



May-June 2015  
Volume 135

***Please note the date - Thursday, May 7th***

### **Membership Meeting**

Thursday, May 7, 2015 - Bellevue City Hall 7:30 p.m.

### **Bellevue, WA – Among the Best Places to Live**

Liz Stead, City of Bellevue Urban Design Planning Manager



Anyone driving through Bellevue these days can't fail to notice all the construction going on and wonder how this will affect living in this city in the future. Bellevue has often been ranked among the best places to live in Washington, and looking ahead to keep it so, the Downtown Livability project was launched in the fall of 2012.

The City Council provided the teams working on this initiative the initial direction on specific downtown zoning and development regulations to be analyzed. The recommendations of the 14-member Citizen Advisory Committee would then lead to proposed changes to the land use code and design guidelines to better achieve the vision for Bellevue as a most livable city.

To keep us abreast of what is happening, Liz has agreed to share an overview of the large downtown projects currently under construction, including general information about the size, height, and use of the buildings, and then update us on the current status of the Downtown Livability Initiative, a presentation that she recently did for the Downtown Residents Association.

**Annual Membership Picnic**  
Saturday, July 11, 2015 - 5:00pm to 8:00pm  
Lewis Creek Park Visitor Center

Please mark your calendars - we will again hold our summer picnic at the Lewis Creek Park Visitor Center. Come, bring family and friends to enjoy this pleasant venue. More information coming in the next newsletter.



### **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—Pamela Alspaugh Newsletter Editor—Inta Gotelli  
Check Facebook or our website for updates! <http://www.bellevuesistercities.org/>

## From Your Editor

First, a huge thank you to two of our new members for their willingness to join us on the board - see below. Welcome and thank you!

This time of year as usual we are in the process of finalizing the selection of our summer student exchange participants and working with our sister city counterparts on scheduling. As of right now we will again have exchanges with both Yao and Kladno and we hope to meet the students soon.

For all of you who have wondered what's going on in Bellevue with all the construction... wonder no longer - Liz Stead from the city planning department will give us an overview at the May 7th membership meeting- and Gregg will be there to help answer any additional questions we might have.

Our Yao committee deserves special recognition - it is the only one of our four committees to meet on a regular basis. Recently, as usual, at Florence Metcalf's home - she reports: *Good meeting, good food, good conversation - eight of us with me Paces, Kusumis, Franklins and Helen Cattaneo.*

Looking forward - our July picnic will again be at the Lewis Creek Visitor Center - we decided that the smaller facility was a friendlier venue more along the lines of what we prefer. We hope to see many of you there - more information soon.

Come September we will be looking forward to hear from our exchange students and their families and we hope that Jared Schrader will join us to tell us about his semester at sea adventure.

November will be up to the Liepaja committee - and then comes our Holiday Luncheon. We have enjoyed the Clubhouse at Tam o'Shanter but would like to hear your suggestions for other venues,

And if you have yet not done so - please send in your dues -and a bit extra to keep us going.

## Welcome our Newest Members to BSCA and to the Board

We have already met **Pam Alspaugh** - not only was her youngest daughter, Juanita, our summer exchange student to Kladno last year, but she hosted both of our Kladno students. Pam has agreed to take on the secretary position and see how it goes with her busy schedule. Pam is a landscape architect for the Seattle Parks and Recreation department in charge of major maintenance projects. Pam is a single mother of 3 daughters and in addition usually hosts some of the International students studying at Bellevue College.

**Helen Cattaneo** attended our March meeting, and not only joined BSCA but also agreed to serve on the board as one of the 'at large' director positions. She and her husband and daughters ages 12 and 14 recently moved from Snoqualmie Ridge to Bellevue. Prior to Washington, she lived in California. She is looking at getting involved in local activities, especially the exchange opportunities - we are pleased she has chosen BSCA and look forward to meeting her family.

## May is Bike Month



Last year more than 800 people who live and/or work in Bellevue participated in the regional promotion of bike commuting. This year during the "Bike Month in Bellevue" there are many opportunities to participate for people of all ages - the Bike to Work day on May 15th, a Bike to School Day on May 6th. For those wanting more challenge Adobe is sponsoring a regional challenge - either for solo riders or teams. More at Cascade Bicycle Club website:

### *Please support our business members!*

For many years now we have counted on two faithful business members to make our travel plans—for student exchanges, delegation visits and our personal travel plans.

