

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Saturday, 3 February 2018

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Maslenitsa 2018

SEVENTH Annual East-European/Central Asian Spring Festival Returns to the Tennessee Valley!

MADISON, ALA: It's extremely rare that those living in the Southeast—let alone the Tennessee Valley—can immerse themselves in *Eastern European and Central Asian culture*. But each year, everyone can visit Madison County and join in celebrating “the awakening of Mother Nature by the powers of Spring” and the long-awaited waning of Winter: the **MASLENITSA Spring Festival!**

Running from **10:00 a.m.** till **4:00 p.m.** on **Saturday, 17 February**, **MASLENITSA** allows festivalgoers to savor traditional foods, enjoy authentic regional folksongs and folkdances, commune with their inner artiste through craft-making and games, and experience firsthand an insider's view of Ukraine, Tajikistan, Moldova, Romania, Kazakhstan, Russia, Lithuania, and many other far-off lands!

This year's festival takes place at **Heritage Church, 29768 Brownsferry Road** in Madison and is presented by **Global Ties Alabama, Heritage Church, International Society of Huntsville, Baron Services, Inc., Boar's Head Provision Company**, and area **Eastern European and Central Asian** communities.

Open to the public, **MASLENITSA** is by definition a family-friendly event. One of Eastern Europe's merriest and oldest surviving holidays (eventually embraced by the Orthodox Church around the 16th Century), it is a fun and tasty way to experience the rich variety found within our collective heritage. Admission is **\$5.00** for all attendees age twelve and up, and payment can be made at the door with cash or check. Among the many foods to be found at the celebration, *Blini* (think Blintzes) are perhaps the favorites.

MASLENITSA's edible “mascots,” *Blini* are harbingers of spring, symbolizing the sun through their round, golden warmth. Closer to crêpes than everyday American flapjacks, plain *blini* are topped, or filled and rolled, with various condiments. Garnishes such as sour cream or chocolate syrup will be provided at the Toppings Table.

Other food options will include Shish Kebab, desserts, and other dishes currently TBA. Food service begins at 10:00 a.m. and continues until supplies run out.

MASLENITSA 2018 ratchets up the entertainment by bringing in new artists for our exciting roster of performers while providing several still-FREE children's activities. Visitors can pore over and purchase delectables from our “Traveling Bake Sale,” as well as local and imported wares. All will accept cash or checks.

New in 2018 are special guests “**Grupul Bucovina Atlanta**” (Garofas and Irina Milici, whose Romanian cultural dances represent regions ranging from Bessarabia to Transylvania). Joining them are other entertainers offering traditional dances and folksongs spotlighting Ukraine, Moldova, the Chuvash Republic, Russia, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan, among others.

Several young pianists and other instrumentalists from local schools will perform international musical selections, rounded out by two runway shows of “National Costumes with Slavic Flair” courtesy of **Anyaberry** Children and Teen Fashions: “Folk Fashion Mix” (modern or traditional styles) and “Land Trusted Linen,” from the Capsule Linen Collection. Linen, one of the most biodegradable fabrics in fashion history, is commonly employed in Ukraine, Russia, and Belarus.

Individually and reasonably priced baked goods, created with care by Brookside, AL’s **Sisters of Saint Olga**, will include choices of Mushroom, Potato, or Apple *Pirozhki*—baked and bun-like, as opposed to the more Ravioli-styled Polish *Pierogis*, and Salmon filled *Rasstegai* (savory pies). Surrounding a table offering Czar Nicholas™ Tea will be *Pryaniki* (Russian Honey-Spice Cookies); *Kolacky*, flaky, cream cheese pastries filled with jam; Butter Cookies; and wedding cookie-like Russian Tea Cakes.

Among other take-home creations, children will paint *Matryoshka* (Nesting Doll) Cutting Boards and create Russian “Good Luck Dolls” from fabric...but remember, ALL ages are invited to join in!

Also new in 2018 is a Silent Auction with proceeds benefiting the Moldova World Children’s Fund and Preodolnye Rehabilitation Center from Cherepovets, Russia, two organizations that benefit special needs children in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The **MASLENITSA** team sends special thanks to Global Ties Alabama; Heritage Church; Baron Services, Inc.; Blossomwood Foundation; European Market Anastasia; International Society of Huntsville; Royal Rose Diner; and Mark Jackson for their support.

Further information and updates are available at [\(256\) 585 8354](tel:2565858354), olgaosadcii@gmail.com, and “Maslenitsa in Alabama” on Facebook. Be sure to bring your family and friends and join us as we celebrate **MASLENITSA!**

NASDROVIA!