

# КАРТОЧКА

*The official newsletter of the Central Association of Russian Teachers of America*



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# CARTA

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Our mission is to consolidate and coordinate the efforts of the Russian language and area studies in order to enhance and expand Russian studies in the region, provide professional and moral support for existing programs, and to create new programs of need and interest to students at all levels of public, private, secondary, and higher educational institutions. The additional benefits would be an exchange of educational programs, ideas, and techniques.

## Dedicated to CARTA! CARTA ПОСВЯЩАЕТСЯ...

In October of 1998 five Russian language educators from three states gathered in Oklahoma City to discuss the feasibility of founding a regional association of Russian language and culture teachers. The idea was unanimously supported and the association was established with the name of CARTA (Central Association of Russian Teachers of America). It was decided then that CARTA's service area would include the states that neighbor Oklahoma: Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, and Texas. Several years later Mississippi also joined the organization.



A line from a once popular Soviet song with an appropriate name «Ищи меня по карте» (music by M. Fradkin; lyrics by M. Plyatskovsky) was selected for the Association's motto. A suggestion was made to establish a Lifetime membership and to offer an inaugural special of \$90.00. All five delegates paid that amount establishing the financial foundation of the newly created professional group. Today, CARTA's Lifetime members list comprises over 30 individuals.

### Those individuals who attended the meeting in 1998 are recognized as CARTA's Founders:

**Lis Collins** – (1941 – 2009), 33 years teaching in the Arlington Independent School District, Texas;

**Elena Doshlygina** - 31 years teaching at Tulsa University, Oklahoma; 14 study abroad trips to Russian and Kazakhstan;



*Founding meeting 1998*

*Left to right: Lis Collins, Elena Doshlygina, Mara Sukholutskaya, Roman Brysha, Larry Lonard, Sally Ziebell (in background Dr. Fran Stackenwalt, East Central University)*

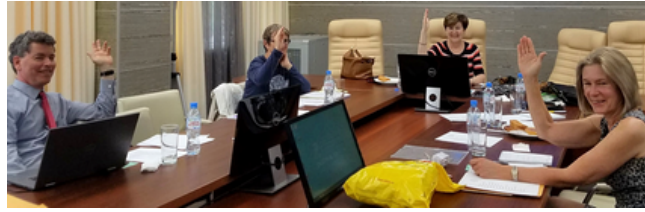
**Mara Sukholutskaya** – 32 years teaching at East Central University, Oklahoma; 27 study abroad trips;

**Roman Brysha** – (1946 – 2023), taught at Holland Hall School, Oklahoma, and in California;

**Larry Lonard** – 32 years teaching in the Topeka Public Schools, Kansas; 6 years of student exchanges with a sister-high school in Kharkiv, Ukraine;

**Sally Ziebell** – 24 years teaching in the Putnam City School District and at Harding Charter Prep High School, Oklahoma; 12 study abroad trips to Russia and France.

Twenty-six years have passed since that October with many individuals have contributing to the continuing growth and success of the association. One small group forming the CARTA Board has worked tirelessly to ensure that the CARTA's main activity - its annual conference - is well planned and properly organized. Following are CARTA's present and past Board members:



## Current CARTA Board



**Sukholutskaya, Mara** – President, Ph.D., East Central University, Ada, OK 32 years of teaching Russian - **25** years of service on the CARTA Board



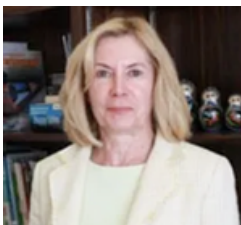
**Schefski, Harold** – Membership, Awards, and Evaluations Chair, Ph.D. Emeritus, California State University, Long Beach 40 years of teaching Russian - **15** years of service on the CARTA Board



**Long, Michael** – Vice-President, Publications Chair, Ph.D., Baylor University, Waco, TX 36 years of teaching Russia - **19** years of service on the CARTA Board



**Iepuri, Valentina** – Publicity Chair and the Webmaster, Ph.D. The University of Mississippi 22 years of teaching Russian - **13** years of service on the CARTA Board



**Nummikoski, Marita** – Treasurer and Grants Chair, Ph.D., Emeritus, University of Texas, San Antonio, 48 years of teaching Russian - **21** years of service on the CARTA Board



**Scanlan, Tatiana** – By-Laws and Nominations Chair, University of Kansas and Johnson County Community College, 33 years of teaching Russian - **3** years of service on the CARTA Board

## Board Members Emeriti



**Lindsey, Byron Ph.D.** Emeritus the University of New Mexico, 37 years of teaching Russian



**Lonard, Larry**  
Emeritus Kansas Public Schools, 32 years of teaching Russian;



**Ziebell, Sally**  
Emerita OK City Public Schools & American Community School, England, 26 years of teaching Russian

## Former CARTA Board Members

Karmanova, Tatyana, Ph.D. Emerita Missouri Southern State University, 17 years of teaching Russian;

Liro, Joe, Emeritus Austin TX Community College, 30 years of teaching Russian;

Tucker, Janet, Ph.D., Emerita University of Arkansas, 20 Years of teaching Russian;

Collins, Lis (1941-2009), Arlington TX Independent School District, 33 years of teaching Russian

Irina Krivtsova - Nominations, Tulsa Junior College, Oklahoma;

Andrey Shkvorov - formerly from the University of Hawaii;

Richard Pain, formerly from Colorado Community College;

