



Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board



Annual Report 2013-2014

The Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board consists of three members: Takako Wakita (chair), Barbara Ellis (vice-chair) and Marti Correa de Garcia (secretary) appointed by the City Council; and representatives from seven sister cities: Puerto Vallarta, Mexico; Toba, Japan; Weihai, China; Dingle, Ireland; San Juan/Manila, Philippines; Kotor, Montenegro; and Patras, Greece. Each sister city committee operates independently - some are very active and others are rather quiet with few people involved. Below is the annual report of the activities of the committees as well as the Board.

The Board was involved in the following activities:

September 11, 2013

The annual 9-11 concert was held on Wednesday, September 11 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. at the Faulkner Gallery of the Santa Barbara Central Library. The music was performed by the Santa Barbara Pipers, Tangos & More, a Japanese bamboo flutist (shakuhachi) and the Unitarian Society Chancel and Women's Choirs. The concert was a great success and the venue was full. This was one of a series of free musical performances held in cities around the world on the same day commemorating the anniversary of September 11, 2001.

September 13, 2013

The fourth program for City TV-Channel 18 was presented on Kotor, Montenegro. Sister Cities participation on City TV started in February, 2012. The first program featured an overview of the seven Santa Barbara Sister Cities by Takako Wakita, chair of the Board. The second program was on Toba, Japan and the third was on Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

October 24, 2013

The 22nd Annual Sister Cities Celebration in honor of United Nations Day was held at the Cabrillo Arts Pavilion. There were over 120 attendees from all seven sister city committees.

Mayor Helene Schneider was the honored guest.

The entertainment was a Chinese Traditional Dance arranged by the Weihai committee and a Spanish Dance by Junior and Senior Spirits of Fiesta.

October 1-31, 2013

All seven sister cities displayed cultural items representing their committees at the Central Library display case. The exhibit lasted for one month and was good exposure of the sister cities to Santa Barbara.

November, 2013

The Board participated in San Juan committee fundraising for victims of Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines.

January 24, 2014

The second networking get-together for the board members of all sister cities was held at the Greek Orthodox Church. The topics of the discussion were: Budget, Student Exchange, Recruiting/Retention, Outreach, and Advertising. Barbara Ellis was chair of the event and Pat Fallin (Sister Cities State Coordinator), Linda Mathews (president, Toba) and Linda Gunther (City staff representative) were also facilitators.

February 26, 2014

The fifth program for City TV-Channel 18 was presented by Weihai, China.

April 23, 2014

The Board participated in a Young Artists and Authors Showcase reception at the Heritage Oaks Bank. This project has been sponsored by the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee for many years but was opened to all the Sister City Committees this year. The winning art piece was shipped to Sister Cities International in Washington, D.C. to compete with other entries.

Respectfully submitted by,

Takako Wakita, Chair

Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board

COMMITTEE REPORTS**Puerto Vallarta, Mexico Sister City Committee:**

July, 2013 – A barbecue fundraiser was held at the home of members Raul and LaV, and over \$1,000 was raised for organization projects.

Three Sister City Committee members attended the Annual Sister Cities International Conference in San Antonio, Texas, “The Power of Exchange: Creating Sustainable Cities and Sustainable Relationships.”

August 2013 – The Sister City Committee sponsored two food booths at the McKenzie Park’s Old Spanish Days Mercado: Cesar’s Place on Milpas Street and Tacos Don Roge of Carpinteria. A donation of over \$1,400 was earned toward the Puerto Vallarta I. Madonnari Festival project.

Over twenty members participated in a fundraising trip to attend the Guadalajara Mariachi Festival; the group visited several states of Jalisco towns. The City of Santa Barbara's Fire Department donated used fire clothing to one of our sister city member's hometown in Ayotlan, Jalisco. The Sister City Committee also participated in the Annual harvest festival of Ayotlan and toured the meatpacking and agave honey factories.

Some Sister City Committee members attended the Southern California Federation of Jalisco Clubs' annual dinner/dance. Our Sister City Committee is a member of the Federation.

