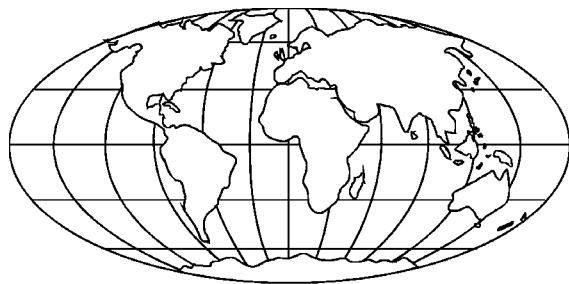


EL CHISME

de Neighbors Abroad



Volume 50, Number 3

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

May-June 2012

Neighbors Abroad presents an International Café

Friday May 18

Lucie Stern Community Center

Community Room and Patio

(Enter by side gate)



6:30 Greetings and beverages

7:00 Food from different lands

7:30 Speaker Donia Bijan



*Free and open to the public but please RSVP to
Barbara or Joe Evans (650) 856-0618*

Be sure to leave name and phone number!



*Iranian-born Donia Bijan, author and chef, will be at the
International Café to talk about her family's life in exile
and her reflections on Iran and the situation there today.
There will be time for questions and discussion.*

*Co-sponsored by Palo Alto Adult School, the City of Palo Alto, American Association
of University Women, Palo Alto, and the League of Women Voters, Palo Alto.*



Presidents' Report

The month of March was full of Neighbors Abroad activities, beginning with the dedication of the "Kiosk" in front of City Hall. This gift from the Palo Alto Rotary club has the names and a brief description of each of our sister cities. NA board members, Rotary members and city hall staff were there to hear the presentation made on behalf of the Rotary by Le Levy, former mayor and a one-time Neighbors Abroad president.



Chesley Douglas, Rotary member and also a member of Neighbors Abroad, was a prime mover in the concept and execution of this project.

On March 11 the students from Tsuchiura Japan arrived and took part in the planting of a cherry tree, a gift from Japan. A bountiful picnic was provided by the Palo Alto host families and the students were greeted by Mayor Yiaway Yeh who asked for a moment of silence in memory of the tragic loss of life incurred by the earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011. Betty Gerard had done her usual great publicity job, sending press releases to the media and CBS Eyewitness News filmed the event as part of its anniversary coverage of the twin disasters.

On March 12, Joe Evans and Jim Newton made a presentation to the City Council on the current state of Neighbors Abroad. In a power-point demonstration Jim showed that the major amounts of Neighbors Abroad funds are spent for charitable purposes.

The visiting Japanese students were introduced and given a souvenir of the occasion. Mayor Yeh praised the dedication and enthusiasm of Keiko Nakajima, our Vice President for Tsuchiura. A special mention was made of outstanding local marathoner, Keith Bechtol who will represent Palo Alto at the Kasumigaura marathon in Tsuchiura, Japan in April.

Things look quieter in the coming months, although we will be having a spring meeting on May 18 to which we hope to invite teachers and students from the Palo Alto adult school. This quarter we are community partners with the PAAS and this is planned as a joint event.

