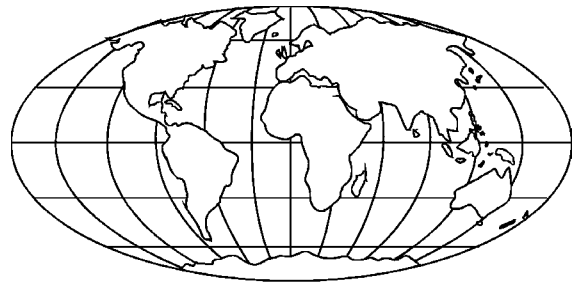


EL CHISME

de Neighbors Abroad



Volume 53, Number 2

SISTER CITY PROGRAM ■ PALO ALTO, CALIFORNIA U.S.A.

March-April 2015



You are invited to join host families, city officials and others to greet the 2015 exchange students from Tsuchiura, Japan and welcome them to Palo Alto.



**Saturday, March 14th
1:00 pm**

**Pine Grove Picnic Area
Mitchell Park
600 East Meadow Drive
Palo Alto**

*In case of rain, the welcome
will move to Cubberley
Community Center, Room M2,
4000 Middlefield Road, PA*

Presidents' Report

We are very happy that we will be welcoming another group of the fine young people from our sister city of Tsuchiura. This exchange has been a wonderful success and has created life-long memories and a strong bond of friendship among the participants.

Under the excellent guidance of Keiko Nakajima (now retired) the program became a model for exchange trips. Now under the dedicated and enthusiastic leadership of the new VP for Tsuchiura, Jennifer Buenrostro, and with the support that exists in that Japanese city, Neighbors Abroad is looking at a strong and continuing relationship.

We think that perhaps Neighbors Abroad members do not always think about the importance of these exchanges, or understand why we, your co-presidents, are so concerned that we strengthen or rebuild once successful exchanges in Albi and Oaxaca. Neighbors Abroad has always attracted members, in large part, because they or someone near them had this special visit and continuing relationship with the city. To some extent we have made up for fewer student visits with various adult exchanges. But the student exchange has been the focus of Neighbors Abroad in the past, and we need to make every effort to grow those exchanges again.

Albi, Oaxaca and Tsuchiura are the three sister cities which have had a language component to the trip, since the French, Spanish and Japanese languages are among those taught in the PAUSD. The Japanese exchange, which involves middle school students who come for about a week and are able to attend school with Palo Alto students, is currently the most successful. Exchange trips to Oaxaca have continued under the active guidance of Oaxaca Vice President Marian Mandell. There is great support for the exchange from the Oaxacan side, but student and parent interest is lacking on ours. This has been a fine exchange in past years and there are now several generations that have had the Oaxacan experience. We just need to find a way to extend that experience to more students.

Albi has had exchange students in the past and under the leadership of Carol Stevens and now Michel Campmas, various adult exchanges have also taken place. As is the case in Oaxaca, more students from France have been interested in the exchange than Palo Altans. We need to explore the reasons for this seeming lack of interest. It is **critical to maintaining our membership** that we continue to build the relationships with these cities and the exchange trips are an integral part of that.

Barbara and Joe Evans



In Memoriam

Neighbors Abroad has received word of the death of three long-time stalwart members of our organization. Our sincere condolences to family and friends of each of them.



Ed Kiester passed away on February 3rd in Beverly, Massachusetts. He had a prolific career as a writer and journalist, authoring more than 2000 magazine articles and 23 books.

He and his second wife, the late Sally Valente Kiester, lived in Palo Alto in the 1980s and 90s and were very active in Neighbors Abroad. Sally served a term as president and Ed was VP for Linköping for a time. They helped organize Neighbors Abroad festivities for the Palo Alto Centennial in 1994.

A memorial was held on February 14th in Essex, MA. The family requested that, in lieu of flowers, contributions be made to Neighbors Abroad. Ed and Sally's son, Will Kiester, can be reached at williamkiester@gmail.com or 718-219-0859.



Edith Sommer died on February 4th in Palo Alto. She had been a resident since 1949. She was a jewelry designer and artist and one of the co-founders of Gallery House in 1958, still a thriving artists' cooperative. She loved connecting with people around the world, which she did as a host and traveler with Neighbors Abroad, other international friendship groups, and on her own travels. She was fond of Paris and studied French and hosted French conversations groups in her home.

