



Celebrating the birth of our flag FLAG DAY June 14



Town meetings

Chelsea

Town meeting, Thurs., June 10,
6:30 p.m. at Chelsea School

Vassalboro
Voters approve
all but one
article
page 3

Palermo
Two consent
agreements
presented on
violations
page 4

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Waterville-Kotlas connection celebrates 20 years

The mayor and deputy mayor of Kotlas Russia, will head a delegation of city administrators and teachers from the Waterville Committee in Kotlas, on a visit here from Saturday, June 19, to Sunday, June 27, in celebration of the Kotlas-Waterville Area Sister City Connection's 20th anniversary. A public reception will be held for the visitors on Wednesday, June 23, at 7 p.m., in The Forum at The Center, 93 Main Street, Waterville.

Motorists coming into Waterville over the Waterville-Winslow bridge are familiar with the sign proclaiming Waterville the sister city to Kotlas, Russia. Visitors to Head of Falls will see birch trees, most dear to Russian hearts, with a dedicatory plaque to the sister city relationship. How many observers know the story behind the sign and the birches?

In the early 1980s, during the Cold War, several residents of the Waterville area began to explore ways to establish friendly communications on a personal level between the United States and the Soviet Union. They decided to pursue a relationship with the city of Kotlas because of its similarities to Waterville—located on a major river, and with industries echoing

daughter, Jessica. While skeptical at first, the people of Kotlas soon warmed to the sincerity of the first Americans to visit their

cal and economic conditions. Seventy-four people from the Kotlas area have visited Waterville: students, teachers, doctors, city



A delegation from Central Maine visited Kotlas during the summer of 2005, and pose in front of the Tsar's Bell (20 feet high, 189 tons and never rung) that is located in the Moscow Kremlin. Front, left to right, Peter Garrett, Herb Foster and Jessica Garret. Standing, Linda Rennebu, Gregor Smith, Carl Daiker, Phil Gonyar, Joanna Hopkins, Ellen Corey, Nancy Foster, Paul LePage and Ron Turcotte.

Photo from the Kotlas Connection website



The storefront window at The Center in downtown Waterville where a Kotlas-Waterville Connection exhibit is displayed.

Photo by Emily Rowden

those of Waterville's at that time. In 1989, after five years of persistent effort, three Americans were invited to Kotlas—Natalia Kempers, Peter Garrett, and his 15-year-old

city, and agreed to send a delegation of their own to visit Waterville. On June 20, 1990, Waterville Mayor David Bernier and Kotlas Mayor Viktor Zverev signed a document establishing the Kotlas-Waterville Area Sister City Connection, and this June we will celebrate the 20th anniversary of our sister-city relationship.

The Kotlas Connection has scheduled special events to commemorate this anniversary. The second of two beautiful exhibits, Russian Arts and Crafts, is now on display in the window of The Center on Main Street. An exhibit of Russian artifacts is currently at the Winslow Public Library.

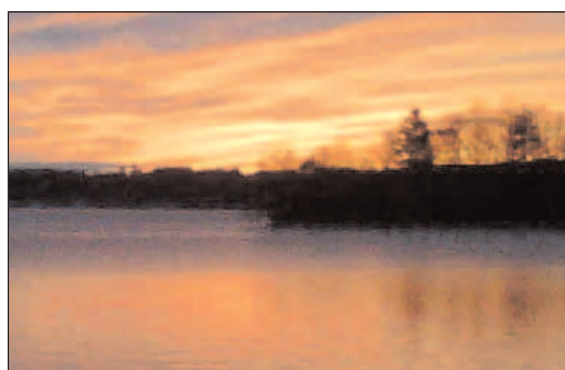
To recognize the celebration, the Maine International Film Festival (MIFF) will include two contemporary Russian films by very highly regarded directors: "Alexandra" and "A Room and a Half." A reception with Russian snacks will highlight one of the showings. The dates and show-times will appear in the MIFF brochure. The Kotlas Connection thanks Ken Eisen and the board of Railroad Square for their support.

The members of the Kotlas Connection are proud that the friendships they have formed over two decades have remained constant throughout ever-changing politi-

administrators, businessmen, and private guests. Several members of the organization have travelled to Kotlas to strengthen these ties.

Most recently, in 2009, four Russian language students from Erskine Academy went to Kotlas with two of their teachers and four delegates from the Kotlas Connection to participate in American Sampler Day, a day-long program in which Kotlas students study American culture. American Sampler is their counterpart to Russian Sampler, in which, for the past 16 years, the Kotlas Connection and the Colby College Russian Department have given Maine junior and senior high school students the opportunity to study Russian history and culture, and to practice hands-on traditional folk crafts. During a visit to Kotlas, a member learned of their students' interest in studying at a college in Maine. Thomas College responded enthusiastically to this proposition, and has had two Kotlas students there to both study and teach.

Further details of the history of the Kotlas-Waterville Area Sister City Connection and its activities can be found at www.kotlas.org. The Kotlas Connection relies on its members for donations of time and money to support its activities. It is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization; dues and donations are tax deductible. The committee warmly invites everyone to the reception to learn more about Kotlas and to meet the Russian delegation.



Deb Hamel, of Waterville, captured this sunset on May 27 over Webber Pond in Vassalboro.



Mark Huard, of Winslow, snapped this photo of a turtle walking across a lawn along Rte. 201 in Fairfield.

Give us your Best Shot!

The Town Line is bringing back its Best Shot series. Send your prize photos to The Town Line at townline@fairpoint.net as a jpeg attachment.