



## Our Newest Board Member, Lena Lake

The ATA unanimously voted to welcome Lena Lake to the Board of Directors in April. Lake will contribute her professional skills in accounting, tax preparation, information science and consulting to the ATA. She was born and raised in Russia but also speaks several more Slavic languages including Ukrainian and Polish. She is fluent in Czech.

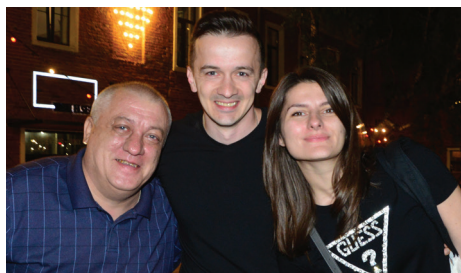


When asked how she feels about being accepted to the ATA, she said the following: "While the world mourns the loss of part of the Notre Dame Cathedral today, I was accepted to the Albany-Tula Alliance. I'm hopeful that my love of history and architecture will continue to build and strengthen the ties between Russia and U.S. I bring a driven sense of commitment and devotion to the ATA mission in hopes that it will help unify our differences."

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The next day, Labzin treated the pair to lunch at **Pravda** restaurant followed by a gathering of Essay Contest winners at **LanArk English School**, a busy language academy that Labzin founded. Shaye introduced the history and purpose of the visit to participants and handed out awards. He did the same at the **Speaker Club** while Stark took photos and videos for posting on the ATA website and social media pages.

On Wednesday, Shaye had a successful meeting with Tula's Director of the Chamber of Commerce in the morning. That evening, both were picked up by a taxi service arranged and paid for by Mikhail



Mikhail Budenkov, Dmitry and Anna Naumova



Shaye and Stark with Vladimir Zakharov in Moscow.

Budenkov. He also arranged for them to meet Vladimir Zakharov, a man of many hats like professor, member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and head of the Center of Sustainable Development. Discussions with the green thinker ended on a positive note. They spoke about creating a public campaign to educate people about the importance of recycling in Moscow.

Shaye stayed at the Marriott Novy Arbat near the Embassy while Stark, again, was welcomed to overnight in an apartment owned by Molchanova.



A newsletter of the Albany-Tula Alliance • A sister city program of Albany, New York and Tula, Russia • People to People, City to City

Fall 2019

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## A Brief but Constructive Trip to Tula

"What a thrill to return to a ever-changing city with close friends that always stay the same," were the words echoed by ATA board member, Sonja Stark, upon visiting Tula, Russia with ATA board member, Jerry Shaye, this past May. Stark's last trip to Russia took place in 2014 when she escorted two Essay Contest winners to Moscow, St. Petersburg and Tula.

While Shaye lodged in a favorite hotel by the Upa River, Stark was treated to a wonderful homestay in a three-story walkup apartment by Elena Molchanova and her 16-year-old son Artyom. Molchanova has been close friends with the ATA since the organizations' beginnings.



Gathering at WhatElse? restaurant.

Friends in Tula were also quick to accommodate Stark and Shaye's last-minute travel needs. Uber was an option but when Valentin Labzin found out that their flight from J.F.K. was arriving a day late, he volunteered to navigate heavy traffic at



Sheremetyevo Airport in his 1957, vintage, army-green Trabant for the pickup.

"It was the ride of a lifetime!," admits Stark.

"Everyone in Tula is so generous with their time and efforts," said Shaye.

With only 3 days in Tula and 1 day in Moscow, Stark and Shaye made the most of their time. In an effort to see as many people as they could, they invited friends to join them for apps and drinks at the newly-opened **WhatElse?** restaurant, a popular

gathering spot co-owned by a former 2017 Business Internship candidate, Dmitry Dremlyuga.

The hip new lounge was located close to the Kremlin in an industrial-chic courtyard that has undergone tremendous renovation. The area was decorated for the spring with strings of lights, outdoor furniture and bubbling water fountains. A pop-up business renting Segways and electric scooters for exploring city sights had a long queue.

Anna Naumova (also a 2017 Business Internship candidate) and her husband Dmitry, presented Shaye with a token of appreciation for the Alliance's continued friendship and a model toy car gift for Stark and her boyfriend, a mechanic — a Russia Series UAZ 3962 "Loaf" — appropriate because of the vast collection on display at Stark's home. Gestures of kindness at every turn!



Elena Molchanova cooking inside Tula apartment.

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# Essay Contest Summary: The Importance of Language



The 2019 Essay Contest for Capital Region teens expanded to include two sister-city schools in Tula this year: LanArk English School and the Speaker Club. Both schools saw considerable participation and garnered deep discussions. The topic — suggested by one of the Alliance’s long-time friends in Tula — provoked poignant essays from students in both cities: *“If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart,”* said by Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa.

The quote generated valuable insights and perspectives including students who were

quick to point out how Mandela’s efforts to learn and use the language of his oppressors served him well in jail and, later, as President of South Africa.

Locally, the first prize of \$1,000 went to Emma Willard School senior, Anna Boggess. Boggess, herself a Russian-American, who researched academic articles to learn of a study, referred to as the *foreign-language effect*, that found students made better decisions when using their second language instead of their first.

The second place winner was Albany High junior, Amelia Colafati. Colafati spent

her elementary school years taking a dual language program in English and Spanish so she approached the topic listing the many benefits of bilingualism in international exchange, discussion and policy.

And, the third place winner turned out to be Albany High senior, Adam Aleksic. This was Aleksic’s third year participating in the Essay Contest, winning third place in 2017 and first place in 2018. Through research, Aleksic found ways that American schools can improve foreign language instruction so that understanding between cultures improves.

Videos of the presentation, held at the Fort Orange Club in late March, can be found online at [www.youtube.com/albanytula](http://www.youtube.com/albanytula).