Mikhail Palatnik - Washington University, Missouri

## The following individuals served as Local Chairs and were Board members during particular Conference years:

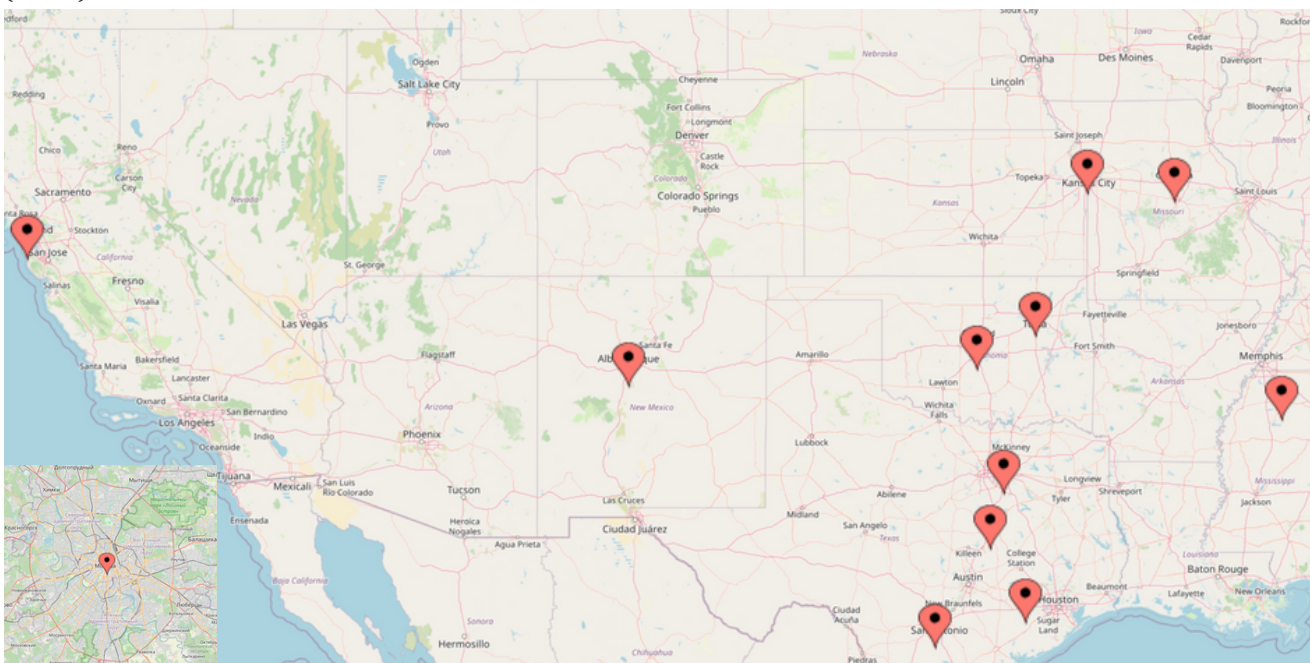
Sabina Amanbaeva; Elena Doshlygina, Marilyn Gaar, Irina Krivtsova, Tatiana Scanlan, Maria

Yevtushenko, Michael Long, Valentina Iepuri, Nicole Monnier, Andrey Shkvorov, Marita Nummikoski,

Byron Lindsey, and Mikhail Osadchiy

## CARTA Geography

CARTA started as a small regional association (the first Conference gathered 13 attendees), but has since outgrown its original intent expanding geographically and growing in number. CARTA Conferences were held in eleven cities: Oklahoma City (1999, 2000, 2008, 2023), Tulsa (2002, 2006, and 2013), Albuquerque (2003 and 2019), Dallas (2001 and 2015), San Antonio (2005 and 2017), Columbia, MO (2014), Austin (2002, 2006, and 2007), Waco (2013 and 2022), Kansas City (2004, 2010, 2016), Oxford, MS (2011), San Francisco (2009) of seven states and also in Moscow, Russia (2018).





CARTA has welcomed presenters and attendees from 19 states and several countries including India, Belorussia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Russia, Slovakia, Austria, Uzbekistan and several others. We are proud that CARTA has become a truly national and international Association. CARTA is honored to have in its ranks two truly distinguished world-famous individuals: **Professor Vitaliy Kostomarov**, founder of the Pushkin Russian Language Institute, and a great Russian poet, **Yevgeny Yevtushenko**. Their legacy lives on in CARTA's Conferences and special events.

CARTA recognizes outstanding contribution to the field of Russian Language and Culture with its Excellence in Teaching Russian Award that is presented annually during the Awards Luncheon. Over twenty CARTA members have earned that honor. Additionally, CARTA recognizes its loyal supporters, contributors, and advocates with a Friend of CARTA Award. Among the recipients of that award there are individuals as well as professional entities such as Language Departments and businesses.



CARTA cherishes and supports its loyal exhibitors who have continuously displayed their products and programs at conferences and through advertising with CARTA publications. Special Thank you goes to the American Council for International Education, SRAS and its leader, Renee Stillings; and Russia-onLine/ Bergstrom Press and its President, James Beale.



In addition to its annual conferences CARTA organized a number of special events. Among them:

- Two Essay contests - 2005 and 2020;
- A Symposium dedicated to 200 years of Diplomatic relations between USA and Russia – 2009;
- Four Yevgeniy Yevtushenko's poetry Readings;
- Yevgeny Yevtushenko Poetry Recital Contest- annually since 2021;
- Pre-conference Workshops on Russian Pedagogy, an unforgettable trip to Fort Ross, Oklahoma Russian architecture and ballet connections; Russian Culture and others.

CARTA still remembers outstanding formal presentations and informal conversations with Professor Vitaliy Kostomarov; an unforgettable trip to Fort Ross; memorable visits to Peredelkino and Yaroslavl. CARTA is proud to be able to offer such first-class professional and inspiring opportunities to its conferences' attendees.

# CARTA Publications

CARTA produces an annual Newsletter as well as the CARTA Research Journal. Many thanks go to the former and current editors for their selfless work and contribution: Michael Long, Alvin Turner, Sabina Amanbaeva and several others.

## ПЕРЕБИРАЯ НАШИ ДАТЫ...

### CARTA 5th Conference (Albuquerque)

Al Turner's dedication:

When we let Russian ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children will be able to join hands and sing together an old Russian hymn, "CARTA at last, CARTA at last!"

