

# **Annual Report**

## **Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board**

**July 1, 2016 -- June 30, 2017**

Santa Barbara has seven sister cities (listed with the year the relationship was established): 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). The Sister Cities Board consist of ten members, three appointed by the City Council plus one representative from each sister city committee. Attached are the reports of activities from each sister city committee. The Board was involved in the activities listed below.

### **July 12, 2016**

The Sister Cities Day Proclamation was given by Mayor Helene Schneider at the City Council meeting. July 15 was declared as “Sister City Day” by Sister Cities International (SCI) commemorating its 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Pat Fallin, regional representative of SCI, received the proclamation.

### **July 22, 2016**

The Annual Report for July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 was submitted to the Mayor and Council.

### **July 13-16, 2016**

Commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of SCI, the Annual International Conference was held in Washington D.C. and about 600 delegates attending the celebration from all over the world. At the conference, the Puerto Vallarta Committee received the Best Overall Program Award for cities with a population of 50,000-100,000; Margaret Saavedra, president of the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee, gave an acceptance speech. Distinguished Volunteer award certificates were given to Takako Wakita, chair of the board and to five members of the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee at the conference. Attendees included: Takako Wakita, and Margaret Saavedra, Gil and Marti Garcia from the Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee.

### **August 22, 2016**

The Weihai Sister City delegation visited City Hall and met Mayor Helene Schneider Peter Haslund. Other attendees were Peter Haslund, president of the Santa Barbara/Weihai Sister City Committee, Takako Wakita, Chair of the Santa Barbara Sister City Board, and Linda Gunther, City Staff Representative.

### **August 27, 2016**

SCI's Southern California (SoCal) Regional meeting was held in Ventura. Takako Wakita, gave a presentation on the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board's program and Margaret Saavedra talked about the Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister Cities program; Linda Gunther and some Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee members also attended.

### **September 1 -30, 2016 Library Display**

The Santa Barbara's Central Library display case was decorated with items from our sister cities; four sister city committees participated, Puerto Vallarta, Toba, Kotor and Patras.

### **September 11, 2016**

The 11<sup>th</sup> annual Santa Barbara 9-11 Peace Concert was held on Sunday, September 11 at 3:00 pm at the Faulkner Gallery. Performers included a traditional fiddle and Irish Dance group, a Native American flute player, the winner of the Teen Star, 2016 competition, and the Unitarian Society Chancel and Women's Choirs. The concert was a great success. 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. Barbara Gaughen-Muller, local United Nations Association president and Cathy Murillo, City Council member, welcomed the attendees.

### **October 19-20, 2016**

The Santa Barbara/Toba Sister Cities Committee celebrated the 50th anniversary of their sister city relationship with Toba, Japan. Mayor Helene Schneider, Council Members, Sister Cities Board members and Linda Gunther attended the two-day celebration including a ceremony at the Mural Room in the Court House, Cherry Blossom tree planting at the Alice Keck Park Memorial Garden, dinner at the University Club and lunch at the Breakwater.

### **October 20, 2016**

The 25th Annual Sister Cities Celebration in honor of United Nations Day was held at the Cabrillo Arts Pavilion. It focused on Toba which was celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary sister city relationship with Santa Barbara. There were over 165 attendees from all seven sister city committees and a Toba delegation with 24 members including the mayor of Toba. Mayor Helene Schneider and Barbara Gaughen-Muller, Santa Barbara Chapter President, United Nations Association, and Mr. Kida, mayor of Toba were the honored guests and offered greetings. The entertainment was a Japanese traditional dance by a Toba guest and a performance by the Junior and Senior Spirit of Fiesta.

**December 31, 2016**

The Board member terms of Mari Correa Garcia and Bea Molina expired.

**January 4, 2017**

The Board agreed to move the Sister Cities Map at the Santa Barbara Airport from its current location to the side wall of the hallway. New Board members were appointed by the City Council: Margaret Saavedra and Raphael Vazquez.

**January 31, 2017**

A delegation from Dujiangyan City in China visited City Hall and met with City Council member Jason Dominguez, Linda Gunther and Takako Wakita.

**March 1, 2017**

Gil Garcia became the representative to the board for Puerto Vallarta and Jacqueline Duran the alienate.

