

## Newsletter of the Portsmouth Severodvinsk Connection

Spring 2010

( Edited by Alex Herlihy – ([alexherihy@comcast.net](mailto:alexherihy@comcast.net)) - responses welcome)

(Note: This newsletter is being sent to all those who have participated with PSC in the past for whom we have addresses and many new people as well. Please pass it on to anyone who you think might be interested. Thank You.)

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(Quotations between sections are Russian proverbs)

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“The truth has seven sides.”

What is the Portsmouth Severodvinsk Connection?

The PSC is a Russian American citizens exchange group organized in 1994 to foster better relations between the two submarine shipbuilding regions. The organization is a non profit 501 c 3 group which receives donations from the public and has received four US government grants to fund exchanges. There is a corresponding PSC group in Severodvinsk with an organizing committee and a growing group of participants. We have managed at least one visit in every year of our existence. The perseverance of the

PSC is due in no small part to the friendships we have built in both regions over the last 16 years. Building close relations with Russians is more important now than ever before. Although the PSC has explored themes of governance, health care, abandoned children, centennial of the Portsmouth Peace Treaty, gymnastics and education, the consistent theme has always been the environment. It was interest in conversion of our two large submarine ship yards to peace time use that brought our two cities together in the beginning. Soon an EPA grant brought an environmental delegation to Portsmouth. In 2000 a State Dept. grant funded an environmental high school exchange program for two years and in 2009 a second Library of Congress Open World grant brought a delegation of environmental professionals to Portsmouth.

With the success of this recent “Open World” visit (see below), we are forging ahead with a renewed effort to connect people in the very broad area of environment. This “Green Connection” (see below) has the potential to excite people in both regions in a wide variety of areas, but the core of PSC from now on will remain Green.

It is our intent to make this the first of a series of occasional newsletters you will receive when PSC news demands it.

Our website remains the same:

[www.psconnection.org](http://www.psconnection.org) We can always be reached through contacts listed there or write PSC, PO Box 794, Portsmouth, NH 03802 or e-mail PSC chair

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We are a 501.c.3 non profit corporation registered in the state of NH.

All contributions are tax deductible.

Non- profit organizations remain relevant when they create projects that connect and excite people on a continuing basis. The PSC is ready to take its activities to a higher level and we invite you join us on this joint venture with our Russian friends. The coastal American northeast and the coastal Russian northwest have been connected for almost 20 years, ever since Greenpeace’s Josh Handler first visited the closed military city in 1991. (see below) Let us build on that shared history and create a more substantial future together.

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“One opinion does not make a proverb.”

Forging a Green Connection

PSC Hosts Second Open World Delegation in October 2009

In October 2009 four young environmentalists from Severodvinsk under a Library of Congress “Open World” grant arrived in Portsmouth and immediately made an impact

with their intelligence and their challenging questions. Clearly they were the group we had been hoping for. They toured recycling centers, met with Portsmouth environmental officials, toured Turnkey landfill and had a two hour session with NH Dept of Environmental Services among many other professional encounters. They even indicated the kind of professionals they wanted to see make a reciprocal visit to their city.

Their region's needs revolve around disposal of sewage/solid waste/recycling, and other very immediate issues. The success of their visit helped to galvanize this 16 year old organization to foster deeper environmental connections between the two regions

### Creating a Lasting Connection

#### The Environment – A Permanent Link Between Our Sister City Regions

Two toxic submarine shipyards at the end of the Cold War was the unlikely seed that gave birth to the Portsmouth Severodvinsk Connection. There was the hope that slowly they would convert to peacetime use and begin to clean up the huge environmental mess they had created. Today this still remains only a hope. Portsmouth Naval Ship Yard has made some progress with toxic abatement, but has a long way to go and Severodvinsk has diversified to a point with non military small scale industry, but the course of history in the last twenty years has not yielded the fruits of peace that were anticipated. But that is all the more reason to return to the environmental theme that drove the PSC in the 90's and animated the student exchange 2001-03. Connecting environmentalists here and there can improve international understanding and lead to significant progress in a variety of areas. Our goal is to link as many environmentalists as we can find here with their counterparts in the Severodvinsk region. This will be done through the variety of technology we have at our disposal and the many translators and interpreters we have in Severodvinsk. The delegation described below will help make that happen.

