

Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board
Annual Report
2012 - 2013

June 30, 2013

The Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board consists of seven sister cities: Puerto Vallarta, Mexico; Toba, Japan; Weihai, China; Dingle, Ireland; San Juan/Manila, Philippines, Kotor, Montenegro and Patras, Greece. The reports from each committee are below.

The board was involved in the following activities:

July, 2012

Sister Cities participation on City TV—Channel 18. In February of 2012, the first Sister Cities program to appear on Channel 18 featured an overview of the seven Santa Barbara Sister Cities through an interview with Takako Wakita, chair of the board. The second program featured Toba and aired in May, with an interview with Linda Mathews, president of the Toba Sister City Committee. The third program featured Puerto Vallarta; Blas Garza, president of the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee was interviewed and Omar, a well-known singer from Puerto Vallarta, participated.

September 9, 2012

The annual 9-11 concert was held on Sunday, September 9, 2012, from 3:00 to 4:00 pm at the Faulkner Gallery of the Central Library. The music was performed by a Mariachi Youth group, Native American flutist and the Unitarian Society Chancel and Women's Choirs. The concert was a great success and the venue was full. This was a concert commemorating the anniversary of 9/11/2001, and is part of a series of free musical performances held in cities around the world on September 11th every year.

October 25, 2012

The 21th Annual Sister Cities Celebration in honor of United Nations Day was held at the Cabrillo Arts Pavilion. There were over 100 attendees from all seven sister city committees.

The honored guests included Catherine Dishion, Santa Barbara Chapter President, United Nations Association; Barbara Gaughen-Muller, vice president of the chapter; and Santa Barbara Mayor Helene Schneider.

The entertainment was a dance from the Nutcracker by the Santa Barbara Festival Ballet and a band which played music from all over the world.

January 24, 2013

The Airport Terminal mural project was completed, with a new exhibit displaying Santa Barbara's seven Sister Cities on a world map. The map was designed and constructed through the collaborative efforts of Gil Garcia of Garcia Architects and Matt Woodford of Zany Graphics.

April 25, 2013

The dedication ceremony of the Sister Cities mural was held at the Airport.

Mayor Helene Schneider; Airport Director Karen Ramsdell; Gil Garcia; and representatives of all seven Sister Cities attended the ceremony. The [Santa Barbara News-Press](#) and Casa Magazine had several articles on the event.

May 24, 2013

The first networking get-together for the board members of all Sister Cities was held at the Santa Barbara Adobe. The topics of the discussion were: Budget, Student Exchange, Recruiting/ Retention, and Fundraising.

June 1—June 9, 2013

The Sister Cities Board sponsored, as it did last year, the "Open World Project" which Gil and Marti Garcia organized to bring six delegates from the former sister city, Yalta, Ukraine to Santa Barbara to experience American democracy, civil society, and community life. The delegation also was seeking the means to re-start the sister city relationship between Yalta and Santa Barbara. The Sister Cities Day was held on June 5 for an introduction and discussion of the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Program with the delegation.

Respectfully submitted by,

Takako Wakita, Chair

Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board

Sister Cities Committees Annual Reports

Kotor, Montenegro, Sister City Committee

June 2012 – This is the fifth year of the Culinary Academy in Kotor, Montenegro. Master Chef Charles Fredrick's from Santa Barbara City College Culinary School traveled to Kotor to teach a two-week course at the Institute for Children with Disabilities. Those who finished the course were prepared for entry-level employment in some of Montenegro's finest restaurants.

Sixteen young water polo players from Santa Barbara, ages 14-16, traveled to Kotor to train with and compete against young water polo teams from the area. The coaches from Kotor were some of the best in the world and the youth teams were preparing for international competition.

July 2012 – Santa Barbara Mayor Schneider and five of our most prominent women executives traveled to Kotor to exchange ideas on governance and establish a program for the Women's Economic Development.

February 2013 – Tiffany DeVries from the Music Academy of the West traveled to Kotor to hold the first European Auditions for the Academies Prestigious Fellows Program. Of the 1,500 who auditioned for the program, Samir Haracic, who auditioned in Kotor, was one of 135 musicians chosen for the program. Mr. Haracic, a cellist, will attend the eight-week program in the summer of 2013.

March 2013 – Kotor's Ratimir Martinovic, one of the finest young Classical Pianists in the world, included Santa Barbara and Chapman University in his world tour. The Santa Barbara Concert was held at the Music Academy of the West in front of 250 classical music enthusiasts.

May 2013 – Committee member Goran Milic traveled to Kotor to meet with the Executive Chef of the prestigious Aman Resort's to establish an intern program where students at our Culinary Academy could get hands on experience in the Aman Kitchens. In addition, the Executive Chef agreed to teach at our culinary Academy saving us the expense of bringing teachers from Santa Barbara and allowing us to add additional classes throughout the year.

