

Annual Report
Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board
July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

The Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board consists of seven sister cities (listed with their beginning dates): Toba, Japan (1966), Puerto Vallarta, Mexico (1973); Weihai, China (1993); San Juan/Manila, Philippines (2000); Dingle, Ireland (2003); Kotor, Montenegro (2009); and Patras, Greece (2010). Below are the reports from each sister city committee. The board was involved in the activities listed below.

July 1, 2015

Bea Molina was appointed by the Santa Barbara City Council as one of the three members appointed by the City Council. Albemar Dumiao became the new president of the San Juan Sister City Committee and will be the representative to the Board. Jaimie Sodusta became the alternate. Scott Spaulding has resigned as the Dingle sister city committee president and representative to the board.

July 10, 2015

The Annual Report for July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015, was submitted to the Mayor and Council.

July 16-18, 2015

The Sister Cities International (SCI) Annual Conference was held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Pat Fallin, from the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee attended.

August 21, 2015

A Networking/Get together with the board members and members of all sister city committees was held at the San Vicente Mobile Home Park Clubhouse. The topics of the discussion were: recruitment of new members, fundraising, exchange student program, and liability and insurance.

September 2, 2015

Peter Haslund, Weihai, China, Sister City Committee, became the new representative to the board. Willy Quinn, Dingle, Ireland, Sister City Committee became the new president and also the representative to the board.

September 11, 2015

The 10th annual Santa Barbara 9/11 Peace Concert was held on Friday, September 11 from 5:30 to 6:30 pm at the Faulkner Gallery of the central library. The music was performed by Japanese Bamboo flute player, Bob Sedivy; Irish singer, Aoife Quinn; Showstoppers Youth Ensemble, and the Unitarian Society Chancel and Women's Choirs. The concert was a great success and it was a full house. This was one of a series of free musical performances held in cities around the world on the same day commemorating the anniversary of 9/11/2001. Mayor Pro Tem Gregg Hart welcomed the attendees and there was a great article in the [Santa Barbara News-Press](#) about the concert.

October 22, 2015

The 24th Annual Sister Cities Celebration in honor of United Nations Day was held at the Cabrillo Arts Pavilion. There were over 125 attendees from all seven sister city committees. Mayor Helene Schneider and Barbara Gaughen-Muller, Santa Barbara Chapter President, United Nations Association were the honored guests. Barbara was the guest speaker for the event. The entertainment was Irish Music by the Foggy Dew and the Junior Spirit of Fiesta.

October 24, 2015

Commemorating the 70th Anniversary of the United Nations, the Sister Cities Board and the local United Nations Association joined together in a march on Cabrillo Boulevard. Council member Cathy Murillo and about 100 members attended.

January 30, 2016

NoCal Sister Cities and SoCal Sister Cities joint board meeting was held in San Miguel. SoCal president, Gil Garcia; SCI So/Cal representative, Pat Fallin; Board chair, Takako Wakita; and other committee members attended.

March 18-21, 2016

The Sister Cities Board, with the Rotary Club Santa Barbara North, hosted the Open World Program and invited six young professionals from Ukraine. Gil Garcia was the local coordinator. On March 20, the Sister Cities Board held a social/lunch for the guests and the representatives from each committee made a presentation of their sister city program.

April 21, 2016

The Young Artists and Authors Showcase reception was held at the Heritage Oak Bank. Each sister city committee donated \$50 toward the prizes and sent a judge to participate in the judging of the art work. The winner's art work was sent to SCI in Washington, D.C. and was entered in the national competition in July.

May 4, 2016

David Zamichow became the new Kotor, Montenegro alternate.

June 2016

SCI president, Mary Kane announced that the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee won the 2016 Sister Cities International's Best Overall Program award for cities with a population between 50,000 and 100,000. The award will be received at the SCI 60th Anniversary Conference on July 16 in Washington, D.C.

Respectfully submitted by,

Takako Wakita, Chair
Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board

SEVEN SISTER CITY COMMITTEE REPORTS

Santa Barbara /Puerto Vallarta, Mexico Sister City

July 2015

- The Committee participated in the 25th Anniversary Celebration De La Fraternidad Universal en Yucatan, July 10 - 13, 2015. A group of seven members participated.
- A spaghetti dinner was held at the home of a member that raised over \$600 for the Puerto Vallarta - *Save the Turtles Project*.