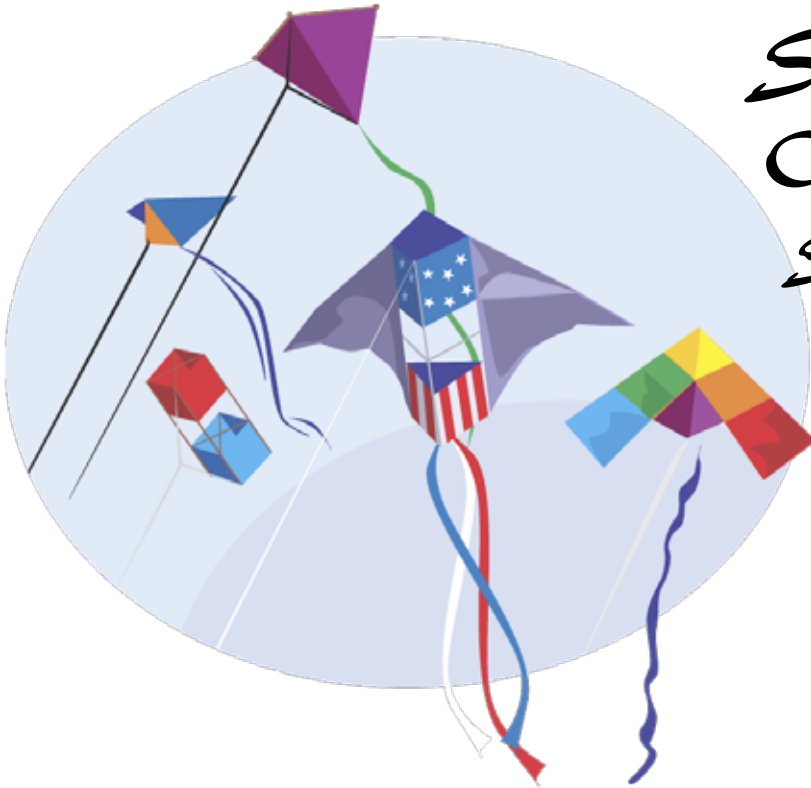
During the March 12 presentation Councilman Pat Burt asked your presidents what we would like to see happen with Neighbors Abroad going forward. We answered him by saying that we thought we needed to broaden the board and have representatives from various business and political entities. And of course we would like to increase our membership. We will be exploring other ideas for ways that the city can help in making Neighbors Abroad more visible in the community. The spring partnership with the Palo Alto Adult School (PAAS) has been another path to greater public awareness for Neighbors Abroad and we look forward to seeing many of you at this joint event on May 18.

Barbara and Joe Evans



Above, the new Sister Cities kiosk in King Plaza at Palo Alto City Hall. Below, Le Levy serenades the crowd at the Dedication Ceremony on March 5 as Chesley Douglas, who had the idea and worked tirelessly to make it a reality, stands by.





Second Annual Come Fly a Kite! Sunday, June 3, 2012

*From 3:00 to 8:00 pm
with potluck picnic and optional
barbecue at 6:00 pm*

*Check www.neighborsabroad.org
for more details after May 15*

Presentation to City Council Highlights Sister City Projects as well as Cultural Activities

The chart below is just one of the slides from the PowerPoint presentation Jim Newton and Joe Evans presented to the Palo Alto City Council on March 12. The accompanying narrative was as follows:

“Neighbors Abroad has a long history of support for charitable activities with our sister cities. In Oaxaca, our oldest program, we

support an Orphanage (the Albergue Infantil Josefino) and a Children’s health program (Niño-a-Niño) on a continuing annual basis. Neighbors Abroad has also supported intermittent events with finances such as a library, the donation by the city of Palo Alto of fire engines and other services. In 2006, we received some substantial donations with the expressed desire that they be used for education. These initially supported two college students from the orphanage and then created an endowment fund which annually contributes to the secondary and college tuitions for students from the Albergue.

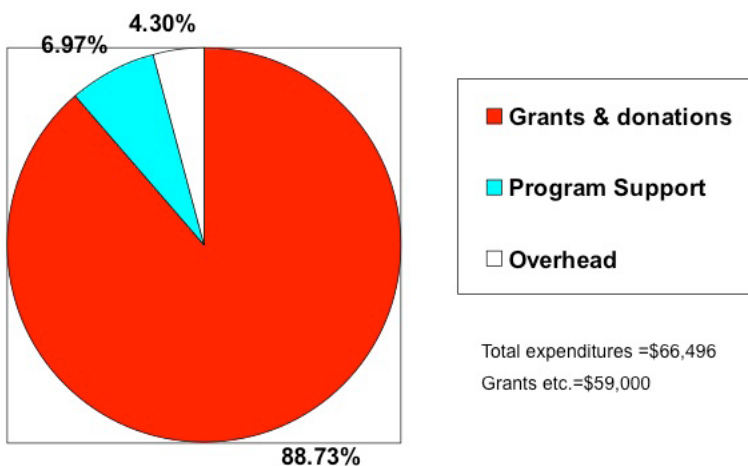
“In the Philippines, we support children’s projects at our sister city Palo. These are mainly focused around a children’s library where we provide for salaries, books, overhead and scholarships.

