



Membership Meeting

Tuesday, May 8, 2012
Bellevue City Hall 7:30 p.m.

Celebrating Ancient Chinese Characters
Ms. Sue Hwang, Calligraphy teacher, Chinese School



For those living in Taiwan, last month a trip to Taipei to enjoy the month long Chinese Character Festival would have been a must. A record-breaking giant Chinese character for "Dragon" wiggled across the ground in the lobby of Taipei Main Station to officially kick off the festival on March 31. The festival, in its 8th year, ran through April 29th, continuing its mission of fascinating people with the charm of Han strokes through the five senses – sight, smell, hearing, taste, and hands-on experiences. Held around virtually every corner in Taipei, people could participate at lectures exploring the beauty of Chinese strokes and related customs or sign up for urban trips touring spots related to Chinese culture.

Of the three ancient writing systems of the world (the other two are Sumerian archaic cuneiform script and Egyptian hieroglyphs), traditional Chinese characters are the only semanto-phonetic script that is still used today. The Chinese Character Festival was first launched in order to raise public awareness of traditional Chinese characters and stir up general interest in the ancient writing system. Writing systems are keys to understanding one's origin, and they function as a kind of culture carrier as well. Thus they are a valuable asset and cultural heritage that must be well preserved.

Ms. Hwang teaches calligraphy at the Chinese Saturday School which meets at Interlake High School in Bellevue, and will be demonstrating the art of Chinese Calligraphy.

In addition to this presentation, our president, Hugh Burlison, will share a video of Hualien – he's been hoping to have a chance to revisit the outstanding reception experienced by the members of the last delegation to our Asian sister cities and we look forward to hearing from him.

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's Message—A Look at the Year that Was

BSCA, as you know, starts its fiscal year on March 1, and plans and conducts its activities throughout the year. Even in August, when we usually have no meetings, our Hualien and Yao exchange students are still here; and Yao committee members are preparing to participate in the colorful and well attended Japanese Fall Festival at Bellevue College. (What? You've never gone? You've been shortchanging yourself! Second weekend in September. Check it out this year. It's free!)

So, BSCA may be "under the radar" for some of you during parts of the year, but actually is a constant presence on the Eastside (a region that, if I may be forgiven, I like to call "Greater Bellevue"). So, let's look at what your BSCA actually accomplished in our 2011-12 fiscal year starting with our four general membership meetings as scheduled:

- **March** - Director General Daniel Liao of the Taiwan Economic and Cultural Office presented a lively update on conditions and developments in Taiwan. Plus a brief annual business meeting.
- **May** - The nonprofit Peace Winds America's CEO, Dr. Charles Aanenson, described how that organization was supplementing broad relief efforts for Japanese victims of the horrendous triple disaster in northeast Japan of the huge earthquake/tsunami and nuclear power plant meltdown.
- **September** - Per our usual practice, we devoted this meeting to debriefing our local exchange students on their experiences of the past summer and enjoyed their presentations.
- **November**—Again with PowerPoint illustrations, we had a richly colored description from the Seattle Asian Art Museum's curator, Catherine Roche, of its "Luminous" exhibit of two millennia of the art of East Asia and India, which she had accompanied on the exhibit's tour of Japan
- **January** - Due of the interest the above program aroused, instead of our usual program we met instead at the SAM to take a curator-guided tour of the "Luminous" exhibit.

What else did BSCA do?

- In **March**, with the help of the Newport High School Debate team, we assisted the Yao Lions Club to bring the three winners in a Lions English debate contest in Osaka to visit Bellevue, they were hosted by families in Bellevue and participated in a trial debate with the NHS Debate Club.
- In **April**, we partnered with the Highland Community Center with a "Zumba" fundraiser for earthquake relief in Japan. We also helped a former exchange student to Yao send funds he had raised on his own initiative to Peace Winds America, also for Japanese relief.
- In **May** several of us participated in a Macy's Community Shopping Day event for nonprofits that netted us some \$800—and gave us some community visibility.
- Through the spring, all of our committees were busy recruiting high school students for the summer exchange and preparing them for hosting and being hosted by their sister-city counterpart students—a total of five Eastside students—two to Kladno participated in this program.
- In **July**, the Liepaja committee saw a beginning of the playground planned for the Liepaja Special School. This project is partially funded by donations in memory of late BSCA member Ann Knofel, who had helped spearhead our assistance to that school.
- Also, in **July**, we held two separate picnic parties at the Bellevue Botanical Garden so that all of our exchange students could join in that annual social event with us.
- In early **September**, to make BSCA programs better known, the Yao committee again manned a booth at the Japanese Fall Festival, which annually draws some 20,000 attendees.
- In late **October**, with welcome and extensive support from City Hall and fund-raising assistance from Seattle's Japan America Society, we hosted a reception at City Hall celebrating some 20 Japan-Washington sister city affiliations, some of them spanning five decades.
- Also in **October**, following the reception, we hosted the annual Washington state sister cities conference a Crossroads Community Center—the attendees represented 19 WA Sister Cities.
- Last but not least, in **December** we had our Annual Holiday Party—this time on a Sunday afternoon at the request of members no longer comfortable with night driving.

Of course, your BSCA board also sustained its schedule of monthly meetings at City Hall - 4th Tuesday of the month. Keep in mind that our board meetings are open to you.

So, in most months through the year, BSCA is striving to advance our sister-city ties and otherwise help Eastside residents better appreciate the cultures of other peoples and broaden their global horizons. Those of you who paid your dues for this past year (and will soon do so for the coming year?) have assisted with this important work. Did this listing of our activities also give you ideas about how you might be more actively involved? Your BSCA board would welcome that.

Sister Cities Conferences—We are part of a much larger whole...

