



Greetings!

My name is Oguljan Young. I am the newly elected President of the Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation. I have been a part of our organization for over 10 years now. I am honored to be the leader of such a wonderful organization, which fosters cultural relationships and brings people from around the world together.

Our organization and its members were busy during the last 6 months.

As you will see from the following several articles written by the Chairs and members, our sister cities around the world celebrated milestones of forging relationships with Albuquerque and its citizens.

It is our intention to bring you reports on more frequent basis in the future. Please be on the lookout for our newsletter each month.

Happy Holidays!

Oguljan Young
ASCF President

Albuquerque Sister Cities Trip to Helmstedt

There was a membership trip to Helmstedt, Germany June 15th to June 26th. On June 17th the Helmstedt Sister Cities Foundation held a spectacular sister cities summer themed event. They invited citizens from all 9 of their sister cities to attend this event. Together we enjoyed various musicians perform live while enjoying traditional German food and drinks. One of the highlights of this event was to experience once again the magic of their local band "Back to Rock." We were fortunate to have this band perform 3 times in Albuquerque last October.

The following day Helmstedt organized a day tour for their entire sister city guests. It was highlighted by a steam train ride to the highest point in the Harz Mountains--Der Brocken. This excursion allowed for over 50 citizens from Italy, England, Germany, France and Albuquerque to become better acquainted.

Along with Helmstedt, some of the other cities the group visited in Germany were Dresden, Hamburg, Magdeburg, Berlin, and Frankfurt. The trip concluded with a bus and boat tour of the Rhine River.

Helmstedt plans on sending a delegation to Albuquerque sometime in September of 2017. The next official membership trip to Helmstedt will be in June of 2018.

Nathan Young, Helmstedt Chair



In Memory of Alma Georgina Solis



Our hearts go out to Alma Solis who lost her daughter Gina Solis in October. Gina was a co-Chair for Chihuahua sister city together with Alma for many years. Gina also served as our Youth Coordinator in the past. She was dedicated to the mission of our organization and will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family at this time.

Alma Georgina "Gina" Solis, age 41, dedicated and loving daughter, sister, and mother, passed away on Saturday, October 22, 2016. Gina is the rock and centerpiece of her siblings--a passionate competitor, hero, and protector. She loved hard, and gave all that she had to her beautiful daughter and her family. She was a devoted friend to many, who brought out truth and goodness in those who knew her. A gypsy at heart, our Gina loved the adventure of her travels, the clarity of the ocean, and the richness of her Mexican culture.

She is survived by her daughter, Alma Tatiana Solis Vela--her greatest gift to our world. She is also survived by her proud parents, Alma Rosario Solis and Ramon Solis; her thankful brothers, Alberto Solis, Edgar Solis, Oscar Solis, and Erik Solis and their spouses. She also leaves many cherished aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, and cousins. Also touching Gina's life were the countless friends who we call family.

Announcements

International Tea and Cookies



Come and meet our Chairs and try teas and cookies from each of our sister city countries. You are welcome to ask questions about upcoming trips and sign up.

Saturday, January 21, 2017 at 12:30 PM - 2 PM
Manzano Mesa Multigenerational Center
501 Elizabeth St SE, Albuquerque, NM 87123

For more information,
call Carol Dawley at 505-883-9516

Help Wanted

Newsletter Editor. Must be proficient in use of Microsoft Word with text and images, and have time each month to assemble our Newsletter. Contact Oguljan.

Electronic Newsletter

Note to our Readers. Starting in January, 2017, our Newsletter will be published monthly. It will be provided electronically, in FULL COLOR, to our members by email. For those members who have not provided a valid email address, the Newsletter will be printed in black and white and mailed to you quarterly at a later date.

Additional notices of importance to our members will continue to be emailed, but not provided through the mail.

Please contact Dave Bagley
(dave3114@gmail.com) and provide him your email address if you wish to receive the electronic copy.

