

# **Annual Report**

## **Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board**

### **July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015**

#### **June 30, 2015**

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. Below are the reports from each Sister City Committee. The Board was involved in the following activities:

#### **July 2, 2014**

Dingle's sister city committee president, Michael Fitzgerald resigned; he also resigned as the representative to the Board.

#### **July 31-August 2, 2014**

Sister Cities International (SCI) held its Annual International Conference in San Jose, California. Attendees from Santa Barbara were: Marti Correa de Garcia, Board member; Gil Garcia and Pat Fallin from the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee. The SCI Annual Award for Best Overall Program (50,000-100,000 population) was awarded to the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee. At the August 12, 2014, City of Santa Barbara Council meeting, a presentation of the award was given.

#### **September 3, 2014**

Scott Spaulding became the new president of the Dingle Sister City Committee and representative to the Board.

#### **September 11, 2014**

The 9<sup>th</sup> annual Santa Barbara 9/11 Peace Concert was held on Thursday, September 11 from 5:30 to 6:30 pm at the Faulkner Gallery of the Central Library. The music was performed by the Santa Barbara Koto Ensemble (Japanese traditional musical instrument), Mariachi Las Olas de Santa Barbara 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 9/11/2001. Mayor Helene Schneider gave greetings and Joe White from the organization, 20-20 A Year Without War, presented its objectives and mission.

#### **October 23, 2014**

The 23<sup>th</sup> Annual Sister Cities Celebration in honor of United Nations Day was held at the Cabrillo Arts Pavilion. There were over 130 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.

The entertainment was a Japanese classical dance. The Japanese folk dance was led by Takako Wakita and a Ball Room dance by Jaime Sodusta and his wife.

**December 9, 2014**

Takako Wakita was re-appointed by the City Council to serve another four year term on the Sister Cities Board.

**March 20, 2015**

The sixth program that City TV-Channel 18 taped for the Sister Cities was completed by Dingle, Ireland. 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, and then individual programs on Toba, Japan; Puerto Vallarta, Mexico; Kotor, Montenegro; and Weihai, China followed.

Respectfully submitted by,

**Takako Wakita, Chair**

Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board

### **Santa Barbara-Dingle Sister City Committee**

In June 2014, Scott Spaulding met with several leaders of the Dingle, Ireland Sister City Committee in Dingle and conveyed a letter and gift to the Committee from Mayor Schneider. The Mayor's letter included an invitation to visit Santa Barbara and acted to renew enthusiasm in Dingle to plan a trip.

- The Dingle Sister City Committee began meeting regularly in the Fall of 2014 in advance of a planned trip by the Dingle Committee in March 2015
- Fourteen members of the Dingle Committee visited Santa Barbara on March 19-24
- Some of the events included:
  - An official welcome by the Mayor at her office
  - A meeting with the Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau
  - A radio interview with the Committee chairman
  - A reception at Maggie and Steve Wardell's home
  - A guided tour of the Mission
  - An official Mayor's dinner at La Arcada Bistro
  - A second radio interview with the leaders of the Dingle group
  - A meeting with the Santa Barbara International Film Festival Director to facilitate communication with Dingle's Film Festival
- Santa Barbara TV Channel 18 did a video on the Dingle visit and the Sister City relationship.

Following the visit from the Dingle Committee, there was an effort underway to organize a trip by Santa Barbara delegates to visit Dingle in 2016

Submitted by Scott Spaulding, president

## **Santa Barbara-Kotor Sister City Committee**

We faced a major change in Kotor with the retirement of Mayor Catovic and the election of the new mayor, Mr. Aleksandar Stjepcevic. Ms. Catovic will be missed, as she was an ardent supporter of our organization but, by all early accounts, it will be a delight to work with Mayor Stjepcevic.

We ran two successful fundraiser dinners this past year one at Divino Restaurant in Brentwood and the other at the Music Academy of the West. We raised enough money to support the following:

One of our Culinary Academy students interned at Divino Restaurant in Brentwood before accepting full time employment at the Porto Montenegro Resort. This makes six of our graduates working at major restaurants in Montenegro. The success of the program is such that we engaged Nikola Mikic, a highly qualified chef from Montenegro, to teach the program this year.

Our attempt to bring a youth water polo team from Kotor to Santa Barbara ran into some financial difficulties, but we are now on track to have sixteen of Montenegro's finest young players visit in Santa Barbara in April 2016.

We had an amazing young violinist, Jovana Bogojevic, from Montenegro audition for the coveted Fellow's Program at the Music Academy of the West. While we were disappointed that she was not chosen, please note that she was one of 1,700 musicians who auditioned for 135 positions.

A number of people have visited Kotor this past year and have received a warm welcome from the Mayor and tours of the city. In addition, we are beginning to see a number of visitors from Kotor. Most notable was Sara Ivanovic from the PortoNovi Resort. Ms. Ivanovic toured the Culinary School at Santa Barbara City College and discussed a working relationship with SBCC Culinary School graduates.