The Albany-Tula Alliance will offer the Essay Contest again in the spring of 2020. Please watch for announcements of the topic and submission guidelines on the Alliance’s website. Posters will be pinned up at area schools and local libraries. Incidentally, we’re also seeking funding sources, namely sponsorships and contributions, to help reinstate travel awards. If you can help, please contact Dawn Weinraub: [contact@albanytula.org](mailto:contact@albanytula.org).

## Recognition of Tula’s Young Talent

ATA members, Jerry Shaye and Sonja Stark, embarked on a memorable four-day trip to Tula, Russia in April to congratulate students who participated in the annual Essay Contest. The long overdue reunion with friends Alina Brustina and Irina Bolushevskaya included a stop at the LanArk English School followed by an equally-impressive gathering at the nearby Speaker Club. Participating students of Tula State University also convened at LanArk for honors.

The top three winners of each school received monetary prizes, awards and accolades for their well-written insights along with Certificates of Achievement. The award ceremony at LanArk concluded with a talent show with Daniel Omara, a Ugandan-born TSU student, treating everyone to a recital playing guitar,

harmonica and singing a Bob Dylan tune. Taisia Klochkova, the second prize winner, also from TSU, found time to do the same by performing a song on her guitar. Slices of pizza were delivered to the **Speaker Club** at the conclusion of the student presentations.

The talents of Tula’s youth can be enjoyed by visiting [youtube.com/AlbanyTula](http://youtube.com/AlbanyTula).



# The Albany-Tula Alliance Brings American Legal English to Russia

International trade has always been a significant area of cooperation between different countries. It’s hard to imagine business relations without a proper contract. Sometimes, it’s a challenge to coordinate two legal systems and two varied languages to achieve a contract that will really work, one that’s clear, comprehensive and satisfies both sides.

The process requires expertise from highly capable and qualified lawyers and translators. That is the reason why legal English has been studied by translators and interpreters in two Tula universities for so many years. It’s vital to the economic and political future of both countries.

In 2002, a total of 10 Albany Law School professors traveled to Tula to lecture on American law and legal system. It was a tremendous undertaking that educated

many future Russian lawyers and started new friendships.

Later, in 2016, Elena Molchanova, a co-owner of a translation agency, who teaches at Tula State University, spent two weeks at Albany Law School, attending lectures and studying the American legal system in order to pass along her knowledge to her students and colleagues. The trip resulted in a series of workshops for future linguists at Tula State University.

Changing environments require additional education so the English project continued in 2019 with the assistance of Charlotte S. Buchanan, Esq., founder of the Albany-Tula Alliance and Dr. Alexandra Harrington, professor at Albany Law School. Both experts answered questions from practicing translators, assisted with translation of contracts and put together a glossary of



legal terms. The project was carried out remotely and resulted in a glossary of legal terms posted on Molchanova’s company’s public website: <http://altm.ru/info/articles/perevod-dogovora-poleznyye-frazy>. All are welcome to use for translating contracts into English.

Molchanova says: “I’m very lucky and grateful to be able to work with an expert and such a great person as Charlotte. This opportunity is inspirational and educational and I hope that the materials that we developed will be useful for translation students, interns and practicing translators, not only in Tula, but all over Russia.”

## Environmental Health Sciences Short Course Summary

With support from the Albany-Tula Alliance, the Environmental Health Sciences (EHS) Department at the UAlbany School of Public Health (SPH) collaborated with the Center for Global Health in the Spring of 2019 on the delivery of a specially-designed short-course to introduce students in Tula, Russia to how hazardous agents in the environment affect human health. The course built on a previous course offered by the ATA and SPH in 2017. The course was taught by Drs. David Carpenter and Xiaobo Xue Romeiko, both of whom are faculty in EHS. Dr. Nataliia Kovalchuk, formerly an EHS doctoral student from Ukraine and now a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Arizona, served as the course’s interpreter. This unique distance learning course included five one-week modules covering concerns related to organic chemicals, radiation, cancer and the

environment, environmental sustainability, and green design.

Each course module consisted of lecture slides covering relevant scientific material and information and a “real time” group discussion session led by Drs. Carpenter or Romeiko. All the course materials were presented in Russian and the lively exchanges during the online group discussions were translated “real time” into Russian by Dr. Kovalchuk. With the support of one of the ATA’s key partners in Tula, the Russia Environmental Policy and Culture Center, 25 students actively participated in the course.

Dr. Edward Fitzgerald, an emeritus professor in EHS and Board member of the ATA, helped to facilitate the course. He says that he was “delighted by the very positive response to the course”. In fact, in an online survey conducted after the course the students remarked that “everything was great, the course was at a high level, and courses like this should be continued.”

Drs. Carpenter and Romeiko were also extremely pleased with the level of engagement and the quality of the interaction with the students. Dr. Carpenter, who also taught several modules in the

prior distance course delivered in 2017, said that “once again the students were very involved and asked great questions.” For Dr. Romeiko working via long distance with the students from Tula was a positive experience. “I found the students to be highly motivated and very much interested in environmental sustainability and green design and how they are practiced outside of Russia.”

As with the prior course, John Justino, the Director of the UAlbany Center for Global Health, provided valuable technical support. Mr. Justino said he was “really pleased with the improvements we made to the course this time around. In particular, our Graduate Assistant, Melanie Mongillo, did a great job creating an online course site using the School of Public Health’s Moodle online learning platform. Creating this online course site made it much easier for the faculty and students to share and access course materials, and to engage fully in the course.”

Mr. David Smith, Chair of the ATA Board of Directors, says that the “ATA is very pleased with how well the course was received by the students and we look forward to further collaborations with our partners in Tula.”

