

March—April 2013
Volume 123



Annual Membership Meeting

Tuesday, March 12, 2013

Bellevue City Hall 7:30 p.m.

Sharing the Fun Side of Japanese Culture

Hugh Burleson, Forence Metcalf, Fusako Kusimi



With New Year celebrations behind us and Valentine's day long gone, we look ahead to the next special holidays... In Japan on March 3rd the big event is "Girls' Day" or "Dolls Day". On this occasion fairly elaborate sets of *hina* dolls representing the imperial court of medieval Japan are traditionally are put on display. And true to the Japanese tradition, Hugh's late wife, Kimie, had her own set—in this case, due to the 'nomadic' lifestyle of those in the Foreign Service, hers was a small portable set. Getting it ready for the meeting, Hugh shared it with his great- granddaughter—who's now looking forward to it being hers one of these days—but he'll share it with all of us first.

Florence Metcalf spent her first 20 years in prewar Japan as a member of a missionary family, then several more in the Allied Occupation after World War II during which time she collected many Japanese objects—enjoyed by those who have visited her home. She will share with us some of them as well as the practices that give color and fun to the Japanese through the year even today.

A native-born Japanese, Fusako-san, has even deeper roots and a more purely Japanese sense of the culture. This she has expressed in her book of poems and reflections on humanity.

Each of our three presenters will help our audience enjoy varied aspects of Japan, past and present. Each also has written a book that will be available for us to peruse and purchase (at author's cost).

Part of our March Annual Membership meeting is a brief business meeting to go over our finances and approve the budget for next year—see attached end of year report and the proposed budget for this fiscal year. Questions - e-mail our treasurer: intabg@comcast.net

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—Hugh Burleson Secretary—Gary Winchester Newsletter Editor—Inta Gotelli

From Your President

International Relations in Microcosm Sometimes we who enjoy our sister-city activities may lose sight of their important role in world affairs. Daily in the news, we read of all forms of international conflict, in the midst of which our armies and embassies struggle to “win the hearts and minds” of local people. We read of our Foreign Service diplomats putting in years of dedicated service all around the world, seeking to advance productive ties with the governments and civilian leaders of those nations. Yet, unless they have unusually winning personalities (the late Amb. Chris Stevens), they will always be seen as U.S. Government officials rather than as true personal friends by the people with whom they interact.

Not quite so true in the field I where served, public diplomacy, where we used American “soft power”—cultural, intellectual and educational programs—to emphasize the common humanity of Americans and demonstrate how much we Americans share with each other country.

Put sister-city activities into this equation—truly private and personal relationships and truly the softest of America’s forms of influence—and we begin to grasp the roles that these ties can have. For, what is more human and natural than personal friendships?

In this spirit, I urge that each of us commit ourselves, early this year, to writing to our friends in our sister cities (if we did not already do so at Christmas time) to reaffirm our interest in them and their lives and further strengthen these ties.

As one of many hundreds of sister-city bodies across the United States, BSCA’s grass-roots ties and each friendship we nurture helps to foster peaceful relations around the world.

Next General Meeting
Tuesday, May 14th
Hosted by the Kladno Committee

July Annual Picnic
Saturday, July 13th
Lewis Creek Park Visitor Center
(Due to construction at the Bellevue Botanical Garden)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

We are delighted that after our event at TECO the Hualien committee has two new members:

Ivy Shan is a native of Hualien—and although they did not meet back then, both she and Eureka Lim attended the same High School. Recently Ivy accompanied Bellevue Mayor Conrad Lee as his guide to Taiwan with a stop also in Hualien. She has been in the States for 12 years now, and at this time she’s involved in real estate having bought some land in Eastgate to sell to builders.

Christine Chen is a native of Taiwan who has been active as a foreign affairs liaison. We look forward to getting to know both of them and hope they will become active members of BSCA.



Florence just turned 90!!

Many Happy Returns

Dues for fiscal year March 1, 2013- Feb. 28, 2014 are now due. Dues are **\$30 individual or \$50 family** and an extra \$10 for additional committees. Please consider adding a donation to support student exchange or for the Liepaja special school playground.

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

Delegation Visit to Liepaja and Kladno

BSCA members and friends have received a questionnaire about participation in a proposed visit to our European sister cities next September.

Please take some time and let us know if you will/might be a part of this delegation and share your ideas as to what you’d like to do. ***Your feedback is needed for us to go ahead with planning!!!***

BSCA Summer Student Exchange—Deadline for Applications for 2013 Near!

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. 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.

Farewell to Cacilia Zemgalis August 31, 1922 - February 13, 2013

Among the original 'Liepaja Committee' which, back in 1991 supported the efforts that led to Liepaja, Latvia to become Bellevue's third sister city were Elmars and Cacilia Zemgalis. In order to explore the possibility and gain Bellevue City government approval, in 1992 Cacilia together with other BSCA members joined the the first delegation visit to both Liepaja and Kladno. Over the years Cacilia and Elmars could always be counted on to help pack the many boxes that were shipped to Liepaja - the first of books, followed by many of medical equipment and supplies. They were active board members, returned to Liepaja for delegation visits and enthusiastically welcomed our Liepaja visitors - and, since they lived close to SeaTac airport, Cacilia was usually one of the welcoming party there.

They both participated in many BSCA events - Cacilia was known for her delicious casseroles at our pot lucks - as well as her signature bags to keep them hot! They joined the other BSCA members in the delegation trips to our Asian sister cities, Yao, Japan and Hualian in Taiwan. During the last several years we saw less of them due to advancing age and poor health. They were sorely missed.