Submitted by George Lily, president

## **Santa Barbara-San Juan (Philippines) Sister City Committee**

July 2014.

Coordinated with the Sister City in the San Juan, Philippines the plan for the San Juan Mayor ship to visit Santa Barbara and make the meeting of the two mayors happen.

October, 2014:

Joined the celebration of the United Nation Day. The San Juan Chapter contributed to the shows of night with their presentation of the dance "Paso Doble by Zorro and Zeta" (Jaime and Anita). Also joined the folk dance choreographed by Takako: "Japanese Farm Worker dance." Many members brought traditional Filipino foods for everyone.

December 2015:

The membership of the Santa Barbara/San Juan and the FilCom Association attended the traditional Midnight Mass celebrated by Father Lawrence Santos who is now the Pastor of Lompoc Church. This was followed by pot luck dinner in the St. Raphael Church Hall.

April 2015

The Santa Barbara -San Juan Sister City Committee has reorganized its leadership into a United Nations style Secretariat leadership composed of 6 people among which the Chairmanship rotates every two months. The Chair and/or its Assistant (Alternate) will attend the Board Meeting. Currently the Chair is Albe Dumlao and the Alternate is Jaime Sodusta.

May 25, 2015:

The Mayor of San Juan and its delegation came over to visit Santa Barbara. The two lady Mayors Helene Schneider of Santa Barbara and Guia Gomez of San Juan had a formal meeting at the Santa Barbara City Hall. There was a reception and a mutual exchange of gifts between them. Mayor Schneider showed Mayor Gomez the gift of her predecessor Mayor Estrada (of San Juan Circa 1980) to the City of Santa Barbara.

The Santa Barbara/San Juan Sister City Committee gave lunch to the San Juan Mayor's delegation and toured then around, to Solvang, the Mission and the wharf. The Mayor liked the dolphin's fountain so much that she said she would like to have one like that as fountain in front of the City Hall building.

June 20, 2015:

Filipino-American Friendship day Celebration was celebrated by the joint membership of Santa Barbara/San Juan Sister City Committee and the Filipino Community Association of Santa Barbara ((FCASB). There were presentation of Folk dances Tinikling bamboo and Binasuan Candle Dance, Salsa and ballroom dancing. Santa Barbara County Supervisor Salud Carbajal was the guest speaker

Submitted by Albemar Dumlao, Chair

## **Santa Barbara-Toba Sister City Committee**

Our year opened as usual with our wonderful exchange students. Our Santa Barbara students this year were very musical, and also enjoyed hosting a Fiesta parade viewing party. This year's group were very tech savvy, and posted photos of many of their activities online for us all to enjoy. The Toba Sister City Committee hosted a welcome Pool Party for the Toba guests, Santa Barbara host families and the members on July 27.

In July, several of our members participated in the Obon festival's Bon Odori folk dance at the Buddhist Temple in downtown Santa Barbara. Several of our Santa Barbara student ambassadors also participated, using this opportunity to learn and practice the Obon dances they would encounter once in Toba in August.

In early Fall we took a small group to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art to see a wonderful exhibit of vintage kimonos and related hand-drawn obi/kimono pattern books, which used to be destroyed after the final run of the weaving, so that they couldn't be stolen and reproduced. Such early pattern books are now very rare, so it was a treat to be able to enjoy them.

This year's 9/11 concert was a great success, and we enjoyed some Japanese flavor with a performance of Koto (Japanese traditional musical instrument) by Santa Barbara Koto Ensemble.

At the United Nations Day Dinner in October, we once again took a main role with the appearance of the Japanese dance troupe we invited from Oxnard. We rehearsed our members who wanted to participate with them, and dressed everyone in Japanese style for the evening, so we were a colorful sight on the floor that night! We managed to get most all the audience up to dance with us for the final number.

Our Shinnenkai on February 8 showcased the local Bonsai Club, with a talk and demonstration of the various types of bonsai, and the pots in which to grow them. A local potter friend also displayed his hand-made pots, and talked about how he chooses the "right" pot for a new or re-potted plant. It was a very educational evening, and drew an audience beyond our usual friends.

In April we had a small but enthusiastic group take a docent tour of the early-20<sup>th</sup> century "Shinhang" Japanese print exhibit at the S.B. Museum of Art, learning about how the modern world, and art from the west, especially the French, influenced Japanese printmakers of the period.

Japanese Way of Tea events in the L.A. area were an addition for our members again this Spring, as several of us Tea practitioners performed Tea demonstrations in support of the Raku lineage, 500-year pottery exhibit at the LACMA. Our Board members who are interested in the Way of Tea also attended a lecture there by the former Grand Master of the Urasenke Way of Tea, discussing Peacefulness through a bowl of Tea.

