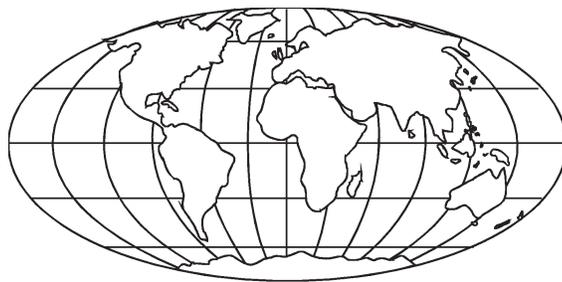


EL CHISME

de Neighbors Abroad

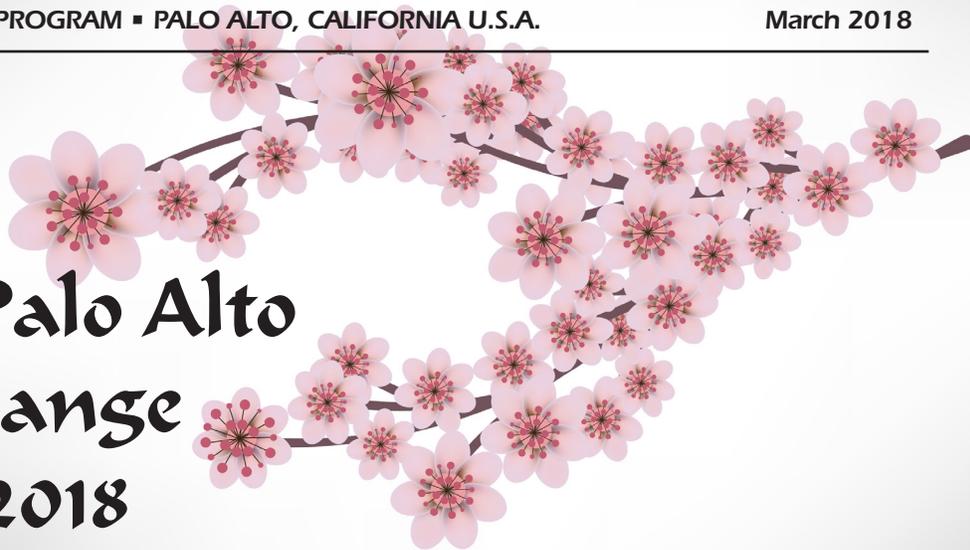


Volume 56, Number 1

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

March 2018

23rd Annual Tsuchiura - Palo Alto Student Exchange March 17-25, 2018



Sixteen middle school students, 9 boys and 7 girls from Tsuchiura, Japan will arrive in Palo Alto on Saturday, March 17 for a one-week stay with Palo Alto students and their families

Everyone is welcome to attend any of the following events to welcome our visitors.

In June, the Palo Alto host students will travel to Japan for two weeks to including a one week stay with the family of the student they hosted.

Saturday, March 17 Welcome Party for Students., 11:15 a.m.
J L S Middle School, 480 E Meadow Drive, Palo Alto

Monday, March 19 Students presented at City Council Meeting
7:00 p.m. PA City Hall 250 Hamilton Ave. Palo Alto

Friday, March 23 Fun night party with food and games 5:45 p.m.
Mitchell Park Community Center, El Palo Alto Room
3700 Middlefield Rd, Palo Alto

Sunday, March 25 Appreciation Party - Farewell 10:15 a.m.
Lucie Stern Community Center, Community Room
1305 Middlefield Rd, Palo Alto

Come see for yourself what a wonderful experience this exchange program is for these middle school participants.



President's Report

Adapting the mantra “it takes a village,” this year I can share “it takes a neighborhood”—and our members form an international neighborhood. I smile seeing that the success we are having as an organization is truly the cumulative impact of our members, our community partners, and our international friends.

While managing vast tax code changes, Chris Torres has engaged with Palo to frame needs and engagement to support the movement to a new library.

