



Sister City Association of Bloomington-Normal

Vladimir
Canterbury

Communicator

Fall 2020



President's Message by Dave Thomas

This is our second newsletter in the time of COVID-19. We have decided a special feature of this newsletter will include short stories from contributors in all three Sister Cities describing life during the pandemic. From my standpoint, much has changed for the VCSCA. We started online (Zoom) based board meetings in August. Our last face-to-face meeting was in March. In between, we conducted business (what little business there was) via email. We have had to cancel all exchanges and have none planned for the near future. We hope someday to return to a full schedule of exchanges, but when that day will be is yet to be determined.

As you will read, various stages of re-opening have taken place in the three countries. Currently, with approximately 4% of the world's population, the US has 25% of the world's deaths. We are rapidly closing in on 200,000 deaths and over 6,500,000 infected. Americans are banned from traveling to most countries of the world and the pandemic rages on. Until a coherent pandemic response is carried out in the US and citizens take personal responsibility seriously, the disease will continue to spread and people will continue to die. There is hope for a vaccine, but currently, a tested safe and effective vaccine does not exist.

From a personal standpoint, I have been teaching my classes completely online at Illinois State University since the middle of March. Since that time, I have been in my office twice. I am planning again to teach all classes online this coming spring (2021). Since the resumption of classes in August, student infection rates have skyrocketed, forcing the university to cut back on the small number of classes that were scheduled face-to-face or in a hybrid mode. There is talk of shutting down and going completely online for the remainder of this semester. I wear a mask to go grocery shopping once a week. I have not dined out or stepped foot in any other store since March. Internet shopping has replaced in person shopping. I go for daily walks making sure I observe personal distancing guidelines. Fortunately I have a weight room and cycle ergometer in my house to keep fit. My wife, Nancy, continues to work fulltime (fortunately she spends most of her time in a small lab with few people). The

Newsletter Editor Margaret Ann Hayden
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company she works for is considered essential since, in addition to making their normal product line, are manufacturing hand sanitizer products.

Life goes on as we hope for things to improve.

During This Time

Regardless of circumstance, the Vladimir-Canterbury Sister City Association endeavors to further the mutual understanding of the culture and people of Vladimir, Russia; Canterbury, England; and Central Illinois through citizen exchanges and related activities.

Members of this association, some of whom have been with this organization since its genesis, could never have predicted that we would enter our thirty-first year together in quarantine. However, physical distance has never precluded our work before. In fact, overcoming physical distance in the name of social togetherness is exactly on what the VCSCA's efforts are predicated.

Thus, we stand today—as always, albeit this time at least six-feet apart—with our cohorts, colleagues, counterparts, and friends in distant countries, not in isolation, but together in the spirit of shared experience.

Stories From Our Exchange Students

Lilia Iosilevich, MA 2008-2009

Cultural Economist and Management Professional

The pandemic times have been an experience of a lifetime for most of us. For me, at least, those months were a sort of revelation. I have learned what indeed matters the most to me and what things are of less importance. Spending time in wild nature, my family, and friends are the things I truly missed during the months of lockdown.

In the Netherlands, my third home country, the lockdown started in mid-March. Following the news of events in China from January, I was surprised that we had to wait so long to make the right decision and introduce strict measures. As a freelancer, I didn't have to spend all of my working days at the office, which allowed me to be more careful, already self-isolating before the local lockdown started.

During the three months sequestered at home, I tried to be productive. Next to my routine work projects, I did a course in digital marketing and studied French. I also attempted a daily indoor sports routine, but that was not a big success. However, I did buy a beautiful yoga mat!

These were and still are challenging times for the whole population and economy. The best thing we can do is learn from the experience and see what can and should be changed in the way we have set up our lives and surroundings. Despite it sounding idealistic and perhaps naive, it does appear to be the right way to go.

Anastasia Pavlova 2011-2012

Account Executive at Ketchum Moscow

I was quite lucky and Covid-19 hasn't impacted me the way it influenced millions all over the world: neither me, nor my family got sick, none of us lost our jobs and I'm incredibly grateful for that. However, the pandemic and its ramifications certainly made me reevaluate a lot and appreciate the things I've mostly taken for granted. Personally, I now take better care of my health, spend more time with the loved ones and appreciate the little things.

