

January-February 2015
Volume 133



Again this year BSCA will be participating in the Lunar New Year Celebration at Westminster Chapel in Bellevue. The booths will be open from 3:00 to 6:00pm. We encourage all to come by, visit with those of us at the booth and stay for the evening program—see information below:

Celebrate Lunar New Year at Westminster

2015 YEAR OF THE SHEEP

Saturday, February 7, 2015

3:00-8:30 PM, at Westminster Chapel

13646 NE 24th Street Bellevue, WA 98005 Phone: 425-747-1461

Once again this event will feature an Asian culturally rich schedule featuring live music and dance, children's crafts and activities, food, a variety of demonstrations, flower arranging instruction, art displays, a ping-pong tournament and more!

This year's church-wide event will complete the Lunar New Year Cycle, so you won't want to miss our "grand finale" celebration.

Fun for all ages! See more at: <http://www.westminster.org/lny/>



SAVE THE DATE

Annual Membership Meeting

Tuesday, March 10, 2014

Bellevue City Hall 7:30 p.m.

Our March Annual Membership meeting is our only business meeting each year. It is when we give our membership a report on the activities of the past year and the financial statements that go with them. It is also the time we approve the budget for the coming fiscal year—which for BSCA is March 1 to February 28 (or 29) of the next year. Sometime prior to the meeting we will e-mail the agenda, the financial statements and the proposed budget for fiscal year Mar 2015-Feb 2016.

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—Gregg Schrader Secretary—Gary Winchester Newsletter Editor—Inta Gotelli
Check Facebook or our website for updates! <http://www.bellevuesistercities.org/>

From Your Editor

It was back in 1969 when, at an international Rotary Club meeting, Bellevue resident Kenneth Fletcher met Ishii Fujii from Yao, Japan. This friendship that led to the formation of the then *International Cooperative Committee of Bellevue*, later to be renamed *Bellevue Sister Cities Association*. As with groups starting out with enthusiasm and energy, there followed delegation visits, student exchanges, and other events between these two cities. A bit over 10 years later, the second sister city was added—Hualien, Taiwan—this one due to the efforts of Jim and Parky Forrester and the family Lin from Hualien (Eureka's parents).

I came across a BSCA address book from 1985-86 (prior to the addition of our European sister cities). Of the 96 names listed very few of those early members are still with us... Billie and Wendell Franklin—Billie, as travel agent with Overlake Travel arranged most if not all of the early travel, Mitzie Hashiguchi who could be always counted on until health issues became a problem, Dorothy Webb who was a mainstay of the organization until she had to scale back due to health issues.

Remembering Elmars Zemgalis (1923-2014)

The Liepaja committee is sad to lose another of the original members whose efforts led to Liepaja, Latvia becoming Bellevue's third sister city. Both Elmars and his late wife, Cacilia, were enthusiastic BSCA members, participated in the early delegation visits and were always available to pack the many boxes of books and medical supplies sent to Liepaja in the 1990's. They lived near the airport and could always be counted to be among the reception committee for our arriving Liepaja visitors.

Elmars was born in Riga, and as with so many of his generation his studies were interrupted by WWII. Escaping to Germany, he put his language skills to use working for the International Refugee Organization. It is in Germany that he met his wife while lunching on a park bench.

The one enduring love in his life was chess. He learned to play at an early age becoming a very proficient player. In Germany he participated in several matches—his strong performances gaining him the attention of the chess world – attention which helped bring him to Seattle in 1952. On his arrival, he solidified his reputation by simultaneously playing against 50 of the best local chess players in the PI auditorium, and convincingly winning against the then WA chess master. He eventually was awarded the title of Grandmaster of Chess in 2003.

With degrees in Mathematics from both Seattle University and the University of Washington, he first worked at Boeing as a research mathematician, later joining the faculty at Highline College where he taught mathematics until his retirement. He authored several textbooks for algebra and calculus, and contributed research articles for mathematical journals.

Elmars love for chess, and his chess colleagues, locally and internationally, was evident throughout his retirement years. He played correspondence chess by mail, and later via the internet. He often reflected on how miraculously chess had shaped his life story.

Where are the rest of these early members? Some continued as active members for many years, others found other interests. As we end this year missing another three long term members, let's not forget those who have been important to BSCA's past and let's honor their memory by ourselves being active BSCA members.

See you all at our March General meeting!

Welcome New Members!

Eureka is pleased that the Hualien committee has new members - **Anne Chen and Daniel Weng**, as well as **Li-Mai Tsai (Molly)**. They have already volunteered to work with her at our booth at the Westminster Chapel Lunar New Year Celebration. Stop by our booth and meet them there!

The Matiss sisters asked BSCA to work with them on a memorial fund for their mother—see back page — and **Maruta Matiss** joined BSCA so she can help in any way needed with this project.

Po Bodin heard about Sister Cities earlier this year while interning at City Hall. With enthusiasm he has been telling others about BSCA and the Sister Cities program.