**April 19, 2017**

A Young Artists and Authors Showcase judging reception was held at Rusty's Pizza Parlor. Mayor Helene Schneider announced the winners. The first prize winner's art work was sent to SCI in Washington D. C. to be entered in the national competition in July. There was an international entry from Toba, Japan which was also sent to SCI.

**April 28 – May 6, 2017**

The Sister Cities Board, with the Rotary Club Santa Barbara North hosted the Open World Program and invited six young professionals from the Ukraine. Gil Garcia was the local coordinator. On April 30, the Sister Cities Board held a lunch meeting for the guests and the representatives from each committee who made a presentation of their sister city programs.

**May 3, 2017**

Pat Fallin became the new Dingle, Ireland representative to the Board and Brian Slattery is the new alternate.

**Respectfully submitted by,**

**Takako Wakita, Chair  
Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board**

## **Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta, Mexico**

Fundraising held during the year:

- BBQ Fundraiser for Law Enforcement Exchange was a concert fundraiser at the Chumash Casino.

Participation in different activities:

- Mexico/USA Conference in Rosarito Beach, October 2016
- SoCal meetings in San Buena Ventura, Santa Clarita, and Pico Rivera
- A ten week MICOPS course at the Mexican Consulate in support of the Ventura/Loreto Sister City (program to provide training on how to organize a club to migrant groups hoping to improve conditions in their hometowns)
- Member leadership organized Open World Visit for guests from the Ukraine in April of 2017. The Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee hosted a Sunday dinner buffet and members from several Santa Barbara sister city Committees attended and brought dishes from their partner countries: Ireland, Japan, Greece and Mexico.

Membership activities:

- Monthly dinners with various local guest speakers, primarily at Rose Café; and special celebrations at Christmas and Cinco de mayo, all well attended by approximately 40 – 60 guests
- About 30 members participated in a Puerto Vallarta trip last November/December of 2016
- Puerto Vallarta visited last July and this year is returning in June of 2017; and we are currently planning four days of activities for our guests.

General:

- Attended 2016 Sister City International Conference and received an award for best program for a City with 50,000 to 100,000 population
- Changed our by-laws so that elected board takes office on January 1; in keeping with our fiscal year
- Coordinated SCI Art Show at Rusty's Pizza Parlor, on April 19, 2017 and followed through with a presentation of checks to winners
- Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee have scheduled visits to Santa Barbara on June 14-21
- Continued support to Santa Barbara Rehabilitation Clinic in Puerto Vallarta

- Continued monetary support to Boca de Tomatlan Clinic outside of Puerto Vallarta
- Continued monetary support of Los Volcanes Sewing School in Puerto Vallarta.

Submitted by Margaret Saavedra, President

### **Santa Barbara/Toba, Japan**

This was a special year for our Sister City Committee, as we celebrated our 50th anniversary of Sisterhood with Toba, Japan. Our main event of the anniversary was the three-day visit last October of a 22-person delegation from Toba. The Mayor, Ken Kida and his wife led the group, which also included Ms. Nakamura, a classical Japanese dancer who had performed for us once before as we visited Toba in 2015. She gave a wonderful, well-received classical and modern performance at the United Nations Day dinner in honor of our anniversary.

The Toba side also gifted our city with three Japanese cherry trees, which we had planted in Alice Keck Park Memorial Gardens. Our Mayor, the Toba delegation and many friends of Toba participated in a tree-planting ceremony to officially receive the trees, accompanied by Bob Sedivy playing a Japanese wooden flute. Later in the Mural Room of our Santa Barbara Courthouse we held official exchanges of proclamations, greeting of VIPs and all previous Presidents of the Santa Barbara/Toba Sister City Committee.

We returned Toba's favor by presenting Mayor Kida with the 50th anniversary gift to Toba, a hand-blown and wood-mounted work of art glass by our local artisan, Saul Alcaraz. The day of celebrations was capped off with a dinner at the University Club, where we presented all our visitors with gifts of locally hand-decorated glassware.

Earlier in 2016 some of our members and former exchange students participated in the local Buddhist Church Obon Festival, wearing cotton Yukata kimonos and dancing the ancient folk dances to the sound of the Taiko drum.

In the summer we held our usual student exchange, and the students reported they were treated especially well in this 50th anniversary year. Favorite activities included eating new foods, baking Japanese traditional sweets at a commercial bakery, and learning to write Japanese calligraphy.

This October, long-time member Marilyn Hochhauser opened an exhibition of her hand-made Japanese paper art to our group, and also donated one of her pieces as an anniversary gift to Toba during the delegation visit.