Sister Cities International holds an Annual Conference, rotating the location among US cities. These conferences provide an educational and interactive environment for networking, sharing best practices, engaging elected officials, robust roundtable discussions, and gaining knowledge about the latest trends in diplomacy. Back in the days when Pat Hale was the WA State Coordinator, she attended regularly - sometimes along with a BSCA board member or a City of Bellevue staff member. More recently Hugh Burlison represented BSCA at the Spokane conference, the last held in our area.

This year the Conference is in Jacksonville, FL - a bit far for us... but the good news is that Tacoma, WA has been chosen to be the host for the Regional Meeting in 2013. This will be a great opportunity for us to work with other WA Sister City organizations to help Tacoma make this a great event - and Barbara Sanchez, as WA State Coordinator is counting on us!

But we won't have to wait until 2013 have an opportunity to meet and share with the other Sister Cities in Washington State - our Annual State Meeting will be in Spokane next October. Spokane has been working on an interesting agenda making this a time to be inspired with new ideas and also a time to share our achievements with others. These meetings are open to all the membership, not only to board members, and we hope Bellevue Sister Cities will be well represented in Spokane.

SCI Board of Directors approves Barbara Sanchez as Washington State Coordinator

WASHINGTON, DC — Sister Cities International Board of Directors approved Barbara Sanchez of Bellingham as State Coordinator for Washington. Barbara has served on the Board of the Bellingham Sister Cities Association since 2006 and has held the positions of membership chair and of president. Since becoming president, both Barbara and husband Frank Sanchez have traveled extensively visiting several of Bellingham's sister cities.

We had the pleasure of meeting them both Barbara and Frank last October when they participated in both our Washington-Japan Celebration and the Washington Sister Cities Conference. Our best wishes to Barbara in her new position and we look forward to working with her to the benefit of all our sister city organizations.

In addition the Sanchez are the founders of Sisu Children's Fund, a charity they started in memory of their daughter, Jolene, for children with medical problems or disabilities not covered by insurance .



2012 Young Artists Showcase Theme—Youth as a Catalyst for Change

We have forwarded entries from Yao and Liepaja to DC. This year's theme looks at a world today that is more connected than ever. With the help of social media and innovative new methods of communication and mobilization of groups, change can occur at a faster pace than ever before. Throughout the world, this new generation of youth is harnessing this power to create change and promote progress. The theme is an opportunity for you to use artwork to express how communication, technology, and individual initiative can lead to dramatic social change.

From Liepaja -Jekaterina Turovska "Mother of Telecommunications" She says: *Every beginning has its creators—a mother and father. But only the mother is that person who gives a generous present—life. So, such World needed thing as telecommunications also has its mother.*

From Yao (pictured)—Chikage Hirata "To the Future". *There are many children who can not go to school or have to work hard every day. But I believe they will never forget smiling expected their possibilities even if they face harsh realities. I painted a lot of smiling faces in this picture, including mine and my friend's as well. Hopefully I want to be one of them who change the world for the better, of course with 'smiling'.*

A Salute to our Yao Committee!

Back in 1969 when the then International Cooperative Community of Bellevue (later to be renamed Bellevue Sister Cities Association) met for the first time to establish friendship with the City of Yao, there was only one committee—and only one sister city for the next several years (in 1984—Hualien became Bellevue's second sister city). As additional sister city relationships joined these, the membership increased to where it seemed best to work as separate committees under the one umbrella—BSCA.

Over the years, each of these committees have had periods of much activity, but only one—Yao—has kept up its regular committee meetings as well as participating in special events.

As we salute this committee there are a few members that deserve special recognition—starting with **Mitzie Hashiguchi**, one of the original members (that's 43 years!) She was a member of the first delegation visit to Yao, and has been on over 10 visits since. Both **Billie and Wendell Franklin** have been members for over 40 years, for many of these Billie was the travel agent organizing these visits. Among other long time members are Pat and Bob Sandbo. Special mention to our BSCA president and Yao committee member, **Hugh Burleson**, and committee chair for life **Florence Metcalf** (at least so it seems to her...). Last but not least, among the youngest are **Carla Furukawa** and **Bill Bockman** set to keep the committee's 4th Thursday of the month meetings an ongoing event.



Heidi's dream to be on Amazing Race



Reality shows are among the favorite TV shows many people watch... but how many dream of participating in a TV reality show? Well - a couple of our own members do! Heidi Ressler has been a fan of *Amazing Race* since its inception back in 2001. Along with daughter Loren (Kladno '07) they are now a step closer to making this dream come true. They spent a beautiful sunny weekend driving to a variety of Seattle parks to create an application film for the *Amazing Race*.

Not familiar with the CBS program *Amazing Race*? The current show is on Sunday night at 8pm and it is almost to the finale - for months teams of two people have raced around the world picking up clues for their next destination at 'pit stops' and meeting challenges such as bungee jumping or learning to drive a tuk tuk. Teams are progressively eliminated until only three are left. The final teams will have traversed five continents, 22 cities and nearly 40,000 miles. All racing to win a \$1 million dollar prize. We hope Heidi and Loren will be among the next group—good luck!

Remember—BSCA Has a Website!

Thanks to Gary Winchester BSCA is on line at <http://www.bellevuesistercities.org/>. We hope that by now you have added this site to your favorites to keep you up on the latest news. Peruse the newsletters from the past year—a glance through these will remind you of our many activities during the year.

On our website you will find information about our **summer student exchange**, the flyer summarizing the exchange and the application forms. Besides reading up on our latest news there you can also find BSCA on Facebook and Twitter! We welcome suggestions as to additions and improvements. Thank you to Gary for his efforts to have us join the internet community!