### CARTA 10th Conference (Oklahoma City)

Yevgeny Yevtushko sent a letter and dedicated a poem in honor of the occasion while Larry compiled a Top 10 Reasons list to attend CARTA Conferences:

Дорогие друзья, коллеги из объединяющей нас всех нашей дорогой Днерожденницы CARTы, которой сейчас исполняется 10 лет! Но она весьма подающая надежды девочка, умненькая, благоразумненькая, даже читает книжки сверх школьной программы, а если открывает компьютер, то вовсе не для того, чтобы заниматься самурайскими играми, а находит ответы на все самые главные вопросы.

Она, наша CARTA – это обобщающая фотографическая карточка наших учительских душ, не потерявших веру в смысл нашей профессии, объединенных благородной задачей, чтобы наши ученики полюбили русский язык, литературу и не позволили бы, чтобы в будущем повторилась бы опять холодная война между двумя такими великими странами, как США и Россия. CARTA не занимается политикой. Но она может помочь воспитать политиков будущего, которые будут понимать, что нация Генри Торо, Уолта Уитмана, Марка Твена, Фолкнера, Роберта Фроста, Хемингуэя может дружить со страной Пушкина, Толстого, Чехова, Пастернака, Анны Ахматовой. Красота языка и мудрость, спрессованная в лучших книгах наших народов, могут привести к взаимопониманию. Человечество всегда сможет найти общий язык только если будет знать языки друг друга! Слава CARTе и всем ее верным рыцарям и рыцарессам!



**Тень Дамы Пиковой, не каркай  
Над нами ночью ледяной:  
«Три карты! – слышите – три карты!»  
А нам достаточно одной!**

*Евгений Евтушенко  
Москва, 2008  
April 3*



## Top 10 Reasons to Attend CARTA Conferences by Larry Lonard

10. Due to educational budgets cuts for foreign languages, this reason was eliminated this year.
9. CARTA is easier to spell than AATSEEL. Besides, AATSEEL sounds like a brand of plastic food containers or a tire repair kit. CARTA can be typed with just the left hand.
8. The backward R and N and all the other funny looking letters make sense.
7. CARTA is a place where those of us who can't wish we could.
6. CARTA is a place where Bears, Tigers, Jayhawks, Tarheels, Lobos, Buffalos, Razor-backs, Longhorns, Sooners, Cowboys, and many other creatures can gather in peace and harmony. But mommas should not let their "babies grow up to be cowboys" [Willie Nelson]
5. CARTA is a place where fish eggs magically become caviar, bacon fat becomes salo, and that clear liquid in the bottle isn't Aqua Fina.
4. CARTA is a place where "perfective" and "imperfective" do not refer to one's appearance, wardrobe, performance, or dance moves.
3. CARTA is a place where "genitive," is not associated with a disease, but perhaps it should be; "accusative," does not refer to crime; "dative," has little to do with your social life: "instrumental," does not refer to a musical instrument; and "nominative," has nothing to do with Clinton or Obama.
2. CARTA is a place where "NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND," just means that all your students are on the tour bus.
1. CARTA is a place where the dues are cheap, the food is good, the dancing is beyond description, and the fellowship is awesome.



### CARTA 15th Conference (Waco, TX)

The festivities started with a warm and welcoming opening Reception. The attendees enjoyed a sophisticated and inspiring greeting from Dr. Heidi Bostic, Baylor's Modern Languages and Cultures Department Chair. Each Conference participant was awarded a special commemorative medal.



### CARTA 20th Conference (Moscow, Russia)



This Conference was held at the Pushkin Russian Language Institute in Moscow. At the Reception the CARTA's Honorary member, Dr. Vitaliy Kostomarov, offered a toast to the most prominent of the less commonly taught languages- Russian. The official opening of the Conference was held the following morning. Speakers included Dr. Kostomarov; CARTA's President, Mara Sukholutskaya, and Mr. Thomas Leary representing the Embassy of the United States in Moscow. The latter, who delivered his comments in Russian, mentioned that the best place to study Russian was the host institute and encouraged the audience to continue studying and researching Russian language and culture.

At the conclusion of the Conference the participants received certificates and CARTA members enjoyed beautiful green mugs commemorating CARTA's 20th birthday arranged by the Pushkin Institute. Al Turner's comments give a good summary of CARTA's experiences during its 20th Jubilee Conference: "The CARTA conference provided a once in a lifetime experience for me. The reception given by the Pushkin Institute, the trip to Yaroslavl and the golden circle were enough to have made it memorable. The memories I cherish however came with the trip to Peredelkino, reading poetry in the home of Pasternak, touring the Yevtushenko museum and a delightful meal and reception at the Yevtushenko home".



## CARTA 25th Conference (Oklahoma City)

For its quarter century Jubilee CARTA gathered in Oklahoma City, the Association's birthplace. Some of the highlights included:

- An opening Reception featuring a violin duo from OCU, students' performances, songs and dances by Anna and the Boys; CARTA's Showtime Choir and karaoke group singing.
  - CARTA Chronicles presentation by Sally Ziebell;
  - Poetry and music recital by Zhenya Yevtushenko;
- Each participant received a commemorative matryoshka doll figurine.

For 25 years CARTA has been delivering on its Mission to support and strengthen Russian Studies in its service area and throughout the United States and beyond. During those years CARTA's members published books and articles, delivered papers and chaired panels at professional conferences; were recognized at state, regional and national levels; received promotions and assumed leadership roles at their respective institutions. CARTA celebrated those achievements, proud that it provided professional, moral, and emotional support to all of its members. The following comments from CARTA's members demonstrate the special bond that has been created by CARTA which is undoubtedly one of CARTA's greatest achievements and a significant contribution to the field of Humanities.