Cacilia was born in Bavaria, growing up in a household where music was cherished, and along with learning to play piano, she developed her lifelong love of music. She met Elmars, then a refugee from Latvia, in a chance encounter in her home town Neunburg von WALD. They were married in 1948. They emigrated to the USA initially settling in Seattle then Burien. Cacilia was an amazing gardener and hostess, accomplished cook and very skilled seamstress, creating her own beautifully tailored wardrobe. She loved people, was a great conversationalist and established and cherished her friendships with people of different ages and varied backgrounds. She loved new experiences and travel. The trip in 2006 with the St James Cathedral Choir was deeply appreciated - it was total immersion in great music and her devotion to her Catholic faith.

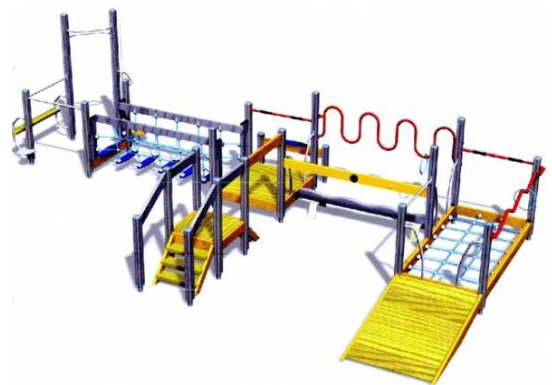
Donations Needed for the Liepaja Special School Playground

When the Liepaja committee decided to use the donations received in memory of Ann Knofel to assure that the children at the Liepaja Special School had an outdoor playground built to their specific needs, we worked under the assumption that our contribution to this project would be matched by other funds... but that was prior to the worldwide financial crisis... The parents support group at the school has applied for several grants and looked at other funding possibilities, with only limited success.

In the fall of 2011 they opted to go ahead with what was available - the playground area was prepared, two of the smaller pieces of equipment installed and there are funds to help install the rubber playground surface. But as yet funding for the main piece of equipment is lacking. Recently, at the her daughter's suggestion, Zaiga Phillips included our project on the Projekt Karma website, and we are delighted to report that donations there have been coming in... but we need you to spread the word - our goal is the \$12,000 needed to get this piece of equipment installed.

Check this website and donate ! <http://www.projektkarma.com/projekts/page/pid/91>

You may also donate directly to the BSCA, Liepaja committee. Make your tax deductible donation to BSCA and mail it to our treasurer: Inta Gotelli, 18911 SE 44th Way, Issaquah, WA 98027



We Welcomed the Year of the Snake!

What a treat it was to have the students of the Northwest Alliance of Chinese Language Schools share with us some of the traditions that are part of their New Year celebrations! We thank David Chau and his students for the Lion Dance, Melany Su and her children's choir, Su Huang and her students who demonstrated the importance of calligraphy to welcome the New Year and all the students who showed off the colorful traditional costumes.

We were honored to have the Director General Andy Chin and Bellevue Mayor Conrad Lee join us for this luncheon. Our thanks to Huelien chair, Eureka Lim, for her efforts in arranging for this event, and Tiffany Kan for organizing the performance, and the parent volunteers without whom these performances



might not be possible – but especially the students.



We also got to meet some outstanding students from Taiwan—as part of a Young Ambassador program 4 students from each of 3 Taipei High Schools were on a tour of the US. They stopped by to tell us about their schools, the special programs at each school and to share their experiences and impressions. We wish them success!

If you would like to see what you missed if you could not make it to this meeting you're in luck – one of the students has posted a video on YouTube!

http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=US&client=mv-google&hl=en&v=F_9n5OnhAh0&feature=em-share_video_user&nomobile=1

The Year that Was – and Looking Ahead...

Our past fiscal year began last March with Zaiga Phillips and Cheryl Kuhn reminiscing about the events 20 years ago that led to Liepaja, Latvia becoming Bellevue's third sister city - one of several events to celebrate 20 years of friendship – which culminated in the reception at City Hall on December 14th, exactly 20 years from the date they officially became Sister Cities. We were pleased that this event included several of those who, not only were key to the beginnings of this partnership, but active members throughout the last 20 years. (please see the January-February newsletter)

This year will mark 30 years of friendship with our second sister city – Hualien, Taiwan – and in January, along with our friends at the Taipei Cultural and Education Center, we celebrated the coming Lunar New Year with a luncheon and performances by students from the Northwest Alliance of Chinese Language Schools (see above). And we have assurances from Bellevue City Council that the two Foo Dogs received as gifts from Hualien a few years back will finally be released from storage and we'll be expecting guests from Hualien to celebrate their new location at City Hall.

As we begin this year we also look forward to 20 years of friendship with our fourth sister city – Kladno, in the Czech Republic – our May general meeting will feature this partnership. We hope that we'll be able to celebrate in style along with our Kladno friends during our proposed fall delegation trip to our European sister cities (you should have received a questionnaire regarding this).

But it is though our annual summer student exchanges that we continue to build on our friendships in our sister cities – as of this past summer we have sponsored 109 students to spend 3-4 weeks in one of our sister cities – along with an equal number of students hosted by our exchange families. These exchanges not only involve the students themselves, but the host families—often leading to follow up visits and long term friendships. BUT— We do need your help to keep these exchanges going – both by spreading the word on this exchange to prospective candidates and along with renewing your membership, adding a donation to your dues.