

Hosting family from Gammalsvenskby by Deb Fettig

Volodymyr Tormoz and his mother, Galyna Utas, from Gammalsvenskby were guest speakers at the 80th Jubilee and it was our honour and privilege to host them at our home in Calgary for a few days before the Jubilee. As it turned out, it was also a great deal of fun for us. I'm not sure about if they had as much fun as we tried to cram as much of Alberta into the little time available.

Our biggest concern was obtaining the proper visas and making the travel arrangements, but all went smoothly and they arrived safe, sound and jet-lagged on July 30. We had a little laugh at the airport when someone who didn't know what the person they were meeting looked like tried to take Vova away with them.

That first day was spent quietly so that they could get over their trip and we could get acquainted. Vova speaks perfect English and Galyna had her Russian-English dictionary and I had an English-Russian dictionary so we managed to communicate very well. Galyna loved to check out the garden (which had been woefully neglected) and we had no problem "discussing" the garden without the dictionaries, as our vegetable crops are similar.



Vova and Galyna

After the first day, we tried to see as much as we could and schedule it between bad weather. The trip to the mountains was a highlight. We had a picnic lunch and visited the Rafter Six guest ranch where Vova had his first horseback ride. Then it was on to Banff for some sightseeing and photography. Later in the afternoon we headed towards Lake Louise where we rode up the ski lift and

finished off the day with dinner on the patio at the Chateau Lake Louise. It was a quiet ride home that night.

We went east to visit Drumheller and the Tyrell Museum. We went south to visit the Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump and Frank Slide. In between we took in some of the sights of Calgary, had a barbecue with cousins Ed and Myrna Wyse, and some days we just watched it rain and mopped water in the basement. On one of those days we visited the Calgary Farmer's Market where Vova told us that he was famous for his borscht and if we collected the ingredients that he would make us some. That was an easy decision. Although I tried to write down the instructions and ingredients, watching him make the borscht was like watching an artist create a painting. The resulting borscht was far and away the best that I've ever tasted. I believe that there should have been enough for two meals but the Fettig family gobbled it all down with only a bowlful or two left over.

Our trip north was to the 80th Jubilee where Galyna and Vova spent a few nights at Rita Nelson's and made their presentations after dinner. I know that everyone was eager to hear news about Gammalsvenskby and were very moved by the video of Vova's grandmother, Elsa. During our time with Galyna and Vova we asked many questions about life in the village and they were gracious enough to answer them all. It is sad to think about how few of the older people that we met on our trip there remain.

The time had flown by and on August 9 they left for home. We thoroughly enjoyed our guests and I hope that they returned to Ukraine and Sweden with happy memories of their trip to Canada.