Al Turner, CARTA 's Court poet, compiled the following lines in honor of the event:

## An Ode to CARTA Alvin O. Turner\*

Odes address topics of significance  
affairs of states, deeds of presidents,  
enduring searches for truth and beauty  
invitations to Immortality.

Odes should reveal noble paths  
away from mercy and wrath,  
point toward holy liberty  
define hopes for posterity.

Odes commemorate visions of movers and shakers  
creators of nations, movements of note  
Not things as small as CARTA  
creations of Sally, Larry, Lis, Lena, Roman or Mara.

Odes are written by poets laureate,  
literary lions or agents of state,  
not unknown scribes, their credentials in question.  
struggling with rhyme, meter, expression.

Yet that odist knows caged birds may sing.  
Truth often remains in desks unseen  
smaller is so often wisest.  
Quilts from scraps may be warmest.

He finds in those thoughts an explanation  
for CARTA's outsized reputation,  
drawing those we stood in awe of  
Yevtushenko and Kastamarov  
Sharing special times with Yevginiy  
honored by the other at the Институт русского

So let us celebrate this silver anniversary  
the dream of Mara, Liz, Roman, Lena, Sally and Larry.  
Let us honor the work of Michael, Masha, Joe and Marita,  
Harold and Byron, Valya, Alla, Tatiana and Sabina.

Let us applaud their vision proclaimed  
Finished scholars, small school faculty and high school teachers  
meeting in sessions with student readers.  
Matthew, Jerry, Olga, Tamar and yet more friends unnamed  
beyond the borders of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico,  
Arkansas, Mississippi, Kansas and Colorado  
transcending boundaries of Ukraine, Latvia, Moldova, Georgia,  
and Russia,  
Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan even Mexico and India

Yes! Yes! Yes! An ode for little CARTA  
The overreaching dream from Mara  
promoting Russian scholarship  
building worldwide fellowship.

And a limerick:

### CARTA Limerick

There was a pretty lady from Kiev  
who kept projects up her sleeve  
for unwary strangers or friends  
who found themselves, at loose ends  
to give them new meaning and purpose  
as CARTA workers, poets and Sherpas.



## CARTA's Voices

I began attending CARTA meetings in 2002 (Tulsa OK) and have missed only one meeting since that time. Unlike cold impersonal national meetings, CARTA creates a warm intimate environment of about fifty to seventy scholars and teachers from all over the world. There are no conflicting sessions, and everyone feels a personal responsibility to listen to as many presentations as possible. People dine together, attend local attractions as a group, and participate in cultural events. Also, it is one of the few meetings that involve undergraduate students who get their first exposure to academic life. I know how much I loved CARTA when the meetings shut down during the pandemic or were relegated to ZOOM, which just is not the same. For me CARTA is a yearly pilgrimage which I feel obliged to attend even though my university fails to support me financially since my retirement in 2016. CARTA has miraculously lasted a quarter century, and we can only hope that it will continue to prosper in the coming years if only dedicated youthful scholars will consider its survival a worthwhile commitment.

*Harold Schefski, California*

Я познакомилась с КАРТой два года назад и очень полюбила формат этой конференции. Мне нравится все: прекрасная организация, замечательные люди, интересные доклады, приятные сюрпризы и теплые воспоминания. Меня очень впечатлило, как бережно КАРТА относится к истории своего существования и гордится всеми достижениями. А гордиться действительно есть чем, ведь за четверть века КАРТА успела подрасти и из маленькой конференции превратилась в конференцию интернационального уровня. Я желаю КАРТе дальнейшего роста и долгих лет процветания и с нетерпением жду новых встреч!

*Yuliya Kruchkova, Texas*

When I ponder about CARTA's role in furthering Russian Studies in the U.S., I think of the people the association unites. I feel fortunate to be able to interact with many current CARTA members, who are so devoted to sharing their experience and knowledge with scholars and students of younger generations. Participating myself and having my students take part in the events organized by CARTA just in the last few years makes me appreciate the association's mission, which has been continuing for over 25 years. I wish everyone continued energy, curiosity, and commitment to their fields of research and study for many more years to come. Многая лета, КАРТА!

*Olga Scarborough, Colorado*

CARTA has become very dear and precious to me. Every time I attend the annual Conference, I feel like I'm surrounded by my old friends, and we are talking about something that we all adore and cherish.

*Aleksandra Montotova, Russia*

Двадцать пять лет моей профессиональной жизни тесно связаны с CARTA. CARTA – это мой любимый островок культурного пространства России и русскоязычного мира в Америке. Я посетила двадцать четыре конференции из двадцати пяти. В памяти особенно ярко остались блестящие выступления Евтушенко, Костомарова, Бердичевского, доктора Тернера, а также экскурсии и очень теплая атмосфера всех конференций CARTA. Я очень люблю CARTA и благодарна CARTA (и Маре как одаренному организатору-вдохновителю) за то, что CARTA нам всем дала.

*Elena Doshlygina, Oklahoma*

CARTA is not just another professional academic organization. It is managed by its members and is as social as it is professional. My time on the CARTA board was satisfying and rewarding.

*Joe Liro, Texas*

CARTA has been a true pinnacle of success for me as a language educator. Who am I, as a teacher of Russian language and culture without the CARTA family? I wear many hats, but my pride and joy is the work I do. I could do it alone and never be supported, enriched, valued, appreciated, loved, cared for, like I am by the CARTA community. My life would definitely be different. CARTA has been there for me since 2010. I met my esteemed colleagues and friends, travelled to various places within the United States and Russia, defended my dissertation, changed countries, came back to the US, got a permanent teaching position. I know that CARTA is there for me. It is a great shoulder to lean on. I am a better person because I am part of this amazing professional organization!

*Tamara Karakozova, Mississippi*

I have retained my association with CARTA because I enjoy the unique challenges and opportunities it offers. I have also found friends within the group that I just enjoy being around. My life and career have been filled with many good memories, but the Moscow meeting has to rank among the best. Albuquerque, Kansas City, and our most recent meeting in OKC are highlights for me as well. In contrast, I cannot think of a comparable history meeting I enjoyed as much.