#### PSC Sends Environmental Delegation to Severodvinsk Sept 2010

The October Russian delegation was clear about the kinds of professionals they wanted to see visit Severodvinsk on a reciprocal visit. Since their departure last fall The PSC has been organizing a delegation and making plans to send them to Severodvinsk this September. The delegates are: Silke Psula, director of solid waste/recycling for the city of Portsmouth; Doug Bogen, representing the NGO community, long time PSC participant, former head of Cleanwater Action and currently director of Seacoast Anti Pollution League, John Bisette, head of US Forest service in Durham who specializes in forest management and visited Russia seven times since '95 on a forest project.

The purpose of the visit is to connect these professionals to their counterparts in Russia so that they may exchange expertise, ideas, information, problem solving and later, possible creation of projects together. Their visit will act as a catalyst for the larger effort we are making described in "Lasting Connection" section above.

Examples of some of the seacoast people whose work will be taken to Severodvinsk by this delegation and shared are Ann Smith, retired elementary teacher at Portsmouth's New Franklin School and head of the North Mill Pond Advocates where students are directly involved in the restoration of this body of water; Karolina Bodner and other environmental educators whose classroom work will be shared in Russia; Peter Rice, city of Portsmouth engineer in charge of sewage; Bill Howard, Waste Management engineer at Turnkey Landfill, Rose Ohar, OSHA, Dept of Labor in Concord, and many others. We plan to book flights for the group by the end May. We are soliciting donations from the public to help fund this visit. Donations will complement PSC funds and the delegates own money.  
(See donation information at end of newsletter)

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“Fear life not death.”

#### Invitation to the Public– “From Gulag to Tribal Stans”

On May 24<sup>th</sup> the public is invited to a special PSC event at the Portsmouth Library's Levenson Room at 6:30 PM Two of our members, UNH Russian history professor Cathy Frierson (“Children of the Gulag”) and retired foreign correspondent Lou Salome (“Violence, Veils an Bloodlines: Reporting from War Zones“), will speak about their books; there will be a short power point on the history of the PSC and its current environmental initiative as well as displays and handouts.

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“What is well done is slowly done.”

#### – PSC History in a Clamshell

Portland Archangelsk Committee and Portsmouth Severodvinsk Connection  
A successful Working Partnership to Link Our Region with NW Russia

Neale Duffett and Dennis Marotte, co-chairs Portland Archangelsk Committee, (PAC founded in 1989) have worked tirelessly over the years two link closely with their sister city. In any given year they send/host multiple delegations on a variety of themes. Fortunately PSC has been linked with them and they have provided us with much support. The two groups have a tradition of trying to spend at least part of a day in the

other's city when they are hosting a Russian delegation. This has helped connect our friends and counterparts in the two Russian cities on the Dvina River which are separated by about 35 miles.

#### PSC sends delegation for Severodvinsk Anniversary

In July 2008 the PSC sent to Severodvinsk a delegation of four people to represent our group in the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the birth of the city. Here are two responses:

“A boy, about three, hugged his two new Beanie Babies and shuffled from his housemates in Solnishko (Little Sun) Home for Abandoned Children to a wood swing nearby. Smiling widely he placed his new toys gently in the swing and gave them the ride of their, and probably his, lives. After taking their place in the swing the boy lifted his new friends to his lap. An older boy, maybe seven or eight, began pushing the swing. All of this happened I maybe a few minutes on July 29, 2008. the boy's reactions were breathtaking in their spontaneity, universally human. If I was unaware of one purpose of the Portsmouth Severodvinsk Connection, our visit to this children's home erased any uncertainty. Our continued goal should be to deepen person to person relationships in the two cities.” Lou Salome

“My memories of Severodvinsk will always be of the historical pageant danced by a youth ensemble and written and choreographed by a local dance master, a really moving spectacle which presented the turbulent past of the city. At Anatoly Shibalov's dacha I experienced my first banya and his warm and generous hospitality. He is a patently resourceful man who built his dacha with his own hands and harvests a lush and colorful vegetable and herb garden tended with obvious loving care. We visited the as yet only partially restored Siya monastery, 100 miles to the south of the city, and its yeoman-like abbot who conducted the tour. These three experiences are etched in my mind because they gave me a penetrating glimpse into a culture so different from my own, yet at the same time revealed our underlying shared humanity” Roland Goodbody

#### Four Journalists Visit Portsmouth on Open World Grant – Dec. '07

In December 2007 Severodvinsk sent two TV anchors and two newspaper reporters for a week of wide-ranging media visits. Although the first Open World delegation was interesting and the PSC created a good program for them, it did not lead to any lasting contacts. One highlight was a forum at the Portsmouth Library where the journalists were able to discuss their work and field questions. Grigori Dydiatov from Archangelsk was the only delegate who spoke English and he provided many interesting perspectives on the state of journalism in Russia today. The delegation was fortunate that the PSC was

able to secure such an interesting range of media professionals here to present and discuss journalism with them.

