



September –October 2013
Volume 126

General Membership Meeting Tuesday, October 8, 2013 Bellevue City Hall 7:30p.m.

Delegation Visit 2013 to Liepaja and Kladno



It was a long time in the planning stages, but finally we made it! A group of six BSCA members led by Bellevue Deputy Mayor Jennifer Robertson spent 10 days visiting our two European sister cities. Unlike past delegation visits, this time the members made their own pre-delegation travel plans and met in Riga. After a couple of days of sightseeing, meeting friends and past exchange students now living in Riga we headed on to Liepaja.

There followed a busy two days in Liepaja — meetings at Liepaja City Hall, at the Liepaja Special Education School, sightseeing around Liepaja and surrounding area, lunches and dinners with our hosts. Some delegates visited Palanga,

Lithuania and the Amber Museum—and of course—another evening spent with past exchange students and others—at Jurnieka Ligzda (Seaman's Nest) a beach resort managed by one of them!

Then back to Riga for an early flight to Prague where we were met by Kladno city officials and Kladno Sister City members. Once again a busy schedule of meetings, lunches and dinners with city officials, Kladno Sister City members and past exchange students—and visits to two outstanding castles in the Czech Republic—Chateau Cesky Krumlov and Karlstejn Castle.

It takes the coordinated efforts of many people to organize a delegation visit—among these we especially thank Natalija Vecvagare in Liepaja and Marketa Teprikova and Zdenek Slepicka in Kladno. Also our thanks to past Liepaja exchange students Agita (Drulle) Kurzeme and Baiba Spirge who acted as drivers and guides.

The pictures inside will give you a taste of what we will be sharing with you at this coming general meeting—plan to join us and enjoy some Latvian and Czech treats, too.



BSCA MISSION STATEMENT

The Bellevue Sister Cities Association (BSCA) is a non-profit organization of citizen diplomats dedicated to fostering understanding, appreciation, and peaceful coexistence among the peoples of our world. BSCA works toward this aim by creating and maintaining people-to-people relationships in an effort to promote cooperation, cultural understanding, humanitarian aid, and economic development at the local level.

President—Hugh Burlison Secretary—Gary Winchester Newsletter Editor—Inta Gotelli
Check our website for updates! <http://www.bellevuesistercities.org/>

From Your President

What's Accomplished and Still to be Done

Welcome to fall, BSCAers! I hear that the Farmer's Almanac is predicting a colder than normal winter. Let's hope not, lest too many of you go into hibernation just when we need your active participation and help with our programs.

First, looking back. We've had a more than usually busy summer, due mainly to the hugely successful Fu Dog event and feting of the concurrent Hualien delegation's visit. You should have been there! Also, the Yao committee scored well for BSCA at the 16th annual Japanese Fall Festival (See separate article below).

Before "looking forward," let me repeat my past suggestion that each of our four committees take a cue from the Yao Committee (whose members average older than in the other committees), which meets almost monthly, as much to maintain esprit and keep updated on BSCA matters as to do forward planning.

Another repeat: Please internalize this fact. The viability of any membership group comes from its members' taking part, being willing to join in the group's programs and other activities, and contributing ideas on what we must be doing.

So, in the near future we'll begin actively seeking candidates for next summer's student exchange. As you know (from past newsletters), we had no viable candidates this year—a first. To avoid any further such lapse if possible, we will be more proactive. As we say in the Foreign Service about diplomacy, the last three feet are critical to success. I.e., personal contact easily beats out indirect contact in effectiveness. That's what we'll emphasize in the coming months as we work to line up our exchange students.

Finally, since our general meeting is being held in October this year and we'll not hold a general meeting in November, I suggest that the committees plan some sort of committee get-together during the fall. Building organizational unity and social cohesion needs more emphasis than we have given it in recent years.

Bellevue Sister Cities Association Holiday Lunch

Sunday, December 8, 2013

noon – 2:00 pm

Location to be announced

Save the date!



BSCA takes on 16th annual Japanese Fall Festival at BC

At a table at Bellevue College, BSCA's Yao Committee again participated in the Japanese Fall Festival on September 7-8. Aided by six other Yao Committee regulars, Yao Chair Florence Metcalf and BSCA president Hugh Burluson displayed our banner at the festival, where close to 20,000 Puget Sound area residents attended.

The *Matsuri* has something for every age and interest group, from pop music to *taiko* drumming, classic Japanese dance and music and puppet shows. So, whole families were again attending, many in bright cotton kimonos.

This year, we stressed (1) attracting new members and (2) scouting for potential applicants for BSCA's summer student exchange, and had a fair number of our brochures picked up. To get better attention from the passing crowds, Florence brought in and displayed her great collection of chopstick rests—over 800 of all kinds. Worked like a charm!