*Al Turner, Colorado (formerly from Oklahoma)*

I rejoice in the remembrance of those few golden days of early 2012 at CARTA. It was not only CARTA, but it was also my first exposure to Russian studies in the US. I could make a journey through the programs of Russian studies at the universities of Arlington, Austin, and then NM. It started from the CARTA platform. I came back home delighted and inspired. To be frank, I was little down in spirit at CARTA conferences during the post Corona years in 2021 and 2023 as I had to attend the sessions with my presentations virtually. My association with CARTA has been very significant for me throughout because the US and India share a similarity in dealing with the problems pertaining to methodology of teaching Russian, as in both countries we teach the language while being far away from the target language environment. CARTA conference presentations often make points on this issue. I am happy to be on the CARTA platform again in person to meet my alike minds.

*Archan Sarkar, India*



Участие в работе КАРТЫ является для меня бесценным опытом, с благодарностью перенимаемым от моего Учителя и Наставника – Сухолуцкой Мары Эммануиловны. Формат КАРТЫ, интересная тематика секций и мероприятий, подбор высокопрофессиональных участников конференции в области преподавания РКИ представляют особый интерес. Комфортная и доброжелательная атмосфера КАРТЫ способствует эффективному обмену практическими и теоретическими наработками участников. Ежегодное расширение географии участников конференции укрепляет ее статус как мероприятия мирового масштаба, которое сплавливает людей, преподающих и изучающих русский язык, позволяет расширить границы их взаимодействия и сотрудничества на благо всех.

*Elena Bagumian, Russia*

My mother has been a Russian language teacher for most of my life, and throughout the years I have known CARTA in one capacity or another. I remember how nervous she was to give presentations, and even how nervous my father was before performing. An audience full of language specialists is an intimidating thing. But after all the nerves and anxiety, what I remember the most, is how happy they were. Little did I know that I would share the same nerves and the same happiness with the same organization that gave so much to my family. It seemed to me more like a warm family reunion than a cold professional conference. There was joy and passion. Each session was full of purpose, but the informal sessions – conversations at lunch, or singing Soviet songs in hotel rooms – were just as special even if I didn't know the songs, and even if I didn't always fully understand the nuances of pedagogy, linguistics, history, or language-learning. But the beautiful thing to me about songs and ideas, languages, and cultures is that they can greet you as simply and warmly as bread and salt, resting on the threads of a friendly *rushnik*. CARTA is the bread, the salt, the *rushnik* but it is also the practiced hands that know how to knead the joyful bread, how to place the salt cellar just right in the center of it all. Language is older than bread, and love is our most sacred and oldest human tradition. That is precisely the way this Association talks about travels in Georgia, playing with proverbs, and even website design for students and classroom management. None of these things are done without love, the way someone embroiders that same *rushnik* that you may or not have noticed.

After my first official visit with CARTA I still think about the Gothic qualities of Lermontov, I hear the laughter in a *khorovod*, or dream about space flight and Rachmaninoff and with it all I think of the warm smell of homemade bread, in-and-out-of-place like this Soviet-born Oklahoman tracing and planning for the next conference, the next songs, the next sessions at a new home that I have always known, the Central Association of Russian Teachers of America.

*Zhenya Yevtushenko, Oklahoma*



Of the many conferences I have attended over the years, CARTA is unique. A mixture of university professors, public school teachers - educators dedicated to the study of a foreign language. The teaching and study of a foreign language has never been easy in a country of immigrants, where, ironically, the need is not always felt. Today, wars, pandemics and administrators bent on cutting funding, has made this task even more difficult. A conference of "flyover" country educators must be different to survive, scrappier, closer-knit than other conferences that can depend on deeper pockets. Attending CARTA, no matter the location, often feels more like a reunion of friends and close colleagues and not an anonymous, large conference, where easily once can be lost in a crowd. Just like liberal arts education/funding, CARTA, perhaps, faces some of its greatest challenges, hopefully, the comradery among members and dedication to the mission will see CARTA not only survive, but thrive.

*James Beale, Maryland*

CARTA to me is an excellent professional association of Russian that enables me to further my participation in the field of Russian language, linguistics, literature, and culture and to enable me to make significant progress in my career. CARTA is a group of wonderful people, a meaningful platform for professional work. CARTA enables me to communicate with many others in the field of Russian, to interact with them, to present my research and to publish it. It thereby promotes my work in a real way. It does this moreover in the most excellent, delightful, and pleasant, yet sophisticated way, every year.

*Matt Feeney, Wyoming*

CARTA has been a special part of my professional and personal life for 25 years. As one of the founding members I have been involved in its growth and development since 1998. While the membership has increased and its influence has spread, the aspect that I love and appreciate the most has not changed – the personal relationships and the friendly ambiance that CARTA nourishes among those who are part of it. My gratitude to all who have been and are part of CARTA!

*Sally Ziebell, Oklahoma*



I joined CARTA in 2005 when I just started to work as a professor at JCCC. CARTA is a relatively small organization, which brings together not only professional educators and their students, but also Russian enthusiasts with various backgrounds and expertise.

It has always been important to me as an instructor to understand how my students may benefit from a Russian program and what I need to include in my courses to help them with their career and, often, life. CARTA gave me many ideas. With its help, I found great translations of Russian poetry and ways of presenting it to American students, learned how to use various computer applications, discovered scholarship and career opportunities for my students, learned about the role and perception of the Russian culture in the US, and visited many beautiful and interesting places.

Because of CARTA, my students had a unique opportunity to spend time with Yevgeni Yevtushenko and even read poetry with him. For them it was a life-changing experience! They will also never forget our trip to Moscow when they presented at CARTA's international conference. They had a chance to meet many Russian language professionals and talk to some very interesting people. It had a serious impact on their lives. Even if they do not use Russian language in their work now, they remain great devotees of Russia anyway.