“We have also granted two scholarships each year to one graduating student each from Gunn and Palo Alto High Schools.

“Over the last ten years, the total of these activities has averaged about \$50,000 per year. In our most recent year the amount was \$59,000.”

Thanks to all members and friends for your support over the years.

Expenditures 2010-11



ALBI



Toulouse Tragedy

You probably all read about the terrible event in Toulouse (only 50 miles from Albi!) back in March where a fanatic killed seven people in cold blood, including three children. Fortunately he was identified within days and killed by the French Police Special Intervention Squad as he would not surrender and fought to the death. During these few days the "terrorism alert level" was, for the region of Toulouse, set at the highest level for the first time ever, giving the police special privileges to stop, search, and interrogate any citizen, which would probably raise the eyebrows of the American defenders of civil liberties here in the U. S. I can assure you that absolutely no one objected in France: just imagine how scary it must have been for parents to send their children to school as long as the killer was on the loose. Happily, this is over and life is (nearly) back to normal now.

Amateur Photographers Exchange

We had our first exploration meeting with the Amateur Camera Club of Palo Alto. I was invited to their Board Meeting on March 6 and was given plenty of time to present our previous exchanges and our philosophy on the purpose of these exchanges. This was very well received and the 20+ people present asked a lot of questions. I think that we raised a high level of interest there. I communicated this to Jean-Pierre, my Albi counterpart from Terre d'Union, and he is working hard at identifying and motivating a similar group in Albi. Once these two groups are identified, we would start talking and drawing plan for a 2013 or maybe a 2014 trip...

Bastille Day is Coming

We still have plenty of time between now and our traditional and always successful July 14 Bastille Day Event, but please mark your calendar. July 14 is a Saturday this year. We found that it was therefore too risky hoping that we would have all the room we want in the parks we usually go to and which do not require any advanced reservation. For this year we played it safe and are planning to have it at Mitchell Park where we can reserve one of the Group Areas in advance. Please stay posted for the exact time and location: this will be indicated in the next July edition of El Chisme and also on our website: www.neighborsabroad.org.

À bientôt,
Michel Campmas

TSUCHIURA



Konnichiwa,

On March 11 2011, the Pacific coast of northeast Japan, which includes Tsuchiura at its perimeter, was hit by an extremely strong earthquake and disastrous tsunami. Fortunately, Tsuchiura escaped the severe damage from the tsunami, but many homes, schools, and business buildings were damaged. Neighbors Abroad raised over \$16,000 and sent to our sister city within a month. Due to the disaster, our middle school exchange program was cancelled last year.

This year, sixteen students (7 boys and 9 girls) led by three chaperones arrived in Palo Alto on March 11, exactly one year after the disaster. Coincident with their arrival, we had a tree planting ceremony of a cherry blossom tree donated by the Japanese Consulate in San Francisco. This is a part of commemoration of the 100th year of the donation of 3000 cherry trees to the capital of United States by the Japanese Government and also a gesture of appreciation for the donation of relief funds by Palo Alto residents.

The exchange students arrived at Mitchell Park shortly before noon and were greeted by host families, Vice Consul Nagaoka from San Francisco, Palo Alto Mayor Yeh, and Neighbors Abroad members. After the short welcoming ceremony, three volunteers from Canopy helped plant a cherry tree near the entrance of Mitchell Park on East Meadow Drive. An amazing coincidence was that one of the Canopy members who helped with the planting was a 4th generation descendant of Commodore Perry who opened Japan after 260 years of isolation. City officials, Neighbors Abroad officers, and Consulate representatives took turns with the shovels, as did all students from Tsuchiura and Palo Alto. Afterwards, we enjoyed our barbecue and potluck lunch prepared by host families. After lunch, all the children and family members enjoyed flying kites. It was a perfect day, and we enjoyed watching over 30 kites flying over Mitchell Park at the same time.

