



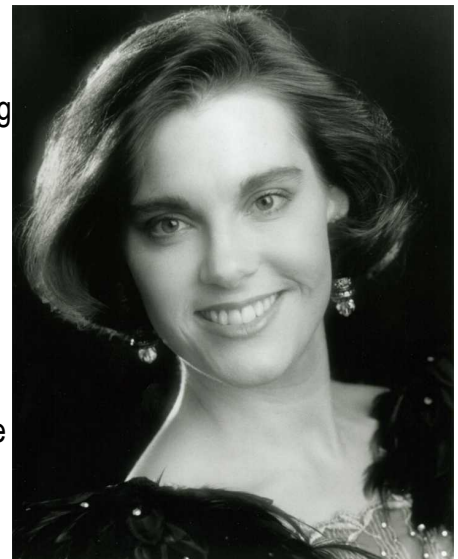
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NEWS—Spring 2014

- On Sunday, April 27th, we were treated to a wonderful recital of Russian song by local artists, soprano Naomi Karstad and bass John Bitterman, accompanied by SB President, Thomas Dickinson. The recital, at Linden Hills United Church of Christ in Minneapolis, was a fundraiser for Siberian Bridges. We heard Tschaikovsky's "None But the Lonely Heart" in its original Russian along with other familiar and not so familiar works by Tschaikovsky and Rachmaninoff, with a sprinkling of Borodin, Sviridov and Grechaninov. Russia is a nation that sings, and the rich expressivity of these songs attests to that heritage. Our Chairperson, Chuck Ritchie, preceded the recital with a moving presentation about the Children's Home.
- As you read this, the *Taste of Zabaikalye* tour, organized by Siberian Bridges and planned by Chita's Sibiriada Tours, begins. Six pioneering tourists from across the US will meet in Moscow on May 31st and fly to Zabaikalye the next day. An unexpected delight will be a performance on June 2nd by Children's Home kids (shown here) presented as a thank you to our partner NGO, Sibirskye Mosti. Following that is an exclusive visit to the remote birding paradise, the Daursky Biospheric Reserve, a glimpse of Buryat culture at Mt Alkhanai National Park and finally the fascinating history of Chita, the region's capital. There, Thomas Dickinson will play a recital commemorating his first visit and performance in Chita twenty-five years before—the visit that began the long relationship with Zabaikalye and led to Siberian Bridges. Though SB receives no monetary benefit from this tour, it will help make this far-off place a little more real to Americans and introduce to them its engaged and engaging people. And, at a time of increased international tension, such contact between ordinary folks may be the best way to encourage moderation in a world where we all need to live together as neighbors in just peace and security.



Naomi Karstad



From the Children's Home in Petrovsk Zabaikalskii

Letters from the Children's Home highlight recent activities. An important holiday is Women's Day, March 8th, and on this day some children did Community Service performing a concert at the local hospital and Veteran Center for the women there and giving them flowers and candy.

Shrovetide is a time of celebration as well, and during that time the children won first place in a city-wide competition for their shopping arcade where they sold their art work and crafts. They also took third place in a regional competition of young voters, in which ten schools participated.

Of particular note is the performance of young Zoya Chizkova, (pictured) who won the right to compete in Moscow in a program called 'Window to Europe.' The winners then go to Prague to compete internationally. But on the day she was to leave she broke out with the measles! Of course she was heartbroken. However, there is a happy ending to this tale. She was awarded a place on the winning team in absentia—probably based on a video of her—and will indeed go to Prague. One of her performances is on the Children's Home Face book page which you can access from our website, siberianbridges.org.



Much of the activity speaks to a priority in the Children's Home of getting these young people out into the real world to interact with people in meaningful ways. One notable example is that



Olga Fleshler at the Children's Home camp

some children attend Sunday school at the Church of the Blessed Virgin. This became personally significant to Board Chair Chuck Ritchie as they mentioned in an email, because they offered their prayers and support to him and his wife Sharon who is undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer. Their reach and spirit have far exceeded the confines of the Home and the local community: it has, indeed, spanned the globe to touch us right here in Minnesota.

Дорогой мистер Чак!