During the lockdown I, for the first time in many years, had the opportunity to spend some quality time in my hometown Vladimir and be with my parents and sister. Yes, life did slow down during the quarantine but it also opened a way for me to become closer to my family and appreciate our time together without constant rush of the daily busy life.

I also tried to maintain my physical and emotional health by trying the activities I never found time for before: started exercising, doing yoga and meditating. Naturally, they became part of my (enjoyable) routine so these new habits are the ones I'm thankful for and eager to keep.

Covid-19 brought much pain, loss and stress to our world and filled our lives with uncertainties. However, I believe that the time of crisis is also filled with opportunities: we can learn from the hardships and mistakes and come out stronger and more resilient. The sudden and quite harsh realization of the fragility of our world and life in general made me more aware, responsive and adaptive.

Anna Filimonova 2019-2020

Hi everyone! I was an exchange student to Bloomington-Normal in 2019-2020. Sadly, my exchange was interrupted by COVID-19. I had to go back home at the end of April.

Who could have predicted that I will be sent to Russia two months earlier than planned? Without a doubt it was hard to leave. I found out that I'm going home two days before the flight. It was hard to say goodbye to my host family realizing that I may not see them for a long time. It was sad to leave my friends not having an opportunity to see them once again before my departure.

Of course I wish I could stay in the US longer, spend more time with my host family and friends, graduate from American high school, go to prom, and have a real goodbye party. Nevertheless, I'm happy that I got a chance to experience all that. This COVID-19 situation showed how helpful and kind people can be. I got so much help from both American and Russian friends. At some point I even liked being quarantined in

the US because I loved spending time together with my host family!

I would never say that COVID-19 made my exchange unsuccessful. It just made it a little shorter and incomplete. Oh well, that's just a reason to go back one day!

Asia Quizon-Colquitt

Normal Community West High School, Class of 2020

It's safe to say that at the beginning of 2020 nobody thought a global pandemic would occur or that we'd still be battling the coronavirus half a year later. Surprisingly, my experience during the pandemic hasn't been all that bad.

I didn't imagine that March 13th would be my last day of in-person high school, but I wasn't at all disappointed. My senior year was extremely stressful. From cross country and track practice to band and college applications, I was always busy with one thing or another and was relieved that I finally got the chance to breathe. I still had to do online school until May 20th; however, class periods were shortened from 49 minutes to 25 minutes. The rest of the school year was a breeze. All of the fun senior activities such as prom, the senior picnic, and eventually graduation were cancelled. I do wish that our exchange student, Anna, could have experienced those events. During quarantine I enjoyed spending more time with Anna even though her exchange was cut short.

Once school finally ended I had about 4 months of summer break. I took this precious time to do things that I enjoyed before I became inevitably stressed once again at the University of Chicago in the fall. Some of my activities included learning how to play guitar, doing 21 jigsaw puzzles, learning how to rollerblade and skateboard, painting by numbers, and finishing 2 very long video games (The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt and Red Dead Redemption 2).

Even though we're in the middle of a pandemic, I'm grateful for all the time I have had to reflect, relax, and recharge. I know most people don't share the same sentiment, but quarantine gave me the opportunity to realize that a good attitude can make almost every situation better.

Canterbury, England

From Rodney Wood

I am glad to know that Illinois and Bloomington-Normal have not been too badly hit by the virus and that all your members are well. Apart from Vicky Davis's sister who is still very poorly, and Denny's eldest daughter who is still living with the after effects, we have not heard of any others of our acquaintance who have suffered from the virus. During the lockdown when it was at its peak, we were encouraged by a little song written by John Bell of the Iona Community which he adapted from words of Hans-Olav Moerk: "We will meet when the danger is over", which you can hear on U Tube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3jDFrPP21g>. We used it at our church.