We have begun planning for our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Sisterhood with Toba. The first stage will be our 20-man delegation visit to Toba this November, and then the return visit in 2016 of the delegation from Toba.

Submitted by Linda Mathews, president

### **Santa Barbara- Patras Sister Cities Committee**

Our members of 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 committee and future fundraising events.

- We established our Non-Profit status.

- We had a presentation table during the Greek Festival that was held at the end of July, 2014.
- Members baked and attended the United Nations dinner that was held October 23rd, 2014 and had a great time.
- A successful fundraising event was held March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2015.
- Georgia Gastouniotis/President and Bessie Condos/Vice President and alternate have attended all the Sister Cities Board meetings.
- A committee has been formed communicating with:
  - a. President of UCSB Classics department discussing the possibilities in the exchange of students and Professors from Patras University and UCSB.
  - b. Exchange ideas among the two Universities including the Engineering and Science Department. A meeting was held at UCSB and in Greece.
  - c. A meeting was held with the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce discussing the possibilities of Tourism into Patras and Santa Barbara.
- After continuous communications with our Representative in Patras, we now have established a Sister City group including past Council members of Patras, Professors of the University of Patras, President of the Chamber of Commerce and other people that have shown interest and enthusiasm.
- New elections were held in 2015 and our new officers are:  
Georgia Gastouniotis/President, Bessie Condos/Vice President, George Papazacharioudakis/Secretary, Debbie Merlo Ruccione/Treasurer.
- According to our By-Laws the next elections will be held December 2017.
- Our meetings held by-monthly.

Submitted by Georgia Gastouniotis, President

## **Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee**

**July 2014** – July 5 – A BBQ fundraiser at home of member's Raul & LaV, raised over \$1,500 for Puerto Vallarta Rehabilitation Clinic.

We welcomed our friends from Puerto Vallarta during their annual visitation to Santa Barbara. Various activities were planned along with a visit to City Hall and a presentation to Mayor Helene Schneider. Santa Barbara members hosted in their homes over 15 Puerto Vallarta visitors.

Sister Cities International Conference (SCI) in San Jose, CA. Six members participated in the annual SCI conference. Our club was honored with the Best Overall Program for population between 50,001-100,000. The award was based on our goals for the Board set for 2013, highlighting the achievement made during the year.

**August 2014** – Sponsored three food booths at McKenzie Park Old Spanish Days Mercado, Cesar’s Place on Milpas Street, Club Santa Rita and Tacos Don Roge of Carpinteria. A donation of over \$1,400 was earned toward the Puerto Vallarta I. Madonnari Festival project.

August 10, 2014 – board retreat, where we set our plans for the next 12 months.

Santa Barbara Rotary Club North and Goleta Rotary Club Evening joined forces with Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee on a more than \$6,000.00 Rotary Dedicated District Funds matching grant for the purchase of first response medical equipment. The equipment was destined for three remote communities located in the municipality of Cabos Corrientes, the next municipal government south of Puerto Vallarta.

**September 2014** – Participated in the Santa Barbara City Council meeting of September 9, 2014, talked briefly about the activities of our group and the SCI Best Overall Program award. Members participated in September 11<sup>th</sup> Peace Concert at Faulkner Gallery in main library. Fundraiser to Copper Canyon, 31 members participated in this spectacular tour by train in several Mexican states. We raised over \$4,000 for the Boca de Tomatlan Clinic in Puerto Vallarta.

Five Rotary Club Puerto Vallarta Sur couples visited Santa Barbara. One of the requirements for our sister city’s participation in the 3 for 1 Jaliciencia Project is that we have a “mirror club” from Puerto Vallarta. Local Rotarians and Sister City Committee members home-hosted the group. The group was treated to tours of our fair city as well as a tour of Solvang and the Santa Inez Valley.

**October 2014** – Over twenty members participated in a San Ynez Valley wine tasting and BBQ luncheon. The tour actually served two-purposes, La Cumbre Junior High projects and raised \$580.00 funds for the Boca de Tomatlan clinic in Puerto Vallarta.

On October 19<sup>th</sup> at the home of Raul & LaV a wine tasting and snacks were served to an appreciative group of approximately 35 guests dedicated to the purpose of raising funds for the Olive Ridley Sea Turtle project headed by retired UCSB professor, Dr. Manuel Carlos and his wife Ann Carlos. This successful event raised \$750.00 for “Save the Turtle” project in Puerto Vallarta.

Three Puerto Vallarta police officers came to Santa Barbara to participate in annual Law Enforcement Exchange. The Santa Barbara Sheriff’s Department held classes and various other law enforcement tactics training. Altogether, the officers participated in 40 hours of training, and each was awarded a diploma honoring the successful completion of their training. This program is in its 11<sup>th</sup> year, 31 officers from Puerto Vallarta have come to receive training and 28 sheriff’s officers have gone to Puerto Vallarta to provide training to Puerto Vallarta officers at its training academy.