Our 2017 Shinnenkai opening included a lovely performance of Japanese Koto by the ensemble of Chikako Shinagawa, Yahiyo Roberts and Hiroko Tanimoto, with our own Takako Wakita providing the songs. We enjoyed great on-site catered sushi by Arief, who is becoming a favorite of our group!

Spring activities were several, one taking advantage of a lovely Japanese cut paper stencil exhibit at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, made more special by a docent talk and power point showing the history and use in the printing and decoration of cloth for kimonos and obis. These rare and ever-more uncommon artworks are nowadays made only in a handful of places, notably in Ise near Toba.

Another Santa Barbara Museum of Art docent talk focused on the influence of late 19th C. Japanese woodblock print artists on the great masters of European Impressionism.

In May, we also took advantage of a special exhibition in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo of "Shodo, Chado and Kado", or Calligraphy, Tea ceremony and Flower arrangement, modern works of which were displayed together in a very contemporary atmosphere, with seated tea demonstration provided by the Edosenke school of the traditional Way of Tea.

Submitted by Linda Mathews, President

### **Santa Barbara/Kotor, Montenegro**

A Youth Water Polo Team from Kotor, Montenegro visited Santa Barbara to train and compete with local club teams. 5/20/16-5/27/16.

A Santa Barbara delegation visited Kotor, Montenegro for a Fund Raising Event sponsored by the Prime Minister of Montenegro. The event raised \$15,000 for future exchange programs. 7/14/16-7/19/16.

Auditions for the Music Academy of the West's prestigious Fellows Program were held in Kotor, Montenegro. 12/5/16-12/16/16.

Two students from our Goran Milik Culinary Academy held at the Institute for Children with Disabilities in Kotor, Montenegro interned at the Divino Restaurante in Los Angeles and visited the Culinary School at Santa Barbara City College. 1/28/17-2/18/17.

Ivan Marinovic, producer and director of the movie The Black Pin, was invited to Santa Barbara to screen his film at our International Film Festival. 2/11/17-2/13/17.

Four young musicians submitted their audition videos to the Music Academy of the West for the 2017 Fellows Program. While none were selected (2,000 auditioned for 135 positions) three were acknowledged for their talent and invited to audition again in 2018. 2/17/17.

Auditions were held in Santa Barbara for musicians interested in performing at the Kotor Arts Festival in the summer of 2017. While none were selected this has opened the door for 2018. 3/1/17.

Other events included: an introduction to Vladimir Jovic the new Mayor of Kotor, an invitation from Kotor for a Youth Water Polo Team from Santa Barbara to visit Kotor in 2018, and an invitation for the Director of KotorArts to visit Santa Barbara in 2017.

Submitted by George Lilly, President

### **Santa Barbara/Patras, Greece**

Our members of the Santa Barbara/Patras Sister City Committee have been busy throughout the year planning for new fundraising events and especially our visitation to Greece.

- We hold executive board meetings three times a year.
- Our General meetings are held bi-monthly at one of our member's residence.
- We advertise our Sister Cities via the Greek Festival in July/August.
- An update report goes into the Greek Orthodox Bulletin six times per year.
- Georgia Gastouniotis, President and Representative to the Sister Cities Board, and Bessie Condos, alternate attended the Sister Cities Board meetings.
- A Visitation was arranged in September of 2016 to Patras, Greece with Gill and Marti Garcia. They met with our representatives in Patras, the Chamber of Commerce and the Mayor.

- We are continuing our communications with the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber of Commerce in Patras.
- The SKYPE program with Dos Pueblos High School in Santa Barbara and the Experimental High School in Patras is still in progress but will have to continue further communications in September of 2017.
- On September 11<sup>th</sup>: We attended the 9-11 concert.
- On October 20<sup>th</sup>: Members attended and baked for the United Nations Dinner and participated in the set-up.
- A donation was given for the SCI'S 2017 Young Artist and Authors Showcase.
- A visitation to Patras, Greece is scheduled from September 20<sup>th</sup> to September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017 and the itinerary is complete with flights, hotels, transportation, daily activities, historical places, museums and meetings. For information about the trip, contact Georgia Gastouniotis/President Santa Barbara/Patras Sister City Committee via email [ginagaston1@gmail.com](mailto:ginagaston1@gmail.com)
- Fundraising events are being planned for the following year.

