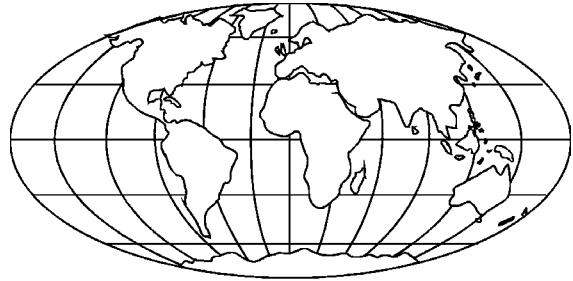


EL CHISME

de Neighbors Abroad



Volume 53, Number 1

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

January-February 2015

CITY OF PALO ALTO PROCLAMATION

**Marion Mandell
Neighbors Abroad of Palo Alto**

WHEREAS, since 1964, the City of Palo Alto and Oaxaca, Mexico have enjoyed a Sister Cities relationship, this year being the 50-year milestone and Marion Mandell, Neighbors Abroad Vice-President of Oaxaca led the celebrations with a 30-person delegation in June 2014; and

WHEREAS, Marion Mandell has been the key champion of this Sister-City relationship, building lasting friendships with Oaxaca for many years, providing diplomatic and cultural enrichments for Neighbors Abroad and the City of Palo Alto; and

WHEREAS, Marion Mandell has been the primary organizer of the student exchange program that, for almost 50 years, has developed cultural understanding and built family connections between Palo Alto and Oaxaca each summer for high school students, and is now an inter-generational program with children of past participants joining in this program; and

WHEREAS, Marion Mandell has led numerous adult tours to Oaxaca, allowing Palo Altans to experience and appreciate the rich, artistic life of Oaxaca and has made improvements to the observatory, and a science center for the Oaxacan students; and

WHEREAS, Marion Mandell has worked tirelessly to benefit Albergue Infantil Josefino, a children's home which cares for 55 orphaned, abandoned and abused children and the Niño-a-Niño (child-to-child) program, which educates children with techniques to teach each other basic health care, nutrition and environmental awareness, which has reduced childhood deaths from double digits to 1 – 2 percent; and

WHEREAS, Marion Mandell, together with Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, has organized the donation of eight good-condition emergency vehicles from Palo Alto to Oaxaca, where such vehicles are named after Neighbors Abroad members Joe Carleton and Bob Wenzlau, Palo Alto Fire Fighter Jorge Salazar, former Fire Chief Nick Marinaro and an ambulance named after Marion Mandell.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Nancy Shepherd, Mayor of the City of Palo Alto, on behalf of the City Council do hereby proclaim our gratitude to Marion Mandell who has so magnificently served as an ambassador to our Sister-City of Oaxaca, Mexico and thank her for the time and effort she has expended to bring our two cities together in mutual appreciation.

Presented: December 1, 2014

**Nancy Shepherd
Mayor**

PRESIDENTS' REPORT

OAXACA



The last Monday in November we held a Family Information Meeting to drum up interest in the Summer 2015 Student Exchange to Oaxaca. Now we are awaiting the arrival of applications from interested students. So far we have received the two teacher references for one student (which are outstanding!) and are awaiting more references and applications.



If you are acquainted with any of the students who are considering submitting applications please suggest to them that they do it ASAP since the deadline will be coming up January 12. Those potential applicants who just heard about the program after the meeting should apply anyway. Students who will be fifteen years old or older by the summer of 2015 and are studying Spanish at any level are eligible to apply.

Contact me for an application—the sooner the better.

Thank you so much to those of you who have already sent in contributions to the annual Children's Projects Appeal. We all, as well as our friends in our Sister Cities of Oaxaca and Palo, appreciate your generosity tremendously! It is not too late to send in your donation—there is no "final deadline".

It was so nice to see so many of you at the annual Holiday Party at the beautiful Hardesty / Parker home. Great food, terrific entertainment and wonderful sociability.