Submitted by George Lily, President

Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, Sister City Committee

July, 2012 – Twenty-six visitors from Puerto Vallarta were entertained for their annual visitation. The highlight was an El Fandango Dinner Dance with El Presidente of Old Spanish Days as Master of Ceremonies; it was held at El Paseo with music by Lencho Martinez. Planned activities included several hosted dinners and shopping trips and a combined dinner at Santa Barbara Elks Club.

Two Sister City members attended the Annual Sister Cities International Conference in Jacksonville, Florida.

August, 2012 – A friendship visit with Taxco Sister City people was held. The Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee members hosted 16 visitors from Taxco, Mexico. The highlight of the four day visit was a trip to the City of Solvang where the Mayor and Councilmember met with the visitors and set up a day full of Solvang/Santa Ynez/Chumash Indian tours.

November, 2012 – The Annual Visitation to Puerto Vallarta was held with 25 persons attending; however, the group missed the plane due to accidents on the freeway and a delay getting started. Everyone was rescheduled, some arriving two to three days later. The Mayor of Puerto Vallarta presented a Key To the City to President Blas Garza. Special parties and receptions were held as well as one in the Puerto Vallarta City Hall.

I Madonnari, supported by the Santa Barbara Sister City, held a three-day chalk painting event in front of the municipal building. The group stayed in Hotel Playa Los Arcos, whose owner funded a Gala Dinner/Show Event on the Beach, together with Folk Dancing.

December, 2012 – The Annual “Las Posadas” party, held in the home of Gil and Marti Garcia, had a highlight with singer Lois Mahalia. The Las Posadas is a traditional Mexican Christmas event where singing, eating of traditional tamales, and breaking of the children’s “piñata” take place.

February, 2013 – The Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee met with MarBorg Industries officials to request the donation of a Trash Compactor truck to Puerto Vallarta. MarBorg has agreed and papers are now being developed for the physical transfer.

The Young Artist Showcase, a program sponsored by Sister Cities International (SCI), had twenty-seven entries from the Santa Barbara High School art classes; with their interpretation of SCI’s yearly theme. A reception at the local Business First Bank was held with the participation of three community judges. The judges picked three winners, with the winning entry receiving \$250, and their art piece was to be shipped to Washington, D.C. to participate with other worldwide art entries. The 2nd and 3rd place winners won \$175 and \$100, respectfully.

The Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee was recognized at the 50th anniversary of the U.S./Mexico Sister Cities Association conference in Laredo, Texas, with the President’s Award for outstanding sister city projects.

February-March 2013 – A small contingency of Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee members visited Puerto Vallarta for the “step-down” and inauguration of the old and new President/Board Members of Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee. Four Santa Barbara architects went to Puerto Vallarta to participate in a Puerto Vallarta community forum for the economic revitalization and historic preservation of the small pueblo ambiance of the city center.

A proposed Friendship Mural was presented to President Blas Garza in Puerto Vallarta to find a home in Santa Barbara to place the mural. The mural depicts two halves with one-half reflections of Puerto Vallarta and the other half depicting Santa Barbara.

March, 2013 – Two Puerto Vallarta Sister City members attended a Leadership Meeting in Washington, D.C. hosted by Sister Cities International.

April, 2013 - Board Member Elections were held. Two new Committee Members were elected and the new Committee reaffirmed the elected officers from 2012-2013 for another year of service.

Seven Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee members attended the SoCal Sister Cities International Conference “Challenges of Sister Cities in a Changing World” which was held in Anaheim, California.

May, 2013 – The Sister Cities Board Map was dedicated. As you ride up the escalator to the boarding gates at the Santa Barbara Airport terminal, you will come face-to-face with a world map depicting the seven official sister cities that have relationships with a counterpart sister city organization here in Santa Barbara. The world map idea was approved by the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board and all official sister cities committee organizations participated in its design development and financing.

The first place winner of the Puerto Vallarta I. Madonnari Festival participated in the 27th Annual Santa Barbara I. Madonnari Festival. The artist was in Santa Barbara for four days. The Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee was a Street Painting Sponsor.

Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee Member Gil Garcia was elected as President of SoCal Sister Cities International.

June, 2013 – We celebrated our 40th Anniversary with 29 guests from Puerto Vallarta. The highlight was a ceremony in the Mural Room of the County Courthouse. Sister Cities International’s Vice President, Bill Bourum, attended and addressed the audience and presented commendations to Santa Barbara and Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committees. Numerous activities were held, including a dinner dance at El Paseo, a visit to the Botanical Gardens, the MarBorg Recycling Center, a Luau at Leadbetter Beach, and a thank-you party given by members of the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee. Members of the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board hosted the Puerto Vallarta visitors in their homes.