### PSC Joins Sister Cities International

In 2006 PSC joined the 50 year old Sister Cities International which made us eligible to apply for Open World Grants. These are funded by the Library of Congress and they bring eastern European professionals to a hosting organization in the US where they have an eight day intense professional program to connect with their counterparts. Ideally, if funding can be found, these visits will lead to a reciprocal visit by US professionals to the sending city and then an ongoing relationship ensues with the sharing of expertise, problem solving and development of projects.

### Seacoast NH Gymnasts visit Severodvinsk in 2006

In late 2005 the PSC was contacted by a gentleman from Severodvinsk who wanted to promote sport exchanges, specifically gymnastics. He visited the seacoast and found an interested group in North Hampton.

“In April 2006 a group of eleven gymnasts, parents and coaches from the NH Association of Artistic Gymnastics traveled to Severodvinsk to train and compete at Sports School #1 and returned with amazing memories and lifelong friendships.”

Ellen Nunes, parent of gymnast

The PSC helped with logistics on both ends of the visit and NHAAG hope some day to host a reciprocal visit from Sports School #1.

### Historic Severodvinsk Visit to Portsmouth in 2005

Chuck Doleac, Portsmouth attorney, began the process of honoring one of the first multi-track peace treaties in the 90's with a series of forums that continue today. The

culminating event was the historic centennial of the Treaty of Portsmouth in 1905 that ended the Russo-Japanese war. If the lessons of that successful negotiation had been learned by the Europeans, the catastrophic events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that began in 1914 might have been avoided. To honor the event, the PSC gathered 24 citizens from many

walks of life in Severodvinsk and invited them to NH for 11 days in August 2005. It was a memorable visit with attendance at Peace Treaty Centennial events, municipal and business meetings, visits to cultural and historical sites, a rousing White Nights public performance by the Russians and evening social events every night. It might have been the largest contingent of Russians to ever visit the NH Seacoast, including the Russian diplomatic contingent lead by Sergei Witte in 1905. (see photos from this visit on PSC website: [psconnection.org](http://psconnection.org))

### Paul Josephson Solo Visits to Severodvinsk

When we have not been able to send a group to Sev., former PSC president and Russian scholar, Paul Josephson, has made the journey for research purposes and for PSC work. This was the case in 1999 and 2004 and several other years. In 2007 during fall semester Paul taught in Severodvinsk under a Fulbright scholarship at Pomor State University. Paul teaches Russian history and history of Russian science at Colby College.

### Spring 2003 Visit to Severodvinsk Marks the End of Student Exchange Grant

In 2000 the PSC received a \$95,000 grant from the State Dept. to fund a two year environmental exchange between Oyster River HS and Portsmouth HS and Severodvinsk Gymnasia #14. The exchange was extended an extra year due to fears in the wake of September 11, 2001. Students created and presented a wide variety of interesting environmental projects and gained some important ecological perspective, and culturally and socially it was a great success. Spending three weeks with a host family in a foreign land opens many doors of perception for young people. School #14 would make a great exchange partner for a seacoast NH or southern Maine high school

### 2002 – Year of many visits

In February Alexander Nikitin, former Russian Naval officer who exposed nuclear waste dumping in the Berents Sea, visited Portsmouth for public presentations. In April PSC member Lois Fonda made a solo visit to Severodvinsk followed by Alex Herlihy in June. In September Mayor Alexander Beliaev and his wife visited Portsmouth to round out a hectic year for the organization

### 1994 – 2000: Summary of activity

In 2000 the PSC hosted a diverse group from Severodvinsk in the snows of February. The group included educators, government officials and journalists; prior to that Severodvinsk had sent delegations here in 1998, 1996 and 1994 which was the inaugural visit of the exchange; in 1995 the first Portsmouth delegation visited Severodvinsk and formal papers were signed setting up the PSC. One of the visits to Portsmouth was by a group of environmentalists and was funded by the EPA. Children's art was also part of exchange.

