



**General Membership Meeting**  
**Tuesday, November 13, 2012**  
**Bellevue City Hall 7:30 p.m.**  
**12001 Main Street, Bellevue**  
**Coffee and Dessert Roundtable**

Our traditional Holiday party has been pre-empted by the Bellevue-Liepaja 20 year Celebration, and while we are making plans for a lunch meeting in January in its stead, the November general meeting format will give those attending time to socialize. In between enjoying coffee and dessert we will cover a few items of business... Hugh and Inta will report on the WA State SC meeting in Spokane, we'll get an update on the Liepaja reception, and start thinking about next years celebrations - Hualien's 30 years and Kladno's 20 years. Come, bring a plate of cookies or other treats, and enjoy the company!



**Bellevue—Liepaja**  
**A Celebration of 20 years of Friendship**  
**Reception at Bellevue City Hall**  
**Friday, December 14, 2012**



On December 14, 1992 Liepaja Mayor Imants Vizmins and Port Director Aivars Boja arrived in Bellevue to sign, along with Bellevue Mayor Cary Bozman, the Proclamation of friendship and cooperation as Sister Cities. Since then it has been 20 fruitful years. We have extended our circle of friends through delegation trips, student and teacher exchanges and projects with Liepaja schools and health and safety projects and our most recent—the Liepaja Special Education School playground.

We invite all BSCA members and friends to join us in celebrating the past 20 years as we look forward to continuing cooperation and friendship.

**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.

## From Your President

**Crisis and Continuity** The recent, devastating storm Sandy. How ironic its name, as it has buried so much of our eastern coastline under many feet of sand! But, this disaster reminds us of similar disasters in the recent past, especially last year's earthquake/tsunami/nuclear meltdown on Japan's northeast coast. The similar disaster in the Indian Ocean off Indonesia years ago that swept tens of thousands of people away over a much wider area. The 1995 Kobe earthquake that killed many thousands with the immediate collapse of homes and larger buildings and the following fires.

Here in Washington state, we are aware that this area is vulnerable to an earthquake similar to that of Japan in 2011. So, what's the point for BSCA and other sister city groups? The response we make, recognizing our common humanity with those afflicted by these disasters, and the receiving nations' recognition of the vital friendship and bonds that sister city ties help to build.

A specific case: The 1995 Kobe earthquake also devastated nearby Nishinomiya—Spokane's sister city—with hundreds of deaths there. In less than a week, the Spokane-Nishinomiya Sister City Society had geared up to render aid. Its volunteers, working with the city's crisis planning committee, solicited medical supplies from area hospitals. Over a dozen people (literally age 8 to 80) showed up to help pack the donated items, valued at about \$100,000. The local UPS trucked them for free to the JAL training base in Moses Lake for airlifting at no charge to Osaka and distribution in the quake-struck area. Over \$30,000 was also wired to Nishinomiya.

Many of us know of the extensive fund-raising that sprang up here after last year's quake and tsunami hit Japan. That activity undoubtedly was more vigorous because so many cities in this state have Japanese sister cities. This newsletter reported on that and on past exchange student

Connor Surdi's (2008) raising over \$10,000 for the relief effort. We also have the example of the non-disaster aid projects that our Liepaja Committee has spearheaded over the years.

So, in America, with over a thousand city affiliations abroad and with past racist attitudes slowly fading from our consciousness, we work year in and year out to celebrate our rising awareness of the unity of the human race. Is that reason enough to keep you actively involved, here at the "grass roots," in this sister city activity?

PLEASE COME AND ENJOY OUR  
**LATVIAN  
CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**  
LATVIAN CULTURAL CENTER  
11710 - 3RD AVENUE NE  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON  
(East side of I-5 Freeway)

**SATURDAY**  
November 10  
10 am to 4 pm

**SUNDAY**  
November 11  
12 pm to 4 pm

YOU WILL FIND  
CHRISTMAS SPECIALTY FOODS  
ETHNIC LATVIAN FOODS  
DECORATIVE PILLOWS  
COSTUME DOLLS  
KNITTED ARTICLES  
STUFFED TOYS  
JEWELRY  
CERAMICS  
HOT MEALS  
ETCHED CRYSTAL  
AND MUCH MORE!

Latvian Association 2012

### Coming in January—Chinese New Year's Lunch

We are postponing our traditional Holiday Party to January due to the Bellevue-Liepaja celebration. Look for information in the next newsletter!



### Past Bellevue City Manger Phil Kushlan visits Liepaja

As the Liepaja committee was preparing guest lists for the upcoming 20 year celebration, first and foremost were those people whose interest and encouragement made this Sister City relationship possible—among them the then City Manager, Phil Kushlan. When contacted he said he would most certainly try to attend—and informed us that he and his wife Diane had spent several days in Liepaja during their European trip last year. We look forward to seeing them and hearing more!

Among others that will be joining us is Ligita Pudza, past Foreign Relations Officer at Liepaja City Hall and her daughter (now 15!) Anete. We hope to see many more of our past VIPs at the event!

## BELLEVUE—LIEPAJA CELEBRATE 20 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP

Even before Liepaja became an official Sister City, BSCA and the 'Liepaja Committee' were looking at ways to help the people of Liepaja then emerging from years under Soviet rule. Boxes of books, school supplies, computers, medical supplies and yes, stuffed animals were shipped to Liepaja.



