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№27 (2008)



**Summer Eating On the Dnipro**  
 A What's On guide to Kyiv's adventurous floating restaurant scene

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16 July - 23 July 2008

**Ukraine Today**

**The Sweet Stuff Getting to the Bottom of Ukrainian Honey**



Honey-making and beekeeping are extremely popular in Ukraine; in fact, the related crafts make Ukraine famous throughout the whole world. Officially Ukraine is one of the world's leading five honey-producing countries. Recently beekeeping has become something of a high-profile craft, as President Viktor Yushchenko has made it no secret that it's one of his favourite hobbies. But what's it all about?

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**Kyiv Cars**

**Greased Lightning Without the Brylcreem**



The Porsche 911 Carrera S is a status symbol. It is a dream car the people with low self-esteem believe will make their lives

complete, the adequate think will make them more so, and the show offs want one to be able to do more showing off. Whether that's a good thing or not is always down to individual thinking, but what is often forgotten behind all that is

**Ukraine Today**

**Bringing Little League Baseball to Ukrainian Orphans**

Bringing Little League Baseball to Ukrainian Orphans

*It is a well-known fact that Ukrainian orphanages are drastically under funded, and the kids that live there are lucky if they have a decent pair of shoes. While there are many charities trying to help the unfortunate children who live there with clothes, hygiene materials and even food, one man is trying to bring a little quality to their lives, American style.*  
 Basil Tarasko, a US citizen, born in Germany to Ukrainian parents, has been coaching baseball here in Ukraine since 1991, and over recent years has been trying to introduce Little League to children's homes throughout the country. This year, if he can raise the money required, he will be staging the first every Little League baseball championships for orphanage teams.



Having arrived in the states when he was 5 years old, Basil has lived in New York City all his life. A mathematics teacher in a middle school there, he became involved in coaching college baseball, and then Little League when his sons were growing up. He went on to become a professional scout for the Atlanta Braves and the San Diego Padres, and so his credentials as both a lover of the game and a professional are pretty good.

His commitment to Ukraine started in 1990 when he was coaching baseball at the City College of New York. One day he spotted an advertisement in the NCAA news, a college sports newspaper, for the Moscow Red Devils, a professional baseball team. The advert said they were looking for coaches to help develop baseball in the Soviet UNION. "My parents were Ukrainian, my wife's Ukrainian, but this was the Soviet UNION and I really didn't know a whole lot about it. I wasn't sure, but my wife told me to go for it. I sent off my resume along with a letter saying that I love the food, I know the language, and I drink a little vodka," Basil explains.

A few months later Basil got a call from Richard Spooner, a businessman who travelled frequently between Moscow and New York. The two of them met, and after a little chat Richard told Basil he'd like him to come to Moscow. "I asked if they played baseball in Ukraine, and Richard said yes, so I told him: 'I want to go to Ukraine,'" he says emphatically.

A few weeks later he received a fax from the Moscow Sports Ministry inviting him to come and coach baseball in the Soviet UNION. "I didn't know what to do, cause now it's on the table," Basil remembers laughing.

The next thing he knew he was on a plane to Kyiv. "As the plane was coming into land, tears started coming... I just started crying. It felt like I was coming home," he says, the emotion at the memory still apparent.

This was in June 1991, and Basil coached the local baseball team for six weeks, and then went home. Of course, in December that year the Soviet UNION collapsed. "I figured that's it!" Basil declares. "I forgot all about it."

Only in the middle of 1992 when a friend of his returned from a trip to Kyiv did Basil find out baseball was still being played in Ukraine. With such a love for the sport and the country, he didn't waste any time and sent off a letter to Valery Borszof, the Olympic sprinter who was the Minister for Sports in Ukraine at that time.

In 1993, Basil was back in Kyiv for the second time, and in 1994 he became the first ever national baseball team coach in Ukraine's history when he took the junior team to the European Championships. That same summer, the national senior team, on their first trip out of Ukraine, won the European Championships held in Slovenia.

"In 1994 we had great baseball players, but when I returned the next year it was a whole new team. I asked what had happened and I was told that the old players had had to move on because there was no money in baseball and they had to support their families," Basil explains. "And then it hit me, who's going to be playing baseball in 10 years? We need kids."