On Monday, March 12, our guests and host families attended the Council Meeting at City Hall. Ms. Wada from the Office of the Board of Education in Tsuchiura read a speech in English expressing their appreciation of our big donation to their city.

The visiting students enjoyed one week living with host families, attending classes at JLS and Jordan, touring the Mayor's office, Police Department and Stanford University

Campus. They also visited Yosemite National Park on an overnight. There were also several social events, including cooking night, Bingo night, and an appreciation and farewell party hosted by our guests.

Now, I'm preparing the Palo Alto students trip to Japan for 2012. Fourteen students from Jordan and JLS and two chaperones have already signed up to participate this summer. There are spots available for two more female students. If you know someone who might be interested in joining this student trip to Japan, let me know. Students must be 13-15 years old.

Arigato for your support,
Keiko Nakajima



Tsuchiura Students visit Palo Alto

Counterclockwise from left:

- *Welcome to Palo Alto sign from Jordan and JLS host students*
- *Left to right, Japanese Consul Takemichi Nagaoka, Neighbors Abroad Co-President Barbara Evans, Neighbors Abroad Vice-President for Tsuchiura Keiko Nakajima, and Palo Alto Mayor Yiwaway Yeh with first shovel of soil.*
- *Japanese students with Mayor Yeh in his office.*
- *Students all took part in the planting (KCBS cameraman filming in background.)*
- *Japanese and American "sisters" observe moment of silence for March 11, 2011 Japan earthquake and tsunami victims.*



LINKÖPING

Things are quiet. The thought that we might stage a midsummer-fest in a local park has not gathered any support, so has drifted away. My gardener has cut and composted all that shiny green foliage that might have covered a Midsomar pole.

We will try to utilize the visit, this fall, by Linköping's mayor and other leaders to hold some sort of event. The concept of the moment is to move Linköping Day from April to September, but, obviously, we must adjust our committee's activity to our mayor's program as host. A serious concern here is to keep Neighbors Abroad relevant.

Bruce Wilner



ENSCHEDÉ

Hallo Vrienden:

On February 15, 2012 in the afternoon a bomb from the Second World War was detonated at the Twente airport. The 500 pound American bomb was discovered at the airfield the previous week. The bomb was in a secluded area of the airport grounds. Buildings within a radius of 200 meters were evacuated. The bomb was covered with sand to dampen the blast. The airspace above the airport in Twente was closed to traffic for several hours because of the blast.

There are expectations that there is much more ammunition the area which will ultimately be removed. The State has transferred the airport land to the City of Enschede and the Province (Overijssel), and has promised they make sure the area is clean and free of ammunition. This previous military base is being sought by the city and county to be eventually used as a civilian airport.

Twente Tubantia 2/15/12

On February 15, 2012, I met with Monique LeConge, Palo Alto's Library Director. We continued our earlier discussion of a librarian exchange between Palo Alto and Enschede. We thought the Fall of 2013 would be an ideal time for such an exchange since the Mitchell Park Library will have been completed and will certainly be a showcase in our library system.

Monique LeConge will be the key person to lead the exchange in Palo Alto and to other cities' libraries as well. Monique indicated Palo Alto's city manager, Jim Keene, is enthusiastic and supportive of the idea.

The details are yet to be worked out. Jos de Smit and I met with the Director of Enschede's Library system last summer, Gerard Kocx, who expressed an interest in a librarian exchange. He emailed me that he would be contacting the local city government as he still thought the idea of a librarian exchange was an "attractive idea."

On February 16, 2012 Janneke Hoedemaeker joined me for lunch at my home. Janneke visited me last July and was featured in *El Chisme*. Janneke is a Twente University graduate. When Janneke returned to the Netherlands she secured a position at the Agentschap NL which is an agency in the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs. Janneke is responsible for assisting Dutch researchers and Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) gain financing and access to European Innovation Funds.

I will not be visiting Enschede this year as I have had both foot and shoulder surgery, in January and March.