The first BSCA visit to Liepaja was in 1992—a 'get acquainted' exploratory trip led by then City Manager Phil Kushlan and Councilmember Terry Lukens. Subsequent delegation trips, led by Mayor Don Davidson in 1995, Mayor Chuck Mosher in 2000 and Councilmembers Grant Degginger and Claudia Balcucci in 2005 cemented our friendship.

In 1994 Lucien Holmes, accompanied by his teacher Juris Janosns, was the first BSCA's summer student exchange to Liepaja. Since then 15 more Eastside High School students and 22 Liepaja students have had the opportunity to share 4-5 weeks with each other's families. These experiences have led to many long term friendships, expanded their world views and influenced career choices.



Starting with the visit of Kaiva Zimante, Vice-principal of the Liepaja Special Education School, in 1998 the Liepaja committee has been supporting the school's work with the most handicapped of Liepaja's children. In order to better assess the school's needs, Ann and Bruce Knofel visited Liepaja in 2000, followed by Dita Kanapinska's and Evija Zagares visits to the US to visit special education programs. From their experiences here a parent support group was organized. A visit to the school is a must for visitors from Bellevue! And we continue support the school's teaching staff through subscriptions to educational publications and providing school supplies.

As part of the City of Bellevue's staff exchange program, 9 Bellevue staff and 13 Liepaja spent time in each other's cities exploring different ways of addressing common problems, and suggesting alternative views. Impressed by this program in 2007, Liepaja Mayor Uldis Sesks himself visited Bellevue along with his wife.

Following the staff exchange visit of Kathy Barker, Bellevue Fire Department Safety Officer, we participated in Liepaja's bike safety program by sending several shipments of bike helmets.

Liepaja art students have also participated in the Young Artist Showcase at Sister Cities International and several have had their entries selected among the 10 best submissions.



Our present project with the Liepaja Special School is the Playground planned as a memorial to Ann Knofel. Dace Kreismane, a Special School parent, spent a week with us visiting playgrounds and special education programs before taking it upon herself the design of this project. The playground broke ground fall of 2011, but due to the financial crisis additional funds have been elusive. Additional funding are needed to be finish it..

Last but not least—all these projects need funding... over the years the Liepaja committee has held fashion shows, raffles and of course our 'Liepaja Live' dinner auctions. The last of these was in 2005. Since then we have depended on dues and donations from members and friends—and we thank all who have contributed and continue to do so to keep these projects funded—and hope you'll continue to support our projects.





## 2012 Washington Sister Cities Annual Conference Saturday, October 6th in Spokane, WA



It is a long drive from Bellevue to Spokane, but with the great attendance we had at last year's WA State SC conference in Bellevue, we could not be there this year... Hugh, Inta (and David along for the ride...) arrived in time for the Friday afternoon reception at Spokane City Hall and the welcome by Spokane Mayor David Condon.

The focus of the Saturday workshop was on Spokane's long-standing student exchange program with sister city Nishinomiya, Japan featuring the visiting School superintendent from that city. Mr. Akihiro Manabe and school board member Mr. Akihiro Nakahara as well as Spokane teacher Elliott Wilde.

An entertaining and informative presentation by Dr. Fredrick Peterson of WSU and Dr. Todd Friends of Whitworth College highlighted some of the cultural differences important to understand when doing business in Asia—with a demonstration on how to exchange business cards.

Additional presentations included Ross Grier's on Bellingham's Ski to Sea race and others. Some of the visiting participants enjoyed further conversation over dinner with Spokane's SC president Margo Buckles (above with Frank and Barbara Sanchez). A huge thanks to Spokane SC for their hard work!

### Foo Dogs, Whither Goest Thou?



Recently Hugh and Eureka Lim met with the Taiwan Economic Office General Director, Mr. Andy Chin regarding the fate of the pair of Foo Dogs Bellevue received some years ago from our sister city, Hualien on Taiwan. They were sent to replace the original Foo Dog, who for years sat at the entrance to the old City Hall. Originally meant to be a pair, when offered to Bellevue years ago, , our Hualien friends were told that we could only accept one.

In the meantime, the new pair sits patiently in a Kent warehouse. Made from marble stone from the mountain quarries behind Hualien, "the marble city" it was shipped to mainland China for carving and then to Seattle. Already quite a biography for these fierce-looking pets! Why still in a warehouse?

Our city's engineers found that their combined weight on the Plaza would strain the underlying support structure, so that expensive reinforcing would be needed before the Foo Dogs took up residence there. Just when the Great Recession set in, straining the City's budget. Check but not check mate, as we with an interest in getting the dogs on display began dreaming up other sites for them. One by one, these were ruled out—even as Mayor Lee took up the cause and started pressuring BSCA to help solve the problem.

How about at the Visitors' Center in the Botanical garden? Not prestigious enough; and, besides, the Visitor Center is slated to be rebuilt when enough outside donations are received. And, the Plaza? Oops, the Eastside Rail Link is going to chop off a big chunk! So, that's out until that construction is complete. But, there has to be a solution to this Chinese puzzle, with enough applied brain power and, again, with possible outside donations. Right? One possibility is on each side of the 1<sup>st</sup>-floor entrance of City Hall. Certainly prestigious enough. Any problems there? We'll soon know.

### **BSCA Summer Student Exchange—Applications for 2013 Now Available!**

This long standing program is our most important contribution to international friendship and we look forward to next summer and a new group of students to share our family centered exchange experience. Applications are available at our website [www.bellevuesistercities.org](http://www.bellevuesistercities.org). Please share the flyer with family, friends and neighbors who might be interested in being part of this experience. Deadline for applications is usually mid-March.