A memorial service was held on February 9th.



Rae Bell passed away on Friday, February 20th. She and her husband Elton have been long-time supporters of Neighbors Abroad. At *El Chisme* press time, we have heard that a celebration of her life will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto, 505 E. Charleston Road, Palo Alto on Saturday, March 21st at 2:00 p.m.

ENSCHEDÉ

On December 8, 2014, at the recommendation of Dayenne Smolders (Enschede's Senior Advisor International Relations) and an invitation from Melina McKim and Henk dePoot, I attended a meeting with them and Tommy Fehrenbach to discuss the possibility of Palo Alto/Enschede student exchange programs and how such



educational exchanges can relate to the 2015 Year of Light Initiative from the U.N. Henk and Melina are educational consultants and they live in Enschede. Melina grew up in Los Altos. Palo Alto has enjoyed students from the Twente University (UT) in Enschede many times since 2002. Those graduate students did their internships at Stanford. Tommy noted that Mathijs Waegmakers (a UT graduate student) was invited by the city of Palo Alto (the city did not engage Neighbors Abroad in the invitation) and interned at City Hall in the transportation department. Saxion undergraduate student Carlijn Soer worked with Tommy Fehrenbach from March to May of 2014.

Tommy mentioned that Palo Alto Unified School District (PAUSD) students seemed to have a "disconnect from the innovation engine" as it pertained to local government and that PAUSD students do "not have civics classes." The Palo Alto city government is interested in engaging PAUSD students in local government and civics; Palo Alto can "get another perspective from youth regarding future life in Palo Alto."

Henk dePoot said the city of Enschede has created a research proposition to include institutions such as the Rijks Museum-Enschede to develop a "conceptual space" for artists (for example), like a cultural café, where there would be open communication among artists as they shared this open space. It is felt the public would be "turned onto activities" that included innovative thinking and creativity hand-in-hand with local government.

All present agreed that building bridges between the youth of the two cities and sharing ideas would be fruitful. Jonathan Reichental, PhD, Palo Alto's Chief Information Officer, was selected to visit Enschede in early December 2014 in lieu of James Keene, Palo Alto's City Manager. Dr.

Reichental oversees Palo Alto's 306 tech systems.

I had the privilege of interviewing Jonathan Reichental on February 11, 2015 in his office at Palo Alto City Hall. Dr. Reichental originally hails from Ireland, but as he has family in the Netherlands he has visited that country many times. This, however, was his first visit to Enschede. I apprised Dr. Reichental about Neighbors Abroad, as he was not familiar with our organization.



I asked Dr. Reichental what the purpose of his visit to Enschede was and he said he was invited to speak at a UT conference on the subject of how towns/cities and universities can work symbiotically to increase job opportunities and entrepreneurship within the environs. He said many issues present challenges as well as opportunities and the increased potential of greater entrepreneurship.

Some examples he gave included the engagement of the City of Palo Alto with the community at large in a more intimate way such as the Our Palo Alto mobile app which is available for both Android and iPhone. The new mobile app provides "the community with the latest on Our Palo Alto community events and activities."

Another example he mentioned is PaloAlto311. This smart phone app gives 24/7 accessibility for the public to share its concerns with the city government. Concerns "such as reporting street issues" are "submitted with a short description" and a photo "in order to provide additional details. The app will automatically know the issue location and the chosen request type will ensure that the issue is sent to the appropriate department at the city."

To locate these apps, go to the city website at <http://www.cityofpaloalto.org/>. To find the Our Palo Alto mobile app, type in "Our Palo Alto mobile app" in the search box in the upper right corner to find the right page. To find PaloAlto311, click on the menu item on the upper left hand side of the home page to find information.

While in Enschede, Dr. Reichental met with Dayenne Smolders and other Enschede city officials, including the Enschede IT organization. They discussed IT interactions within their respective cities as well as the commonalities: both are university cities, have an educated population, and many cultural activities.

He met with Paul Bijleveld (a professor at Saxion University in Enschede) regarding student exchanges.

Although he did not meet with Melina and Henk he was taken on a tour of the Rijks Museum Enschede by Hilda Ferwerda. I look forward to hearing from both of them and will share their news in the next El Chisme.