We also shared Sister City experiences with five Yalta, Ukraine visitors participating in an “Open World” program sponsored in part by Sister Cities International. This might result in an old sister city relationship being rekindled.

Our finances are healthy, with a reserve account and we presently have 206 members on our active roster. Our charitable contributions include donations to I Madonnari for activities here and in Puerto Vallarta; to the Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Department for their training project in Puerto Vallarta; and cash donations to charitable institutions, such as the Rehabilitation Clinic and the Orphans Home in Puerto Vallarta. Locally we donated to the Santa Barbara High School Multimedia Arts & Design Academy and to the Manuel Unzueta “Milagro Fire Fundraiser” (Manuel is an Honorary Member of the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee).

The number of members of the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee are 158. Of these, 122 are residents of Santa Barbara County, and 36 are residents outside of Santa Barbara County. The members pay \$25 annually in dues which equals \$3,950 per year.

Submitted by Blas M. Garza, President

Toba, Japan, Sister City Committee

This year's activities focused again on a more outward approach to the community. We participated in the 10th anniversary of the Shinkanen Tea House at the Botanic Garden; helped to host an exploratory Sister City group from Yalta, Ukraine; and worked with other Sister City Committees and the City to formulate and install in our Airport Terminal a map of Santa Barbara's Sister Cities around the world.

Summer, 2012

Our Student Exchange was again quite a success, with our Toba students enjoying all that Santa Barbara has to offer. Four junior-high students (two boys and two girls) and a chaperon from Toba stayed in Santa Barbara from July 27 to August 5. They enjoyed a visit with the Mayor, went to the beach and did some downtown shopping, attended a Foresters game, the Fiesta parade and the Mercado event. The Toba Sister City Committee had a welcome pool party on Sunday, July 29. The Santa Barbara students and a chaperon visited Toba from August 7 to 18th.

We also celebrated the visit of Hisaji Sekichi and his wife, from Kyoto, who undertook the repair and renovation of the "fusuma" paper doors in the Shinkanen Tea House. Mr. Sekichi's work is of world-class quality, and he was so very kind to donate his efforts! The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden, the local Urasenke Tea group, as well as our Committee members, were extremely grateful for this historic gift to our Tea House and the Botanic Garden.

Fall, 2012

We participated of course in the Sister Cities efforts for the 9/11 concert, and enjoyed a full house for the UN Day, where the entertainment was a dance performed by Sarah Pacheco, a former exchange student to Toba.

Spring, 2013

We opened our year of the Snake with a great Shinenkai New Year event—a kimono show of our committee member Takako Wakita's great collection of theatrical and formal as well as colorful vintage kimonos. Our models came from all parts of the community, broadening the appeal of the event. We had a packed house, and garnered several new members.

The next event was also packed—a visit to the Arts and Crafts era home of Mrs. Maggie Gallant for a Spring Tea in honor of Boys' and Girls' Days. We had received from Mr. and Mrs. Blakeway a beautiful, historic set of Girls' Day Hina Dolls, dressed resplendently in silk brocade. The group really appreciated the Asian influenced interior of Mrs. Gallant's lovely home, and our Shakuhachi music, played by local Bob Sedivy, as well as the atmosphere

created by the Koto playing of Local Japanese teacher Yahiyo Roberts made it a beautiful event for sharing Japanese culture with our fellow citizens.

We next participated in the two-day celebration of the 10th year anniversary of the Shinkan Tea House at the Santa Barbara Botanic Gardens, where we have been one of the stewards of the Tea House since its installation. There was an overflow crowd as our local Tea Master, Kyoko Kasai, made the ceremonial offering of tea in memory and thanks to all those who had been instrumental through the years in supporting and developing the Tea House as a community resource. The following day our local Tea students offered all-day demonstrations of tea for the many visitors to the Tea House.

In preparation for our student exchange, we held a fund-raising yard sale in early June, and collected a sufficient amount to make a meaningful contribution to the airfare costs of this year's Santa Barbara students.

Submitted by Linda Mathews, President

San Juan, Philippines, Sister City Committee

October 2012: Medical supplies and surgical sutures were donated to certain needy hospitals in San Juan. The committee membership in Santa Barbara and some private donors provided the money and materials for the project.

December 2012: A Midnight Mass at the Saint Raphael Church was held, bringing together the Filipino communities from Santa Barbara, Santa Maria, and even as far as Los Angeles to partake of the tradition.

