



Musical Bridges, Inc.

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Newsletter Summer 1998

It's been an eventful winter and spring for Musical Bridges. The year started with a very successful between-mailings fund-raiser, followed immediately by a six week trip to Chita by Musical Bridges' President. On his return, an impressive group of English teachers were chosen for Chita for next year, and the project to collect and send a shipping container of books to Chita got off to a strong start. In addition, Musical Bridges' first intern from Chita arrived in the United States for the summer.

Special fund-raising appeal a great success

Heartfelt thanks to our friends whose donations in response to a special appeal this past winter should assure "501(c)(3)" (charitable organization) status for Musical Bridges. Our provisional status ended December 31st, and though we have not yet heard from the IRS, we are confident our funding base is sufficiently broad now to retain 501(c)(3) status which enables us to apply for grants. This generosity also raised our bank accounts to a level where we are able to send an additional teacher to Chita in the fall! Thank you!

Thomas Dickinson travels to Chita

Advice on grant-writing

Musical Bridges' President, **Thomas Dickinson** went to Chita in February and March to work on two projects. He helped a newly formed consortium of six higher education institutions and the main regional library begin work on its first grant application. He also met with many leaders and staff in education, government and social services encouraging them to learn about and apply for foundation support in these difficult economic times. These included the regional heads for education and culture, the Children's Hospital, the Rectors, students and staff of both universities, the head of the trade union, the Rotary Club, and many others. He also spoke at a big meeting of district school heads, where he learned firsthand about the

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grave difficulties with funding and infrastructure facing Russian education now.

Tom's efforts were met with great enthusiasm, along with ignorance about American charitable giving and how to go about tapping into it. Sometimes this ignorance took the form of suspicion about the motives of American foundations, "Why would they want to help us here in Russia?" and he did his best to explain the blend of idealism and practicality which fosters American giving.

Awareness of Musical Bridges

Tom's second project was to publicize and promote Musical Bridges to the people of Chita and encourage project proposals. At present we work with only a handful of institutions, yet we are the only cultural exchange charitable organization working in the region. Since this sort of organization did not exist previously in Russia (such activities were the responsibility of the government) we must let people know who and what we are, and how to take advantage of the opportunities and access we can provide.

This awareness can only help Musical Bridges, as well, since broadly demonstrated need and enthusiasm from Chita will make it easier for us to work on their behalf. The more we are asked to help, the easier it will be to convince funding organizations of the importance of our presence in Chita and win their assistance. It is time for Musical Bridges to grow past its initial stage of tiny budget and limited programs, not only to do the work we are chartered to do, but also to get the respect from foundations necessary for success in the stiff competition for major grants.

Four projects

Three arts projects were brought back by Tom. Two small exhibitions, one of photographs by Chita photographer, **Victor Kozyrev**, and the other of children's art from the city's art school, are being prepared for showing in schools and libraries. Two films of Chita Region's beautiful wilderness by the film company "**Moskovsky Trakt**" are being translated and prepared for possible broadcast on American public television. And Chita reporter, **Nina Belomestnova**, has offered to write about her region for American newspapers and magazines. *If you think any of these projects may be of interest in your area, please let us know!*

Stacy Neterer and Frances Werle

It was a great pleasure for Tom to finally meet **Stacy Neterer** and **Frances Werle**, Musical Bridges' 1997-98 teachers to Chita. Both were clearly wonderful representatives of the United States, effective teachers, and much loved by their students and colleagues. Though they just got back to the United States, Stacy will return to Chita for another year this fall, and Frances hopes to return in 1999! If you would like to correspond with them, or just thank them for their generosity and hard work, write to them care of Musical Bridges. We are sure they would appreciate it! Thank you, Stacy and Frances!

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New teachers chosen for next fall

We are pleased to announce that **Michael Matthews** of Pendleton, Oregon, **Gene Moffitt** of Old Fort, North Carolina and **Richard Faillace** of Allendale, New Jersey, will join Stacy Neterer in Chita this fall. Stacy returns to the Pedagogical University, Michael will teach at the Technical University, Gene will split his time between the Pedagogical College and Refresher Institute, and Richard will travel to Krasnokamensk near the Chinese border as teacher at the Gymnasium.

Michael is a Navy veteran and a 1998 law graduate from De Paul University, Gene is a retired schoolteacher and former Peace Corps volunteer to Russia and Richard is a PhD candidate in History at the University of Oklahoma. They were chosen from among 19 terrific applicants, any of whom we would have been honored to send.

