



# LINKAGES



Rochester, New York, USA

SISTER CITIES

Velikiy Novgorod, Russia

## Summer 2019 Newsletter

### President's Letter

*Paul Caccamise*



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[www.linkagesrochester.org](http://www.linkagesrochester.org)  
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### Board Members:

Michael Brundage  
Paul Caccamise  
Kristine Fredrick  
Debra Fromm-Faria  
Craig Johnson  
Barbara LeSavoy  
Tanya Schueler-Choukairi

It is with sadness and gratitude that we note the passing of two Linkages pioneers this year. They both were instrumental in establishing Linkages as a viable and thriving sister city organization.

**Nancy Eckerson Fitts** (wife of Richard (Dick) Fitts) passed way in March after a long illness. She was, along with her husband, the driving force behind the founding of Linkages. Nancy was a member of the denuclearization movement in the 1980s. Her concern about the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the real threat they posed to the peoples of the USA and the Soviet Union led her to look into citizen to citizen contacts as an antidote to the atmosphere of hostility at the national government level. She discovered that a movement was beginning in the 1980s to pair American cities with cities in the USSR and lobbied to have Rochester paired with Velikiy Novgorod. Her advocacy and vision resulted in the establishment of Linkages in the 1980s and in a sister city relationship which has endured for almost 30 years.

**Robert (Bob) Hunter** was also member of the Linkages Board in the 1990s and was responsible for many student exchanges. Bob taught in the Lycée in Novgorod in the 1990s. He started student exchanges and, along with his wife, Barbara Coe, hosted many students as well as other Russian visitors in their home. They last hosted an Open World delegate for Linkages, a policeman from rural Novgorod oblast, in 2013. Irina Shirina, president of the Russian American Friendship Society in Novgorod, recalled staying with Bob and Barbara in Rochester in 1995. She said that they both did much to connect teachers and students of the two cities....

(Continued on pg. 2)

## President's Letter Continued...

... He leaves a legacy of relationships formed between dozens of students from Novgorod who studied in Rochester schools and their host families.

As Irina wrote to me in her note of condolence: Светлая память! (Bright memory!) Linkages is grateful for their lives and their dedication to peaceful relations between our two nations. We offer condolences to their families.

*Paul Caccamise*

## Linkages Sponsors 28<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Seminar in Novgorod

Each year Linkages provides an opportunity for local educators to teach a two-week English language summer seminar in Velikiy Novgorod. This year the Linkages Education Committee selected Lia Festenstein and Marjorie Rolleston as the recipients of the Linkages Summer 2019 Teaching Fellowship in Novgorod. Both educators entered a competitive process to be chosen for the fellowship. They conducted two weeks of seminars for Russian elementary and secondary teachers of English at the Velikiy Novgorod Center for Educational Development from June 17 through June 28. Marjorie Rolleston is an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) instructor in the MCC ESOL department. Lia Festenstein is an Instructor in the

Nazareth College School of Education and the Warner School of Education.

This is the first year that Linkages sent two educators from Rochester higher education schools. It is also the 28<sup>th</sup> year that Linkages has continued the tradition of sending teachers to Novgorod during the summer to help Novgorod educators improve their English language skills and maintain their certification as English language instructors in the Novgorod region. For some it is also the only time in the year they have an opportunity to interact with native speakers of English.

Lia and Marjorie provided English language practice and pedagogical training using communicative and participatory methods. In addition, our Russian colleagues in education learned about US culture from our teacher ambassadors.

Through their lessons in English and American history and culture, this year's teachers helped to promote the Sister City International mission which is "to promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation — one individual, one community at a time"

The members of the Linkages Education Committee who organized the application and vetting process and arranged the details of the trip are Board members,



Kristine Fredrick, Michael Brundage and Tanya Schueler-Choukairi along with Irina Shirina, president of the Russian American Friendship Society, who teaches English in Gymnasium school #1 in Novgorod, is the coordinator for arrangements for the summer seminar teachers in Novgorod.

*Kristine Fredrick & Paul Caccamise*  
*See more photos at [linkagesrochester.org](http://linkagesrochester.org)!*

## Friendship Concert

In January Linkages again co-sponsored a concert of music by Russian composers with the Eastman Community Music School (ECMS). This partnership with Howard Spindler, Linkages member and instructor at the school, has provided the Rochester community with a taste of the rich musical tradition of Russian classical, liturgical and folk music annually for over ten years. The performers include ECMS students, both youth and adults, ECMS faculty, local performers and, this year, a professional singer from Russia who volunteered to fill in for a performer who was unable to attend at the last minute.

## The Yale Russian Chorus

The famous singing group from Yale University, returned to Rochester on their northeast tour this year. In 2018 they sang at several venues in the region. This year they started their local tour with a dinner concert at Polska Chata in Irondequoit. From Rochester they headed to Toronto. Members of the chorus who performed in Rochester included current students and an alumnus.



## Vladimir Yarish

The internationally recognized basket maker was feted in Novgorod on his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday by a retrospective exhibit of his work in Novgorod. The exhibit included over 500 pieces from his collection. Yuri has told Linkages that he plans to come back to the US in spring 2020 to attend basketmaking conferences and to conduct some classes. We are planning for him to make a stop in Rochester to offer some introductory classes for beginners and master classes for experienced basket makers as he did in 2013. Linkages is also looking for a suitable venue to sponsor an exhibit of his work in Rochester.





## Hey, Don't miss the PICNIC!

Wednesday, August 21 5 - 9

Buckland Park Lodge 1341 Westfall Rd, in the back.



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or [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)

### OUR MISSION

The mission of Linkages of Rochester, Inc. is to increase the understanding of the people, politics, and culture of Russia, with a focus on people-to-people relations with the citizens of our Sister City, Velikiy Novgorod, Russia.

Linkages of Rochester, Inc. is an all-volunteer organization that promotes professional, educational and cultural exchanges between our two cities. Find us on the web at <http://linkagesrochester.org> or email us at [webguy@linkagesrochester.org](mailto:webguy@linkagesrochester.org)

Linkages is a member of the International Sister Cities of Rochester (ISCOR). Novgorod, Russia is one of Rochester's 12 sister cities.



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392 Barry Road  
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### **PICNIC!**

**Wednesday, August 21 5 - 9**  
**Buckland Park Lodge 1341**  
**Westfall Rd, in the back.**