Пишут вам ребята из первой семьи. Мы живём хорошо, ходим на различные кружки, секции, в городскую станцию «Юннаты», Воскресную школу при храме Пресвятой Богородицы. Недавно ездили на озеро ловить рыбу, Григорьев Игорь поймал 6 окуней и занял 1 место, ему дали кубок, спиннинг и маску, чтобы плавать под водой. На 8 марта мы ездили поздравлять с концертом женщин в городскую больницу и бабушек в центр «Ветеран», где всем девочкам подарили по гвоздике, а остальным ребятам дали конфеты. Мы рассказали вам о последних новостях, а сейчас хотим спросить у вас, как здоровье? Как ваши дела? Как дети и внуки поживают? Знаем о несчастье с вашей женой и очень хотим поддержать вас в эту трудную минуту. Очень хотим, чтобы всё плохое покинуло вас а в жизни было только хорошее. Надеемся, что Бог услышит наши молитвы и Ваша супруга поправиться. Пишите нам почаще. Мы Вас любим и ждем в гости. Приезжайте, мы по Вам соскучились.

С уважением, дети 1 семьи.

14/03/18

Dear Mister Chuck!

The kids from Family #1 are writing to you. We are doing well, we have been going to different interest groups, activities, the city stadium "Yunati" and to Sunday school at the Church of the Blessed Virgin. Not long ago we went to the lake to ice fish and Igor Grigoriyev caught 6 bass and won first place; they gave him a cup, a spinning rod, and a diving mask.

On March 8 we went to visit the women in the city hospital and then some elderly women at the Veteran's center and we celebrated with a concert for them. Our girls gave them each a carnation, and the rest of the kids gave them candy. We have told you about what we have been doing, but now we want to ask about you: how is your health? How are things going? How are the kids and grandkids? We know about your wife's misfortune and we very much want to support you in this difficult time. We want all the bad stuff to disappear for you, and that only the good stuff is there for you. We hope that God will hear our prayers and your wife will get well.

Write more often. We love you and are waiting for your visit. Come. We miss you.

Respectfully, The children of family #1 3/18/14

Tatiana Sukhanova, English Professor at Chita State University remembers the first contact

When I look back on the time I met Tom Dickinson twenty-five years ago in August 1989, it seems ours was an entirely different world back then. It was the end of the Soviet epoch with problems in everyday life piling up, but at the same time positive changes taking place too.

Tom's visit to Chita was one of the latter. It also the time when Chita was opening up to the world, and Tom was the first American to come to stay for a few days when before that westerners could only pass through Chita travelling by Trans-Siberian Railroad.

I remember quite well how the head of Chita Philharmonic and I went to the town of Zabaikalsk right on the Soviet-Chinese border to meet Tom.

It turned out we were not the first ones to do so, as some Russian representatives of local fledgling businesses ran into Tom in Manzhouli (China) the night before and treated him rather aggressively to Russian hospitality, which was very much vodka-based!

Tom seemed sort of bewildered at first but soon everything fell into place, especially when he saw how many people were enthusiastic about his coming to Chita, especially music lovers and music teachers, who attended his master class in a local music school and his concerts. Both concerts turned out to be utter successes with standing ovations and heaps of flowers that only huge buckets could hold. I remember the way I felt like I had known the guy for my whole life as he was so open, so willing to learn as much as he could about this unknown world and all his reactions and his behavior were so natural and spontaneous.

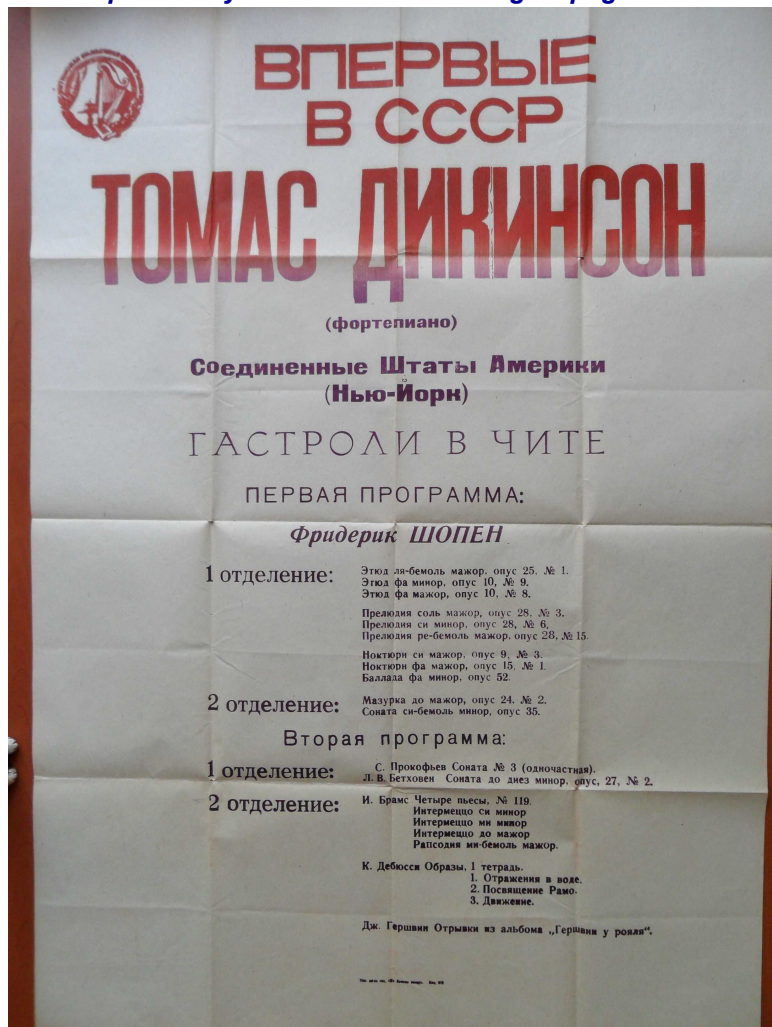
I believe there were many things that were hard to comprehend, like watching an accountant use an abacus while making calculations about the price of a fur cap that he was buying, and not in a store, but in a warehouse (another novelty for him, for at that time one could not buy things in a store. It was the time of total deficit and things could only be bought "po blatu", ie. if somebody influential enough could pull some strings).