It was at this point, in 1995, that Basil turned his attention to Little League to try and get the kids interested in the game and produce the players of the future for the country's national sides. That's when things started to get really busy here for the baseball enthusiast. He started looking for communities that wanted to start a youth programme, and give their kids something to do other than wander the streets. Once he'd found such programmes he would provide them with equipment, and rules.

Over the next few years the popularity of this programme spread throughout the country, but in the summer of 2003 Basil became very disheartened when he attended a Little League meeting in Kyrovograd. "I almost left Ukraine, because the coaches started complaining about the equipment they were receiving. Little League does not give out any equipment, but being Ukrainian, I decided to help out. I have many contacts in the States where people donate equipment, and ship it over here, and even the US government helped out once bringing stuff over. I wanted to let the kids play and hopefully

**Kyiv Life**



**Calendar**

July 2008						
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**Weekend Pick**

**Top Russian DJ Descends on Kyiv!**

DJ Spy.der, Tsar project (1A Hrushevskoho), 26 July at 22.00  
 Tsar Project invites you to its Moscow Saturday party, where one of the best Russian DJs, DJ Spy.der, will spin the decks.



He's the first Russian electro musician to release a vinyl disc in Germany, and later on he played sets at the biggest rave festivals all over the world, including Kazantip, Mirovozzrenie and Love Parade. He's also the winner in the DJ of the year category at the Moscow nightlife awards. Devote your Saturday evening to hearing the best Moscow dance music on the market. Call 278-0216 for more information.

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### Kyiv Kino

#### Hellboy II: The Golden Army



Action, 2008, USA  
Directed by Guillermo del Toro  
Starring Ron Perlman, Selma Blair, John Hurt  
The mythical world starts a rebellion against humanity in order to rule Earth, and Hellboy and his team return to save humanity.

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### Kyiv Culture

#### Gaitana Going Strong Ukraine's Soulful Singer Talks



Ukrainian, half Congolese singer Gaitana is the real thing in an artificial pop landscape. But who knew that she almost became a table tennis champion instead of a musician?  
"I know what I want and I've always known what I wanted," says Gaitana, sitting at a secluded table amidst the alpine-lodge elegance of Soho steakhouse. "I loved to sing and I did it sincerely, with my whole heart."

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let the national teams grow down the road. So when coaches started complaining that he got seventeen baseballs and I only got thirteen me and my assistant through down the paperwork and said: "from now on you're on your own."

Basil felt he'd helped out enough by that point and started looking for a new direction. Shortly afterwards he happened to meet a woman who was the president of the Help Us Help the Children Fund in Kyiv which helped children's homes around the country. The two of them started looking for orphanages large enough to form Little League baseball.

**"Last year, our thirteen and fourteen year old team, the next division up from Little League went to Poland and beat England 3-2 in the finals: a team of all Americans whose families live in the UK. They went on to Michigan for the World Series free of charge!"**



Since then Basil has provided equipment to thirteen children's homes located in various parts of the country, and four of them have become officially chartered as Little Leagues. "These four orphanages qualify for the proposed first ever Little League championship for orphans, in the world! We're hoping to hold it this September in Kyiv," Basil says, obviously proud of this achievement as much as any other.

And it's right he should be proud, because not only does the equipment he provides give the kids a day-to-day quality of life, but, due to the way Little League baseball works, gives them opportunities they would have been exceptionally

unlikely ever to experience.

Every Little League consists of four teams and at the end of the season the league forms an All Star team, which goes on to play in the Ukrainian national championships. The team that wins that gets onto play in the European championship, and the team that wins that gets an all expenses paid trip to the US to compete there. Basil explains: "Last year, our thirteen and fourteen year old team, the next division up from Little League went to Poland and beat England 3-2 in the finals: a team of all Americans whose families live in the UK. They went on to Michigan for the World Series free of charge!" This wasn't a team from a children's home, but the same opportunities are now available to these kids as well, thanks to Basil's efforts.