As usual, please remember that we always have MANY ready-packed suitcases for travelers like YOU to escort to Oaxaca.

Please call or email me: 650-493-3798 or marionb@sonic.net.

¡Hasta luego!
Marion Mandell



At left, Marion Mandell and Palo Alto Mayor Nancy Shepherd with the city proclamation presented to Marion in recognition of her long-time dedication to the Palo Alto-Oaxaca sister-city relationship.



PALO

Mabuhay!

Holiday Party

Once again Nancy Hardesty and John



Parker hosted our annual Holiday Gala at their beautiful home. I don't believe that it ever looked more festive with all the holiday flowers and traditional Christmas tree. It was wonderful to see so many old friends and new. Shirley Gruber and her daughter Miranda Melen, both sopranos, and Mike Crager, accompanist provided beautiful music. My granddaughter played the piano for us for the seventh year. The food representing our six sister cities was delicious. Thanks to each of the chairs for their contributions!

Book Packing

A group of us—the Evans, Luz Sanchez, Joni Reid, Mary Ashley, Jeff Carleton and I packed three balakbayan boxes for our Children's Library. It was an outstanding collection and individual donors plus the trove from FOPAL made packing a delight. We hope to get a fourth box ready for shipment. Thanks to Chris Torres for handling the details.

Recent Typhoon Hagupit

We have not yet heard how Palo fared in the recent typhoon coming just a year after last year's devastating storm. It seems that Tacloban and Palo did not receive a direct hit this year and evacuation plans have helped reduce casualties.

Conference on Climate Change

The Philippines arrived at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Lima, Peru recently. Previously Filipino Climate change diplomat Yeb Sano had staged a hunger strike in an attempt to urge developed nations to cut carbon emissions. This year, however, a shift in strategy urged underdeveloped and developing countries also to take upon themselves the task of reducing their emissions. The Philippines assumed the chairmanship of what is now termed "Most Vulnerable Countries." Rising sea levels and increasingly strong typhoons must be responded to. The recent accord between China and the U.S. has served as an impetus in this cause.

Mabuhay!

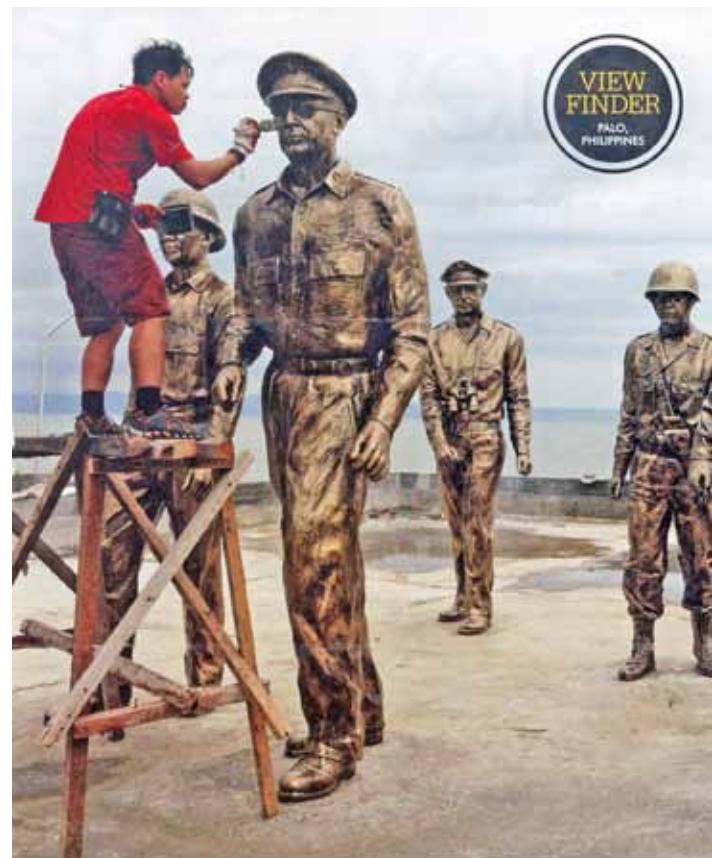
Ruth Carleton

*Neighbors Abroad member
Carol Stevens found the
picture at right in the
Christian Science Monitor*