**Tot Ziens,
Joni Reid**



PALO

Mabuhay!

We are so pleased with the initiative of Sheilane Cabag in

sending us many pictures of the Children's Library in Palo. They give us just an inkling of the devastation of last year's typhoon and the tremendous work it has taken to restore our library. She also forwarded us an inventory of the expenditures taken to set the library to rights. I can only imagine what such a disaster can do to each individual life. What the library suffered can only be small compared to that of the Paloans who are faced with rebuilding their city!

News from the Philippines

Recently Pope Francis visited the Philippines to offer condolences for the great losses of life and property there. His church wields great influence over the lives of his "flock" there but offers challenges to ordinary people who are concerned with global warming and the problems around population growth. The Philippines are one of the many areas where rising sea levels threaten the lives of the population. In the recent "summits" on this topic those similarly affected are drawing attention to this man-made crisis and illustrating the responsibility of the greatest contributors --i.e. developed countries such as the U.S.

Mabuhay!
Ruth Carleton and Chris Torres

Below: Exterior view of damaged roof



Interior view of roof damage



Above and right: Cleaning flooded library



At left: Sorting and salvaging books.



Palo Children's Library Photos from Assistant Librarian Sheilane Cabag.

Typhoon Yolanda damage and progress in repairs.



GIANTS meeting: discussion of library damage and repair



Recent pictures: At right, students studying in the library; above and near left, ceiling intact; far left, kitchen area still under reconstruction



TSUCHIURA

Konnichiwa,

The 2015 Middle School Exchange Program is approaching quickly. It will take place March 14-22, 2015. The 16 students from Japan have been matched with their Palo Alto host families. The Tsuchiura office reported back to us that they announced the matches last week in a meeting with the parents and everyone was very excited! Our students have also each been assigned their Japanese guest and have begun exchanging emails with him or her.

The 16 students and 3 chaperones will arrive on March 14 at approx 1:30 p.m. We are hosting a welcome party at the Pine Grove Picnic Area in Mitchell Park starting at 1:00 p.m. All Neighbors Abroad members are welcome to attend and we would love to have you there! It will be great to show our support. Please come and welcome them!

Marathon runner has been chosen.

Each year, our sister city Tsuchiura invites Palo Alto to select someone from our community to travel to Tsuchiura and compete in the annual Kasumigaura Marathon. This year it will take place on April 15.

Matt Schlegel, Palo Alto resident, marathon runner, father and volunteer in schools and community events as well as the Japanese student exchange program for the past two years, has been chosen to travel to Japan and run in the marathon. We are very proud of Matt and we wish him all the best! We look forward to hearing about his experience when he returns.

Arigato for your support,
Jennifer Buenrostro





ALBI

You probably all heard and read about the recent tragedy in Paris on January 7-9 and the gigantic, never seen before, demonstration by 4 million French people who took the streets on

January 11 to defend freedom of expression, mourn the innocent victims of this horrific terrorist attack and show they were not afraid. In Albi alone more than twenty thousand people participated in a silent march. This had a deep resonance in the region as all had in mind a similar event fifty miles away in Toulouse where in March 2012, Mohammed Merah went on a killing spree and executed two military personnel just because they wore a uniform, and four civilians including three children just because they were Jews.

Tennis Players Adult Exchange Update

I have been recently in touch with Jean-Pierre Remazeilhes, my correspondent in Albi, in regards to the progress on the Tennis Players Exchange planned for this summer. The news is not very positive as yet. As per Jean-Pierre, the mood of the French is affected by the (very) bad economic situation and the fears raised by the terrorist attacks. At this point we did not get much feedback from the tennis players from the Albi Tennis Club. I am working with Jean-Pierre on a short presentation explaining the purpose of the exchange and giving some history on the past successful adult exchanges in the last twenty plus years of the Albi-Palo Alto Sister City relationship. As we already are in March and no planning has occurred yet, it is not possible to consider a trip in June of this year as originally planned. I am currently contacting the 10 persons in the U.S. who had expressed a strong interest in this exchange to see if they would consider an early September timeframe for this year. If this does not work out we would then postpone this exchange to June 2016 so that we have plenty of time to prepare. I will keep you posted.