September 2015

- The Committee participated in the Santa Barbara City Council meeting of September 9, 2015, and spoke briefly about the activities of our Sister City and the SCI Best Overall Program award.
- Members participated in the September 11th Peace Concert at the Faulkner Gallery in the Central library.

October 2015

- The dinner Speaker was Dr. Manuel Carlos, *Save The Turtles – Puerto Vallarta*.
- A Wine Tasting Spaghetti Dinner – hosted by member to raise funds for *Save the Turtles* was held.
- We participated in the United Nations day events and in an international potluck at the Cabrillo Arts Pavilion.

November 2015

- The Annual visitation to Puerto Vallarta, with over 30 members, participated in a 10-day event. We were able to visit the projects our Sister City Committee has been funding and to visit with our many friends in Puerto Vallarta. This was a fundraising trip where we raised over \$5,000.
- We are supporting a sewing school and sewing business venture in Puerto Vallarta. This project will help mothers of a local community become professional seamstresses and assist in helping their families become self-sustaining.
- An electric wheelchair was generously taken on the plane by Sister City Committee member Kevin O'Dea and presented to a young man in Puerto Vallarta. The young man was thrilled to be receiving this gift to better assist in his handicap.
- We supported Puerto Vallarta I Madonnari Festival, with funding for five Santa Barbara chalk painting artists. The Festival took place in early November sadly before our Annual Visitation.

December 2015

- The Annual “Las Posadas” party was held in the home of Gil and Marti Garcia. Las Posadas is a traditional Mexican Christmas event where singing, eating of traditional tamales, and a reenactment of a Bethlehem scene.

January 2016

- The Dinner guest at our meeting was a young man named Daniel Godinez, an outstanding San Marcos High School student, and subject of a story in The Independent. He is attending the prestigious Bard College in upstate New York and his goal is to be an astrophysicist. His parents are in service industries and they have no means to help support his dream. Even though he has a scholarship it does not cover all of his expenses and his former teacher is helping him seek donations.
- We changed our dues structure, all membership dues are now due on the first day of the year. This will simplify our record keeping.

February 2016

- The Monthly membership dinner was held with speaker Father Larry of the Old Mission; he spoke of his travels and an inspirational visit with Mother Teresa.
- Three members attended the Oxnard Mexican Consulate for training on the 3x1 program.

March 2016

- The March Dinner Meeting guests were the SMART First Aid Training Providers.
- On the 18th -26th we hosted five young professionals and a translator from the Ukraine in cooperation with the Rotary Club North and the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board. During the visit they were introduced to the Santa Barbara community. The program empathized the NGO world of non-profits and how they function in a civil society.
- The Santa Barbara School of Squash received funds from the Rotary North for air fare to send three people to Puerto Vallarta in a squash exchange.

April 2016

- Election of new board members and officers was held.
- A report on the Law Enforcement Exchange by Sheriff's Deputies who provided the training for Puerto Vallarta and surrounding cities. The training was over five days in basic police tactics and weapons training. The local officers are supportive of this exchange and have seen firsthand how effective the training has been for Mexican officers and Marines. In fact they support an increase to six of the number of officers sent to Puerto Vallarta to provide training.
- We submitted names of five members for recognition as Distinguished Volunteers to the Sister Cities International Conference in Washington, D.C., July 2016.
- The Santa Barbara County Fire Department is replacing "Jaws of Life" with newer equipment and we are coordinating requests from five fire departments in the Puerto Vallarta area to receive their old equipment.
- We participated in the Young Artist Showcase that took place on April 21 with other Sister City committees. The winner's artwork was submitted for the competition.

May 2016

- Installation of a new slate of Officers was held.

- We hosted Puerto Vallarta artist Quetzal Reyes, winner of the I Madonnari in Puerto Vallarta event to participate in the Festival at the Old Mission. His square was sponsored by sister city members Ruben and Sandra Islas.
- We enlisted food vendors for booths during Old Spanish Days to support our fundraising efforts.
- A new representative to the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board, Margaret Saavedra, President of the Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee was appointed.

June 2016

- The SCI Art Contest Winners were announced.
- Our Committee won the 2016 Sister Cities International Best Overall Award for cities with a population between 50,001 and 100,000. "This Award is in recognition of the outstanding exchange work done by your organization in advancing the goals and mission of the sister cities movement." Quoted by Mary Kane, President and CEO of Sister Cities International

Other Information:

Our finances are healthy, with a reserve account. We presently have approximately 138 dues paying members on our active roster and another 35 honorary or complementary members.