Jeannet Kiessling has set the bar with engagement for our newly minted sister city Heidelberg. She has worked with partners in Heidelberg to develop exchanges in dance, support a group of Heidelberg students to visit Gunn High School and participate in BEAM, and then send our own Palo Alto group of students there. A musical exchange is in the works.

Barbara and Joe Evans never rest, and organized a delegation of 17 from Linköping and hosted. The success brings new members to Neighbors Abroad including Susanne Wisen, a Palo Alto resident who grew up in Linköping.

As our anticipated sister city emerges with Yangpu District in Shanghai China, I am watching three new leaders emerge in our organization—Bing Wei, Michael Zhu and Ling Feng. The engagement with China is complex, and for me part of the adventure of Neighbors Abroad. We will host a delegation at the beginning of March.

Our team is larger than just our members. In this case we have changes at City Hall. Both Rob de Geus, as Deputy City Manager, and Chantal Gaines as an Assistant City Manager, have stepped up to drive the City's international relations. Chantal's incredible organizing skills led to an amazing visit with Linköping.

We continue having great engagement with our Council Members. Mayor Liz Kniss has inspired focus on our sister city in Albi. We welcome council member and Vice Mayor Eric Filseth as our new liaison. As you will read, Eric will be our representative to Tsuchiura Japan, continuing a tradition of council member Greg Scharff's marathon run in Tsuchiura.

BEAM continues to grow under the leadership of Cristina Cismas Florea, Gunn teacher as well as BEAM founder and Neighbors Abroad board member. I was so excited to watch a global presentation of BEAM with students from various sister cities Skyping into the classroom at Gunn. This shows new models of international engagement.

As partnering continues, Hank Heubach and I have been working to create a “1 + 1 = 3” relationship with our Chamber of Commerce. There is a mutual interest in celebrating Palo Alto and engaging internationally, and together with the Chamber we are finding ways to align

our efforts to make local and international impact.

Tsuchiura is blessed by the continued passion of Jennifer Buenrostro who picked up the reins to maintain our middle school exchange.

A focus of mine has been on the efforts to create good communication and have strong financing. As I close this note, please continued to know how honored we are to have Mary Ashley helping build our wonderful *El Chisme* and Jim Newton keeping our finances strong. We are working with member Lynn Grant to freshen our branding that recognizes the themes of Neighbors Abroad.

And finally, we can never forget where we come from. Please join with me in wishing our former Neighbors Abroad President Iraida Espinosa a happy and wonderful 100th birthday. She is counting on our best wishes, so let's be sure to send them.

Bob Wenzlau

2018 Palo Alto Chinese New Year Fair
Mar 4, 2018. 2:00-5:00
Mitchell Park Library



Palo Alto Chinese Community
Palo Alto Chinese Parents' Club (PACPC)
City of Palo Alto
Palo Alto Council of PTAs
Mitchell Park Library
Palo Alto Family YMCA

Lunar New Year Brings A New Sister City to Palo Alto!

As one of the most attended annual events in Palo Alto, the Chinese New Year celebration last year attracted over 2,000 visitors with wonderful music, a lion dance, tai chi, arts and crafts, and other local performances. The festival also includes delicious Chinese food. This year's event on Sunday, March 4th is even more special to the local Chinese community. Neighbors Abroad and the City of Palo Alto will be introducing a delegation from Shanghai Yangpu District during the event and celebrating it as Palo Alto's newest Sister City. We hope to you can join us on March 4th for the celebration. Please see the flier at left on page 2.

On the morning of March 5th at 9:00 a.m. at Palo Alto City Hall, three Yangpu political leaders will meet with Palo Alto Mayor Liz Kniss to officially sign the Sister City Agreement with Palo Alto. They are Mr. Xiaosong Zhang of Shanghai Foreign Affairs Office; Yueqi Li, the Yangpu District Committee Party Secretary; and Ms. Yaping Li, Vice Mayor of Yangpu District. Other members of the Yangpu delegation will also be present, and Neighbors Abroad members are welcome to attend. Monday evening at 6:00 p.m., the head of the delegation will address the City Council.