Submitted by Georgia Gastouniotis, President

### **Santa Barbara/Dingle, Ireland**

After several years of little or no activity, the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board asked that the Dingle Sister City Committee either reorganize or a recommendation would be made to the Santa Barbara City Council to dissolve the Dingle Sister City. Mayor Helene Schneider encouraged a group to begin the reorganization process in advance of a small delegation going to Dingle in April, 2017 and the reorganization process was begun.

On March 7, 2017 an organizational meeting was held at LaArcada Bistro. In attendance were: Willie Quinn, Tom McCool, Pat Fallin, Brian Slattery, Maureen McFadden, Linda Mathews, Gil Garcia, Linda Gunther, Takako Washita, Joe King, and Trini Quinn. A Board of Directors and Officers were elected: Willie Quinn, President, Linda Mathews, Vice-President, Pat Fallin, Secretary, Tom McCool, Treasurer, and Board Members Maureen McFadden, Joe King and Gil Garcia. Pat Fallin will serve as the Dingle Representative to the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Committee and Brian Slattery will be the Alternate. Plans were made for a general membership meeting to be held on April 11 at LaArcada Bistro to announce the



reorganization of the Dingle Sister City committee and the trip to Dingle in late April.

The April 11 meeting was a merger of the Irish Business and Cultural Network and former Dingle Sister City members. It was well attended and everyone enjoyed the program of Irish stories by Willie Quinn and Joe King. Mayor Helen Schneider spoke about the upcoming trip to Dingle, April 26 – April 30.

St. Patrick's Day was celebrated by several members of the Dingle Sister City committee as they participated in the St. Patrick's Day stroll down State Street hosted by the Santa Barbara Independent. The stroll down State Street was led by Tom Strelch's bagpipe and drum group with stops for a pint in a couple of beer establishments along the way. It is good to once again have Dingle represented in Santa Barbara in true Irish fashion on St. Patrick's Day.

The Board of Directors continues to hold monthly meetings for planning and business. Tom McCool, Treasurer, is working to reestablish our status with the State of California and update the checking account. Plans are being discussed for the upcoming year.

Submitted by Pat Fallin, Representative to the board

### **Santa Barbara/Weihai, China**

The Weihai Sister City Committee has spent much of the year getting reorganized. We have maintained contact with our counterparts in China, and we are in hopes that they will want to become more engaged next year. We continue to support our core mission with a focus on educational, cultural and economic exchanges, and we have begun planning for a student exchange, hopefully for next summer.

We had an organizational meeting on April 8th, 2017 during which the following members were appointed as Officers and Directors:

- Anna Kwong - Board President
- Jill Stassinis - Vice-President
- Richard Gomez - Secretary
- Bets Wienecke - Treasurer.
- Peter Haslund – Representative to the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board
- Eliesa Bollinger – Alternate to the Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board

- Alex Sheldon - Webmaster

The participating group voted to select the following as the key activities for the Weihai Sister City Association in the year of 2017-2018:

1. We will continue our Annual Chinese New Year Dinner Celebration
2. We plan on participating in the annual United Nations Santa Barbara Sister Cities Board's Dinner
3. We intend to develop a plan for bringing Santa Barbara residents to China, including a stopover in our Sister City. We hope to coordinate this trip with the Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce
4. We will develop a quarterly Chinese dinner gathering for our members.
5. We hope to create a Chinese conversation process or "Chat in Chinese" (the practice of Pu-tong Hua), hopefully co-sponsored by Santa Barbara City College's School of Extended Learning
6. We will be exploring the development of some form of Student Exchange, possibly starting next summer.

We have not been a member-based organization for a number of years, so one of our goals for the coming year is to reestablish our membership.

Our Board of Directors will convene on a regular basis to plan and pursue the activities mentioned above.

Submitted by Anna Kwong, President

### **Santa Barbara/ San Juan, Philippines**

After a few difficult years for the San Juan Sister City Committee, the Sister City Committee has reorganized. Albe Dumlao, Representative, has met with the Mayor of San Juan and was encouraged that the Mayor is planning a trip to Santa Barbara in the new year. Mayor Helene Schneider also met with Albe and has offered to meet with the San Juan Sister City Committee whenever it is convenient for them. We are all excited that this Sister City Committee is meeting regularly again.

Submitted by Albe Dumlao, Representative