Our charitable contributions include donations to:

- I Madonnari for activities here and in Puerto Vallarta.
- Santa Barbara Sheriff's Department for a training project in Puerto Vallarta and Santa Barbara.
- Support and cash donations to Boca de Tomatlan Regional Health Clinic in Puerto Vallarta.
- Donations to charitable institutions, such as the Rehabilitation Clinic of Puerto Vallarta.
- Volcanes Sewing School donation.
- Santa Barbara School of Squash.

Other Associations

Members of the Federation of Jalisco Clubs of Southern California based in Los Angeles. The Federation consists of over 150 hometown Mexican migrant clubs in Southern California. The Santa Barbara Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee qualified and was accepted as a Jalisco club based on the 40-year association with our State of Jalisco sister city Puerto Vallarta. We are the second Sister City organization to qualify for this honor. Board members included Rotary Clubs in the Jalisco club alliance resulting in Rotary International funding support.

Sister City members are informed by:

- Monthly General Membership Dinner Meetings
- Monthly Newsletter

- Active participation of membership on the face book page
- Web-page (sbpvsistercity.org)

Active Sister City members supporting sister city programs:

- Sister City member Gil Garcia is selected to participate in SCI's Honor Board for the 60th Anniversary Conference in Washington, DC.
- Sister City member Pat Fallin serves as Sister Cities International State Coordinator for Southern California.
- Sister City members Bea Molina and Marti Correa de Garcia serve as "City at-large-members" on the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board.

Submitted by Margaret Saavedra, President

Santa Barbara/San Juan, Philippines Sister City

July 2015:

We coordinated a student exchange from San Juan to Santa Barbara.

September 2015:

Members of the Santa Barbara/San Juan Sister City Committee visited the Office of the Mayor of San Juan. Mayor Guia Gomez treated them to a Filipino lunch together with some of the delegation that visited Santa Barbara in May 2015. The Santa Barbara group gave the Mayor a coffee table type book of Santa Barbara while the Mayor reciprocated with a gift of the official flag of San Juan City and a huge flag of the Philippines.



October 2015:

- We joined the celebration of the United Nation Day. The Santa Barbara/San Juan Sister City Committee had one of the largest number of participants, bringing traditional Filipino foods for everyone.
- We joined in the celebration of the "United Nations Walk", where Santa Barbara Sister Cities members (and many international students) walked along Cabrillo Boulevard from East Beach up to the dolphins' fountain on Stearns Wharf – and back!



2015Oct24 UN Walk-SB
SisterCities



December 2015:

The membership of the Santa Barbara/San Juan Sister City Committee and the Filipino Association celebrated the traditional Midnight Mass led by Fr. Raul Gatbonton, Associate Pastor of Our Lady of Sorrow Church in Santa Barbara. This was followed by a pot luck dinner in the Church Guest Hall.

March 2016:

We joined in the welcoming of the Ukrainian Delegation and brought in Philippine native foods for the visitors and locals to talk about and enjoy. The current Santa Barbara/San Juan Sister City Committee President Jemmi Irabon gave the group a souvenir Filipina doll in traditional costume.



May 2016:

General Elections in the Philippines were held and San Juan Mayor Guia Gomez got re-elected. Our Committee sent her congratulations.

June 2016:

The San Juan Sister City Committee and the Filipino Community Association of Santa Barbara celebrated jointly their biggest event of the year: Filipino-American Friendship Day at the Elks Lodge, Goleta, on Saturday, June 25, 6 to 11 p.m. All committees of the Santa Barbara Sister Cities were invited.

Submitted by Jaime Sodusta, President

Santa Barbara/Patras, Greece Sister City

- We set up and updated our website.
- Our members baked and attended the United Nations Dinner that was held on October 22, 2015.
- Our Committee held a successful fundraiser on March 26, 2016.
- Georgia Gastouniotis, President and/or Bessie Condos, Vice President have attended all but one of the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board meetings.

- A meeting with Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce was held to discuss possibilities of tourism promotions with Patras and Santa Barbara.
- Dos Pueblos High School has been contacted with regard to establishing student contact via Skype with a High School in Patras.
- Our meetings are held bi-monthly.