April 2013: We completed the project in the Philippines " Feeding the Poor Children of San Juan". One of our members here in Santa Barbara visited the San Juan, Philippines. With the help of our local Sister Cities in San Juan, we organized the project of feeding the poor children of San Juan and giving them advice on good nutrition.

Our Filipino Sister Cities committee counterpart also visited the San Juan fire victim families and donated to them boxes of essential supplies and toys for the children. The San Juan group then received group pictures of the event and letters of appreciation from the recipients as a token of their thanks.

The membership in the San Juan Sister City Committee and some private donors provided the money and materials for the project.

An informal talk with the Mayor of San Juan revealed the desire to have meeting with the Mayor of Santa Barbara via a mutual future visit.

April 2013: Our Committee contributed and joined in the unveiling of the Sister Cities Map at the Santa Barbara Airport Terminal.

May 2013: The Filipino American Friendship Celebration was held in May. This is one of the biggest events that the Sister City Committee of San Juan jointly celebrated with the Filipino

Community Association of Santa Barbara. Cultural dances like the “Dance of Lights” and “Cucaracha” were the highlights of the show that night. Part of the Fil-Am celebration was attended by a TV journalist and was broadcasted on Filipino channels all over the world.

June 2013: Under the leadership of Gil Garcia, our San Juan Sister City Committee joined the Sister Cities Board and membership in welcoming the Ukrainian delegation.

Every Friday we hold a Dancercise. It is open to all the members and guests of the Santa Barbara Sister Cities and the Filipino Community Association of Santa Barbara. Dances include ballroom and line dancing and cultural dancing.

Submitted by Jaime Sodusta, president and Board representative

Weihai, China, Sister City Committee

Weihai, located in Shandong Province, China, just west of the Korean peninsula, became a Sister City to Santa Barbara on August 10, 1993.

A sparkling seaside port-city open to foreign import and export trade, Weihai is connected to the rest of China via a modern airport and highway. Weihai is dramatically situated between nearby mountains and Liugong Island just offshore, where a memorial museum commemorates the Qing Dynasty naval headquarters. Comfortable hotel accommodations, delicious seafood and white sand beaches make Weihai a popular international summer resort destination.

The city has been voted the cleanest in the province and only smokeless industries exist in the city proper. Like Santa Barbara, Weihai is well known for its rich history, arts and crafts, universities, bountiful mariculture harvest, an extensive wine industry, and high tech manufacturing.

Santa Barbara and Weihai interactions have focused on personal and cultural understanding through visitations by groups of teachers and students between the two cities with special focus on English learning and instructional methods. Most recently, in the summer of 2012, Santa Barbara/Weihai Sister City Committee members hosted a group of Weihai school children. Since then the local chapter has elected new board members, hosted social events for old and new members, helped with the new Sister Cities map in the Santa Barbara Airport Terminal, and is currently engaged in devising means to send local students and adults for extended stays teaching English at the request of Weihai, China.

Submitted by Eliesa Bollinger, President

Patras, Greece, Sister City Committee

Our Sister City Committee is restructuring due to the passing of our past president Theony Condos. The board appointed Georgia Gastouniotis as president, treasurer, and the representative to the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board. Alternates for the Sister Cities board representative are Vivi Tziouvaras and Chris Compogiannis. Vivi Tziouvaras was appointed as the vice president, Mariella Stockmal as Web presence/marketing and George Papazacharioudakis remains as the secretary.

A Sister Cities Committee representation is planned for our Greek festival again to raise awareness and increase membership. We need to have brochures, a video display, and goods like Patras loukoumia for the booth visitors. A request for donations are in the works. A recommendation was made to reach out to the Los Angeles Patras Greek community for Sister City membership and support.

Georgia attended a Sister Cities board discussion about networking/get together with members from all sister cities committees to discuss ways to raise money and help keep each sister city committee active.

Jim Stathis will call Dr. Apostolos Athanassakis to get the status on a technical MOU between UCSB and Patras University.

Georgia included our March 25 Greek Independence event in the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board's yearly calendar of events. The Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board members showed a strong interest of attendance to our March 25 GI event.

Our Patras Sister City has been placed at the airport plaque along with our Greek Flag. We have been notified that the grand opening date is scheduled for April 25.

Our nonprofit status is on hold pending Patras' city official acceptance and approval.

Submitted by Mariella Kallona Stockmal

Dingle, Ireland, Sister City Committee

This past year has been committed to reorganizing. We were able to have a walk down State Street on Sunday, March 17, St. Patrick's Day, with a large group of people. We also participated in the design and development of the Sister Cities Map placed at the Santa Barbara Airport Terminal. We plan to continue to recruit new members and our commitment to the Dingle Sister City Committee during the coming year ahead.

Submitted by Michael Fitzgerald, Representative
