Dear Friends:

Welcome to the first issue of the Hermitage Museum Foundation Newsletter! We plan to send it to you periodically with updates on our most recent activities and well as on our future plans.

This past year was monumental for the Foundation. We celebrated many events and outreach efforts including: a screening of *Rape of Europa*, Robert Edsel’s stunning documentary film; a benefit dinner honoring our Director, Dr. Piotrovsky, in Palm Beach; a lecture and reception, *The Romanov Mystery: Closing the Final Chapter*; the Woodrow Wilson Award presented by the Kennan Institute to Dr. Piotrovsky at the Davis Awards Dinner, followed by a whirlwind of activities in Washington DC, documented by Voice of America News; and our annual White Nights tour in St. Petersburg.

Now is also the right time to thank the Friends of the Hermitage Museum Foundation for their personal commitment and efforts in making this newsletter a reality. Nothing is more valuable than one’s own time and they have generously given of it. Thank you for making such a difference!

In addition, I would like to express our collective admiration for the enormous professional and personal contributions—both historically and in the present—that have been and are being made by every single person involved in the safeguarding, management and growth of one of the greatest museums in the world. In the person of Dr. Mikhail B. Piotrovsky, all of us here salute each and every one of you. I look forward towards continuing our exciting journey together!

Kind regards,
Paul Rodzianko, Chairman

SAVE THE DATE

- **White Nights Tour**, St. Petersburg, Russia, June 23-29, 2010
- **Hermitage Banquet Gala**, St. Petersburg, Russia, June 25, 2010
Dr. Piotrovsky Honored by the Kennan Institute with the Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service

By Kathy Springhorn

Washington, D.C. – On October 1st, Dr. Mikhail B. Piotrovsky, was honored with the prestigious Woodrow Wilson Award for Public Service at the Kathryn and Shelby Cullum Davis Awards Dinner. His keynote speech was greeted with a standing ovation from diplomats, the media, and Directors of the New York-based Hermitage Museum Foundation. Several days of special events in honor of Dr. Piotrovsky and his wife, Irina, began with a luncheon hosted by Dr. and Mrs. James Billington in the rare instruments Whittall Pavilion of the Library of Congress, with a tour and a private viewing of LOC’s rare Russian books and engravings. After a Hermitage Museum Foundation board meeting at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a reception was hosted at Book Arts Conservatory by owners Stephen Vanilio and John Paul Greenawalt, who delighted Dr. Piotrovsky with a gift of one of their hand-made leather presentation holders containing a facsimile of the actual United States check issued to Russia for the purchase of Alaska. Director Gary Vikan hosted a private tour and tea at The Walters Art Museum, and Director Fred Fisher and Curator Emerita Anne Odom hosted a luncheon and private tour of Marjorie Merriweather Post’s former home, the Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens. A behind the scenes tour was hosted by Mervin Richard of The National Gallery. The Honorable Esther Coopersmith gathered 50 of Washington’s elite at her Georgetown home for a dinner party, and John Marshall, Director of Guest Relations, lead a private tour of George Washington’s Mount Vernon Estate and Gardens, with a climb into the cupola atop Mount Vernon and a visit to George and Martha Washington’s tombs, where the Piotrovskys laid a ceremonial wreath of boxwood, followed by lunch at the Mount Vernon Inn. Founder and Chair Wilhelmina Holladay and Director Susan Sterling welcomed the Piotrovskys back to The National Museum of Women in the Arts, for another private tour and a “Vin d’honneur,” with caviar and a farewell champagne toast. Before they returned to St. Petersburg, more congratulations and final good byes were said at a New York reception at the home of the Honorable John Train, hosted by his daughter, Musa Klebnikov, a Hermitage Museum Foundation Board Member.