Katsumi Mamiya at **K-Mans Travel Expert** for travel to Asia 425-373-5686

Elise Lalor at **Rainier World Travel** for travel to Europe 425-392-9970





## Liepaja Special School Playground - WE'RE GETTING THERE!!!

It has been some time in coming... the idea of remembering Ann Knofel and her contributions to our projects with the Liepaja Special School by using the donations we received in her memory to help provide the special school with a playground came about back in 2009. It seemed to be the right thing to do - it was due to Ann that our project with the school became a reality - her experience as a school psychologist and her contacts provided the framework for the project that started in 1998. Over several years three teachers visited schools our area spending time visiting special education classrooms. Both Ann and Bruce visited Liepaja to share their expertise with the local teachers and parents. It was Easter when they were in Liepaja - and Ann enjoyed the swing - for good luck - and it was Easter weekend when the play structure was finally installed.



The playground project provided us with the opportunity to host another visitor from the school - this time a parent who was chosen to lead the project - and who drew the plans, not just for one playground but for the whole school grounds. It took several years and contributions from many to raise the additional funds needed to make 'our playground' a reality - our thanks to each and every one who helped along the way.

There is still much to be done - landscaping the surrounding area for one. But in the meantime we have some pictures to share with you... this particular play structure was selected so that it would also serve the needs of the older students at the school. There is another playground financed with EU help that works well for the younger students.



Another addition to the playground, seen in the background above, is a swing especially designed for wheelchair bound students. Parents and teachers no longer need to move the student from wheelchair to swing, but can drive the wheelchair onto the swing. The swing was funded by the Lucia fund in Liepaja's sister city Helsingborg, Sweden.

**Thank you to all of you who have already sent in your dues** - your support for BSCA is greatly appreciated. **Dues for March 1, 2015- Feb. 29, 2016 are still \$30 individual or \$50 family** and, as last year will be credited to the Association funds in order to cover operating expenses. See the attached dues reminder and consider a donation to support student exchange or your committee of choice.

Your check made out to BSCA should be mailed to our treasurer:  
Inta Gotelli, 18911 SE 44th Way, Issaquah, WA 98027

## European Capital of Culture 2015 - Pilsen, Czech Republic

Last year the European Capital of Culture was Riga in Latvia... this year it is Pilsen in the Czech Republic... during our delegation visits to Liepaja, Latvia we have spent time in Riga - now we need to add Pilsen to our itinerary on our next visit to Kladno... it's just an hour drive away.

Pilsen, the country's fourth largest city, is the capital of West Bohemia. Unlike the nearby elegant spa town of Karlo Vary, which has been on our delegation itineraries, Pilsen is an authentic industrial city home of the Skoda company. Originally established in 1859, it recently underwent a restructuring, and now has just two principal subsidiaries: one being Škoda Transportation which makes locomotives, underground trains and trams, which have been sold to Portland, OR as well as to Tacoma and Seattle.



The Czechs love their beer and no place is it more evident than in Pilsen the birthplace of Pilsener beer. Besides the brewery tours there are old Czech taverns in the city center to sample beer in historic surroundings. The city and surrounding countryside is packed with historic sites, picturesque villages and colorful folk traditions. Nor is there no lack of cultural events.

The idea to each year designate a European city as the Capital of Culture originated in 1985 as a way to bring Europeans closer together by highlighting the richness and diversity of European cultures and to raise awareness of their common history and values. It has since been a catalyst for the cultural development and the transformation of the city as well as having a beneficial socio-economic and development impact. See more: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Capital\\_of\\_Culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Capital_of_Culture)

### Save the Date - Czech That Film!

In Seattle July 10-12, 2015, Preview Event July 7

The CCEC, in partnership with SIFF and the Consulate General of the Czech Republic in Los Angeles, is bringing Czech That Film back to Seattle with another fabulous line-up of films! Czech That Film 2015 kicked off its fourth year in Los Angeles on Friday, March 27 and will tour 18 major US cities. In Seattle an added bonus this year's screenings will also feature a Festival Preview Event on Tuesday, July 7. Save the date, and watch for the line-up and show times announcement soon!

More at <http://www.czechthatfilm.com/>

### 2015 Young Artists Showcase

#### *Connecting Communities for Peace and Prosperity*

Each year, the Young Artists and Authors Showcase encourages youth from around the globe to express the mission of Sister Cities International through original artwork and literature, and each year for longer than we can remember, Yao has submitted an entry to the Young Artists Showcase for us to forward to Sister Cities International. This year's Yao's young artist Kanako Onixhi explains her entry *The Peaceful Connection* - she writes: *There are a lot of people in the world and a lot of differences. For example the born location, the location where we grew up. The gender, the color of skin, etc. But we can understand each other and respect mutual.*

As usual, 10 finalists will be selected—five US and 5 international, one in each category selected as Grand Prize winners. All entries will be displayed at the *Sister Cities International 2015 Annual Conference* in Minneapolis, MN, and will go on tour to selected US cities.

