

September-October 2011

Volume 114



Membership Meeting

Tuesday, September 13, 2011

Bellevue City Hall 7:30 p.m.

Welcome Back Our Returning Exchange Students

It is that time again—fall is in the air and our exchange students are back from their adventures in international living... As is our tradition, at this fall meeting, we welcome them back and look forward to hearing from them the highlights of their summer. And we also want to say a huge "THANK YOU" to the host families who make this exchange program possible. We might provide the opportunity through our Sister City organizations, and we are there to help as needed, but without the enthusiasm and willingness of the families this exchange program would not happen.

So—a HUGE thank you to Karen Corbitt, Tony and Kris Blanch, David and Meredith Roberts and Claire Petersky and David Levine—we appreciate all of you!

Washington State Sister Cities Conference 2011

Hosted by Bellevue Sister Cities Association and City of Bellevue

Dinner Reception—Friday, October 21, 2011

Bellevue City Hall Concourse 6:00-9:00pm

Conference—Saturday, October 22nd

Crossroads Community Center 8:30am-3:30pm

Bud Bard, the present WA State Coordinator for Sister Cities International has identified 51 WA cities that have affiliations with 110 overseas cities—21 of these are also members of SCI. This annual conference Sister City members an opportunity to share information and discuss items that concern all. This year in addition to the one day conference, we will be hosting a dinner reception on Friday evening to celebrate Sister Cities and especially the affiliations with Japan.

Please put these dates on your calendar!

BSCA MISSION STATEMENT

The Bellevue Sister Cities Association (BSCA) is a non-profit organization of citizen diplomats dedicated to fostering understanding, appreciation, and peaceful coexistence among the peoples of our world. BSCA works toward this aim by creating and maintaining people-to-people relationships in an effort to promote cooperation, cultural understanding, humanitarian aid, and economic development at the local level.

President—Hugh Burleson Secretary—Gary Winchester Newsletter Editor—Inta Gotelli

President's Message—Make yours a Participatory Membership!

Classically, we think of spring as the season of new beginnings; and yet with the summer student exchange as a major BSCA activity, our annual calendar is geared more to an academic year that springs to new life in the early fall. Your board is offering a busy fall lineup of activity for you to engage in.

For starters, Yao committee activists will be manning a booth at the 14th annual Aki Matsuri—Japanese fall festival—September 10th and 11th. Those of you who have visited past festivals know these lively and colorful events are fun and informative for the entire family. This year's Matsuri again will be bigger than last year's. Highlights include a kimono fashion show, puppet theater, lots of exhibitors and many other attractions.

A few days later, on September 13th, will be our general membership meeting. We will again "debrief" this year's exchange students on the most memorable aspects of their exchange experiences.

Then skip forward to late October: a gala reception at City Hall October 21st for our members and guests followed by the annual statewide sister-city conference the next

And at our November general meeting (11/8) we will hear from Inta Gotelli about her visit to Liepaja and its special school, and from Heidi Ressler about her visit to Kladno—and start planning for our much postponed delegation visit to both these cities.

Put these events on your calendar. Volunteer to help. Relish the joys of participatory membership.

Japanese Fall Festival 2011 Aki Matsuri

***Saturday, September 11 (10 a.m. - 6 p.m.)
Sunday, September 12 (10 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)
Bellevue College Campus, Bellevue***

The matsuri is an excellent opportunity to experience the rich culture of Japan as the Eastside Nihon Matsuri Association again brings "Japan to the Bellevue College for a weekend!"

The Aki Matsuri is a celebration of Japan's rich cultural heritage. A large number of local artists and craft persons practicing Japanese-style arts and crafts, performing arts, martial arts, and Japan related businesses & organizations will be participating during the entire two day event. There really is something for everyone!

Don't miss the BSCA-Yao committee's booth!

BSCA to Host Washington Sister Cities Annual Conference.

The annual Washington Sister Cities Conference is a time for all WA Sister Cities to network, to share experiences, to learn of projects and programs – and this year it will be held in Bellevue, at the Crossroads Community Center close by the Crossroads International Park – one of the few places in Bellevue where we find mention of our Sister Cities.

Bud Bard, Coordinator for WA Sister Cities and Barbara Sanchez from Bellingham SCA (another BSCA) are working on a program of current interests to all. Among the speakers will be Nancy Bacon of Bacon International addressing the impact of small internationally focused non-profits, and Melodie Hight A.U. from Hefferman Insurance Brokers in Portland will address our perennial problem – non-profit insurance issues. The afternoon session will give all an opportunity to participate in sharing, discussion and planning for future events.