**À bientôt,
Michel Campmas**

*20,000 people on
the streets of Albi*

LINKÖPING

Watch for a report in the next issue.



Silent march in Albi



*Liberty,
Equality,
Fraternity!*



OAXACA

Be sure to look at the cute photos of children and adolescents from the community of San Miguel Peras, on the outskirts of the City of Oaxaca, receiving baby chicks for their Niño-a-Niño group to raise as part of a project in community health and nutrition. Director Paty Molina is literally "handing" them out to the excited children. They have received instruction in how to care for them. They also were given food and vitamins to prevent them from getting respiratory illnesses. (It is cold where these children live, and baby chicks can "catch a cold.") Money to buy these chicks was contributed by many of the members of Neighbors Abroad who visited the town of Yaxe when our group was in Oaxaca last June for the 50th Anniversary celebration. They could not deliver the chicks earlier because it was raining so much there was a distinct risk that they might become ill.

Benita, one of the girls from the Albergue (the Orphanage) who graduated from the University in June, was married in November. All of the children and caregivers attended; in fact, all of the "Madres" were her sponsors, and we hear that it was a lovely wedding!

Please be sure to spread the word that we are still looking for more students for the summer exchange to Oaxaca. Both boys and girls are needed. Tell all of your friends and neighbors—it is not too late. Ask them to call or email me ASAP for information and an application: (650) 493-3798 or marionb@sonic.net.

Also, PLEASE tell anyone that you hear is going to Oaxaca to contact me first! We have MANY ready-packed suitcases for the children both at the Orphanage and those part of a Niño-a-niño group. The clothing that we send is gratefully received and saves the groups a lot of money. Please tell your friends!

For those of you who like long-range planning, take out your calendars, turn to October 4, and write in NEIGHBORS ABROAD FAMILY FUN DAY INTERNATIONAL FAIR. This is the event we hold every two years at the Lucie Stern Main Courtyard, which has games for children, food, music, and the FAMOUS International Store, with items from around the world. All items are donated so all proceeds go directly to our children's projects in Oaxaca and Palo. Check out what you'd like to donate from your trip to (some far-off land) that you are now tired of and would like someone else to have the opportunity to enjoy. Then, call me!

**¡Hasta luego!
Marion Mandell**



EL CHISME

de Neighbors Abroad



Neighbors Abroad
P. O. Box 52004
Palo Alto, CA 94303
U.S. A.

NEIGHBORS ABROAD is a volunteer organization which maintains and carries out the activities of the City of Palo Alto's officially recognized Sister City Program with Palo in the province of Leyte in the Philippines, Oaxaca in Mexico, Enschede in the Netherlands, Linköping in Sweden, Albi in France, and Tsuchiura in Japan. Its activities have served and continue to serve the community interests of international and intercultural understanding.

Barbara & Joe Evans, Co-Presidents	856-0618
Jim Newton, Treasurer	854-4360
Mary Ashley, Newsletter	494-1829

<http://neighborsabroad.org>



Neighbors Abroad Plus Community Events Calendar

March 2015

Wednesday, 11th, 7:30 p.m.

Neighbors Abroad Board Meeting; Cubberley Comm.
Center Room A3, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

Saturday, 14th, 1:00 p.m.

Welcome Picnic for Tsuchiura exchange students.
Pine Grove Picnic Area, Mitchell Park, 600 East
Meadow Drive, Palo Alto See Cover for details.

April 2015

Wednesday, 8th, 7:30 p.m.

Neighbors Abroad Board Meeting; Cubberley Comm.
Center Room A3, 4000 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

Neighbors Abroad members and guests are invited to a free public lecture on Wednesday, March 4th on "The United Nations: Promise, Reality, and the Future" with Stephen Stedman, Deputy Director, Center for Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, Stanford University, sponsored by the Peninsula Chapter of the World Affairs Council. Refreshments: 7:00 pm; Program: 7:30 - 9:00 pm. Site: Los Altos Youth Center, 1 North San Antonio Rd., Los Altos. For information, call Carol Stevens (650) 494-0757.

Next El Chisme Deadline—April 15, 2015

- Send your articles to Mary Ashley
- E-mail: meashley@pacbell.net
- 3114 Cowper St., Palo Alto, CA 94306