

Lowesville man visits Russia

By RENEE WALSER

Duke Power senior engineer and Lowesville resident Richard Wilson got to see some of the changes in what we knew as the Soviet Union first hand last September.

The company is participating in an exchange program with Russian power workers to learn more about how the other operates.

"It was generally a very positive visit" said Wilson, who hopes to return on a future trip. "A real nation of extremes."

Wilson visited a town located 100 miles north of the Black Sea in the Ukraine. He said the whole purpose of the town was to generate electricity. The manager of the utility was also mayor of the town.

While he was there, he visited two Russian Orthodox churches. His church in the U.S., St. Peter's-By-The-Lake Episcopal, is trying to set up a sister-type church relationship with one of the churches he visited. Wilson's congregation has gathered Bibles to be sent over to the sister church. Wilson said that Russians have access to Bibles but they are expensive.

"I had lots of discussions about religion," Wilson said. "There were mostly interest questions rather than challenging questions."

"They're willing to discuss things that they would not talk about except in the privacy of their own homes," he said. Wilson

said he got into discussions about religion at work and at schools that he visited.

One observation that impressed him was during his visit to the second church, which was conducting services in a former store, he noticed a large number of icons. He found out that these icons had been hidden at members' homes for 50 to 60 years.

"They had enough faith that eventually they would be able to bring them out again," Wilson said.

As far as the lines we hear about of people waiting for food and other items, Wilson said he saw lines outside of pharmacies. Apparently there is a shortage of medicines.

He talked with some Russians who said they were making more money

now but there were fewer things to buy.

Wilson ate in six homes and said the food was delicious.

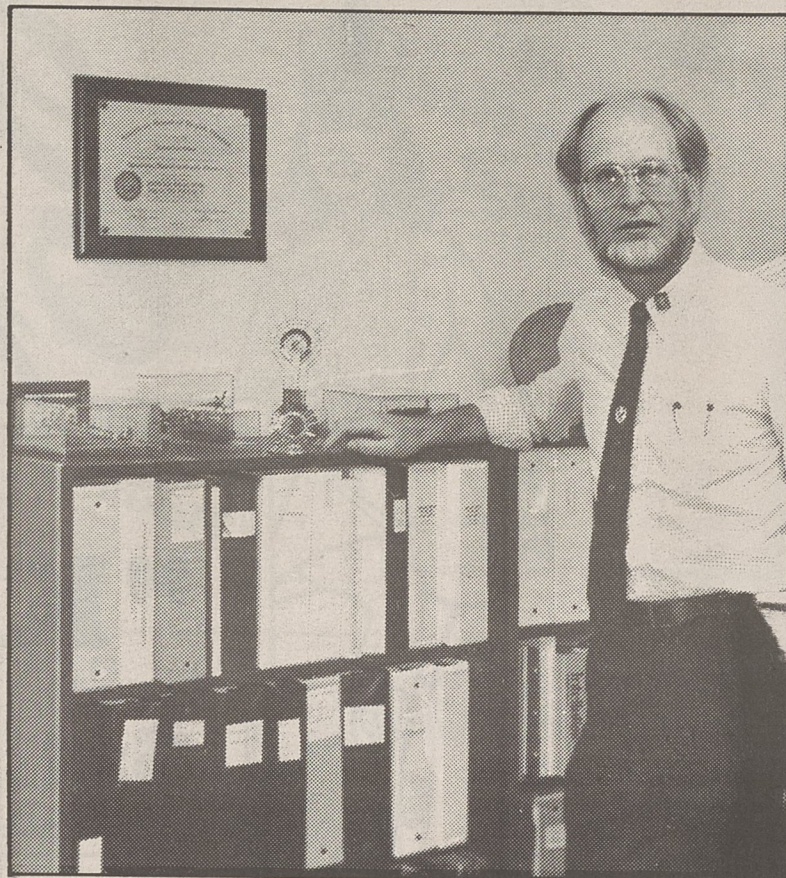
"I felt completely at ease and completely welcome," he said. "We found out Russian men like to drink a lot."

In the small town he visited, he found that everyone lived in apartments except for the manager and one other worker, who had houses.

"Privacy is not a concept that they are used to," Wilson said.

Wilson's wife also works for Duke Power as a biologist and they have two daughters. He likes to build model airplanes and tanks, travel, play tennis, snow ski and study history.

"We know very little of the Soviet Union," he said.



Richard Wilson visited a small town in Russia last September and is trying to start a "sister church" program with one of the Russian Orthodox churches he toured. On top of his bookcase is a gift given to Wilson from his Russian friends.

Rescue '92 Crusade held April 2,3,4

Rescue '92, an area wide youth crusade, is scheduled to take place in the Lutz-Yelton Convention Center at Gardner-Webb College on April 2, 3 and 4 at 7 p.m.

Thursday and Friday evenings will feature the music of Kyle and Susan Matthews, followed by the testimonies and talent of high school students, then Inspiration of Youth communicator Mark Evens of Little Rock, Ark.

Saturday's program will feature a concert by Newsboys, one of the nation's most popular

Christian bands.

A youth leaders and workers meeting will be held at Second Baptist, 1114 South Lafayette St., Shelby, on March 25 at 7 p.m. and will provide all necessary information to workers interested in involving individual youth groups.

Participation in this program is free of charge.

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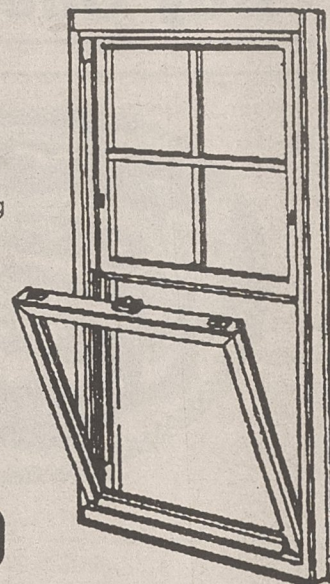
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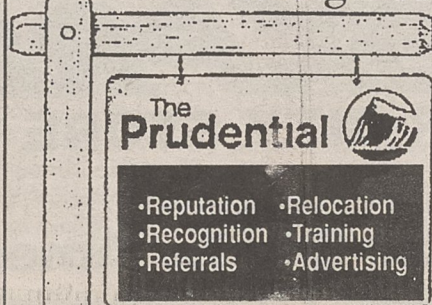
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