Evidently these, and many other, things did not scare Tom away. On the contrary, a couple of years later he returned with his Dad and a friend to give more concerts and to make more links with the place. And it was then, probably, that he thought of coming again to stay for a longer time to teach and to enjoy the true hospitality of the people who became Tom's good friends. *(...concluded on next page)*



Tatiana Sukhanova with Chuck Ritchie, Chita 2012, at the Pushkin Library

TATIANA SUKHANOVA continued...



Poster from the first piano tour to Chita, 1989

This year he comes to Chita with a group of tourists--a long time dream coming true. There will be an exploration of an entirely new world, the Daurisky Biospheric Reserve, more meetings within the framework of Sibirskiye Mosti, the local NGO which is another of Tom's dreams put into effect, and a 25th anniversary concert. There will be a lot of people who will come to say words of thanks for Siberian Bridges' activities, to see an old friend or to meet the American they heard so much about to share new ideas for further joint work. Another page in the work that has already made permanent differences for the better in the lives of lots of people here is about to be filled in.

Go to siberianbridges.org to read about the 2014 Taste of Zabaikalye Tour taking place June 1 - 12 and see pictures of what the lucky American tourists will see.

21st Century Siberian Bridges

- **Would you switch to email?** Postage for each newsletter has risen to 49¢ and is still rising. The largest items on our shoestring budget are, in fact, these semi-annual mailings. If you are willing to switch to contact by email and receiving the newsletters as email attachments, please let us know and accept our big thanks. This switch allows us to spend more donor dollars on projects.
- **Be sure to check out our revamped website.** Still at siberianbridges.org, it is now easier to navigate and has new material, especially on the Children's Home.
- **We are on youtube!** Search "Siberian Bridges in Zabaikalye" at youtube.com to view our collection of videos, from the newest about our 20 years of work, to videos of children at the Children's Home.

Thanks to our May 2013-April 2014 donors!

\$500 - \$1000

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Chuck Ritchie)

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In-Kind

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John Bitterman (recital)
Naomi Karstad (recital)
Megan Nicholas (graphic design)
Betty Tisel and Sarah Farley
(encyclopedia)
Mr and Mrs Steve Landby (books in
German)
Francelyne Lurie (books in French)

Financial Report

Having no paid staff means that all donations do concrete service promoting and supporting our work in Zabaikalye. In January 2010 we had \$1500. As of April 2014, we have \$14,000, a 9-fold increase in four years. Income is mostly from individual donations, with matched donations and two generous \$1000 grants from the Minneapolis Foundation honoring our Chairman, Chuck Ritchie. Our annual budget has been fairly consistent over the last several years. We recently increased the honorariums for the Children's Home's teachers and graduating students .

For this year are planned expenses are:

Children's Home: Packages and incidentals, \$500; Honorariums, \$1000; Books \$720; Mailings, \$1200; One fundraising event, \$500

Contributions

By check:

Mail your check payable to “Siberian Bridges” to:
Siberian Bridges
3212 18th Ave S
Minneapolis, MN 55407

By credit card or Paypal:

Go online to www.siberianbridges.org and click on the “Donate” button.
Siberian Bridges is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. All donations are 100% tax-deductible.

***\$500 match offered by
Thomas Dickinson in appreciation of 25 years of friendships on the
other side of the globe.***

*Earmark your donation for (optional):
Bi-monthly Children's Home box (\$75)
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