Our locality has had many rainbows posted around the locality usually drawn by children and stuck on front windows. Others were more professionally done. It was the practice at the height of the lockdown to come outside the houses at 8 pm to clap in support of the Drs and nurses of the NHS. We got to know

new neighbours that way. On one such Thursday Denny played her flute and "Over the rainbow" accompanied the clapping. This led to Denny and I doing a street 'concert' outside our house of well known songs on flute and keyboard to mark the last Thursday clap.

Otherwise we are following the same guidelines as you are. With the relaxation of the regulations we have been glad to meet up with family and friends in gardens and the open air. With happy memories and all good wishes - including for a good election outcome!

From Vicky Davis

How lucky we are to have all the various means of electronic communication at our fingertips! In the middle of a pandemic, I have been able to exchange news, stories, jokes and points of view with neighbours in France, relations in the United States, old friends in Germany, and friends and colleagues in Russia and Kyrgyzstan. I've met new people through twin cities Zoom meetings and even celebrated the birth of little Mukhambad in the mountains of Central Asia – a very special occasion, as it was on the very auspicious last day of Ramadan and he was the first boy to be born to parents who already have six daughters!

The pandemic hit Kyrgyzstan badly, but gave me the chance to help organise a relief effort for poor families in the south of the country and in the suburbs of Bishkek. Our support is still ongoing, so please contact me through the aid website at <https://erayim-aid-trust.uk/> if you feel able to make a contribution to our deliveries of flour, oil and hand sanitiser. It would be wonderful to help a few more families in need.

A quieter life has also provided the opportunity for concentrated writing sessions. In fact, the latest book is almost writing itself, now that I am on a roll. And finally, Brian and I have been able to spend quality time with my sister who has been staying with us for over four months to recover from the nastiest bout of Covid-19 ever. Every black cloud really does have a silver lining.

From two students who participated in international exchanges.

Garrett Hirsch is an ISU student who travelled to Vladimir in 2019. He graduated from ISU in May. He and his family are from Bloomington-Normal (Towanda). Attached is a picture of him on the right with one of the other students that went to Vladimir last May – Christian Griswold. The picture of them was taken in Moscow.

When everything kicked off around March it not only cut my internship short but it also made taking visits to graduate programs



impossible. I was forced to take a leap of faith and commit to the University of Louisiana at Monroe to play football and go to graduate school. I moved to Louisiana in June and life was seemingly normal again. When the second wave hit the football team took a lot of precautions and so far the team has stayed healthy. It is unfortunate because I may not be able to be the college student I enjoy being until a vaccine is hopefully dispensed in October. I am however still playing football right now as our season is still full steam ahead. I can give up the college lifestyle so that I can compete and have fun playing the sport I love. My friends and I have all been very safe and staying away from people not in our bubble. If the whole country did the same thing maybe things would be different. However, I cannot act like COVID-19 has really ruined my life by any means. I am a young healthy college athlete who is still playing football and living my life relatively normal. I also know that I have about a 99.97% chance of surviving if I did contract the virus so I am sitting in a great position. My heart goes out to the medically compromised individuals and the elderly that are terrified to do anything in fear of losing their lives. All we can do as a society is wear a mask and listen to the precautions. Until a successful vaccine is created we must act as if everyone has it and stay clear.

The second story is from **Polina Baykalova**. Polina was one of Karen Dennis's students at Vladimir State University. She is 19 years old, is a linguistics major, and will be starting her third year of university in September. Attached is a picture of her and her mom and sisters. During quarantine her mom had to stay at her work, so Polina had to care for her sisters and maintain the home, while still taking online classes.

On 16 March 2020, the authority of our University announced that face-to-face classes would be temporally replaced by online ones. The situation was challenging but it was necessary to find something positive in it. I was really glad to stay at home in the neighbouring town rather than to stay in the residence hall in Vladimir. The household chores were split between my mom, two younger sisters and me, so I wholly focused on my studying.

My mom is a director of the psycho-neurological boarding house. On 17 April 2020, the authority of our region decided to lock down such institutions along with their workers for indefinite period. Besides two sisters, I had one dog, three cats and aquarium fish to take care of. My younger sisters (age 9 and 15) were very helpful to me. We were busy with cooking the various dishes for lunch and dinner, feeding our lovely pets, doing homework together, taking care of the garden, cleaning the house. Our family's friend was helping us with food delivery.