Establishing these Little Leagues was no mean feat, and Basil travelled the length and breadth of the country visiting children's homes. "There's so many of them, I had no idea. The vast majority of them are run by people who care very much for the children, and know all their names. We offer them Little League. Some of them take it, some of them don't," says Basil.

If a children's home decides to go with the programme, they get a starter pack, which includes bats, balls, shirts and gloves, and two of their teachers are trained in coaching. This of course costs money, all of which comes from the States at the moment, through Basil's own endeavours, but he's hoping that will change. "The point of Little League is that a community gets involved. They should raise money themselves if they want to build a field or they need equipment. The people who live there, if they are concerned about the kids, should do something for the kids. We're now spreading the word through the ACC and the Lions' Club, that these are your kids, and you need to do something for them."

The message is slowly getting across, and businessmen and women throughout the country are starting to offer funding for Little League teams, some of whom are building purpose built pitches, but it is a slow process, especially when it comes to children's homes. "We're staging the first ever Little League baseball championship for orphans, and it's happening here in Kyiv at the end of September. That costs money. Transportation, accommodation, food - it all adds up. The Kyiv Lions' Club has donated \$3,000 dollars, but we're really looking to local business people to get involved," says Basil

While there are only four orphanages taking part this year, Basil is confident more children's homes will get with the programme once the word gets around. "We invited all 13 orphanages that have equipment to come, and four are taking part. The winning team will have the chance to go on to play in the Ukrainian championship. Once the others see the benefits of it, more and more will want to take part," Basils says with unreserved commitment.

The value of participating in such a competition for the unfortunate kids living in the country's children's homes is immeasurable. "Last year, one orphanage in a village miles from anywhere wanted to come on board. They got equipment from us, and they wanted to come to the Little League tournament. They'd only been playing three months, but they came," Basil says, his excitement mounting as he remembers. "It was their first time on a train. They'd never been anywhere in their lives. First time they've been to the Black Sea. First time they've been on a baseball field. Their first game was against Kirovograd, the eventual winner. I tell the coach of Kirovograd to please take it easy on these kids, as they're brand new. The first kid up to bat for the orphans is a girl. She swings late and hits it down the line to first base, it bounces off and she's safe. Next kid hits it and they're now on one and two. The coach of Kirovograd says to me, 'you're putting me on. These kids are good.' They lost, but they didn't care, their coach was taking photos all the time. That's what Little League is all about!"



Boxxxxxx

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### Serhiy Kuznetsov Up-and-Coming Artist and Curator

Contemporary art is booming in Kyiv, and to get some insight into the scene we talked to Serhiy Kuznetsov, at 27 one of the youngest people to be making waves in the gallery world



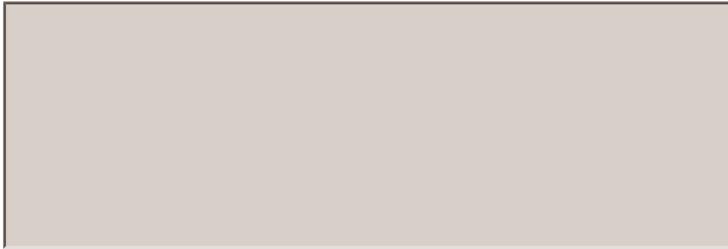
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### Global news



#### **Russian paratroopers arrive in North Caucasus for combat drills**

MOSCOW, July 16 (RIA Novosti) - Paratroopers from Russia's 76th Airborne Division arrived Wednesday in North Ossetia to participate in the active stage of large-scale military exercises in the North



#### **Business eyes Ukraine's fertile land**

Once considered the bread basket of Europe, Ukraine's farms are still recovering from the economic collapse that followed the break-up of the Soviet Union. With Ukraine's grain yield about

35



#### **Azarov: Are they going to drop US dollar to 4.30?**

It is for the first time the government introduced the state budget but didn't make a calculation for exchange rate, stated ex-minister of finances of Ukraine, people's deputy Mykola

Azarov



#### **Russia's biggest sub ready for scrapping**

The TK-13 Typhoon-class nuclear submarine has arrived in Severodvinsk in northern Russia where it will be decommissioned and scrapped. The sub is one of Russia's biggest.

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