Submitted by Chris Compogiannis

Santa Barbara/Toba, Japan Sister City

Our Student Exchange last July/August, 2015, came off again without a hitch. One of our exchange parents, Lisa Ishikawa, was so drawn to our group and appreciative of the opportunity our group offered her child, that she has joined our Committee's Board this year.

Last fall we participated in the 9/11 Memorial Concert, at which our member, Bob Sedivy performed playing a Japanese bamboo flute. The community has taken this yearly event to heart, and the hall was full of public participants.

In October, we were part of the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board's United Nations Day celebration. It was especially festive last year as it was the 70th anniversary of the United Nations. Nearly 120 people from all seven sister city committees joined the dinner celebration, which featured a great international pot luck and entertainment by the Foggy Dew and the Junior Spirit of Fiesta.

The following weekend, a large group of our members, dressed in Toba's signature blue Happi coats, carried our flag in the United Nations Day walk for Peace all along the Santa Barbara beachfront, visiting with others in the community, and spreading the message of peace envisioned by President Eisenhower as he sponsored the creation of the Sister Cities program.

The big event of last year was the group's 50th anniversary delegation visit to Toba and other sights in Japan in November. We had a full-capacity group of 20 touring Tokyo, Matsumoto, a traditional Japanese paper-making complex, Tsumago and Magome in a day of hiking from the one village to the next, traditional inns and ryokans, Nagoya to see its wonderful castle, then 3 days in Kyoto, where we went behind the scenes to see rarely-open Japanese historical homes of the imperial aristocracy as well as a specially prepared traditional kaiseki meal. In Toba our friends treated us to a delicious and entertaining time, culminating with a beautiful banquet where we exchanged gifts and congratulations, and were entertained by Toba's talented traditional dancers, and given a special performance of Geisha dance and singing. The family visit night, where some

of our members got to see for the first time how our Toba friends live, and eat, was the highlight of this visit.

Our New Year's dinner meeting, the ShinNenKai, was a popular event in January, 2016, where we featured a great slide show designed by Board member Mark Hamilton covering our 50 years of activities and delegation visits. One of our student ambassadors from last year, Aylin, gave a heart-warming talk about all her experiences on our summer exchange to Toba and about how she became close with her Toba exchange sister. A founding member of the group was present, as well as some of our earliest student exchange ambassadors.

Our Spring Event this year, free to our members, was with the Bonsai Club in their Santa Barbara Botanic Garden Bonsai Weekend. The Santa Barbara group of the Urasenke Way of Tea was also represented, opening the Shinkanen Tea House to our members and offering them a bowl of matcha tea and a sweet. Our Board member Alice Burke narrated the demonstrations of tea-making put on by Kyoko Kasai, the local Urasenke teacher, and our member Diana Vandervoort showed her exquisite hand-made temari balls; other members folded origami animals and described our Student Exchange program to visitors at the Santa Barbara-Toba table.

In May our Board member Takako Wakita facilitated the visit to Toba of Santa Barbara.- Puerto Vallarta Board members Gil Garcia and his wife Marti, along with Mr. and Mrs. Perez from our sister city Puerto Vallarta. The hospitality offered by Toba was very warm and included visits to many of the unique sights of the city. The group met with the Mayor and discussed the future of the sister city relationship between Santa Barbara and Toba.

The Committee's Board has been planning our 50th anniversary celebration later this year, when a delegation from Toba will visit Santa Barbara.

Submitted by Linda Mathews, President

Santa Barbara/Kotor, Montenegro Sister City

After five years of high activity, 2015-16 was a transition year where we continued to build on successful programs while establishing priorities for the future.

Our Mayors:

Kotor has a new Mayor, Dr. Aleksandar Stjepcevic, who is very supportive of our programs both past and future. We have arranged for a personal meeting between our Mayor Helene Schneider and Dr. Stjepcevic, in Kotor, later this year.

Culinary Academy:

Our first class taught by former students Semir Corovic and Simsa Music, assisted by Aman Resort Chef Bogdan Krsmanovic, was a resounding success. By using Semir and Semsas, rather than bringing in Chefs from Santa Barbara, we will be able to increase the number of classes and the number of students we can serve in the future.

Classical Music:

Marina Milic supervised the auditions for the Music Academy of the West's prestigious Fellows Program in 2016. Of the six who auditioned two received letters of commendation and one was chosen as an alternate. With 1,700 applicants competing for 135 openings this was a remarkable showing.