September 2013 – Two Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee board members attended the official ceremony where the Jalisco Federation 3 to 1 fund for Boca de Tomatlan Regional Health Clinic was presented to the municipal Puerto Vallarta government. The funds were made available by the signature approval of the health clinic project of our Sister City Committee.

Some Sister City Committee members participated in the 9-11 Peace Concert at the Faulkner Gallery in the Central Library.

A reception for the "Mariachi Nuevo Tecalitlan" group was held at the Franklin Neighborhood Center. This was in partnership with the City of Santa Barbara Neighborhood and Outreach Services and UCSB Viva el Arte de Santa Barbara.

October 2013 – We participated in the Central Library's display for the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board.

Three Puerto Vallarta police officers come to Santa Barbara to participate in a Law Enforcement Exchange. The Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department held classes and various other law enforcement tactics training. A fundraiser dinner was held at the home of members Barbara and Art Najera in support of the exchange.

November 2013– The annual visitation to Puerto Vallarta was held. Over 40 members participated in a 10-day exchange. Also the "Miracle of Boca" was held, where over \$17,000 was raised in less than 5 minutes toward the 1 part funding in the 3 to 1 Mexico funding program for the Boca de Tomatlan Regional Health Clinic project.

The Sister City Committee supported the Puerto Vallarta I Madonnari Festival, with funding for five Santa Barbara chalk painting artists; the Festival took place during our Annual Visitation.

The Sister City Committee donated \$1,000 for typhoon recovery in San Juan, Philippines.

December 2013 – 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 take place.

A donation was made of \$2,000 to replace flooring in the Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Rehabilitation Clinic. This clinic was a joint project designed and built in the early 1980's.

January 2014 – The Sister City Committee sponsored ceramic tile (12 x 12) with Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City logo in recognition at the Puerto Vallarta Botanical Gardens sister city relationship with the Santa Barbara Botanical Gardens.

The Sister City Committee partnered with the Goleta Rotary, Santa Barbara Rotary North, and Rotary Club Vallarta Sur to assist with the funding of the Boca de Tomatlan Regional Health Clinic.

February 2014 – Sister City Committee member and Board Director, Gil Garcia, was recognized in Puerto Vallarta by Instituto Jalisciense de Asistencia Social for his social work in Puerto Vallarta.

An All Women Mariachi Concert and Gourmet Dinner was held at the Santa Barbara City College Gourmet Dining Room on Valentine's Day.

March 2014 – Two Sister City Committee members attended a Leadership Meeting in Tacoma, Washington, hosted by Sister Cities International.

April, 2014 - Board Member Elections---Two new Board Members were elected and the new Board reaffirmed the elected officers from 2014-2015 for another year of service.

Thirteen Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee members attended the SoCal Sister Cities International Conference "Joining Forces for Success" which was held at the Los Angeles City Hall.

The Sister City Committee participated in the Young Artist Showcase, a program sponsored by Sister Cities International. Thirty entries from Santa Barbara High School's art classes submitted their interpretation of SCI's yearly theme, "Connect Globally, Thrive Locally". A reception at the local Heritage Oaks Bank lobby was held. Three community judges picked three winners, with the 1st place winning entry receiving \$250, and their art piece shipped to Washington, D.C. to participate with other worldwide art entries. The 2nd and 3rd place winners won \$175 and \$150, respectfully.

A seven-day Law Enforcement Exchange took place in Puerto Vallarta. Three Santa Barbara officers from the Santa Barbara County Sheriff's Department participated.

A transfer was made of Hyperbaric Chamber from the Puerto Vallarta municipality to the Mexican Navy, which was donated 20 years ago by the Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee. An official signing of transfer documents took place at the Mexican Navy Base in Puerto Vallarta.

May 2014 – The Santa Barbara Botanical Garden and Puerto Vallarta Botanical Garden signed an official "sister" garden agreement at the Puerto Vallarta Garden.

The 1st place winner of the 2013 8th Annual Puerto Vallarta's I Madonnari Festival participated in the 29th Annual Santa Barbara I Madonnari Italian Street Painting Festival. The artist was in Santa Barbara for five days. His art piece was well received, the Puerto Vallarta Tourism Bureau sponsored the Puerto Vallarta's artist airfare and the Sister City Committee members hosted him in their homes.

The Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee participated in the 29th Annual Santa Barbara I Madonnari Italian Street Painting Festival.

A meeting was held in Oxnard with Mexican business leaders to discuss food basket distribution in various areas of Mexico.

Sister City Committee Member/Director, Bea Molina is honored as Volunteer of the Year by The Dream Foundation.

Sister City Committee member and Immediate Past-President, Blas Garza was elected Board President of the Santa Barbara United Way.

June 2014 – Sister City Committee Members attended the Federacion de Club Jaliscienses del Sur “Presentation of Young Ladies” event at the Downey Civic Theatre.

Other Information:

Our finances are healthy, with a reserve account. We presently have 150 dues paying members on our active roster.

Our charitable contributions include donations to:

- I Madonnari for activities here and in Puerto Vallarta
- Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Department for 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 and the Orphans Home in Puerto Vallarta

Sister City Committee 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 Committee member Gil Garcia was re-elected as President of Southern California Sister Cities (SoCal). Mr. Garcia is also on the Board of Directors of Sister Cities International
- Sister City Committee member Pat Fallin serves as Sister Cities International State Coordinator for Southern California
- Sister City Committee member Blas Garza served as representative to the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board
- Sister City Committee member Roberto Najera replaces Mr. Garza as representative to the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board
- Sister City Committee members Barbara Ellis and Marti Correa de Garcia serve as “at-large-members” on the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board

Submitted by Roberto F. Najera, President

San Juan, Philippine Sister City Committee:

The Sister Cities Committee of the San Juan Chapter joined with the Filipino Association of Santa Barbara for the major celebrations of the Filipino American Friendship Day on June 15, 2013; Thanksgiving Night (November 23, 2013); Christmas Night (December 7, 2013); and Parents Night (May 15, 2014), among others.

July 2013 - A member of the Santa Barbara-San Juan Sister City Committee went to the Philippines and delivered a number of boxes containing medical and surgical supplies to needy areas in the Philippines.

March 25, 2014 - A major fundraising was held that collected a total of \$3,500 from the other Sister Cities Committees and the community at large. This money was donated to the victims of the Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines via Direct Relief International. This is the strongest typhoon ever recorded in history. The San Juan Sister City Committee, together with the Filipino Community Association of Santa Barbara, made this joint effort and raised about \$9,000 for the needy victims in the Philippines.

March 29, 2014 - Members of the San Juan Sister City Committee volunteered to the Direct Relief International to help in the packaging of the relief goods for the Typhoon Haiyan victims.

April 2014 - The Sister City Committee joined the Workshop/Get-Together with the rest of the members of Sister Cities Committees to discuss and exchange ideas for improving finance and memberships.

May 26, 2014 - The Councilor of San Juan, who co-sponsored the Santa Barbara/San Juan Sister Cities Resolution passed by the State of California extends greetings and an invitation from the Mayor of San Juan to the Mayor of Santa Barbara. Although he missed passing through Santa Barbara, he aims to formalize this Resolution at a later time.

Submitted by Jaime Sodusta, Chair Person

Kotor, Montenegro, Sister City Committee

Our primary activities this past year centered around our Culinary Academy, Classical Music and Water Polo Exchanges and, of course, our annual dinners. Highlights of each are as follows.

Culinary Academy: In November 2013 our most promising student from our Culinary Academy, Semsal Music, traveled from Kotor to California to intern at Divino's Restaurant and the Peninsula Hotel in Beverly Hills. During that same period one of our past students, Melinda Silver, was named head Chef at the Sofi Restaurant in Los Angeles. Both Melinda and Semsal were featured in a report on our Culinary Academy that ran on KABC-TV in Los Angeles, CA.

Classical Music: In July/August 2013, Cellist, Isak Haracic, attended the prestigious Fellows Program at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara. Isak auditioned in Kotor and was one of 130 musicians chosen for the program from over 1600 that auditioned.