LINKÖPING

After Marilyn Hunwick found contact information for the two Swedish engineering students who are studying at Stanford this year from Linköping University on the exchange program Marilyn wrote about in the last issue of *El Chisme*, Marilyn and Mary Ashley contacted them and invited them to dinner in early November. The Hunwicks, Ashleys and Evans were pleased to meet Erik Broberg and Sebastian Piwell and hear a little bit about their experience so far at Stanford. They are living in one of the graduate student high rise residences and getting around by bicycle. They are studying hard, and were looking forward to experiencing Big Game and a Thanksgiving dinner with some of their dorm-mates. We hope to see them again before their exchange year is up!

Bruce Wilner



HE HAS RETURNED, AGAIN

Conservator Rommel Aquino cleaned the statue of US Gen. Douglas MacArthur at the Leyte Landing Memorial in Palo, Philippines. The work was being done in advance of the 70th anniversary to the Oct. 20, 1944 return by MacArthur to liberate the country from Japanese forces, as he had promised. The site was hit by typhoon Haiyan last year. AARON FAVILA/AP



ALBI

150th Anniversary of Toulouse Lautrec's Birth (continued)

I already mentioned in the last *El Chisme* the Maurice Joyant exhibit at the Toulouse-Lautrec Museum in Albi, celebrating Toulouse Lautrec's birthday. Highlighting how important this painter is for Albi, many more events, small and large, local and remote, are taking place:

A beautiful Celebration Coin minted by *Monnaie de Paris*
Elegant murals in the Cultural Center of the City of Albi
Google.fr search page Doodle already seen by millions of French web surfers

Restaurants serving dishes from a recipe book illustrated by Toulouse Lautrec

Bars offering an absinthe-based cocktail (his preferred drink)

Commemorative stamps from Cyprus & Guyana

A special exhibit of lithographs by the Bank Austria Kunstforum in Vienna (Austria)...and more!

What a strong symbiotic link between Albi native Toulouse Lautrec and his city!

Latest News on a Tennis Players Adult Exchange...

I did not receive any news yet in addition to what I shared in the last *El Chisme*. I will keep you posted.

À bientôt,
Michel Campmas



Toulouse Lautrec murals at Albi Civic Center

TSUCHIURA

The Japanese exchange students are arriving on March 14 and staying until March 22, 2015. Tsuchiura has selected 6 boys and 10 girls to come to Palo Alto this year. We are very excited that it will be a week full of fun activities and the making of lifelong friendships. We currently have 11 families (5 girl hosts and 6 boy hosts) from JLS and Jordan to welcome them. However, we are still looking for 5 more host families for female students. We need host families with female students in Middle School at JLS, Terman or Jordan. If anyone is interested, please contact me at 650-224-9539 or jbuenrostro@apr.com

Jennifer



*Celebration Coin by
Monnaie de Paris*

Google Doodle



*Toulouse Lautrec
commemorative stamp
issued by Cyprus*



ENSCHÉDE

Jeroen Huijben (the first student to stay with me when the University of Twente study tour came to Palo Alto in 2001 and also for his internship in 2002) has been

selected to present one of his 3D Animation films for the "Vizzies"—a visualization challenge of the National Science Foundation (NSF). This is the link to see his film: <https://review.wizehive.com/voting/view/nsfvizziesgallery/27429/2436534/0>

The National Science Foundation and *Popular Science* are cosponsors of the long-running Visualization Challenge, now called The Vizzies. Entries are in one or more of five categories: Photography, Video, Illustration, Posters & Graphics and Games & Apps. The Experts' Choice winner in each category will be awarded \$2,500, and a People's Choice prize of \$1,000 goes to the best overall entry.