Water Polo:

Working with the Administration in Kotor and the Prime Water Polo Club in Santa Barbara we've completed arrangements for one of Montenegro's top U-18 teams to come to Santa Barbara to train and compete with our teams in 2016.

Theater:

We have been invited to send a group to perform in the Kotor Art International Festival in 2016 or 2017. This is a major undertaking and we are doing our best to find a group interested in this opportunity.

Fund Raising:

The success of our Culinary Academy in supplying qualified employees, from the Institute for Children with Disabilities, to resorts and restaurants in Montenegro has resulted in the Prime Minister of Montenegro offering to host a fund raising dinner for the continued support of our Culinary Program as well as the many other exchanges we are planning for the future. The dinner will be held in Kotor later this year.

Submitted by George Lilly, President

Santa Barbara/Dingle, Ireland Sister City

This year was a busy year for our Santa Barbara/Dingle Sister City Committee. Following is a list of our activities:

- The 9/11 Concert was graced by Aoife Quinn's beautiful songs and guitar playing, filling us all with Irish sentiment. Aoife is our President Willie Quinn and Trini Quinn's daughter. She is a very talented and popular vocalist.
- The well attended Sister Cities United Nations Celebration had us all jigging to Foggy Dew, trying to stay in our seats. Foggy Dew is led by our own Willie Quinn and his partners in Irish music. This group is filled with Irish twinkle and fun.

- Our Annual Irish Christmas party, held at La Arcada Bistro, was quite successful and we all celebrated. With food, drink and merriment. Attendance was gratifying and the holidays were ushered in Irish style!
- On February 2nd, the Dingle delegation (the Destaic family) returned to visit as a contributing part of the Santa Barbara International Film Festival, and brought a group of people from the Dingle Film Festival Committee. Six short Irish animation films were shown, and were a big hit with the festival viewers. This was just eleven months after their last visit. Two parties were held; one party was hosted at the La Arcada Bistro, and the other one at Maggie Wordel's home, which was attended by the family of Gregory Peck as well as a wine tour and a visit to the Mayor's office were enjoyed by all! Roger Durling was a perfect host, and made their inclusion in the Santa Barbara Film Festival a memorial highlight for them. Brian DeStatic, the Chairman of the Dingle Sister City in Dingle, made and presented the trophy which is called "The Gregory Peck Trophy" to Anthony Peck and his sister. We have received a lot of great publicity for both of these events.
- In March we had a St. Patrick's Day celebration with The Independent parade and the La Arcada Bistro's "green" festivities.
- Trini and Willie Quinn hosted the April 24th "Easter Uprising of 1916 Commemoration" with great historical meaning, and education for those in attendance.
- Currently there are three students from Dingle working at La Arcada Bistro, they are on J-1 student working visas for the summer.
- It has been a satisfying year, and we all look forward to more Irish culture, music and cheer in 2016-2017; maybe even a trip to Dingle.

Submitted by Willie Quinn, President and Kathleen McSweeney-Zeitsoff, Vice-President

Santa Barbara/Weihai, China Sister City

As has been our annual habit, we began the year 2016 with a celebration of the Chinese New Year at the China Pavilion, to which the Santa Barbara community was invited. The event is based on the Chinese lunar calendar and was celebrated as the year of the monkey.

During the year, we have maintained contact with our sister city in China, inviting educational groups as well as trade groups to visit Santa Barbara. In the past, we have been successful in bringing Santa Barbara based teachers to Weihai to experience what

it might be like to teach across cultural boundaries. We are now looking for ways of repeating that experience.

Currently, we are making plans for a visit by a delegation of 13, including Weihai's Deputy Mayor, to visit our city in late August. In preparation for that visit, we are in contact with the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce so as to make sure that our delegation meets with their Santa Barbara counterparts.

Much of the year has been allocated to a reorganization of our Sister City Committee, and this process continues into the balance of 2016. A small organizing group, including Anna Kwong, Eliesa Bollinger, Bets Wienecke, and Peter Haslund, will be arranging a planning session in early August. We will be meeting not only to plan for the delegation's visit, but also to set goals for the coming year. Our first priority will be to reconstitute our Board of Directors so that we can plan specific community-wide events that underscore this important relationship with China.

Submitted by Peter Haslund, representative