Once or twice a week we were going to the centre of the town to buy the products. Sometimes we visited our mom bringing delicious snacks, homemade food, flowers and necessary things. We celebrated our sister's birthday on 30 May 2020, our mom could not be with us for the party but she presented her a new bicycle through her friend.

Our grandparents were at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, so we refrained from visiting them. However, in June, they took our youngest sister to their summerhouse and it got easier. On 17 July 2020, my mom finally returned home. Now she suggests that lockdown can be repeated in autumn if the second wave of coronavirus comes.



Polina on the front left, mother in middle and her two sisters

From Vladimir Russia

Dr Grigory Volchenkov, Chief Doctor
Vladimir Regional TB Control Center

Now, 6 months after unexpected COVID-19 pandemic arrival, Vladimir seems to be adjusted to the new normal. Given inadequate official data on incidence and mortality which seems more or less typical for most of the countries I rely mostly on personal experience and communication with health care professionals and other community members. It seems that number of cases and deaths peaked in May - June and now on decline.

Intensive preparations started in the beginning of March and included conversion of most of hospitals for inpatient COVID-19 care, lock-down of businesses in April - June, supplying PPE for health care workers, and introduction of self-isolation, masking, social distancing, remote work etc. It seems that mortality is much less than 1% among all infected, occurs mostly among older patients with obesity and serious co-morbidities. Unfortunately there are some deaths related to COVID-19 among health care workers in the region.

There are several weaknesses which affected severity of pandemic impact here (and probably globally), but the most important among them are lack of rapid, affordable and reliable testing, and inadequate infection control interventions to prevent community and nosocomial SARS-CoV-2 transmission.

In my Regional TB Control Center we were the pioneers not only in Russia but in whole Eurasia who validated and started in late April 2020 to use rapid molecular test Xpress SARS-CoV-2 (Cefeid, USA), 40 minutes low risk PCR based test to confirm COVID-19 cases. We also promoted use of airborne precautions in community and health care settings for prevention of SARS-CoV-2 transmission. We conducted several webinars in Russian and English on effective prevention of airborne infections including TB and COVID-19, authored IPC chapters on IPC in Russian National Interim Guidelines on COVID-19 management.

Unfortunately despite overwhelming evidence of critical role of

airborne (bioaerosols) transmission, both US CDC and WHO still keep reluctant to accept that and to officially recommend well known (but not generally implemented) airborne precautions for COVID-19 prevention.



End of February in Samarkand, Uzbekistan. Grigory and Natasha

Marina & Tatyana Semenova

We heard about COVID-2019 epidemic in China on New Year's Eve. We were busy preparing for holiday celebration and didn't pay much attention to it. Besides, our relative who worked in China told us about epidemics of local character in different parts of the country happening from time to time, so we didn't pay much attention to COVID-2019 news. Anyhow, soon COVID-2019 spread all over the world and we understood its danger. In March 2020 COVID-2019 came to Russia and our President declared self-isolation from March 28 to prevent the spread of the virus. On that day we couldn't even imagine that our lockdown would last for almost two months and our lives would change greatly: no work, no walks in the parks, no sports, no theatre, no concerts, no celebrations with friends.....

We believe, that children and senior citizens were especially sad because sheltering at home. Children had to learn on-line and were not able to hang out with their friends, go for a walk, play outdoor games, visit hobby clubs. Seniors were not able to see their children and grandchildren, to go shopping and spend time with their peers. Anyway, people became friendlier, more caring and attentive to others. Many young people in Vladimir became volunteers and delivered food and medicines to elderly people and the sick. Businesspeople provided free protection masks, gloves and suits for doctors and nurses working with COVID-2019 patients, offered free transportation to hospitals.

However, sheltering at home made people look for new kinds of spending their free time. Our friends and relatives started attending on-line hobby clubs, on-line concerts and theatre shows; taking on-line lessons of dancing, painting, singing; travelling on-line to other countries, etc. As a result, many people learnt to do many things they had never experienced before. They learnt to live on-line.