CARTA provides a great support system for those who teach and study Russian, and I am happy to be a part of it. I want to promote CARTA as much as I can. For that reason, I am CARTA's life-time member and recently accepted a nomination to join CARTA's Board of Directors.

*Tatiana Scanlan, Kansas*

CARTA for me is an escape from the mundane world, where I can be surrounded by and learn from incredible people who have dedicated their lives to the promulgation of knowledge. It means an opportunity to see passion at play and to grow as a person, ready to share what I've learned with those that will listen when I leave. I especially love seeing students present and grow academically, like a seed finally sprouting. Both my mind and my heart swell for this weekend I look forward to every year, like a holiday with an extended family. It means the perfect blend of academia and love.

*Tyler Gifford, Oklahoma*



*Happy quarter of a century of excellence to you, Central Association of Russian Teachers of America!*

I am proud to say that CARTA and I have been “together” since “the beginning of time.” And we’ll carry on, long and strong. To some extent, it is a sibling relationship. In 1998, I was on the sidelines of the conference’s inception, eating pizza and shopping for shoes at a nearby mall in Oklahoma City, while the founding group of enthusiastic educators were holding their first meeting.

I returned to a young and spry CARTA as a student participant in 2005. Next, in 2006, came assistance to the local chair in hosting the conference. I was happy to be with the hosting university again in 2012. In my adult life, I have attended at least 9 conferences, and it is now my honor to prep students for their own academic presentations and the poetry recital contest.

All who have known CARTA know that it is not like any other conference. It is not there simply as a stepstool for academic career advancement or for winning prestige points. It is not where people come to hear themselves – and only themselves - talk.

CARTA is a homecoming. A time and a place to catch up and share many laughs with colleagues turned kindreds. A space to soak in so many interesting talks and discussions, to boost up intellectually. A charging station for hope that the teaching of Russian language and culture will continue, no matter how strong the headwinds. A weekend of fun, ranging from 50-person khorovod at the opening reception, to late-night Russian karaoke campouts in Mara’s hotel suite, to raffles that let every single attendee go home with multiple prizes. To use a Russian phrase, день КАРТЫ – это красный день календаря.

*Olga Randolph, Oklahoma*

#### *Why I love CARTA*

I first came to CARTA 20 years ago, in 2003, to its conference in Albuquerque to present a paper, and it was любовь с первого взгляда. It was unlike any other conference I had attended. What made the CARTA conference unique was its intimate and friendly atmosphere. In addition to presentations and first-class speakers at many conferences, there were exciting activities, discussions, and field trips that bonded all participants together. We got to know each other; we socialized and became friends. The organizers of CARTA, its board, did an amazing job designing the conference format that brings people together. And of course, CARTA’s success and uniqueness are largely due to its tireless leader of 25 years, Dr. Mara Sukholutskaya. She brings everybody together and generously supports her colleagues and students. She is an endless fountain of Russian culture, pouring quotes from poems, movies, and songs, quoting proverbs and sayings. Mara brings incredible energy, love, and enthusiasm that have been the driving force behind CARTA’s success.

Another unique aspect of CARTA is the students that Russian teachers bring to the conference. It is so impressive and encouraging to see young students perform or recite Russian poetry in Yevgeny Yevtushenko Poetry Contest! It reminds me every time about CARTA’s mission to expand Russian studies, and to pass our love for the Russian language, literature, and culture to new generations.

From my first conference, I kept coming back to presenting every year, getting together with my colleagues, sharing my interests and hearing what they were working on, and most importantly connecting with old friends. In 2008 I took a job in California as a dean, a job that proved to be very demanding and did not allow me to participate in CARTA conferences. But last year as I started planning my retirement, my first thought was to reconnect with CARTA. I came back this year and it felt like I was back with old friends that I just saw yesterday. Coming to CARTA is always such a joy because I see old friends and have a lot of fun!

*Tatiana Karmanova, Texas*

*Falling out of the Blue and back to Earth*

Before returning to Orlando after the CARTA conference and a great celebration of our 25th anniversary, I decided to take a break in the long and quite impossible process of trying to “cram” all my belongings into the little suitcase. I thought some "alone time" in the park might help.

My mind's activity was no less busy than the park's. It was a blur with all the things I still had to do and with whom to talk before leaving my old and new conference friends, to whom I still had to say goodbyes. I was so preoccupied with my thoughts, expanding the list of things and information I heard at the conference that the activity surrounding me simply became a backdrop. Suddenly, literally out of the blue, a bird started singing above me. His clear song brought me back to earth, back to my physical position on the grass under a tree in the park.

This bird reminded me of what I should be doing, what I normally do - watching, noticing, questioning. These necessary activities should not only be reserved for the time during my cross-cultural experience in CARTA, but for the transitions between them as well. My habit of opening myself up so completely to my surroundings and to the people around me, soaking in everything like a small sponge in a vast ocean, has permitted me to enjoy my experiences to their full extent. My absorption is enriched by my need, my desire to wring myself out, to give back all that I have seen and learned during this last conference, especially the evening reading of Evtushenko's poetry. I realized that leaving, although painful, was simply a new chance to drain, to share what I had seen and learned, allowing room for a new exhilarating rush of experiences to fill me.

The first time I visited the CARTA conference was in 2011. I thought it was a nice dream. I have been teaching Russian at the University of Central Florida for 16 years but had never spoken daily with a lot of professionals who speak and teach Russian. Now I am back to the sunshine state to my favorite university job, doing my teaching and grant research, and I am once again following the pattern that is my life, moving from one amazing, intellectually challenging, goal- shifting experience to the next, from one community, one established culture, to the next, constantly sharing what I have learned.