SAVE THE DATE!!! – Dinner Reception, Friday, October 21, 2011

Along with hosting the Saturday WA State Sister Cities Conference, BSCA along with the City of Bellevue will be hosting a dinner reception on Friday, October 21st. In this year when our attention has been focused on Japan as so many of our Sister Cities reached out in countless ways to help in the aftermath of the earthquake, it is only right to somehow recognize them. Of the 51 Washington cities with overseas sister cities – 36 of these have a sister city in Japan – Seattle –Kobe dating back to 1959 – our own affiliation with Yao back to 1969. A dinner reception will be held at Bellevue City Hall – featuring, among others Consul General of Japan in Seattle, Mr. Kiyokazu Ota and Lori Matsukawa, co-anchor for KING 5 news. We are pleased to have as co-sponsors the Japan-America Society of Seattle. We are grateful for the sponsorships from several businesses among them Uwajimaya, Encore Global, Nichimo International, Net Systems and Nintendo.

BSCA Summer Student Exchange—2011



Liepaja - Christina Corbitt—The whole time I was there, I felt constantly amazed by the new experiences that Latvia offers. Because of this opportunity my mind broadened, expanded my love for people and their cultures, and want to embrace more of the world through travel and associations.



Yao - Bianca Blanch-The trip to Yao was thrilling! My host family became like a real family to me. Sightseeing in Yao and Osaka was full of history and culture, and I had the time of my life with Ranna's friends and family. One of my favorite experiences, though as nerve-wracking as it was fun, was finally working up the courage to take my first trip to an *onsen* bath.

八尾市の旅行はすごく楽しかった！ホスト家族は本当の家族になりました。八尾市と大阪市に観光するはれきしと文化

がいっぱいだったも、らんさんの家族と友達と生きるは私の人生の一番面白いことでした。一番心配だけど楽しいことは多分私の初めての温泉に行く時でした。



Hualien—Scott Corbitt-I had a lot of fun showing Jeff America. This was the first time I ever saw EMP or rode on the ducks. I really liked Taiwan. I thought the food was amazing and they treated me like royalty. I made a lot of friends there, and everyone was so nice. I was excited to be on TV and in the newspaper. I really liked Taroko Gorge because it was so beautiful, there were lots of butterflies on the trail and the spiders were so big. I would love to go back again. It was awesome and Jeff's family was so nice and accommodating.



From Hualien—Yang Che-Feng (Jeff)-I had a lot of fun showing Scott Taiwan. There are many places that my parents took me too for the first time too like Taipei 101. In America, I really liked the EMP because they had many different kinds of guitars and music. It was very cool. I think here there are many trees. All the beauty is very different than Taiwan. Things that surprised me were like the store. Here it is more cool because it is much cheaper.

BSCA Summer Events – Ice Cream Social AND Picnic



The Bellevue Botanical Garden is always such a pleasant place for our summer get-togethers – and the weather was with us this year. Besides visiting with other members, our summer events are a time to meet our exchange students and their families. The student's different travel schedules make this a challenge – so this year we opted for two events – and we met Elliot and Eliska shortly before they left



for Kladno and Scott and Che-Feng (Jeff) and Bianca and Ranna on their return from Hualien and Yao. We especially enjoyed meeting all the family members – which included Bianca's grandparents!

It's a Small World...

Recently Elise Lalor, our travel agent at Rainier World Travel, was among a group invited by the Japanese Tourism Agency to tour Japan in order to assure the invited travel agents that recovery was well on its way, especially in the southern part of Japan that was spared the worst of the aftermath of the earthquake.

Their tour included Osaka, Kyoto and Kagoshima – the latter with its continually erupting volcano and the hot springs one of the highlights of the tour. As Elise chatted with the tour guide she found that this lady was very familiar with Seattle having attended UW, and also, not only knew about the Bellevue-Yao Sister City connection, but had herself been part of a visiting delegation!

And in Hualien...

As over the past few days we watched hurricane Irene make its way up the east coast of the US leaving devastation in its wake—much the same was happening on the other side of the world... a typhoon that flooded homes, roads and farmland in Taiwan with more than 20 inches of rain left the island Monday and headed to southeastern China.

Typhoon Nanmadol stayed over Taiwan for only a few hours and was weaker than when it pummeled the Philippines, where at least 16 people died and another eight were missing. We have not yet heard of major damage from our friends in Hualien and hope they all weathered it safely..



Liepaja Special School project has broken ground!

It has been over a year since Dace Kreismane completed the plans for the Liepaja Special School grounds, a busy time for her as she searched for funding. The estimate for 'our' playground as first planned was 19,125Ls (about \$35,000) - our Ann Knofel fund only \$7,000—quite a bit short.

European Union funding—due to the financial crisis—was not forthcoming. A few other options also ended as dead ends. Along with Zaiga Philips she met with the Liepaja Lions club and they are willing to support the project.

In the meantime, loath to wait too much longer, it was decided to go ahead and start by preparing the playground area and installing the first pieces of equipment. As of mid-August the playground area has been cleared and filled with sand which will eventually be covered with the projected rubber surfacing. Two of the smaller pieces of equipment have been installed – funding for the large play structure—the estimate for it is around \$14,000– is the next goal—we have about \$900 left.