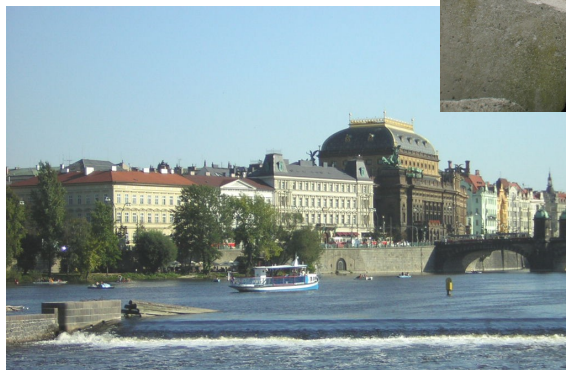
A highlight of our second morning was having former (2011) exchange-student Bianca Blanch drop by. Since her visit to Yao two years ago, Bianca has been attending the U. of Hawaii, where she is continuing her Japanese studies.

And—surprise!!—this academic year Bianca will do her junior year abroad at Kwansei Gakuin (university) where Florence's missionary father taught between 100 and 80 years ago, and where Florence lived as a youth. The college is not far from Yao; and Bianca has contacted her Yao counterpart student about their getting together during that year.



Delegation Visit 2013 to Liepaja and Kladno September 13-23, 2013

Enjoy this pre-view of delegation pictures we will share at the General Meeting on the 8th!



**It's not TOO SOON to start thinking about our NEXT DELEGATION visit...
to our sister cities in Asia—Yao, Japan and Hualien, Taiwan**

Now that we seem to have weathered the financial crisis we hope to get back on track visiting our sister cities and hosting them here on a regular schedule again. In the past we planned on a 4 year interval between visits—the recent visit to Europe was the first since 2005—all of 8 years! And our last visit to Asia was in 2008... we just had an amazing time hosting our friends from Hualien as we finally dedicated the new Fu Dogs. They now are expecting us. The board will be working on this!



BSCA Summer Student Exchange Applications for 2014 Now Available!

This long standing program is our most important contribution to international friendship—the first exchange with Yao dating back to 1977! By now 109 high school students have had the opportunity of spending part of their summer in one of our Sister Cities, and an equal number of students from our Sister Cities have visited here.

Our exchange is a two part program: we match each selected student with a student selected by our Sister City counterparts and the two spend much of the summer together - half here and half in the Sister City. It also has become very much a family centered program - not only is the selected student involved, but so is the whole family - each student in turn becomes part of the family - participating in family activities and experiencing what everyday life is like in each other's country. Of course, these visits also provide the opportunity for the families to show off their city and country...

While we share the information with schools and student and parent organizations, we do ask our members to share the information on this unique program with their family, friends and neighbors. Applications are available on our website www.bellevuesistercities.org.

Washington State Sister Cities Conference October 12, 2013, Saturday – Tacoma, WA

This year's meeting is preceded by a two day SCI Leadership Meeting for Board Members, Honorary Board Members and State Coordinators. Friday afternoon we are invited to attend the Leadership Meeting where Adam Kaplan, Membership Director, will speak about the SCI website and how to use it to best advantage, Social Media, and Sharing Your Story followed by a reception and a no-host dinner - a chance to speak to the Leadership and get to know them.

The program on Saturday will feature Mary Kane, Executive Director of Sister Cities International, Adam Kaplan and others. Among some exciting topics is the possibility of offering insurance both through SCI and policies with an agency in Portland for liability and Officers and Directors.

Another very special event is our luncheon on Saturday. As there are so many sister cities with Japan, **the luncheon is being hosted by the Consul General of Japan.** And, if this is not special enough, Saturday evening the Tacoma /Cienfuegos Cuba Sister Cities committee is holding a special event.

Attached is the flyer advertising the program on Saturday—please let a board member know if you'd like to participate in any part of the program. A great way to get involved!

2014 Young Artists and Authors Showcase Theme *Connect globally. Thrive locally.*

What does this mean to you? Sister city relationships foster partnerships within the community and between international cities, counties, and states in order to *promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation – one individual, one community at a time.* In 2012 Sister Cities International launched a new tag line: Connect globally. Thrive locally. How does global connectivity allow an individual or community to thrive locally? How has this connectivity impacted you for the better?

As usual, 10 finalists will be selected—five US and 5 international and these pieces will be displayed at the *Sister Cities International* 2013 Annual Conference in San Jose, CA. One U.S. artist and one international artist will be selected as overall winners. For more information and applications please see: <http://www.sister-cities.org/young-artists-and-authors-showcase>.

We again look forward to receiving entries to submit from Yao and Liepaja and maybe from Kladno and Hualien, too. We keep hoping to find someone interested in organizing a local competition and have our own entries to submit!