As an emerging sister city, our relationship is evolving positively. Yangpu already enjoyed a city-to-city relationship with the City of Palo Alto called a "Smart City Partner" that renewed in 2016 when then Mayor Pat Burt visited Yangpu. Based on that visit, the Chinese government accorded Palo Alto the equivalent of a sister city status. The Board of Neighbors Abroad has voted to make Yangpu a sister city, and has added board members to direct those activities. Formal consideration of the sister city by our City Council will be completed by the time the delegation visits.

For those of you who do not know much about Yangpu, it is the largest urban district of Shanghai with a population of 1.3 million people. Among the 30,000 companies in Yangpu, nearly 7,000 are technology enterprises. Yangpu is also the home to 14 universities such as Fudan University and Tongji University. In fact, Yangpu has designed their University Avenue, that links the business district to Fudan University, after Palo Alto's downtown in a live-work design of cafés, artwork and pedestrian-bike friendly environment with a street called University Avenue. For those interested in our emerging sister city Yangpu District, we have an active committee engaged in building cultural, education and commercial relations. Please check www.neighborsabroad.org for last minute plans for both the Chinese New Year Celebration and City Hall events.

Neighbors Abroad Partners in the Spotlight

The Morocco Library Project works with teachers in over 30 locations in Amazigh communities of Morocco developing English libraries for motivated high school students. The libraries are having a huge impact on underserved populations and especially girls. They are doing this in places that have not had libraries before, and it's a collaborative initiative with the local communities. MLP is also building a bridge of peace and friendship with each library.

MLC founder and Neighbors Abroad member Barb Mackraz is planning a fun and meaningful group trip to Morocco in the first half of April—it'll be a combination of visiting libraries, students, and teachers and seeing historical and cultural sites of Morocco with a true inside perspective. Barb says, "We're staying in the old medinas in each city we'll visit, and while out in the Sahara Desert we'll take camels out onto the sand dunes to stay in tents one night. We have room for 2 or 3 more travelers. People may contact me at barb@mackraz.com if they'd like to know more!" www.morocolibraries.org

OliveSeed is the parent organization for MLP and a second program, which is a partnership with a community-led nonprofit in Kenya called Friends of Maasai Mara. OliveSeed is collaborating with them on the first conservation education center in the entire Maasai Mara, a region that people come from all over the world to see for its rich wildlife and indigenous culture. A Gala in Palo Alto for this program last fall, attended by a number of Neighbors Abroad members, raised enough funds for the Friends group to purchase a vehicle, enabling their education outreach program at local schools. They are also organizing a photo safari trip to the Maasai Mara later this year, which will support the conservation education program. www.oliveseed.org

Neighbors Abroad has been a supporter of both Morocco Library Project and OliveSeed's partnership with Friends of Maasai Mara.

Friendship Force of the San Francisco Bay Area (FFSFBA) will celebrate World Friendship Day on March 10, 2-4 p.m. at the Los Altos Youth Center, #1 San Antonio Road, Los Altos. Commemorating the 41st year of Friendship Force International, this event will feature Jeremi Snook, President/CEO of Friendship Force International for three years, musical entertainment and stories of the club's recent trip to Nairobi, Kenya. The event is free, open to the public, and refreshments will be served.

Friendship Force was founded in 1984 by Wayne Smith, with the support of President Jimmy Carter, to promote global understanding and peace through international friendships. Under the motto, "Experience different views, discover the common ground," club members travel to other countries to build lasting friendships through homestay visits (hosting as well as traveling), seeking to overcome differences among people and nations. By combining home hospitality with cultural exploration, members reach a new level of understanding.

The non-profit organization, based in Atlanta, has over 15,000 members worldwide, with 350 clubs in more than 60 countries.

For more information, call 650-961-3539 or visit www.ffffba.org or www.friendshipforce.org (international).

LINKÖPING

Linköping: A Good Start to 2018

New interest in our Sister-City relationship with Linköping was sparked when a delegation from that city visited in late January. Representatives from the Mjärdevi Science Park and also from the Science Park in nearby Norrköping, accompanied city staff members, two representatives from Katedral School and a number of business leaders.

