

November-December 2017
Volume 149



Bellevue Sister Cities Association

Holiday Luncheon

Sunday, December 10, 2017

Tam o'Shanter Golf and Country Club

1313 - 183rd Ave NE, Bellevue, WA 98008

1:00 pm Socializing and Appetizers
Luncheon at 1:30 pm

We will again meet for our annual Sunday luncheon at the Tam o'Shanter Golf and Country Club - friendly holiday atmosphere and the good food keeps us going back. It is the best attended of our events and a good time to bring along some of your friends. We will have more information to you by the end of the month - in the meantime - *mark your calendars!*

The Baltic Arts Council of the Northwest - Baltic Film Series

How We Played the Revolution

2012 Lithuanian documentary with English subtitles

November 9, 2017

Seattle Latvian Center 11710 - 3rd Ave. NE Seattle. WA
Showtime: 7:00 p. m. Free admission, donations welcome

This is the second film in the film series "*This film about the legendary band, Antis, [Duck] shows how youthful determination, energy and bravery, together with a strong, razor sharp, persuasive word and a song woke up Lithuania from its stagnation. It is inspiring even today.*" Dalia Grybauskaite

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/>

YAO, JAPAN

HUALIEN, TAIWAN

LIEPAJA, LATVIA

KLADNO, CZECH REPUBLIC

From your editor

From the day Kaiva Zimante, teacher and vice-principal at the Liepaja Special School arrived here for our very first teacher exchange, BSCA has had a very special relationship with the school and its teachers and students - and none were more involved in all this than the Knofels - Ann in organizing the exchanges, both Ann and Bruce in hosting the visiting teachers. Their move to Alaska left a big void in our midst, even bigger after the tragic accident that took Ann's life. But the Knofels were again instrumental - this time by directing memorial donations to the benefit of the Liepaja School... and from those, the playground you all have participated in funding. It was Bruce's wish to again revisit the school and see the completion of the project for himself - something he finally did last September. Please read his account of this visit in the pages that follow. Thank you Bruce, as well as all your family and friends as well as so many others who helped this project to completion.

I have included most of Bruce's account of his visit in the newsletter, but also attached find his complete account with some additional pictures.

While this brings one project to completion, it by no means is the end of our cooperation with the school - as Bruce ends his account - there are more issues to address and we can think of ways to help them resolve these.

Coming to the Latvian Center in Northgate

PLEASE COME AND ENJOY OUR
**LATVIAN
CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**

LATVIAN CULTURAL CENTER
11710 - 3rd Ave NE
SEATTLE, WA 98125
(East side of I-5 Freeway)

SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 11, 2017
10am to 5pm



SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 12, 2017
12pm to 4pm

www.facebook.com/SeattleLatvianChristmasBazaar
Choose the one with address included



LATVIAN ETHNIC BAKERY &
LATVIAN ETHNIC LUNCH
CHRISTMAS SPECIALTY FOODS
LATVIAN AND MODERN JEWELRY
DECORATIVE PILLOWS
KNITTED ARTICLES
STUFFED TOYS
HOT MEALS
LATVIAN LINENS
LATVIAN BOOKS
ETCHED CRYSTAL
AND MUCH MUCH MORE

Washington State Latvian Association 2017

2018 Young Artists and Authors Showcase *Theme: The Art of Diplomacy*

This year's theme, "The Art of Diplomacy" highlights the importance of citizen diplomacy and the innovative ways citizen diplomats achieve peace through people-to-people interaction.



Sister Cities International Young Artists and Authors Showcase (YAAS) encourages youth from around the globe to express the mission of Sister Cities International through original artwork, literature, film, and photography. It offers a way to showcase their imagination, creativity, and passion for world peace, - students interpret a designated annual theme into works of art and literature. Entries from sister city member communities are sent to Washington, DC, where a panel of judges selects Finalist and Grand Prize Winners based on originality, composition, and theme interpretation.

This program is a great opportunity to reach out to the community and engage local English and art teachers, and reach a student audience that may not already be included in sister city programming. While we seldom have had entries from our own city, our sister cities have participated - Yao every year often their entry among the finalists - the pictured Yao entry was selected as one of the 2017 finalists and has embarked on a yearlong tour hosted by local sister city programs.

Ten finalists are selected—five US and 5 international. One U.S. artist and one international artist will be the Grand Prize Winners - and awarded \$1,000. Anyone for helping with a local competition?

Completing the Circle - a Nostalgic Trip to Liepaja, Latvia

Bruce Knofel remembering his wife Ann



On Sunday September 17th 2017 I boarded a flight from SeaTac airport, bound for Frankfurt, Germany and Riga, Latvia. To be quite honest I wasn't totally sure why I was taking this trip except I felt a need to complete a circle that had begun eight years earlier.