We had on-line birthday parties, family gatherings, virtual film and book discussions, zoom teachers' and parents' meetings. Our schools, universities, colleges have become more digital. Museums and libraries started giving on-line lectures, tours and exhibitions; made a big step forward in the virtual space.

As for us, the saddest impact of COVID-2019 was cancellation of Museum 2020 Exchange. We believe that the situation will soon improve and Museum Exchange will take place in the summer of 2021. At the moment we are working on developing on-line cooperation between Vladimir and Bloomington-Normal museums and hope it will be fruitful for both sides.

Virtual hugs to all our friends in Bloomington-Normal.
From Vladimir with love,



Tatyana on left and
Marina

Oksana Seliverstova, Associate professor
The Department of Foreign Languages for Professional
Communication, Vladimir State University

Covid-19 rushed into our lives all of a sudden. I perfectly remember March 15, 2020, when my son had his Birthday. We had a big party with a lot of friends and an amazing tour with fun and experiments in a popular science museum in Vladimir.

On March 16, all universities were reported to go online. By then the news about coronavirus had already been in news reports but had seemed distant and not yet threatening. At first such measures seemed too early and excessive and made everyone feel uneasy. The news about schools and universities closing came early that night, so by the beginning of the working day everybody had been informed and the university was suddenly empty and filled with suspense. Classes were cancelled for 2 weeks to prepare for the unexpected distant learning, to subsequently be resumed online.

For us it also meant that classes Karen Dennis was giving to our students, our weekly discussions so much loved by everybody, were going to come to an end and she had to go back home. I remember our evening together when the decision about her departure was made: worry, tension and tears mixed with warmth, love and gratitude...

It took us a bit of time and effort to adapt our courses, routines and minds to a new reality. This avalanche of the unknown and unexpected turned out to be a wonderful test for our soft skills. Being quick, flexible, adaptable and helpful (for colleagues, students and family members) became our vital assets, and our homes literally turned into our castles. When I had to leave home to buy groceries, I really felt like walking unarmed in a battlefield. The town looked unnaturally empty, people's eyes above their face masks looked fearful. The tension was heated by mass media that

seemed to have lost interest to all other news, day and night reporting statistics about new cases and victims, interviewing doctors, professors, politicians, collecting rumors and gossips along with conspiracy theories.

But everything changed for me one day when I spent a weekend with my parents in their country house. I felt safe and at ease there in the nature awakening from its winter sleep. The rest of self-isolation was spent there. It was an amazing time – family evenings, board games, walks in the fields and bicycle trips. I got into gardening helping mom and dad to plant flowers and design flower-beds, my son learnt woodwork, my daughter found time to cook and bake and kids together arranged music evenings for us playing as a flute and saxophone duet. Meetings with Karen were back, in Zoom now. From formal academic classes they turned into communication and support group gatherings of likeminded people who value all dimensions of wellness.

In summer the number of covid-19 cases began to subside and the atmosphere got more relaxed. On September 1, we started a new academic year OFFLINE!!!! Wearing masks, sanitizing hands and disinfecting air, but offline, face-to-face. I think it was the first time in many years that nearly everyone (school children and teachers, students and professors) had been looking forward to traditional classes. Now there's a slowly growing number of cases again which is alarming... But hope with all my heart that it will be a temporary rise and we will eventually return to NORMAL (and BLOOMINGTON of course)!

Polina Semenova, Linguistics student
Vladimir State University

Hello! My Name is Polina. I am a student from Vladimir State University. I would like to share my story about living during the pandemic. For me the whole quarantine time was very unwanted and I would even say hard period. It started so unexpectedly. People were not ready in just one day to change their lives and turn them into an online mode.

Yes, there were some positive aspects. We could stay at home, sleep longer than usual, we could see our families and spend some time together. We also had some rest from the University, at least for several days before the distance learning started.