In February 2014, Tiffany DeVries, Dean of Students at the Music Academy of the West, traveled to Kotor to audition a number of gifted musicians for positions in the Fellows Program for the Summer of 2014. This was the second time Tiffany had ever held auditions outside the U.S. in cooperation with our Sister City program.

Also in February 2014, Ratimir Martinovic traveled from Kotor to Santa Barbara to present a proposal for the creation of a Mediterranean Art Institute in Kotor, Montenegro. Presentations for the project were made to Mayor Helene Schneider, SBCC President, Dr. Laurie Gaskin, and the President of the Music Academy of the West, Scott Reed. The project was initiated by Kotor's Mayor, Marija Maja Catovic.

Water Polo: In March 2014 fifteen players and three coaches from the Santa Barbara Water Polo Aquatics Club visited Kotor to train and compete with some of the finest coaches and young players in all of Europe.

Other: Fundraising dinners were held in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara and were well attended by committee members and "Friends of Kotor." Internships were established for our culinary academy students at the Regent Porta Montenegro and the Peninsula Hotel in Beverly Hills. More than thirty visitors from Santa Barbara visited Kotor during the year and were introduced to Mayor Catovic and received VIP tours of the City.

Submitted by George Lily, president

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.

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. However, we have not had any travel/personal exchange between our Sister Cities this past year.

For the year 2013-2014, our Weihai Sister City Association has been focusing on building our membership, planning a trip to Weihai in the summer of 2015, and establishing more activities related to China as a whole.

A list of activities held for the Weihai Sister City Committee include:

- The United Nations Dinner, held on October 24; eight Sister City Committee members attended and Chinese Dancers participated
- A Chinese New Year Celebration Dinner was held on January 30th—the Public was invited
- The Weihai Sister City Committee's Board Retreat was held on May 10, 2014—A review of past

year activities, membership, nominations of board members, and a discussion of upcoming planned events was held

- A Chinese Dinner gathering was held at the Empress Palace, on April 6th and included a discussion of past trips to Weihai, and planning a trip in the of summer 2015
- Three Movie Nights were held at the Montecito YMCA. On February 20th it was “The Postman in the Mountains”, on April 17th it was “Globe Trekker—The Ultimate China”, and on June 19th it was “King of Masks”—and the public was invited

Submitted by Eliesa Bollinger, President

Patras, Greece Sister City Committee

Our members of the Santa Barbara-Patras Sister City Committee have been very busy throughout the year establishing a well organized chapter and always working towards the growth of our group and future fundraising events.

- We are now in the final status in becoming Non-Profit
- We had a presentation table during the Greek Festival that was held at the end of July, 2013
- Members baked and attended the United Nations dinner that was held October, 2013 and had a great time
- We had a Greek display at the Library during the month of October, 2013
- A very successful fundraising event was held in March of 2014 and other Santa Barbara Sister Cities Committees showed a very strong interest
- A group of our members attended the Networking Workshop that was held January 24th, 2014 at the Saint Barbara Greek Church Community Center
- Georgia Gastouniotis/President has attended most of the Sister Cities Board meetings
- We are in the process of signing a MOU and we are meeting with Dr. Helen Morales, Professor of the Classics departments at UCSB. Our representative in Greece will be contacting the University of Patras and will try to connect the two Universities
- A fundraising event is being planned for October, 2014
- New elections were held.
- Our meetings were held by-monthly

Submitted by Georgia Gastouniotis, President

Toba, Japan, Sister City Committee

This last year was quite positive, and quite busy for us. We linked up with other community organizations to co-sponsor several events, increasing our audience and bringing renewed interest in our programs from the community as a whole.

In July, our group joined together with the Santa Barbara Buddhist temple to celebrate the Obon festival by dancing in their Bon Odori, held again for the first time in 24 years. The crowd was so big they formed four concentric circles of dancers, filling the entire parking area of the temple. Our president encouraged members to participate in the dance practices leading up to the event, making us new friends within the local Japanese-American community.

