

Mala stresses U.S.-Soviet cooperation

by Dr. Ted Mala

for the Tundra Times

Not many people think of it this way, but we are the only place in the world where the super powers share a common border.

Alaska is not only a big and resource-rich land, it is also located on the Soviet border. When we think of a Soviet border, we tend to think of Europe or Finland — rarely Alaska.

Daily, Europe and Finland have interaction with Russia. So do those in China and the Asian world. Yet Alaska has none. Oh, sometimes we hear about a Russian plane coming into U.S. air space or about Russian fishing boats or disputed territories, but much of that is negative and not representative of how most Siberian and Alaskan people are living their lives.

Alaska has little-to-no say about our interchange with the Soviets. Over the past five years I have been made more and more aware of that fact as I spend many months of each year flying between Moscow, Siberia, Washington and Alaska.

In fact, I am sitting in a hotel room in New York on Easter Sunday, writing this for the *Tundra Times*.

I have just spent the past week in Washington and in New York, attending high-level meetings with the Soviet deputy minister of health, the

under secretary of health of the United States and with the U.S. Surgeon General.

Within those walls of government, thousands of miles from Alaska and Siberia, our destiny was discussed.

My goal was simple enough: work with our neighbors to study and improve health for all Northerners. The Siberians want that as much as we do.

While much of that decision is out of Alaskans' hands, there is a groundswell of enthusiasm for this program.

Attending meetings with me in Washington was the Dr. William Kepler, University of Alaska-Anchorage vice chancellor of academic affairs, who was pleasantly surprised to see how many individuals back East recognize the importance of the UA-Siberian Medical Research Program and have pledged their support to us.

As of this moment, we are collecting the names of individuals from all over Alaska, the United States and even Canada. All of these many names are being put on computer disks under the six areas of our Siberian agreement, and plans call for the formation of teams and the actual writing of the work plans and grants this fall.

The University of Alaska has made this program one of its priority programs, and it has been supported by both the Legislature and the governor,



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as well as various communities around Alaska.

Other events will be happening that will be of interest to you. Soviet medical scientists will be in Alaska this fall to give talks on their work in the North and the development of their tundra and their people.

Toward the end of the year, we plan to publish a book that will be a guide for people doing medical research in

Now is the time to write and tell us who you are and how you would like to get involved. All you need is the will to see Alaskans and Siberians working together side by side.

Siberia.

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Let us know you care, and write to: UA-Siberian Medical Research Program, 3211 Providence Drive, Anchorage 99508.

Come and make history with us!