Sister Cities United Nations Day - Members of our organization assisted in the Annual United Nation Day dinner. Members helped decorate the tables and set-up the beverage station and sold tickets for the drinks.

**November 2014** – Annual visitation to Puerto Vallarta, over 40 members participated in a fun-filled 10-day event. We were able to visit the projects our club has been funding and to visit with our many friends in Puerto Vallarta. This is a fundraising trip where we raised over \$5,000. We are supporting a sewing school & 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 wheel chair was generously taken on the plane by Sister City 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 artist. Festival took place during our Annual Visitation.

**December 2014** - Annual “Las Posadas” party in home of Gil & Marti Garcia. Las Posadas is a traditional Mexican Christmas event where singing, eating of traditional tamales and a reenactment of a Bethlehem scene. Takako Wakita led the Carole singing.

**January 2015** -

**February 2015** – A Valentine Dinner/Dance took place at Museum of Natural History, Fleishmann Hall on February 14<sup>th</sup>. We were entertained by Mariachi los Toreros, fed by Mayo’s and Cesar’s Place Restaurants and danced to the music of “Family Sound”.

**March 2015** – Fundraising BBQ to support our annual Puerto Vallarta Police Training Project. Sheriff Brown stopped by to tell us how proud he is to support this project.

**April 2015** - Board Member Elections. New President is Raul Navarro, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President Jacqueline Duran, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President Carlos Velasco, Recording Secretary Gil Garcia, Corresponding Secretary Jim Brock and Treasurer Marti Correa de Garcia. We are supporting the Santa Barbara School of Squash and hopefully will do an exchange with a squash team in Puerto Vallarta. Board Member Jacqueline Duran is organizing a VIP Mariachi raffle fundraiser. A \$500.00 donation has been given to this organization to foster their youth program.

Participated in Young Artist Showcase, a program sponsored of Sister Cities International. Thirty entries from Santa Barbara High School art classes submitted their interpretation of SCI’s yearly theme, “Connecting Communities for Peace and Prosperity”. Three community judges picked three winners, with the 1<sup>st</sup> place winning entry receiving \$250, and their art piece shipped to Washington DC to participate with other worldwide art entries. The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place winners won \$175 and \$150, respectfully.

**May 2015** – The 1<sup>st</sup> place winner of the 2014 - 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Puerto Vallarta I Madonnari Festival participated in the 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Santa Barbara I Madonnari Italian Street Painting Festival. The artist was in Santa Barbara for 5 days. His art piece was well received; the Puerto Vallarta Tourism Bureau sponsored airfare for the PV artist and Sister City members home hosted him.



His square was sponsored by Sister City members Ruben & Sandra Islas; and the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Sister Cities Association of the Americas International conference was held in Puerto Vallarta – May 22 – 24, 2015.

**June 2015** – Twenty members enjoyed 14 days on a land tour of Alaska and cruised the Sawyer Glacier. Great trip, wonderful company and we made a little bit of money for our projects.

**Other Information:**

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

Our charitable contributions include donations to:

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

Sister City members are informed by:

- Monthly General Membership Dinner Meetings
- Monthly Newsletter
- Active participation of membership in the face book page
- Web-page (sbpvsistercity.org)

Active Sister City Committee members supporting sister city programs:

- Sister City member Gil Garcia is re-elected as president of Southern California Sister Cities (SoCal). Mr. Garcia is also on the Board of Directors of Sister Cities International, ending his 3-year term in July 2015.
- Sister City member Pat Fallin serves as Sister Cities International State Coordinator for Southern California.
- Sister City member Roberto Najera served as representative to the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board, to be replaced by newly elected President Raul Navarro.
- Sister City members Barbara Ellis & Marti Correa de Garcia serve as “at-large-members” on the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board.

Submitted by Raul Navarro, President

## **Santa Barbara-Weihai 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 2014-2015, our Weihai Sister City Association has been focusing on building our membership, planning a trip to Weihai summer of 2016, and establishing more activities related to China as a whole.

A list of activities for Weihai Sister City include:

**UN Dinner, October 24**—8 members attended

**Chinese New Year Celebration Dinner, January 30<sup>th</sup>**—Public invited. Chinese Council from Los Angeles sent 3 members, Mayor Helen Schneider spoke on importance of our Sister Cities alliances, Anna Kong spoke and showed a photo journal of student trip to Hong Kong with her SBCC economic students

**Chinese Dinner gathering, Empress Palace, March 10<sup>th</sup>**—discussion of past trips to Weihai, and planning for trip summer 2016

**Free Chinese Movie Nights, every other month at Montecito YMCA—Public invited.**

Submitted by Eliesa Bollinger, President