But it was not our choice. And after a couple of weeks of living in the so called "self-isolation regime" I started missing my normal life: daily meetings, trainings, my job and other activities. Every next week staying at home was harder and harder for me, but I could do absolutely nothing about it. One day I stopped following the statistics about new cases. Sometime later, I even stopped believing stories in the news.

I was very happy to come back to my real life. Now it is almost the same as it was before COVID-19. I hope so much that this is the end and we will not have to stay at home again.

Wrestling team

Nadir Magomedov is a professor at Vladimir State University and is the Head wrestling coach. This facility, along with Nadir, is very famous as it has produced many Olympic, World, and All Russian wrestling champions. Nadir visited Bloomington-Normal in 2017 as part of the university exchange program.

On the territory of the Russian Federation in connection with the outbreak of coronavirus infection from March 28, 2020. quarantine was declared and in this connection, all mass events and any gatherings of people were prohibited. The first time the training of Greco-Roman wrestlers on the territory of the Vladimir region took place online. Nadir Magomedov made a training plan for wrestlers at home. Every day, athletes recorded their training videos and sent them to coaches for study and identification of mistakes.

Since the release of quarantine, in mid-June, the national teams of the Vladimir region were allowed to conduct training activities. And Nadir Magomedov resumed his two-time training in the gym. For a better training process, Nadir invited Mikhail Ivanchenko for the master class (Senior coach of the Russian national Greco-Roman wrestling team, chief for the weight category up to 77 kg). These training sessions during the quarantine period allowed athletes to pay attention to their mistakes, correct them and practice new techniques. Thanks to the senior coach of the Russian national team Ivanchenko M., the spirit of the team rose, despite the isolation, and the guys began to train with double dedication.

From July 10 to July 31, students-athletes were sent to the tourist rally of the health camp "Polytechnic", where the wrestlers practiced their wrestling skills in the fresh air On August 14-24, the team went to training camps in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic (Terskol city), not far from Elbrus.

High-altitude training is a powerful tool for developing endurance, widely used in wrestling. Thinner air is the main factor contributing to increased endurance. During the training camp, the athletes ascended the Cheget mountains (3800 meters high) and Elbrus (5600 meters high), there were trainings in the Terskol gorge, and near the Maiden Braids waterfall.

Upon arrival in Vladimir, our team began diligent preparation for the Russian championship in Greco-Roman wrestling among juniors (under 21), which was held from September 6-10, 2020. In this championship, the national team of the Vladimir region was represented by 13 athletes in various weight categories. The prizes of the wrestlers training under the guidance of Nadir Magomedov were distributed as follows:

- 2nd place Starodbutsev Stepan (weight category 77 kg)
- 2nd place Magomedov Saifula (weight category 82 kg)
- 3rd place Huseynov Huseyn (weight category 60 kg)

This championship was the first sporting event after the abolition of quarantine, in connection with which the organization of the competition was taken more seriously. The championship was held without spectators and all participants, representatives, judges and organizers were not allowed to the competition without a certificate with a negative result for COVID-19.

Mikhail Mamiashvili, President of the Russian Wrestling Federation, praised the organization of the championship at a high organizational level.



Supporters We have Lost

In the past months Vladimir Canterbury Sister City Association has lost two loyal advocates and workers, Olga Young and Dr. John Bertsche from Bloomington Normal and two from the Caterbury Association.

Olga Young was an advocate for Vladimir/Canterbury Sister City Association from the inception of the organization. Olga didn't believe that anyone was a stranger, "just take time to smile, say a few words and you will have a new friend."

Olga was a major "ticket seller" for the annual Borsch Bash providing tickets for friends and family, a willing provider of funds for Association projects, a Board member and at age 86 the senior diplomat on the Community trip to Vladimir in 2008.

Olga chose to remain on the tour bus with the driver who spoke no English in St. Petersburg while the tour group went to the Hermitage. Olga had visited the Hermitage previously with her husband Clarence. When the group returned to the bus 4 hours later Olga shared that she had had a personal tour of St Petersburg including chai with the driver. Her mantra for life: diplomacy and friendship.