Ashgabat Trip

Join us for a trip to the heart of Central Asia May 21-28 to Ashgabat, Turkmenistan! We will meet with local officials and with representatives of scientific and cultural institutions in Ashgabat, and will celebrate Ashgabat Day on May 25 with our Turkmen hosts. Please contact Mellie Myer, 505-553-3958, melliemyer@gmail.com if you are interested. We will meet at 6 PM, Friday, January 27, at Mellie's home, 7508 Don Gaspar Drive NE, to go over details of the trip and review cost estimates.

Trip to Alburquerque, Spain

The visit by Mayor Berry and his wife Maria, along with sister Cities members Marie Trigg, Ramon Gonzalez, Randy Trask, Connie Vance, and Co-Chairs Dillon Fisher-Ives and Fred Mondragón to our sister city, Alburquerque was a huge success. A total of 22 people from Albuquerque attended the unveiling of the Frederico Vigil Fresco, a gift from the citizens of Albuquerque to the citizens of Alburquerque, España.

In addition, the group participated in the Alburquerque Festival Medieval and parade, an annual event that is recognized as one of the top such festivals in Europe. Prior to going to Alburquerque, the delegation went on a two hour tour of Museo Del Prado in Madrid as guests of Jim Long, Heritage Hotels, who is on the Board of the Prado Museum.

Mayor Berry and Alburquerque Mayor Angel Vadillo conducted a business exchange

moderated by Chairman Fred Mondragón with several local owners of enterprises in the food, slate, and technology fields. Mayor Vadillo was invited to come to Albuquerque for Founders Day next April, and there will be a follow up visit to Alburquerque next fall.

Fred Mondragón and Dillon Fisher-Ives



Member Visit to Sasebo, Japan

As we landed in LA and began our journey together – 17 of the Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation members lead by Kazumi Kawakubo-Todman, along with Mayor Berry, his wife, parents, and staff members and representing CNM, Victoria Martinez and her mother - trooped along LA Airport's vast passageways to the International Terminal awaiting our much anticipated flight to Japan.

Arriving first in Tokyo and then Fukuoka, where Sasebo's Kenji Nakayma and Oyama Kenichiro welcomed us with a bus for the ride to celebrate our 50th year as a Sister City with Sasebo.

When the bus stopped at a market for snacks, we all had our first "tastes" of a variety of Japanese favorites. Only the beginning of an 8-day adventure in cuisine and cultural enrichment.

Our Sasebo friends greeted us with such a warm welcome of cheering, handshaking, hugs, and a beautiful banner that brought tears to my eyes (and I think several others). After many introductions and pictures, my husband and I left with our host, Yukiko Maekawa, as several others did who were staying with host families.

What a warm, loving family we stayed with; in their 100 year old traditional Japanese home – from the tatami floors and paper/wood doors and cozy living area, to the wonderful breakfasts Yuki's mother, Yoshiko prepared for us each morning; it is a home and family we will always hold dear in our hearts. We were welcomed to a lovely afternoon, relaxing with the comfort of green tea and snacks, lunch, shopping, and then closing the day with a beautiful dinner and reception. We were entertained by our wonderful city hosts, having a sing-a-long and enjoying lots of laughter and food.

Between the dolphin entertainment at the Pearl Sea Resort and digging pearls from their shells, to a Huis Ten Bosch musical, being greeted by President Tominaga of Sasebo Albuquerque Sister Cities Association (SASCA), his associates, Sasebo Mayor Tomonaga, the Japan-America Society of Sasebo, toasts, lunches and dinners, the dedication of the Albuquerque Bridge with a most darling and talented marching band, comprised of 3 to 5 year-old Japanese children, leading us across the bridge with Mayor Berry and the rest of us following, to Mayoral speeches, gift exchanging,



Students painting a mural about the friendship between Albuquerque and Sasebo

a visit to welcoming applause at City Hall, and a 50th Year Celebration Reception commemorating our friendship with Sasebo, our days in Japan were full of pure enjoyment.