In 2009 after Ann's tragic death in an auto collision my children and I approached the Liepaja committee to see if we could start a memorial fund in Ann's memory for the Special Needs School in Liepaja. The committee readily agreed and it was decided to raise money to build an accessible playground at the school. With the efforts of members of the committee, especially Dr. Zaiga Philips, and in coordination with Kaiva Zimante, vice-principal of the special needs school in Liepaja, funds were raised, grants written, designs worked out and finally the playground was completed in 2016. In addition to the playground plan, Dace Kreismane, parent and local engineer, developed a master plan for the open area around the school was also developed and is becoming a reality.

That was the circle I felt a need to complete for myself. My desire was to volunteer at the school for a few days, to enjoy being with their students and to see the playground. Kaiva gave me the green light to come and now it was happening.

I arrived in Riga and as I left the airport there were the smiling faces of Kaiva Zimante and Evija Zagere to welcome me and to provide a ride to Liepaja. It was a three hour drive west through the gentle rolling countryside of farm land and hard wood forests. ending at the Baltic coast. It was raining very hard the whole way but that didn't dampen our spirits. This was like a reunion. In years past Kaiva and Evija had been guests in our home in Bellevue. Ann had organized a program for them to tour the various schools and other programs in the Seattle area that worked with students with disabilities. In 2001 Ann and I did the same, we spent two weeks in Liepaja visiting their schools and programs. Now sixteen years later I was back.



The city and the school have made significant progress since my last visit. The school is brightly painted and the class rooms are warm, bright and cheery. I was also impressed to see that several of the classes had "smart boards" that were being put to good use. Their teaching staff is quite stable. I saw a number of teachers who had been there during our first visit. The playground is a fantastic addition and the overall grounds around the school are much improved.



The hospitality I was shown during my visit was amazing. I felt so welcome and well cared for. Before the week was over I was referring to Kaiva and Evija as my "Mother Hens". The itinerary of activities they had planned for me was perfect. Each day I spent some time at the school. One day I was part of a life skills class where the students wrote out a shopping list, walked to a nearby grocery store, picked out the items on the list and bought them. We returned to class and they prepared a fruit salad from a recipe they had. These are skills we take for granted; but it was challenging for these students but they were learning. Another day I lead a P.E. class using a game parachute that I brought with me for the school. It wasn't one of my better moments but we tried. Hopefully in the hands of a truly skilled teacher they will find it useful. I also had a class session with students from the University of Liepaja. They are studying to be social workers focusing on persons with disabilities. One evening I toured the boarding facilities provided by the school for some of their students who stay during the school week and go home on weekends. The school also provides three hot (delicious) meals a day for all students and staff. I enjoyed several meals there during my visit. All these services are provided free to the student and their families. *(continued next page)*

(continued) One additional surprise during my visit was a meeting with Gunars Ansins, vice-Mayor of Liepaja. He presented me with a nice gift/memento of the city which I will cherish. Mr. Ansins asked me a question that keeps echoing in my mind: "What will be your next involvement with Liepaja?" Two things I think of when I ask the question, "What Next?" One, is to emphasize the importance of our student exchanges. The value of such cultural exchanges is more important now than ever. Second, is a concern I share with the staff and administration of Liepaja's special needs school: What happens for the students when they graduate? How do they find their place into the fabric of Liepaja's community? What jobs and volunteer opportunities do they have? What independent living and social connections do they have? Might there be ways we might be able to help as our friends in Liepaja work to address these needs? opportunities?



The Baltic Republics - 100 Year Anniversaries 1918-2018



The end of WWI saw the beginnings of a very different Europe - the huge empires were gone - and one after another the new countries in Europe were declaring their independence. None more so than the three Baltic republics who in 2018 will be celebrating their 100th Anniversaries. The local Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian communities came together and created the Baltic Arts Council of the Northwest, intent on developing a variety of programming this important year. From concerts to movie nights, book clubs to guest lectures, we are hoping that you enjoy a full year of celebrating!

Some of the activities are already under way - The Baltic Film Series started October 18th with a film from Latvia. The next is a Lithuanian film, November 9th at the Latvian Center - see the front page - followed by an Estonian film in January.

Several Chamber Concerts are planned featuring outstanding professional musicians from the Seattle area highlighting composers such as Vasks, Mägi and Narbutaitė. The first of this series will be on **Friday, February 23rd** at the Good Shepherd Chapel in Wallingford.

A Baltic Celebration concert, hosted by the Seattle Choral Company and the Mägi Ensemble that includes six additional choirs coming together to sing Dubra's spectacular "Te Deum" is programmed for **Saturday, March 24th** in the beautiful St. Mark's Cathedral.

And these are only a few of the events being planned - see more at: www.balticartsnw.com

BCSA Summer Student Exchange

Please let interested people know—Applications for Summer 2018 Available!

We hope this past summer's students, as many before them, will have fond memories of life in each other's homes and countries and we hope the friendships will continue to enrich their lives.

This long standing program is our most important contribution to international friendship-the first exchange with Yao dating back to 1977! 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.

It is now time to begin looking ahead to next summer. Most of our applicants hear about this program from past exchange students, friends or family members or from BSCA members such as you. Do let your family and friends with teenagers at home know of this unique opportunity - the flyer and applications should be available on our website www.bellevuesistercities.org.