Each time I am in CARTA, every time I travel to a different conference on the opposite coast from this "land of smiles", it has reinforced who I am. I find the diverse cultures, religions, and races that have always surrounded me an exhilarating motivator to be alive, to test who you are and how you personally fit in to this world. The constant movement, the endless opportunities to learn and to make lasting friendships are for me, right now, the most important components for my cross-cultural research.

CARTA conferences, and especially the celebration of the 25th anniversary, provide not only the opportunity to know Russian colleagues better, share the research, but to listen and talk to Evgeniy Yevtushenko, who left unforgettable lasting memory in my heart and mind. In every opportunity when I talk to my students or colleagues, I share the experience of Evgeniy's poetry reading and introduce them to the work of his outstanding father. Thank you, CARTA!!!!

*Alla Kourova, Florida*





*What CARTA Means to Me*

I find it hard to say what CARTA means to me or why it is important because it has been a part of my life for so long, but I suppose I can best sum up my feelings as “grateful.” Because CARTA has always been so accepting of student and early career presenters, the first entry on my CV under scholarly presentations belongs to CARTA. I attended and presented at my first CARTA conference in Oklahoma City as a first-year MA student in 2000, when both CARTA and I were still very young, meaning that CARTA has been present in my entire professional life. The welcoming audience made for a very comfortable and encouraging place to start presenting. As CARTA and I matured, I’ve enjoyed fruitful feedback that has helped me develop articles and my current book project on war films. I used suggestions I received at CARTA to transform two of these conference papers into articles that helped me achieve tenure at Baylor: “No Nastas’ias on the Volga: Soviet Women Veterans and Folkloric Self-Representations,” *Folklorica* 17-18 (2013), 99-130 and “After ‘a Youth on Fire:’ The Woman Veteran in Iuliia Drunina’s Post-war Poetry,” *Aspasia: The International Yearbook of Central, Eastern, and Southeastern European Women’s and Gender History* 7 (2013), 68-91. For this role in my scholarly formation, I am grateful. CARTA has made me a better teacher. I have always found the pedagogy sessions to be particularly helpful. Even as a graduate student I incorporated ideas I heard at CARTA in my teaching—for example, including well-known tales into the classroom. I appreciate CARTA’s continual willingness and supportive generosity that allows my students to present. At the 2022 CARTA conference in Waco, my daughter recited a poem—the first time she’s recited a poem for an audience other than her teachers and peers at Russian school. It was a positive experience for her. In 2015, I was grateful to be chosen as the recipient of the “Excellence in Teaching” award—what an honor!

Beyond obvious career development and exchange of ideas, CARTA conferences have also given me many unforgettable experiences that cannot be measured by CV lines. I will never forget our visit to Fortress Ross in California and the incredible meal provided by the San Francisco consulate. Few people have enjoyed multiple poetry readings given by Evgenii Evtushenko—in Kansas City, in Tulsa. What better exemplifies Russian generosity and hospitality than the meal provided by Maria Evtushenko at their beautiful dacha? Speaking of Peredelkino: I was just telling someone that I had sat at the desk at which sat Pasternak as he wrote *Dr. Zhivago* and looked at the view from this desk—the same view he would have had as he drafted the novel. In Rostov, we enjoyed beautiful churches and my daughter saw the Volga for the first time—and for what has turned out to be the only time. The meal on the boat cruise as we sailed through Moscow remains another beautiful experience given to me by CARTA. I loved walking along the river in lovely Tulsa. I remember the goosebumps I experienced as I listened to the Dallas School of Russian students perform Russian songs. I am grateful for these memories and for others and I look forward to many other beautiful experiences at CARTA conferences in the future.

*Adrienne Harris, Texas*

For all those years when I was still an active member of CARTA, our meetings were one of the highlights of my professional life. It was an honor to be associated with such a dynamic organization and such committed colleagues. CARTA has done wonders in promoting the study of Russian and the appreciation of all that is praiseworthy about Russia.

*Gerald E. Mikkelson, Kansas*

CARTA is where passionate teachers meet to share their best practices of teaching Russian as a foreign language. Due to wise and caring guidance CARTA has become the very kind of association that allows us to develop, prosper and just learn to enjoy what we are supposed to do. Long live our CARTA!

*Maria Molchanova, Russia*

I joined the welcoming, family-like, and supportive professional CARTA community in 2016, when I started teaching at University of North Texas. In 2019 I was thrilled, honored, and privileged to receive the CARTA Excellence in Teaching Russian Language and Culture Award.

During my thirty-year teaching career, I have been a member of many professional organizations and delivered many papers at various professional conferences, but the high standards set by CARTA for all its activities and high-quality annual conferences have always impressed me. I have very warm memories of each CARTA conference I attended, because they provided me with an assured opportunity to learn new ideas and new teaching techniques that I later implemented in a classroom. In 2023 CARTA celebrates its jubilee and brought its activities to the international level by inviting teachers and scholars from other countries to participate in annual CARTA conference's online sessions.

I wish CARTA, its growing membership and very popular and strong leadership many happy returns, many more forthcoming successful conferences and publications.

*Tatiana Filosofova, the United Kingdom*

Let me express my deepest gratitude to all of you for the opportunity to be and feel part of your highly professional community. Since the very beginning I was captivated by CARTA's mission to consolidate and coordinate the efforts of the Russian language educators to enhance and expand Russian studies, to provide professional support and development by creating new programs of need and interest to students at all levels. While participating in CARTA conferences I was not just honored to share my own teaching experience with my colleagues overseas. I had the pleasure of getting acquainted with the most prominent experts in the field of teaching Russian. I acquired a lot of information about innovative approaches to teaching languages. Moreover, your conferences provided me with new connections for the benefit of students all over the world.

I do appreciate the opportunity to maintain mutually beneficial dialogue and cooperation via English, Russian or any other language to provide better understanding, communication, collaboration.