For the celebration, our own President Oguljan Young, and Mayor Berry's wife, Maria, had the wonderful privilege of being dressed in traditional Japanese kimonos. Oguljan said it took two hours for the Japanese women to dress them! They were both adorned beautifully and spent the evening being admired.



Mayor Berry and Mayor Tomonaga during the Renewal Celebration

We all enjoyed spectacular traditional Japanese cuisine, performances, meeting new friends and lots of picture taking. We were delighted to visit with the mother of the young woman, Akina, we hosted six years ago; as was Denise Terrazas, who even got to stay at the home of the young woman, Natsuko, who her family hosted eleven years ago. Earlier that day, we visited an Albuquerque Exhibit that had many gifts on display that Sasebo has received during their visits (paintings, pottery, sculptures, etc.). Included, were a wall of photos and articles with pictures of our youth, Mayor Berry, Sasebo city officials, chaperones and volunteers.

We were particularly delighted to see a letter from our exchange student, Akina, who wrote a letter last year, stating that her experience here in 2010 gave her the desire to travel abroad and is now on a college exchange program in Oregon. What an insight on how our Sister Cities Program has encouraged and impacted youth.

Both SASCA and The Japanese-America Society kept us immersed in a variety of wonderful Japanese cultural experiences, in addition to that which I've already mentioned.

These included a Zen experience and tea ceremony, Master Inoue's Kiln (a famous porcelain artist), Nagasaki Peace Park Memorial, Kujukushima and Gunkanjima boat tours, and a lovely farewell dinner hosted by The Japan-America Society at Mt. Inasayama (the world's most beautiful night view). We even got to capture a view of the blood moon that evening overlooking the city of Nagasaki.



Reflecting on our trip, Mike & I have hearts overflowing with gratitude to not only our many Japanese friends who welcomed us with open arms, but to the Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation for this tremendous opportunity to learn, grow, and experience life outside our community. When my heart longs for another visit to Japan, I will simply enjoy a visit to our Sasebo Japanese Garden at the Bio Park, reminding me of our fond memories of 2016 abroad.

By Marta Szucs

Visit to Kaga, Japan

Friday, November 18. Led by President Oguljan Young and Sasebo Chair Kazumi Kawakubo-Todman, our group of 13 Sister Cities members traveled from Tokyo to Kaga, Japan on Central Japan Railroad's Shinkansen, the high-speed bullet train, the 200 miles taking about 3 hours.



We were greeted at the Kaga rail station, and were off to a brief meeting with Mayor Miyamoto at Kaga City Hall. The mayor was very warm and explained that Kaga was very interested in bringing in high-tech to offer a more diverse opportunity to their city and young adults, who are looking elsewhere after high school for more educational and employment prospects. We had a question and answer session during the gift presentations.



We enjoyed lunch at the Arrowle restaurant, then walked around and did some window shopping among the many shops. Unfortunately, rain was expected, and our outdoor schedule was quickly adjusted, so we checked into the gorgeous Shirasugiyu Tawaraya hotel. After relaxing and changing into kimonos, we enjoyed an "over-the-top" dinner, and were serenaded by a traditional Japanese trio of a singer, shamisen (3-stringed instrument) player, and dancer.



Saturday, November 19. Our last day in Japan and as soon as breakfast was over we headed to the Kano Sake brewery for a tour and tasting, taking care not too imbibe too much before having lunch with Mayor Miyamoto. A shakuhachi (end blown wooden flute) player kept us entertained during another memorable meal. The mayor spent time with us, again asking and answering questions, invited us back to Kaga and indicated that he wanted to return to Albuquerque and Rio Rancho sometime in 2017.



Kaga has – hospitals, a small symphony, art, history and science museums, beautiful tourist-oriented downtown, is known for its hot springs, Saki breweries, annual Japan RoboRave competition, but no university. Kaga wants - IT-related ventures.

by Dave Bagley