WOODROW WILSON AWARD photos:

1. Dr. Piotrovsky’s award acceptance at the Mayflower Hotel

2. Paul Rodzianko, HMF; George A. Cohon, founder McDonalds Russia; Dr. Mikhail B. Piotrovsky; Neville Isdell, former Chairman - Coca-Cola; Blair Ruble, Director of the Kennan Institute

3. Paul Rodzianko with Kathryn Davis

4. Irina Piotrovsky; Dr. Mikhail Piotrovsky; Marjorie Billington and Dr.
Dr. and Mrs. MIKHAIL B. PIOTROVSKY’s WEEK in PHOTOS

1. Dr. Mikhail Piotrovsky inspecting the “Rubens Vase” at The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD
2. One of the "Monuments Men" Harry Ettlinger with Dr. Piotrovsky at the New York City cocktail reception
3. Dr. and Mrs. Piotrovsky, Anne Odom, and HMF members in front of "The Dacha" at Hillwood Estate, Museum and Gardens
4. Dr. Piotrovsky congratulated by Mikhail Shvydkoy, President Medvedev’s Special Cultural Representative
5. New York City reception at the home of John Train: Musa Train Klebnikov and Pierre Apraxine
6. Dr. Piotrovsky, Jacques Leviant and Paul Rodzianko at the New York City reception
7. Dr. Piotrovsky and Wilhelmina Holladay admiring painting at the National Museum of Women in the Arts
8. Private Tour of the National Museum of Women in the Arts led by Susan Sterling, Director and Wilhelmina Holladay, Chair and Founder
9. HMF’s Annual Board Meeting in the IMF’s board room – Presentation by Stephen L. Vanilio
10. Luncheon at the Library of Congress – Dr. James Billington greeting his guests
11. Dr. and Mrs. Piotrovsky at Mount Vernon
12. Dr. and Mrs. Piotrovsky with John Marshall of Mount Vernon preparing to lay boxwood wreath on tomb of George Washington
13. Farewell reception at the home of John Train – Peter Schaffer and Francine du Plessix Gray
Annual Board of Directors Meeting and Cocktail Reception at Book Arts Conservatory
By Taisha Hutchison

The Hermitage Museum Foundation held its annual Board of Directors meeting on Friday, October 2, 2009 in the International Monetary Fund, Washington, DC, to discuss the year in review and future efforts. Dr. Mikhail B. Piotrovsky, Director of the Hermitage Museum gave a commentary on the Museum’s 20/21 renovation project. Mr. Stephen Vanilio of the Book Arts Conservatory and a valued Advisory Board member, also made a fascinating presentation of the Book Folio Project created by Book Arts.

Following the meeting, members of the Board of Directors, Advisory Board and Friends of HMF joined other distinguished guests at a fabulous reception generously hosted by Messrs. Stephen Vanilio and John Paul Greenawalt at the Book Arts Conservatory also located in the IMF building. As guests arrived, they were greeted with the strains of Russian music played by the "St Petersburg Trio" – a wonderful balalaika group. Accompanying the chilled vodka were lavish platters of smoked salmon with all the accoutrements. The highlight of the evening was a presentation to Dr. Piotrovsky by Messrs. Vanilio and Greenawalt of a facsimile of the US check that purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867.

An Interview with Mr. Stephen L. Vanilio of the Book Arts Conservatory
By Taisha Hutchison
Following the Book Arts Presentation during the Board of Directors Meeting

TH: What did you showcase at the Annual Meeting?
SV: A recently completed a special edition for the Ufizzi Gallery, Florence which consists of 10 print masterpieces housed in an elaborately 23 karat hand gold tooled leather presentation box. As well as a limited edition book featuring three plays, one never-before printed, by Tennessee Williams. We were pleased to present Dr. Piotrovsky with a facsimile of the check that was used to purchase Alaska presented in a custom made calf portfolio - hand tooled in 23 karat gold.

TH: What is a current project?
SV: We recently completed gifts commissioned by the White House for the Emperor and Empress of Japan, the President and First lady of China, The President of Korea, and The Prime Minister of Singapore.

TH: What working plans do you have with Hermitage Museum Foundation?
SV: We envision a series of collectible pieces that will tell the story of The Hermitage primarily through images of art explore important themes or time periods.

TH: The image and the word...comments?
SV: This is something I can talk endlessly about! For the past 500 years, there are two traditions in the world of books: the book as a vehicle to transfer information widely and the book as an art object. The logical conclusion to the first tradition is the e-book. We are very much in the latter tradition. We produce unique books that last many generations and are appreciated as objects of art.

TH: Has today’s economic climate had a particular bearing on Book Arts production capacity?
SV: On the contrary, we have experienced a record high this year, beating the record of last year...it seems in these difficult times, people are investing in objects that last and not so much the ephemeral, such as fashion. Our books are meant to go beyond “the moment.”
Dr. Piotrovsky visits Palm Beach

In February, en route from Houston (where he attended the opening of Genghis Kahn at the Houston Museum of Natural Science) to St. Petersburg, Dr. Mikhail B. Piotrovsky paused to refresh in Palm Beach, Florida. As the guest of the Hermitage Museum Foundation, Dr. Piotrovsky enjoyed a whirlwind weekend of events and press interviews.