**Tot Ziens,
Joni Reid**



*At right,
Palo Alto
Director of
Libraries
Monique
LeConge*



*At left,
Janneke
Hoedemaeker
from
Enschede*

PALO



Mabuhay!

Heads-up!

Next January 2013 Neighbors Abroad will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary as a Sister-City organization. Palo, Leyte, the Philippines was our first sister city, hence we will also celebrate 50 years of sister-cityhood with Palo. During this wonderful relationship with our friends there, we have experienced the warm hospitality of the people in Palo with a large delegation going from Palo Alto in 1993 as well as subsequent visits of smaller groups. We also enjoyed

friends who visited us including the former governor of Leyte--Remedios Petilla. We learned much about the culture of the Philippines through our renowned interactive reconstruction of a Philippine village which offered thousands of children and adults the opportunity to experience rural and urban life there. This nine-month-long exhibit with all artifacts from Palo now resides in Spokane, Washington.

Now we need your ideas for appropriate celebrations for both events--our anniversary of sister-cityhood and all six of our sister-cities as well as our anniversary with Palo. Please write your suggestions and we can publish them in a forth-coming *El Chisme!*

Yum!

Recently we experienced the annual shipment of Philippine mangoes in local markets. These mangoes, yellow in color, are not quite as lovely-looking as the blush pink ones from elsewhere. But, oh, the taste is delicious with that special mango flavor imbued with unusual sweetness.

Thank you!

We thank those who attended the benefit piano concert by Carmencita Aspiras at the home of Nancy Hardesty-John Parker. This unforgettable event was April 14.

Mabuhay!

Ruth Carleton

OAXACA



¡Hasta luego!

Many of you were concerned when you heard on the news about the recent earthquake in Oaxaca. Let me set your minds at ease—our friends in the CITY of Oaxaca are fine. Remember that Oaxaca is a very large STATE, of which the CITY of Oaxaca is the capital. The CITY is inland and located at an altitude of 5000 feet. It was far from the epicenter, and although the quake was felt to some extent in parts of the city, there was no damage. Thank you for all of your concern. (Whenever the name “Oaxaca” is mentioned on the TV or radio news or in the newspapers everyone assumes they mean “our” city. Often some event has happened on the coast or elsewhere, far from the Sister City.)

It's only April, but Arik, our student exchange participant for this summer, and his “brother” in Oaxaca, are both looking forward to their time together. How wonderful that nowadays they can email, text, or phone each other easily. Many years ago the students never even knew where they were going until the plane arrived at the Oaxaca airport! Arik and Rodrigo will begin their exchange on June 30 in Oaxaca.

As usual, please remember to contact me if you or anyone you know are going to Oaxaca—as you know, we always have many ready-packed suitcases for the children of the Orphanage and the Child-to-Child Health program. And if you haven't had time to send in your contribution to our once-a-year appeal for funds, please do so now. We are sad to announce that we have lost one of our major contributors to the Child-to-Child Program and this will cause a real shortfall in their funding. (Any of you have connections to any generous foundations?)

Remember to start saving up for the June 2014 50th anniversary trip to Oaxaca too.

Marion Mandell

**Our Friends
in the CITY of
Oaxaca are fine
(after the recent
earthquake in
the STATE of
Oaxaca.)**



Neighbors Abroad Plus Community Events Calendar

May 2012

Wednesday, 9th, 7:30 p.m.

Neighbors Abroad Board Meeting. Cubberley Community Center, Room A6, 4000 Middlefield Rd. Palo Alto

Friday, 18th, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

International Café with Speaker Donia Bijan; food from many lands. RSVP to 856-0618; free admission. Lucie Stern Community Room and Patio, 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto.

June 2012

Wednesday, 13th, 7:30 p.m.

Neighbors Abroad Board Meeting. Cubberley Community Center, Room A6, 4000 Middlefield Rd. Palo Alto

Sunday, 3rd, 3:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Come Fly a Kite. All ages welcome. Potluck picnic and optional barbecue at 6 p.m. Mitchell Park, 600 East Meadow Drive, Palo Alto.

Next El Chisme Deadline—June 10, 2012

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

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>