

The One Hundred Twentieth Season of

The Chicago Literary Club

commences on Monday, October fourth

at The Fortnightly of Chicago

"A River Runs Through It Also"

**will be the inaugural address of
President Ralph Fujimoto**

please reply

**cocktails at six
dinner at seven**

The Chicago Literary Club
A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT ALSO
Presented by Ralph Fujimoto
October 4, 1993

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A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT ALSO

"In rivers the water that you touch is the last of what has passed and the first of that which comes: so with time present" -- Leonardo da Vinci.

On July 12, 1991, we arrive at the Leningrad International Airport as a Russian band greets us playing the Star Spangled Banner. A bus ride takes us to a Russian Cruise ship which is to be our home for the next eleven days on our journey into Russia's past.

(The city was known as Leningrad while we were there, but its original name St. Petersburg was restored in late 1991 after we left Russia.)

Traveling through the waterways of Russia, the voyage takes us from St. Petersburg to Moscow. These two cities symbolize the rivalry of the old conservative ways of Muscovite ideology opposing forces attempting to Westernize Russia. The founding of St. Petersburg by Czar Peter the Great is a decisive manifestation of this rivalry.

Peter Alexeevich was born on May 30, 1672 in the Kremlin Palace. His father was Czar Alexei, second of the Romanov Dynasty, who married Maria Miloslavkaya and had 11 children by her. Among them were a daughter Sophia, a son Fedor III and a son Ivan V. After the death of his first wife, Alexei married Natalya Naryshkins and fathered a son, Peter and a daughter, Natalya.

Czar Alexei died when Peter was only three and a half years old. Fedor III, Peter's half brother, was Czar for a very short time until his death due to illness. This left the question of succession between the two half brothers, Ivan V and Peter. Ivan was 16 years of age at the time, but he was also lame, nearly blind and suffered from speech difficulty. In contrast, Peter at the age of ten, was tall for his age, healthy and very active.

A line was now drawn between the two families -- the first was headed by Sophia, the older sister of Ivan V. and the second was headed by the new Regent, Natalya , Peter's mother. Events that followed were to have a profound effect on young Peter's mind and on the course of Russian history.

The unsettled political situation between the two families provided Sophia with an opportunity to gain the support of the Streltsy, a regiment of professional soldiers composed of simple Russians ignorant of politics. She convinced them that the Naryshkin family had poisoned Czar Fedor. In a savage rampage, the Streltsy murdered relatives and close friends of Natalya Naryshkin including her brother.

The people had declared Peter as the Czar. However, the Streltsy now demanded that Peter and Ivan rule as Co-Czars. The Patriarch and the Boyars, then, declared that Sophia would replace Natalya as Regent. The revolt of the Streltsy and subsequent events left a

mark on his young mind. Peter grew to hate the Streltsy, Sophia and Moscow.

Sophia ruled for seven years, from 1682 to 1689. Peter enjoyed his passive role as Co-Czar, serving only at official functions while Sophia and her ministers governed the country.

Peter now developed an interest in war games and the military. He began to spend more time with his mother at their country residence where the open fields would allow him to engage in military exercises. Although these exercises began as childhood games, he eventually organized two regiments at full strength.

Peter also acquired an interest in crafts of all kinds and soon became qualified as a stonemason, smith, carpenter and printer. A Dutchman, Franz Timmerman became his tutor in math, geometry and military science. This close association between the two was the beginning of Peter's exposure to Western ideas and tastes.

Once, in a village outside of Moscow, Peter caught sight of a discarded English boat which was unlike the flat-bottomed Russian boats. He was told that, with proper masts and sails, the English boat could even sail against the wind. This fascinated him. He outfitted this boat and learned to sail it on a nearby river.

He then engaged two Dutch boatbuilders from Moscow's Foreign Quarter and began to build three yachts and two small frigates on a