegas, Boston and Chicago. We were pleased to be able to host Ms. Boeva's Pittsburgh debut concert!

SUMMER LAMB ROAST CELEBRATION IN THE WORKS

Join us for our first annual Summer Celebration! We're planning an outdoor lamb roast and will be serving up the best corn-on-the-cob you've ever tasted. We'll have a well-stocked cash bar, lots of live music from a variety of bands, and a chance to purchase unique ethnic gifts. Please visit our website in the coming month for more exciting details: www.bmnecc.org.

CHILDREN ENTERTAIN AT EASTER EVENT

The children enrolled in the BMNECC Cultural Program presented an entertaining song and dance recital during the Center's Orthodox Easter celebration on April 15. A total of 25 children participated! Please contact the Center at 412-461-6188 or at bmnecc@gmail.com if you are interested in viewing the photos and video of the performance. Attendees enjoyed a luncheon of roast lamb and many tasty side dishes prepared by various guests. A competition was held to choose the best kozunak (paska bread) from various regions of Bulgaria. Congratulations to the winners!



WOMEN'S STAR GROUP TO SPONSOR MOVIE NIGHT

The BMNECC's women's social group Star (Zvezda) will present a movie night on Friday, May 25. Kebabcheta and Shopska Salata will be served. Possible activities of the new group include craft-making, film screenings, book discussions, recipe swapping, cooking demonstrations, lectures, musical events, playtime with kids, and celebrations of Bulgarian holidays. You don't have to be Bulgarian to join! Please contact us for more information: bmnecc@gmail.com. You can also call Polina Hristozova at 412-531-4360 or Anelia McLaughlin at 412-726-4298.

The original Star group was active from the 1940s through the 1980s, carrying out programs and fundraising events that were vital to the success of the Bulgarian Center.

SHOP BULGARIAN AT PUMP HOUSE MARKET THIS SUMMER

The BMNECC will be selling handcrafted Bulgarian gift items at the Rivers of Steel Heritage Market at the historic Pump House on Sundays through October, beginning May 6. The market is open from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Special items include our beautiful



ceramic kitchenware and exquisite jewelry designed by BMNECC member Julie Rhyner. The Pump House is located at 880 E. Waterfront Drive, Munhall, PA.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR FOLK FESTIVAL AND VECHERINKA

Our Performing Ensemble Otets Paissii will perform at the Pittsburgh Folk Festival on the weekend of May 19 and 20. Please check our website for exact dates and times.



And remember to join us at the Bulgarian Center on Saturday, May 19, for our liveliest Vecherinka of the year. You can eat, drink and party till the wee hours, as you dance to the live music of our Otets Paissii Orchestra. Musicians from other Festival groups will also perform. The event starts at 10:00 pm. The menu includes a variety of hot and cold Bulgarian specialties and an assortment of beverages, plus a cash bar. Admission is \$8. Children under 12 are admitted for free.

BUY BULGARIAN CERAMICS AT CLOSEOUT PRICES

The BMNECC Gift Shop is having a close-out sale on all discontinued kitchenware items. These Bulgarian-made ceramics are made of lead-free glazed terracotta and are dishwasher and microwave safe. Each liquor set, coffee/tea set and pitcher set is now on sale for \$10 and all mugs are \$3.



SOUP SEGA! ITEMS DONATED TO EMPTY BOWLS EVENT

The BMNECC's Soup Segal kitchen donated dozens of gallons of delicious homemade soup to the 17th annual Empty Bowls Dinner at the Rodef Shalom Synagogue on Sunday, March 11. The Empty Bowls Dinner is a fundraiser which raises awareness of hunger in our communities. All proceeds benefit the Food Bank and Just Harvest.



Member Profile:

DIANE MOHR

Diane Mohr was first introduced to the BMNECC on a warm summer night while sharing a gourmet meal on the deck of Pat French's condo in Mt. Lebanon.

"The more I talked to my neighbor Pat, the more I realized I was a natural fit for the Center," says Diane. "My work on the board combines my love of travel, art, music, theater, food and different cultures. It remains a good fit to this day."

Diane has been a valuable, hard working board member for seven years, and is proud to co-chair the Art and Museum Committee. "I am a huge champion of the arts and my goal is to introduce new Bulgarian artists to Western Pennsylvania," she says. And she's done just that. The exhibits she's organized at the Center in recent years, such as the Georgi Petrov *Password: Love* show, have been well attended and well received.

Although Diane grew up in Western Pennsylvania, she has called many places home through the years. After graduating from Indiana University of Pennsylvania with a B.S. in French, she went on to earn a Masters in Education from Duquesne University. Along the way she's taught English and French in grades 8 through 12 and tutored college students before discovering her true calling as an international travel specialist. She is currently the owner of Enriching Journeys, having previously been the owner of The Travel Company from 1981-2008.



FOLLOW THE BMNECC ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER

Please follow us on Facebook! We currently have 84 followers and are striving for 100 by June 1. When we hit that mark, we'll choose one of our followers at random for a special gift. Visit our website and click on the Facebook and Twitter icons to follow us: www.bmnecc.org.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR EVENTS

The Center is hosting a number of tour groups and special events in the coming months and you can be part of the action! We need people to help out in the kitchen, work the buffet line and to help set up the dining area. We also need docents, bartenders and people to work in all areas of hospitality, culinary arts and archiving. We'll train you! Take a look at our list of events that require volunteers. You'll have fun! Visit: www.bmnecc.org/volunteer_events.aspx



In addition to arranging personal and unique international trips for clients, she has worked as an on-air travel industry consultant for WQED-TV, WTAE-TV, and KDKA-TV. She lived in Houston, Chicago and Rouen, France, before settling down in Pittsburgh.

Diane enjoys travel, gardening, reading mysteries, going to the movies, attending live performances and adopting rescue cats (Wonka and Miss Kitty). She is fluent in French and says her Italian is improving.

Diane is especially fond of her work as a mentor and volunteer for various humanitarian organizations. "I am a long-time supporter of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Greater Pittsburgh," she says. "My little sister Rebekah and her family have been an important part of my life for the past 13 years. This last year I have become involved with Lending Hearts, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing educational and recreational programs for Pittsburgh children and adolescents with cancer." Diane is also on the Board of Advisors for a new non-profit called Choices, a tutoring/mentoring and work program for people in our communities experiencing social and economic problems.

Diane says that one of the reasons she finally settled down in Pittsburgh is because it is a city so rich in culture and the arts.

"The Bulgarian Center epitomizes this wealth of cultural offerings," she says. "Through the Center I have made life-long friends. Plus, I enjoy helping to share and preserve the traditions of Eastern Europe. The BMNECC combines so many of the things and people that I care about under one roof. How great is that!"