Remembering John Bean (1926-2014)

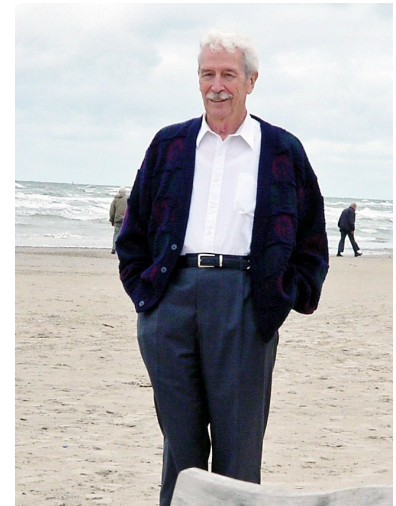
We first met John and Ruth when, urged by Dorothy Webb, they joined BSCA. About to retire and looking forward to some more traveling, they soon joined our delegation visits both to Asia and to Europe. But these trips were just the tips of the iceberg for this couple, whose first of six children was born halfway between Baghdad and Tehran.

In the words of his daughter Mimi—John was an educator, an adventurer and always a devoted family man. He was born in the small town of La Grande, OR and started the career that would eventually take him on an adventure all over the globe as an elementary school teacher. He went on to earn a MS degree and eventually a doctorate from Stanford University, leading to his career with the State Department of Education and assignments that took the family all over the middle east and Asia.



John's love of travel might have started with his year of mission in Australia, followed by two years in the Army during WWII—and went on as his assignments as an Education Administrator in the Foreign Service took him to Iran, Sudan, Ethiopia, Yemen, Lesotho and Washington, DC. He wrote the *State Dept of Education: Leadership through Research* for the Office of Education; and created a nationwide system to coordinate educational research. His career also extended to teaching on the faculties of Alaska Pacific University, Brigham Young University, the University of Virginia, Eastern Oregon University, and Xi'an International Studies University (China).

In addition – and with some help from the kids -- his over 50,000 hours of volunteer work included service on school boards, scout troops, as a missionary in Australia and teacher-trainer in India. We'll remember John for his ever-present curiosity, good nature and sense of humor.



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Holiday Luncheon 2014

Last year we enjoyed the friendly holiday atmosphere at the Tam o'Shanter Golf Clubhouse so it was an easy decision to plan to do so again this time around. And we were not disappointed—Justin Johannsen, catering manager was more than helpful, making sure we had all the necessary tables, etc. for our event. Thank you.



This event is usually among the best attended of our activities and this year was no exception. We were pleased that among those attending were Councilmember Conrad Lee and his wife—we appreciate Conrad's consistent support of Sister City activities.

Eureka had brought some of her friends and we are pleased that they liked what they saw enough to join BSCA!

Liepaja committee – Fanija Matiss Memorial Project

We are honored that sisters Vita and Maruta Matiss chose BSCA, Liepaja committee, to receive the memorial contributions for their mother Fanija Matiss (b. Hartmanis) (1917-2014). Fanija's life was devoted to music, and through the Fanija Matiss Memorial Project their mother's lifelong love of music will be shared with deserving students in Liepaja

Fanija's school years were spent in Liepaja, music an integral part of her young life. After completing high school education in Liepaja, she went on to pursue a teaching degree while at the same time continuing to concretize as a pianist. WWII changed the course of her life, she fled war torn Latvia for Germany, where she met her husband. Eventually the family emigrated to the US, where Fanija attended the University of Washington earning a B.A. in Music Education. She worked as a music teacher in the Puyallup School district until her retirement.



In addition to teaching, she was the conductor of the Tacoma Latvian Choir and a chief conductor at several Latvian Song Festivals. Music was her lifeblood and she attended Seattle Symphony and Seattle Opera performances up until a few months before her death

Through the Fanija Matiss Memorial Project deserving students in Liepaja will be provided with the means to attend concerts in the new Liepaja Concert Hall (completion in 2015) as well as to travel to exceptional concerts and opera productions in Riga and elsewhere. Donations totaling \$1,555 have been received to date. Both sisters are in touch with people in Liepaja to arrange the details for selecting the recipients. They hope that the first awards would be made next fall.

Cultural Conversations program at Bellevue City Hall

An Evening of Connections Across Cultures

Wednesday, February 4, 7-9pm

Council Chambers at City Hall, 450 110th Ave. NE

The Cultural Conversations Program was launched in 2010 as a partnership between diverse women in the community and the City of Bellevue. It was initiated by women who had a desire to get better connected with their community and who wanted to enhance their knowledge and understanding of different cultural practices and world views.

Speakers will share personal journeys related to three topics:

Immigration -- the promise and the loss: Adriana Prengler talks about her family's journey from their Argentinian homeland in search of safety and a better future, a story about the universal longing for a place to call home;

A bond across cultures: Jane York, born in the Pacific Northwest, and Nura Adam, from Somalia, appear to have little in common, but personal risk, generosity and openness created a surprising bond between them; and

Journey to education -- path to a new home: Faisal Jaswal traces his passage from Pakistan to Bellevue, and how education can change lives, but may require brave choices and significant sacrifices.

The event is free and open to the public, age 14 and up, and the stories will be followed by open discussion tables where participants can explore how diversity and culture impact their daily lives.

More information is available online; or contact the Neighborhood Outreach team at 425-452-6836 or neighborhoodoutreach@bellevuewa.gov.

Reminder to all—Summer Student Exchange Deadline Approaching

Please share the information about our summer student exchange program with students and their families who might be interested in participating. The application and additional information can be found on line at the BSCA website: www.bellevuesistercities.org Flyer attached.