*Tatiana Makarova, Russia*

Я впервые присоединилась к CARTA только в 2023 году, но с первых дней почувствовала теплоту этой замечательной семьи -- семьи единомышленников и настоящих профессионалов своего дела. Хочу поблагодарить лидеров ассоциации за прекрасную работу и слаженную, очень продуктивную конференцию, которая прошла в дружеской, почти домашней, атмосфере. С нетерпением жду следующей встречи!

*Катерина Цецура, Оклахома*



I joined CARTA in 2004 and since then I have always enjoyed all its yearly meetings. Each CARTA conference is like a family reunion to me. CARTA gave me many friends, unforgettable meetings with amazing educators, famous scholars, writers, and poets, such as V.G. Kostomarov and E.A. Yevtushenko. It helped me learn about new ideas and approaches to language pedagogy, extend my knowledge in Russian area studies, and it has always supported me in my professional career. I am very grateful to CARTA for the Excellence in Teaching Russian award that I was honored to receive in 2008.

In 2011, I had the privilege to become CARTA local conference coordinator and enjoyed hosting my colleagues at our university. That conference helped me develop important communication, leadership, problem-solving, and decision-making skills, which are so beneficial when working in a team. CARTA conferences are always very informative, well organized, and give its participants a lot of insights into language teaching and tools that they can use at their home institutions. What makes CARTA conferences special is their warm and hospitable atmosphere where all participants are always welcome and supported. My special thanks go to our CARTA President, Dr. Mara Sukholutskaya, who has outstanding qualities of a leader and has always put so much effort and support into making each CARTA conference a special and unforgettable event. I am grateful that I am a CARTA member and honored to serve on the CARTA Board.

*Valentina Iepuri, Mississippi*

#### *К 25-летию КАРТЫ*

Русский язык в мире в настоящее время переживает не лучшие времена. Число им владеющих и изучающих в школах и вузах во многих странах сокращается. Тем важнее деятельность преподавателей русского языка и их ассоциаций и их органов печати. Среди них заметное место на американском континенте занимает Центрально-американская ассоциация преподавателей русского языка (Central Association of Russian Teachers of America), ежегодно выпускающей научное издание докладов и выступлений на ее конференциях.

Огромную роль в сборе материалов и подготовке ежегодного издания КАРТЫ играют ее бессменный Президент и основатель Центрально-американской ассоциации преподавателей русского языка, профессор Мара Сухолуцкая, и вице-Президент Майкл Лонг. Один из лучших выпусков КАРТЫ, по моему мнению, является издание КАРТЫ 2021 года, подготовкой к изданию которой занимался профессор Майкл Лонг. В выпусках ежегодника КАРТЫ публикуются как статьи ученых, преподавателей русского языка, так и интересные материалы, подготовленные студентами и аспирантами, изучающими русский язык. Следует также отметить прекрасную организацию самих ежегодных конференций КАРТЫ.

С наилучшими пожеланиями в работе Центрально-американской ассоциации преподавателей русского языка и продолжении ежегодного издания КАРТЫ.

*Александр Арефьев, Россия*

#### *CARTA to the rescue!*

When I started teaching at UTSA over 30 years ago, there were four of us Russian teachers, which was sometimes more than the number of students in our classes. But we had parties and all kinds of extracurricular activities, so there was a lot of interaction with the students, teachers, and the community. Over the years, the number of Russian students increased, while the number of teachers decreased, and it resulted in limited time for out-of-class activities. Now that I am already retired, I look back to those early years of camaraderie with nostalgia. But every spring there is a conference that revives the same atmosphere of belonging that is otherwise missing in my life. At CARTA conferences I can immerse myself in the Russian culture with a group of wonderful, enthusiastic Russian teachers who will carry on the rewarding task of teaching young Americans to appreciate the language and culture. Long live CARTA!

*Marita Nummikoski, Texas*

Before CARTA I was a lonely, socially awkward Russian Teacher in Topeka Kansas. For years I had been picked on and abused by the Spanish, French, and German teachers. Even the Latin teacher ignored me. The Japanese teacher threatened me with her samurai sword and the Chinese teacher laughed when I tried to eat with chopsticks. My students were nice, but behind my back they called me ‘the sad old man’. Many days I dreaded going to school and then returned home with feelings of despair. When I returned home, the dog was happy to see me, but my wife, a French teacher, looked at me with contempt.

My life was miserable. Then, in October 1998, a woman named “Mara” called me from Ada! I was suspicious at first. Who would call me from Ada? Was it one of my fellow teachers luring me into some kind of cruel joke? But her voice was so reassuring and friendly that I figured, what do I have to lose? Mara invited [lured] me to come to Oklahoma. It was impossible to resist the Siren’s song. I could also experience the wonders of Turner Falls in October.

Seriously speaking, in the autumn of 1998 I was starting my 25th year of teaching Russian at Topeka High School and I was experiencing teacher burnout. I had managed to keep my program alive, but was forced to teach Russian II, III, and IV levels in one class. I had little support from the administration or fellow foreign language teachers. I felt alone until I went to Oklahoma City to meet other teachers of Russian who had the same problems that I was facing. It was refreshing to share ideas and talk with teachers in similar situations.

As CARTA grew, I appreciated the vast wealth of knowledge and experience I could consult whenever I had a question about the language or culture. The value of CARTA that I most appreciate is its unity. CARTA makes no distinction concerning the level of instruction. Public school teachers are treated with the same respect as university professors. As a public-school teacher at conferences, I was accustomed to being put on the end of programs because I was ‘just’ a high school teacher. If the program was short of time the less important presenters would have their time shortened or just eliminated. CARTA makes everyone feel welcome.

I cherish the wonderful friends I’ve made in the years I’ve been a member of CARTA. Many of the interactions with CARTA members have grown to more than friendship. I am thankful that several CARTA members call or email me as I enjoy my retirement. I’m especially grateful to Mara, because without her effort and kindness I would still be that ‘sad old man’.

*Larry Lonard, Kansas*