Our Student Exchange in late July/early August was a great success, with an enthusiastic, energetic group of Toba students as well as our own, great Santa Barbara student ambassadors. The student ambassadors from Santa Barbara were: Regina Santos Moreno, Kardenia Velasquez, Owen Dawson and Stephen Taylor. The chaperone was Lety Pacheco. Highlights of this year's visit were camping at Lake Cachuma, and sitting on the stage as honored guests during the Las Noches de Rondo at Fiesta.

Our Sister City Committee also participated in the Sister Cities' 9-11 Commemorative Concert at the Faulkner Gallery, with our associate, Bob Sedivy, performing uplifting pieces on the Japanese Shakuhachi flute.

In October, we joined the Santa Barbara Historical Society's Presidio Pastimes in celebration of the Asian communities formerly living near the old Presidio. Our associate, Diana Vandervoort, brought out her beautiful Temari ball collection to share with the public, and our President hosted an information table which attracted several youth interested in participating in the next student exchange with Toba.

A large number of our members wore Japanese themed clothing and brought Japanese dishes to the annual United Nations Day potluck, with our Mark Hamilton as Master of Ceremonies.

In cooperation with the Urasenke Tea School members, several of our members supported the Santa Barbara Botanical Gardens Tea House, Shinkanon, by donating money to replace the old tatami mat floors.

Our long-time friend, Japanese classical dancer and documentary filmmaker, Shizumi Manale, returned to Santa Barbara to demonstrate dance in the schools, and to be our featured speaker at a sold-out event cosponsored by the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, A Year Without War, and the Unitarian Society. Shizumi showed her moving documentary film: "Pictures from a Hiroshima Schoolyard", and talked about her emotional journey of discovering the life-affirming stories behind the children--now elderly subjects of the film--who lived through the horror of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, but soon thereafter produced colorful, positive drawings of their hopes and lives to share with a sponsoring church in the U.S.

We participated in a chance event "Master Artists from Japan" sponsored by UCSB and the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, which brought to Santa Barbara a three-man team of Japanese cultural icons, performing Noh dance, speaking about traditional Kyoto cuisine in the wonderful "Machiya" traditional townhomes and showing photos of rebuilding of the Ise Grand Shrine.

Our Shinnenkai in February featured Wade Nomura, long-time local Japanese gardening expert. He showed slides on traditional Japanese garden features, and talked about the challenges of Japanese gardening outside Japan.

Our final event this Spring was a group outing to Los Olivos Museum, where we enjoyed a docent tour by the collector, Mrs. Kathleen Graves, of her wonderful private vintage Kimono collection. Mrs. Graves and her husband made numerous trips to Japan, collecting Japanese art and fabric items for over 40 years, and have recently decided to share the beauty of this varied collection, some as old as 150+ years, with the public. We hope we'll be able to hold a companion visit to the museum for Mrs. Graves' Obi (wide kimono silk-belt) collection sometime later this year.

In June, the USS Ronald Reagan, visited Santa Barbara. This ship will soon be moving to be stationed in Yokosuka, Japan. Gary Maxwell, our President emeritus, represented the Santa Barbara/Toba Sister City Committee at the captain's welcome dinner and ceremony aboard ship.

Submitted by Linda Mathews, president

Dingle, Ireland, Sister City Committee

Two wonderful and successful Dingle/Santa Barbara Sister City Committee events were accomplished this last year.

The first was the well-attended and very festive Irish Christmas Party, held at the La Arcada Bistro Restaurant on December 11. The food and drink was Irish, and the Foggy Dew Band played Irish music; a good time was enjoyed by all. The decorations were Irish, too!!

On St. Patrick's Day, the Santa Barbara/Dingle Sister City Committee participated in The Independent's Annual St. Paddy's Day Parade, and culminated the celebration at the La Arcada Bistro, owned by Trini and Willie Quinn.

There are plans to arrange for a visit from our Dingle sister city members soon.

The Dingle Sister City Committee is hoping to increase their membership and a hard-working core group of Ireland loving people are working on this, so this Committee can be revitalized and can continue into the future as a vital and exciting Santa Barbara Sister City with Dingle, Ireland.

Submitted by Missy Zeitsoff, Acting president