According to trip coordinator Kerstin Reimstad, the group appreciated the time spent with them by City Manager Jim Keene and Mayor Liz Kniss and enjoyed a meeting with Gil Friend on cooperation around sustainability.

In a full schedule arranged by Chantal Gaines of the City of Palo Alto City Manager's Office, the group toured several local companies and particularly enjoyed their tour of Facebook in Menlo Park. Another highlight was a visit to the Institute for the Future at Stanford.

There were seventeen members in all in the delegation. Four had asked for homestays and Neighbors Abroad members were happy to oblige. Bob Wenzlau and his wife Juli were hosts to Mayor Helena Balthammar. Kerstin Reimstad was the guest of Joe and Barbara Evans and the two men from the education establishment, Peter Hammers and Magnus Nyström stayed with Mary and Roger Ashley. Peter and Magnus were especially pleased to have a chance to visit Cristina Cismas Florea and the BEAM team at Gunn High School.

To add a Neighbors Abroad flourish to their visit, Bob Wenzlau and the board invited the delegation to a potluck supper on January 30, their final night in town. With lots of salads and casseroles, impressive desserts provided by Mary Ashley, Jeannet Kiessling and Carol Stevens, plus some donated beer and wine, the guests dined well. The only entertainment planned was conversation between citizens of our two cities which Bob had encouraged by stipulating that each table must have representatives from both countries!

The follow are excerpts from Mayor Helena Balthammar's speech before the city council on January 29.

"I am very happy to have the opportunity to build on our sister city relationship...established in 1987. It is a long period of friendship and special thanks to Neighbors Abroad which has contributed...to the sister-city relationship for the past 30 years.

"The relationship has grown and developed and there has been built a platform for cooperation...a long-term plan of action...where we can expect to work together on specific areas such as business, innovation, economic development, sustainability and school exchange."

Mayor Balthammar further foresaw that "there will be representatives from different sectors...students, teachers, lecturers, business partners ...involved in the cooperation between the cities in the future."

Barbara Evans



Above: Introductions at the potluck;



At left: Mayor Helena Balthammar of Linköping presents gifts to Palo Alto Mayor Liz Kniss.

Below: Cristina Cismas Florea, Gunn High School BEAM Project leader, meets with Peter Hammers, Director of International Relations at the Katedral School in Linköping, and Mayor Balthammar.



HEIDELBERG

Heidelberg and Palo Alto Lead Off With Two Youth Exchange Programs

Only a few months after signing the sister city contract, Heidelberg and Palo Alto are off to their first youth exchange. As part of the BEAM program (Business, Entrepreneurship and Math), founded by Gunn High School teacher and Neighbors Abroad Board Member Cristina Cismas Florea, 8 students from Heidelberg's English Institute will come to Palo Alto in early April (April 7-15). They will attend BEAM classes at Gunn and work together with their Palo Alto peers on BEAM projects. In June, 8 BEAM students from Gunn are invited by the city of Heidelberg's youth exchange foundation Stadtjugendring and the English Institute to come to Germany.

Later in the summer, the city of Heidelberg invited 3 or 4 young string musicians from Palo Alto to take part in the two week Exchange Orchestra program which meets in Heidelberg this year. The Exchange Orchestra brings together young musicians from Cambridge (England), Montpellier (France) and Heidelberg (Germany). They meet each summer in one of the cities. After two weeks of hard work, they will give a concert at Heidelberg's world famous castle. Check it out on youtube:

<https://youtu.be/g0K4J9IBfZE>

Jeannet Kiessling



Tsuchiura City has once again offered to host a Palo Alto runner to compete in the 28th Kasumiguara Marathon on Sunday, April 15, 2018. Palo Alto Vice Mayor (and City Council Liaison to Neighbors Abroad) Eric Filseth will be our representative this year. Here's Eric:

"I am currently a member of the Palo Alto City Council, and was recently appointed Vice Mayor this year (2018). Before being elected to City Council in 2014, I was a tech executive in San Jose for many years. During my corporate career I visited Japan a number of times; it is a wonderful country!"

