

St. Louis Children's Choirs

# Leaving on a High Note



by Christy James

St. Louisans should be bursting with pride! Our very own **St. Louis Children's Choirs** have been selected by the **Russian Ministry of Culture**, in cooperation with the **International Fine Arts Institute of the United States**, to perform this summer in Russia as featured guests in Russia's national celebration commemorating the 50th anniversary of the defeat of fascism and the end of World War II.

The St. Louis youngsters and soon-to-be goodwill ambassadors, who come from throughout the metropolitan area, are ages 8 to 18. They *love* music and *love* to sing. And because of their diligence and the technical direction given by artistic director **Ethelyn Sparfeld** and associate directors **Eric Anthony**, **Charles Collins**, **Vicki Dohrmann** and **Rebecca Donaldson**, the group has reached a

nationally and internationally recognized level of artistic prominence. The youngsters' achievement is also a tribute to the encouragement and support of their families.

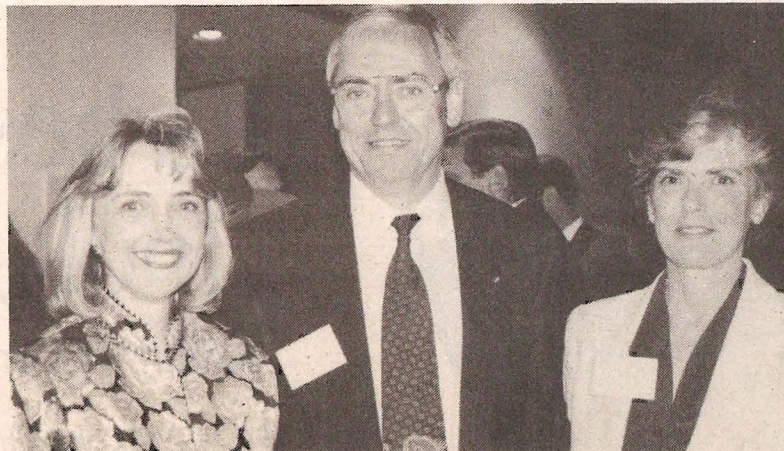
Representatives of the Russian Ministry of Culture, **Alexander Demchenko**, director of Russian Choral and Folk-art, and **Boris Tevlin**, conductor and head of the choral department at Moscow State Conservatory, were special guests at a recent dinner and concert by the choirs held at the Missouri Botanical Garden. Thank goodness, too, for **Nadia and Chester Danett**, who were on hand to



Nadia Danett, beloved Russian teacher at St. Louis Country Day School, and her husband Chester served as interpreters for the evening's honored Russian guests.

serve as interpreters for both visitors and locals. Emcee **Julius Hunter** of KMOV-TV (Channel 4), with an assist from Demchenko, led the assemblage in a rousing, bilingual vodka toast to start the dinner.

Capping the evening was a splendid performance by the



Children's Choirs' Executive Director Donna Lusk with Jack and Mary LaBarge.



Alexander Demchenko, director of Choral & Folkart with the Russian Ministry of Culture; Children's Choirs' Artistic Director Ethelyn Sparfeld; Boris Tevlin, Russian conductor and head of the choral department at Moscow State Conservatory; and Children's Choirs' Board President Ted Wolfarth.

photos by Christy James

Concert Choir and Chamber Singers of the Children's Choirs, reminding everyone of the real reason for getting together.

According to Children's

Choirs Executive Director **Donna Lusk**, the group is still trying to raise funds to cover some travel expenses. To help or for more information about the Children's Choirs' programs, please call Lusk at 993-9626. LN



Evening emcee Julius Hunter leads a vodka toast in true Russian tradition.



Choir member Lisa Haffenreffer carries a welcoming bouquet of roses to one of the Russian visitors at the conclusion of the concert.