Collecting books to send to Chita

Forty boxes of books sit in Tom's basement ready to ship to Chita. They have been donated by a wide variety of people, in lots small and large. We need at least double this amount to fill the shipping container. We are also looking for discarded computers (386 and up), printers, cables and programs to include in the shipment. The container should be ready to send in the fall, and it will be shared by members of the Chita education consortium, with distribution managed by Musical Bridges' teachers. We welcome your donations! Almost any kind of book is acceptable and many magazines, as well.

First Musical Bridges Intern

Finally, we are pleased to bring Musical Bridges' first intern to the United States. Through a mutually beneficial arrangement we were able to invite **Dmitry Borisov**, an English major at the Pedagogical University, for the summer at his own expense. He will work with Stacy Neterer in Fort Myers, Florida on Musical Bridges projects, provide us with translations and other assistance with the Russian language and present talks about Chita to civic organizations in the Fort Myers area. However, Dima has a rather more important reason for coming to the United States. He and Stacy are engaged--he has to meet the in-laws! We are very happy for them...and are accepting no fee for our international matchmaking service! Congratulations Stacy and Dima!!

Excerpts from letters to Musical Bridges

"I want to convey my sincere gratitude for your long time and devoted assistance to Zabaikalsky State Pedagogical University [ZSPU]...Your organization is, in fact, the only non-government source of real help to our institution...We thank you...for your fruitful efforts and hope that our cooperation will last long and will be as fruitful and rewarding as it has already become.

Valery P. Gorlachev, Rector [President], ZSPU

"The outside world used to view Zabaikalye as a place destitute of civilization. We were an obscure region, never in the mainstream of the events of the 20th century. Today we have opened up to the world--owing to Musical Bridges and its enthusiastic President...Thank you...for your big heart, empathy and love for our land."

A. V. Doshlov, President

On behalf of Chita Television and Radio Network Staff

"The faculty of the Department of Automation of Production, Chita State Technical University [CSTU], expresses their appreciation of the contribution Musical Bridges is making to the scientific and cultural development of our region. We would specially like to thank...for the efficient counseling in finding financial support for the newly organized Department of Medical Engineering."

V. A. Ustyuzhanin, Head

Department of Automation of Production, CSTU

"Our purpose...is to express our gratitude to Musical Bridges...for the help...rendered to the musical department of the college in learning techniques, language and strategies to approach American foundations...We are looking forward to establishing contacts with professional teachers of music from the USA. We hope that Musical Bridges...will help us in this issue."

Jane Myasnikova, English Teacher

On behalf of the [Chita Pedagogical] College authority

"You are really a kind of bridge that connects such a remote place as Chita region with America. It reminds me of the strip of land that once connected Asia and Alaska, but disappeared thousands of years ago under water, and which is now being revived. The most difficult thing is to get started and you've done it well I'm sure...Your plans are tremendous. I wish you luck."

Natalya V. Banina, Head

Humanities Department, Zabaikalsky Railway Transport Institute

"Until our country's economic situation improves dramatically, we cannot rely on our Federal government to provide all the necessary support of education. Such help as is being offered by Musical Bridges is essential during these difficult transitional times, and we appreciate Musical Bridges' recognition of this fact and its willingness to help us work to improve our lot...We hope that you, the people of the United States, will also recognize our sincere and urgent need for this assistance...and support Musical Bridges... as generously as you can."

Konstantin I. Karasiov, Head

Chita Oblast Office of Education, Science, Youth and Welfare



Snapshots from Thomas Dickinson's Winter 1998 trip to Chita

At left: Members of the Consortium say goodbye to Tom after six weeks of work.

Below: A meeting with Konstantin I. Karasiov, Head of the Chita Oblast Office of Education, Science, Youth and Welfare. From left: Head of district teachers association [name unknown], Natalya V. Gotlib, English Professor, Chita State Pedagogical University [CSTU], Mr. Karasiov, Mr. Dickinson, Ludmila A. Skidanova, Superintendent of Schools for the Oblast, Oleg M. Gotlib, Head of the International Studies Faculty, CSTU, Tatiana I. Ivanovna, Head of the English Faculty, Zabaikalsky State Pedagogical University.



Dmitry A. Borisov, Musical Bridges' first student intern to the United States



Above: Technical University English students who interpreted for Tom. Standing: Olyessa Bezhina. Seated from left: Liza Kozachenko, Alina Bakhareva, Sveta Gnedina, Natasha Gotlib and Olga Fleshler, their teachers, Olga Povoroznyuk. Seated at bottom: Yegor Ivanov.
 Right: Tom presents a public meeting at Philharmonia Hall to answer questions about Musical Bridges. With Natasha Gotlib interpreting.
 On outside cover: Top left: Frances Werle teaching. Bottom left: Stacy Neterer teaching. Right: Musical Bridges display at the Pushkin Regional Library with Galina Lebedeva, Department Head and Julia Bakhmutova, Senior Librarian.

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