“The devil is always dressed in the latest fashion.”

## The end of the Cold War and the Birth of the PSC

### Greenpeace’s Moscow Office and Josh Handler’s visits to Severodvinsk

At the end of the cold War Green peace was very concerned about the dumping of radioactive waste at sea which all the nuclear powers had done. When Greenpeace realized that the Soviet Union we actively dumping this waste we protested and organized a conference in Moscow in September 1991 right after the failed coup in August. People from all over Russia where the dumping had occurred were invited. I had been to the north so they were included. Any research done on naval matters included the famous city of Severodvinsk, home to the worlds largest nuclear sub shipyard, and environmentalists from that city came to the conference. There were international participants as well and our Boston campaigner knew Macy Morse and her work in the field so she was there as well.

Because of the turmoil in the country after the coup people felt a bit freer to speak and one participant was able to prove the dumping of radioactive waste which lead to such an international uproar that the Soviet Union stopped the practice. This publicity also lead to international aid to help decommission Soviet Subs and their radioactive waste which continues to this day. It also lead to the birth of the Portsmouth Severodvinsk Connection. Because we met people from Severodvinsk at the conference we were able to visit there in October and made solid contact with new thinking officials of the city. In March, 1992 with great effort and many delays, I visited Severodvinsk a second time on my own. (see Lyena P.’s account below) During our meetings I was struck by how cut off these people were but in a very paradoxical fashion. Despite being a top secret closed city they were not isolated at all and felt every twist and turn of international events of the Cold War. Later I realized that sitting in my office in Washington, DC I had more access to information than the head of their shipyard and local environmentalists, just the kind of support they needed to pursue defense conversion and deal with health and environmental problems. I was put up in a hotel in Archangelsk and met some of the Portland Committee who had already started their exchange program. During this second visit it occurred to me that a sister city program might be a way forward for Severodvinsk and that Portsmouth would be a great match with Macy and the shipyard and both cities wrestling with similar issues. I am very glad to this day that Macy and all of you have been so willing to chip in and help out.

Josh Handler

### A Russian Remembers Josh Handler’s Visit to Severodvinsk

Lyena Podorozhnaya was an English teacher at School #14 and was called in to interpret during Josh’s second visit to Severodvinsk in 1992. Later she became very active in the organization and was the chief organizer of the large Severodvinsk delegation that visited

here in 2005. She now lives in St. Petersburg but is still active in PSC. Below are her recollections of Josh's visit to Severodvinsk.

“In the mayor's office I remember the meeting with Josh Handler who had come straight from the airport to meet Mr. Pzyrev. Several officials from KGB and Sevmarsh and Zvezdochka shipyards including Director Kalistratov. When they knew that Josh had taken video tape of the shipyards on his way to Severodvinsk they told him to delete all the film from his camera. I remember that Josh smiled and said that it is not a secret at all because all such pictures taken by satellite can be found in any magazine in Washington DC kiosk. I also remember the very surprised and even scared faces of KGB officials because Josh took pictures which were not secret but the officials were so much afraid as if Josh showed them something confidential. Josh said ironically: ‘Please, you can delete all the pictures and let us make pictures of all of you instead and I will show them to my friends in Washington.’ Later in a more relaxed atmosphere with refreshments, it was announced that it would be nice to organize a visit of Severodvinsk officials to an American city and to establish continual contacts.”

(Macy Morse did not hesitate to seize this initiative of Josh and the officials and over the next two years she and others worked to organize the first visit by a Severodvinsk delegation to Portsmouth in 1994 and the rest is some pretty exciting and significant history. Josh Handler was not the only American who visited Severodvinsk in 1991. Lois Fonda of Rye, who has hosted more PSC Russian delegates than anyone, also visited the city on a missionary trip with Eastern European Outreach. It seems the final months of the Soviet Union saw a real softening of restrictions, as the central government control unraveled and freedom of movement reached even into military cities like Severodvinsk)

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“A beard is a mark of honor; even a cat has his whiskers.”