Contest results will be publicly announced in *Popular Science* and on popsci.com in March 2015. NSF will also publish the names of the winners on its website. (http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/scivis/challenge.jsp).

Jeroen is the founder of Nymus3D. He has been involved with computer graphics and science for many years, and did his first commercial project in 1995 while at high school. Jeroen graduated from the University of Twente with a Masters in Applied Physics in 2005. He is working on completing his PhD thesis.

Pensions

The Dutch state pension age will reach 67 years in 2021. The government ministers said the retirement age needs to be raised more quickly because spending on social security is rising more quickly than economic growth. A bridging system is being worked out for people who will be hit financially by not being able to retire when they expected.

Dutch News.nl (11/14)

Sinterklaas

Every November, Sinterklaas travels from his home in Spain to the Netherlands bringing presents and special treats for the children. He arrived in Amsterdam on Sunday, 16 November 2014. The holiday will be celebrated on December 5th, with the giving of gifts. But,



the Sinterklaas celebration is not free of controversy. The controversy revolves around the character Zwarte Piet.

Zwarte Piet first appeared in print as a servant of Saint Nicholas in *Sint Nicolaas en zijn knecht* ("St. Nicholas and His Servant") in 1850, but the tradition may date back as far as the early 19th Century. Traditionally Zwarte Piet's face was said to be black because he was a Moor from Spain. Today, some say that his face is blackened with soot as he has to climb through chimneys to deliver his gifts. The figure of Zwarte Piet is considered by some to be racist and the character has become increasingly controversial in the Netherlands in recent years. The character is usually a white person in blackface make-up with a black curly wig dressed up like a 17th-century page in colorful attire including a lace collar and a feathered cap. Critics say the role is outdated and offensive.

Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet remain popular in the Netherlands. In a 2013 survey, 92% of the Dutch public did not perceive Zwarte Piet as racist or associate him with slavery, and 91% were opposed to altering the character's appearance. However, beginning in 2013, several Dutch retail chains including Hema and V&D began changing their seasonal Sinterklaas products and displays in order to include a revised version of Zwarte Piet without the makeup or other racially sensitive characteristics.

"Many people who cherish the Sinterklaas tradition see nothing wrong in Zwarte Piet and perceive Dutch non-whites as complaining about discrimination that does not exist. Those who contend that Zwarte Piet is a racist stereotype find white Dutch people who refuse to change anything about it to be racist and heartless." (*The Amsterdam Herald*, 7/14 & *Wikipedia*, 12/14)

I have been in Amsterdam at the end of November when Sinterklaas arrived. A massive horde of children and adults of all ages and ethnicities dressed in Zwarte Piet costumes laughingly move in one direction-toward the harbor to watch Sinterklaas arrive. It was an interesting spectacle.

Cultural and religious traditions survive and are altered as people move from country to country. Whatever your tradition is, I hope you had a joyous and healthy holiday season.

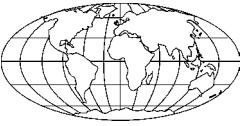
**Tot Ziens,
Joni Reid**



Sinterklaas
and
Zwarte Piet

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

January 2015

Wednesday, 14th, 7:30 p.m.

Board gathering at Evans residence (no official Board Meeting)

February 2015

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

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

Beginning in January, and continuing for several months, FOPAL (Friends of the Palo Alto Library) will be helping Neighbors Abroad by having a donation box to collect books for the Palo Children's Library in the Children's Room at their monthly book sales on the second Saturday of the month. Patrons at the book sale can purchase an extra book or two and leave them in the donation box, which will have a sign with information about the library and explaining the project to replace books ruined in the 2013 typhoon. Any Neighbors Abroad members with children's books in good condition to donate can contact Ruth Carleton at 650-324-3635 or ruthcarleton@sbcglobal.net

Next El Chisme Deadline—February 15, 2015

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