Dr. John Bertsche was an advocate for global cultural understanding while sharing medical care information. John went to Vladimir as a participant for the first medical conference sponsored by USAID/IREX, the VCSCA Medical Partners of B/N and the Partnership Committee of Vladimir in 1999. As an Internal Medicine physician, John was an advocate for Family Medicine and quietly went to the rural Russian communities to partner with Russian physicians as they worked in their rural settings, learning and sharing as professionals.

John and his wife Evelyn welcomed Russian medical visitors into their home regularly. As a retired physician John was able to be strong advocate for facilitating

Russian physicians and nurses in seeing B/N healthcare from a professional perspective.

Marjorie Lyle – Historian & Master Storyteller

By Ann Bastian White

Marjorie Lyle brimmed with enthusiasm whenever she shared the history of Canterbury. Both Marjorie and her husband, Lawrence, became enamored with history as students at Oxford University. They saw the devastation of many English cities during the heavy bombing of WWII. She said it made her realize *“how fragile and at-risk history is.”* She began giving historical tours of Canterbury in 1957 and served as a Fellow of the Historical Association.

At one time Lawrence was the secretary of the Canterbury Archaeological Trust and Marjorie’s involvement with the Trust led to the publication of her first book *Canterbury: 2000 Years of History*. It had a second edition published in 2002. She later authored a series of children’s books based on historical events in Canterbury. In 2005 Lawrence and Marjorie both received a Civic Award from the City of Canterbury for making the city’s history available to a wider public.

Marjorie’s first appearance in Bloomington-Normal was for the Vladimir Canterbury Sister City Association’s Tenth anniversary. During that visit she commented that in Bloomington-Normal “You live in a lot of space here. Over there [England] we live in a lot of time.”

In 2005 a delegation from the Vladimir Canterbury Sister City Association traveled to Canterbury to celebrate their 20th Sister Cities Anniversary. Marjorie exhibited her masterful storytelling skills as she led our delegation on a tour of Canterbury Cathedral. What a sight it was as she enlisted Mayor Chris Koos to portray the slain Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket, at the very spot where his murder took place!

To everyone’s delight, she returned to Bloomington-Normal in 2007 to again share her historical knowledge and storytelling skills. She gave a pre-show lecture at the Bloomington Performing Arts Center prior to the Aquila Theatre Company’s show “The Canterbury Tales.”

The Normal and Bloomington Public libraries hosted her presentations there. Marjorie read from her children’s books and shared the archeological clues on which her stories were based.

Marjorie’s presentations for some English Literature classes at Normal Community High School left quite an impression on the students in Michael Harrington’s and Mary Jespersen’s classes. Mr. Harrington commented *“My students and I were so impressed by Marjorie’s performance. I received nothing but praise and amazement from students after Marjorie’s visit. They were quite surprised by her vitality.”* Mrs. Jespersen added *“I can’t tell you how many of my students have stopped me in the hallway to say how much they enjoyed the visit.”* Marjorie and Lawrence were married in 1949 and had five children and 12 grandchildren. She wrote her three children’s books for her great-granddaughter. They collaborated on a final book, Canterbury and the Gothic Revival, that was published in 2013. They both became Fellows of the Historical Association in its centenary year.

Lawrence died in December 2019 and Marjorie in March 2020. In her obituary a Mr. Bennett is quoted as saying *“Theirs has been a rare partnership that has had few equals, and it has come as no surprise to those of us that loved them both, that Marjorie has left so soon after Lawrence.”* Among our many wonderful international guests, Marjorie was one who captivated the hearts of children, teens and adults. Her knowledge of history and gripping storytelling skills kept audiences completely engaged. She strengthened our community’s connection with Canterbury and her memory will continue to bring smiles to all who knew her.



Save
The
Date

**Our Annual Meeting is November 5th, by
zoom**

Topic: VCSCA Annual Meeting
Time: Nov 5, 2020; 7:00 PM Central Time (US and
Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://illinoisstate.zoom.us/j/97668432683>

Officers for 2020 - 2021

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Vice President - Desiree Quizon-Colquitt
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MEMBERSHIP FORM

Is Your Membership Up to Date? If you have not sent in your 2020 membership, please use the form below.

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