A gala dinner was hosted by Thomas C. Quick at his home and was attended by over fifty supporters of the Hermitage Museum. An in depth tour of Palm Beach’s unique Addison Meizner architecture was organized by John Carl English with the Preservation Foundation and Town Historian, Jim Ponce. Dr. Piotrovsky and HMF directors and guests were able to discover Palm Beach from the inside-out while enjoying lunch at the exclusive Bath and Tennis Club and a farewell breakfast hosted by Mr. Donald Trump at “Mar-a-Lago”, former home of Russophile and collector, Marjorie Merriweather Post.

1. HMF Directors visit the Davis family
2. Dr. Piotrovsky and board member, Valerie Evans-Freke enjoying Palm Beach
3. Donald Trump greeting Dr. Piotrovsky at Mar-a-Lago (National Historic Landmark and the former Marjorie Merriweather Post estate)
4. Television interview with Toni May of WXEL PBS
5. Addison Mizner Architectural Tour with Jim Ponce, Town Historian
6. Advisory Board member John Carl English with Dr. Piotrovsky and Paul Rodzianko in front of Mar-a-Lago
7. Brunch at Mar-a-Lago, hosted by Donald Trump
8. Inside Mar-a-Lago Dr. Piotrovsky autographing a book with Paul Rodzianko looking on
Screening of The Hermitage Dwellers
By Dmitry Yermolayev

On October 28, 2009 Sothebys and the Hermitage Museum Foundation held a joint reception and screening of the documentary film The Hermitage Dwellers at the Sotheby’s gallery in Manhattan. More than 50 attendees enjoyed wine and hors d’oeuvres followed by the film by Aliona Van der Horst. After the screening, guests were invited to view the Russian show of works to be auctioned in November. The Hermitage Museum Foundation appreciates the opportunity to partner with Sotheby’s to provide its members and friends a chance to learn more about the Hermitage as well as to have a unique access to view some of the rarest pieces of Russian art from various private collections.

The Hermitage Dwellers masterfully intertwined the life stories of the people who work in the Hermitage Museum with the glorious art works housed in this St. Petersburg institution. For the “hermitage-niks,” who are the main characters of the documentary, the Museum has been a safe haven from the tumultuous events of Russian history and the hardships of contemporary Russian life. Each tells their tales of trials and tribulations and how they have developed intimate relationships with the artwork and museum itself. For them, the Hermitage has become a place of emotional healing.

Memorable guest quote:
“Thank you so many times for yesterday. What a magnificent movie! I laughed and cried, it was like coming home. How did they do it? I don’t know. In the years past I have seen so many documentaries about the Hermitage, have read so many articles about it, but they left my memory as soon as they have entered. But this was a bouleversement. A wonderment. Thank you so much again, Galya.”

UPCOMING EVENTS
This year we plan on holding an array of exclusive lectures and events including:
• Cynthia Whitaker’s lecture “Catherine the Great and the Art of Collecting – A Network of Spies”, February 18, 2010
• “Will the Real Faberge Please Stand Up” lecture by Peter Schaffer of A La Vieille Russie, April 2010

Please visit our recently updated website (www.hermitagemuseumfoundation.org), for up to the minute information about upcoming events and news. We welcome your comments, which you can now submit on the website.

We rely on the generosity of our friends. Without your support, the Foundation cannot advance its valuable mission. For example, our website’s re-design was made possible through generous contributions from Robert M. Edsel and the Monuments Men Foundation together with the Arthur and Holly Magill Foundation.

If you wish to make a donation, you can now send it via the website or checks can be made payable to: Hermitage Museum Foundation (USA), Inc.

Thank you!

ABOUT THE HERMITAGE MUSEUM FOUNDATION
The Hermitage Museum Foundation (USA), Inc. (HMF) supports the State Hermitage Museum’s collections, as well as its artistic and educational missions. Through fundraising efforts, the HMF sponsors restorations, exhibitions of American art, private curatorial tours, member trips, concerts, film screenings, and lectures. It works closely with other foundations, museums, and businesses in the United States supporting the Hermitage Museum and advancing Russian-American cultural diplomacy.