

UNBC prof reflects on changes in Russia

By JOHN YOUNG

For the Free Press

We've all heard something about the new Moscow: the successful resuscitation of Boris Yeltsin's presidency, the recent bombings on public transportation, various accounts of "new Russians" and/or organized crime, and the "struggle" for democracy. It's one thing to read about these events from afar; it's quite another thing to witness them from within Moscow itself.

This was my seventh trip to Moscow in eight years, but the pace of change in Moscow is such that many familiar hang-outs and landmarks from even two years ago no longer exist, while new cafes and attractions abound.

Gorky Park, for example, is now an amusement centre with new western-style rides (and the high prices that go with them!). Another huge park built to show off the achievements of Soviet science has been transformed in an odd kind of shopping centre with Japanese electronics and other consumer goods. Years ago, there were con-



The Moscow State University (above), Russian concerts and ballets were on the UNBC itinerary, but so were a ZZ Top concert, Russian rodeo and 'wild-beyond-belief nightclubs'. PHOTO ROB VAN ADRIKHEM

certs and ballets to attend. We visited those, but also a ZZ Top concert, the first-ever Russian rodeo, and wild-beyond-belief nightclubs.

I played a double role as professor and "papa duck," leading a group of 15 little ducklings in the famous Moscow subway or through Red Square.

The students themselves might be classified into three groups: those who suffered from culture

shock and immediately started counting the days until they got home, others who did their best to cope with the shock and make the best of the experience, and students who did not miss a beat and even quickened the pace, adjusting to Moscow with apparent ease. Those more adventurous students soon tired of "the group thing" and explored the city on their own.

A few weeks into the

course, I visited an acquaintance at his private "banya," a Russian sauna. A professor of politics at Moscow State University, he began to discuss the results of the presidential election and Russia's political transition. The main problem with democracy, he pointed out, is that it is much more an ongoing process than a specific point end. Because democracy is a process, he added, Russia would only

really understand how to get there after it had already arrived.

Working with a group of 15 Canadian students helped me understand contemporary Russian society a bit better. In Russia, there are also those who suffer from transition shock and would like a return to the safer confines of how things used to be. There are others who try to cope with the massive economical, political, and social changes as best as they can, and there is a third segment that has quickened the pace without missing a beat.

UNBC Political Science professor John Young has made several trips to Russia in the past, but, as this is the first overseas course offered at UNBC, this is also a first for him.

School bus registration

School bus registration starts Aug. 22, 23 and 24 at Pine Centre Mall. Information and brochures on routing and scheduling will be available. A course on bus safety for kindergarten students will also be taught but children must be pre-registered. Call 561-6802 for more information.

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The Journal of Natural Products in March 1991 released an article which indicated that studies into the active ingredients in the herb cats claw may aid in preventing strokes and reducing the risk of heart attacks by lowering blood pressure, increasing circulation and inhibiting the formation of plaque on the arterial walls and the formation of blood clots in the vessels of the brain, heart and arteries. In his best selling book *Vibrational Healing* by Dr. Richard Gerber, Dr. Gerber says Cats Claw may show great promise for the treatment of arthritis when taken internally while European studies have shown that this herb may be of interest to those individuals suffering from painful joints.

Cats claw is not recommended for pregnant or nursing women and is also contraindicated for transplant carriers because of possibility of graft rejection.

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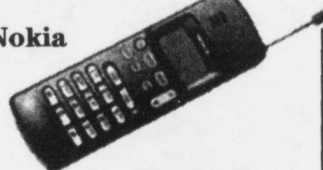


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