#### A Snapshot of Severodvinsk Region

Although only 72 years old, Severodvinsk is located in a region that has been settled by Russia for over 400 years. Built as a submarine ship yard city in 1938 by enforced labor, the city lies at the mouth of the Dvina river on the White Sea, downstream from its larger and much older 16<sup>th</sup> century neighbor, Archangelsk. Here, where the great northern forest meets the sea, there is beautiful and abundant nature, so close to the heart of all Russians. It was here in rural Russia where the eternal values of the people were born and nourished: loyalty, love of family, self-sacrifice, patience to outlast the long winters and love of nature. There is also rich human culture to be found in a museum that highlights both natural and human history as well as a lovely Orthodox church built in 1995 and often frequented by submarine sailors stationed in Zvezdochka, the largest submarine shipyard in the world nearby. There is a branch of Pomor State University, an active theater and a downtown government square that reminds one of St. Petersburg which was the intent of the architects. Way out in the White Sea are the

Solevky Islands, home of the 16<sup>th</sup> century monastery, a world heritage site. North of Archangelsk is one of the most impressive museums of outdoor wooden architecture in the nation – Maly Karely. Russians set a high standard for the development of human culture and institutions that promote it; Severodvinsk is no exception.

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“To know a man you have to eat seven puds of salt with him.” (pud = 36.11 lbs.)

Faces of the PSC –

You have already heard about Lyena P, but the current head of the PSC is Katya Boikova, English teacher at School #14 and she is assisted by Dima Ryzhikov, curator of the Sev. history museum and Lyena Dudina and Katya Urbanichene of the Adult Ed. Institute “Knowledge.” Lyudmila Ermolina and Vladimir Vashenko are long time supporters. The four delegates who were in NH in October are also active as is their facilitator Victoria Podolskaya in Archangelsk and there are others who support the program.

In the NH Seacoast the chair of the PSC is Alex Herlihy assisted by a working committee of Cathy Wolff, Roland Goodbody, Lois Fonda, Ellen Nunes, Dudley Dudley, Cathy Hodson and Lou Salome and Ursula Bondi. Macy Morse remains a consultant as do Russian scholars Paul Josephson and Cathy Frierson. There are at least two dozen others who help out during visits.

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“From honest toil you don’t build mansions”

Volunteer Opportunities and Ways to get Involved in the PSC

1. join dialogue about daily workings of PSC and its future
2. grant writing
3. computer expertise, especially reporting to government under grants
4. writing and editing
5. find and organize seacoast environmentalists for our Green connection with Sev.
6. seek and engage in dialogue with other Russian American groups
7. plan and organize future Russian forums at Portsmouth Library
8. work with Portland Archangelsk committee to better coordinate joint activities
9. help coordinate and prepare environmental delegation visit to Sev. in Sept.
10. cultivate better media connections for the PSC
11. identify and organize a visible environmental project that could be a gift
12. to the people of Severodvinsk to represent our friendship and future together
13. work on the structure of PSC to create better organization
14. become a regular correspondent with one or more of our friends in Sev.

- 15 find a way for PSC to connect to the Portsmouth school system
- 16 become a liaison between PSC and Portsmouth city government
17. etc.

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“The glory of the house is hospitality.”

(Several of us in the PSC, who have been fortunate to have visited Russia several times, can attest to the legendary hospitality of the Russia people. If you become involved in PSC work you will soon experience this warmth and friendship from visiting Russians who will encourage you to visit their country and see for yourself.)

#### Donation information

Below is information for those who want to support the work of the PSC and specifically help to fund the visit of the environmental delegation to Severodvinsk in September. The PSC is not a membership organization, but has always depended on donations to fund delegations to Russia. Four of the delegations from Severodvinsk have been funded by US government grants, but those are not as available to go to Russia.

All contributions are tax deductible. Make checks out to “Portsmouth Severodvinsk Connection” and mail to PO Box 794, Portsmouth, NH 03802 Please include your name, address, tel # and most important e-mail so that we can send you updates on our activities

Many thanks for your support!

“Russia is both ugly and grand at the same time; both poor and rich; it is something you can’t compare with anything; Russia is something to felt and believed in.”

Fyodor Tyutchev, 19<sup>th</sup> cent. Russian poet

end

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News Flash – 5/14/10 Although it is not official yet, recent events have made it almost a certainty that Oyster River HS in Durham NH and English School Gymnasia #14 in Severodvinsk, Russia will renew their exchange started under a grant in ’01 and revived again with a special visit from School 14 to ORHS in March ’09. Such a regular exchange will do much to expand and enrich PSC connections between our two regions. It is anticipated that the Gymnasia might begin the program with a visit here in November and Oyster River would reciprocate in April 2011.