



VLADIMIR CANTRBURY SISTER CITY  
ASSOCIATION  
OF BLOOMINGTON NORMAL

*COMMUNICATOR*

WINTER 2025



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**PRESIDENT'S LETTER:**

A technology that kept friends and family together during COVID is proving to be equally effective at keeping our sister city relationship strong. While we can no longer enjoy our student and professional exchanges, we have been Zooming together to learn more about each other and exchange good wishes. Our most recent Zoom with Vladimir brought us up to date on happenings at the American Home. Having had to leave the original structure built by Ron Pope, the American Home now enjoys more spacious quarters for their programs. With the current political situation, they are unable to have the usual team of English teachers from the United States. Instead they have engaged English speakers from Zambia and Hungary as well as local teachers. English, we learned, is the official language of Zambia.

I hope many of you will join our next Zoom with Vladimir which will take place on March 15. We will gather at the Westminster Village Willows Clubhouse to celebrate International Women's Day with our colleagues in Vladimir and enjoy a potluck meal about which you'll hear more later. Mark your calendar for 10:30 am on Saturday, March 15 and join the celebration.

At our Annual Meeting at the end of 2024, we welcomed two new board members to the Vladimir Canterbury Sister City Association. I couldn't be more pleased to have long-time VCSCA member Ann White and ISU Professor of History Christine Varga-Harris join our board. Christine's area of specialization is Russian History. Our Board is in good hands with these two new board members.

You will have the opportunity to meet another recent addition to our Board, Igor Kalnin, at a very special program at Bloomington Country Club to be held on April 27. Igor Kalnin is a Professor of Violin at Illinois State University and was born and raised in Russia. We will learn about Professor Kalnin's experience growing up in Soviet Russia in a town not far from Vladimir, his musical studies, and his journey to the United States. We will also enjoy a wonderful performance by Dr. Kalnin. You won't want to miss this very special event. We are so very pleased to have Dr. Kalnin on our board and have him share his talent and expertise with us.

Keep watching for emails about the many future events that are planned. If you have any questions about our programs or ideas to share for future activities, please get in touch with me via email at [elainec@umich.edu](mailto:elainec@umich.edu). I look forward to seeing you at upcoming events.

Sincerely,  
Elaine Cousins, President

## 2024 HIGHLIGHTS



On Sunday, May 12th, the Dr. William L White International Peace forum was held at Bloomington Country Club. George Conyne gave a presentation on Adlai Stevenson. George is a member of the Canterbury Sister City group and a retired Professor of History at the University of Kent.

In August, the association held its annual picnic.



**Movie Night:** Last fall, there was a showing of the delightful film, “Barber of Siberia” at the ISU Alumni Center and we are looking forward to showing more Russian films in 2025.

**Zoom Meetings:** Zoom get-togethers with Vladimir and Canterbury continued to be an important way for our 3 organizations to keep in touch. The following ZOOM meetings were held in 2024:

- *Canterbury Through the Eyes of Olga Zolotova* presented by Irina Lapshina
- *Evergreen Cemetery Walk: burial customs, cemetery history, and architecture* presented by Candace Summers of the McLean County Museum of History
- *Treasurers of Suzdal* presented by Tatiana and Marina Semenova
- There was a meeting exchanging holiday celebrations in December.

## PLANNED 2025 EVENTS

### Spring Events:

- March 15, we will celebrate International Women's Day. We will have a zoom meeting with Vladimir to discuss this topic and enjoy a potluck brunch at the same time. This meeting will take place at 11:00am at the Willows Clubhouse in Westminster Village. Join fellow association members to celebrate in person at the Willows Clubhouse and learn how International Women's Day is celebrated in Vladimir. Contact Carol Kerestes to let her know you are coming. [cdkeres@ilstu.edu](mailto:cdkeres@ilstu.edu). Watch for a Zoom link in your email if you cannot attend in person.
- April 26 at 11:00, we will have a Zoom meeting with Vladimir and Canterbury to discuss Easter traditions.
- Postponed from the Annual meeting, on April 27 Igor Kalnin will give a presentation on growing up in Russia and becoming a musician. This will take place at Bloomington Country Club. After the presentation, we will serve a dinner. More information to come.
- May 17th, Vladimir will do a presentation on WWII posters.

### Summer Event:

- In the summer, there will be a picnic.

### Fall Events:

- There is a possibility of a Zoom presentation on the Kickapoo by the McLean County History Museum.
- Christina Varga Harris will do a presentation on Women in World War II.
- In the fall of 2025, the William L White International Peace forum will be held in Bloomington. The speaker will be Dr. Alexis Peri who wrote a book, *Dear Unknown Friend* which discusses the pen friendships between Soviet and American women. More information to come.
- Film showings of Russian films. *Wings* and *Moscow Doesn't Believe in Tears* are being considered.
- November, the Annual meeting will take place.

## SISTER CITY GARDENS

The Vladimir Sister City garden is located behind the berm off Vernon Ave at the Constitution Trail entrance off Angela Drive. While visiting the Russian Garden, walk along the Trail about 65 yds. to the East where you will see the new Canterbury Garden and the sign which shows the location of three English native type trees: English Oak, Horse Chestnut, and Copper Beech. There is need for additional workers to do garden work, especially in the summer. Please contact Orlyn Edge ([edge@ilstu.edu](mailto:edge@ilstu.edu)) if you are interested in maintaining the garden.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

This is the time of year when memberships to the Sister City Association are due. The following are the various categories.

Student Level	\$15 to \$39
Friend Level	\$40 to \$99
Patron Level	\$100 to \$199
Benefactor Level	\$200 to \$499
Corporate Level	\$500 to \$999
Life Member Level	\$1,000

Send your check payable to:

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If you have any questions or comments regarding this newsletter, please contact Anita Carney at [arcarney73@gmail.com](mailto:arcarney73@gmail.com)

### FACEBOOK PAGE:

The Vladimir Canterbury Sister City Association of Bloomington/Normal Facebook page may be accessed by entering [www.facebook.com/vcsistercitybn](http://www.facebook.com/vcsistercitybn).