I am 57 years old and have run three marathons: one standalone, and two as part of ironman triathlons. I am an active member of the Team Sheeper triathlon club, which also manages aquatics programs in Palo Alto and Menlo Park."

We wish Eric a pleasant journey to Japan and best of luck in the marathon competition.

PALO

The Giants in Palo celebrated the Christmas holiday on December 30 with a lunch and then a visit and presentation of gifts at the Pope Francis Complex Center for the Poor at the Archbishops Palace in Palo, Leyte.

The temporary library facility has been expanded to two rooms, but needs repairs to the roof, which Neighbors Abroad will help with. Moving is taking place gradually. The current library at the Pio Pedrosa building is still open for business and well-used.



Giants and visitors at the Center for the Poor. Sister Thaddeus from Thailand, sixth from left, oversees the Pope Francis Complex.



Giants visiting with the residents at the Pope Francis Center



Schoolchildren in the still-operating library in the Pio Pedrosa Building

Neighbors Abroad Leads Palo Alto to Buy “Carbon Offsets” from Sister City, Oaxaca, Mexico

Neighbors Abroad was integral to the first forestry-based carbon offset agreement between Mexico and the United States. In November 2017, Palo Alto City Council entered a contract to purchase 17,000 tons of carbon offsets from Oaxaca.

What are carbon offsets? As a community produces carbon dioxide from combustion that carbon may be “offset” by sequestering an equivalent amount of carbon, and then the climate impact is neutralized. Palo Alto’s gas utility is a green gas utility offsetting all 200,000 tons per year.

During a visit to Oaxaca in the spring of 2017, Neighbors Abroad president Bob Wenzlau visited with municipal officials where an offset project was discussed. In the intervening five months the idea matured including working with the Climate Action Reserve (CAR), a nonprofit in California that established a protocol for offsets agreements between Mexico and California. Integrative Organization of Oaxaca Indigenous and Agricultural Communities (ICICO) is based in the city of Oaxaca, and works with communities across the state of Oaxaca to enter into forestry offset projects. They identified a project in San Juan Lachao where 17,000 tons of carbon had been sequestered. The City of Palo Alto validated the project, and purchased these offsets recognizing the importance of the relation that Neighbors Abroad has with Oaxaca. “We are excited to partner with our sister city on this carbon offsets project that provides mutual benefits for climate protection and economic vitality,” said Ed Shikada, Palo Alto assistant city manager and general manager of utilities. “This is an excellent example of how environmental, social and economic issues can positively intersect when we collaborate with one another.”

The purchase is for \$136,000. The San Juan Lachao community asked Bob to visit the community in December. There he was greeted by 500 community members. A wedding dance celebration was performed to commemorate the impact of the agreement for the community. Each \$2,000 or 250 tons of carbons supports one family in the community per year.

“The agreement is but one form of sustainable development, and Neighbors Abroad working with the City of Palo Alto can help introduce lessons learned in our own shift to renewables, said Bob Wenzlau, president, Neighbors Abroad of Palo Alto. “This new agreement is a milestone in showing how sister cities can engage around sustainability. This agreement marks a sustainability agreement between a ‘developed’ region and a ‘developing’ region, balancing a trend where sustainability is only a theme of the developed world.”

Reference -

<https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/news/displaynews.asp?NewsID=4110>

Photos in Facebook -

<https://www.facebook.com/bobwenzlau/posts/10155281667908763>



John Nickerson and Amy Kessler of CAR, Bob Wenzlau, and Alberto Ramírez of ANCE the verification entity at the forest in San Juan Lachao, Oaxaca.

PALY STUDENT CONNECTS WITH ORPHANAGE

Neighbors Abroad wishes to recognize Palo Alto High School Junior Anthony Xie for his extraordinary service project for the benefit of the Orphanage in Oaxaca.

Anthony had the opportunity to meet two of our past exchange students to Oaxaca. They told him all about their great experiences and also about the projects that Palo Alto, through Neighbors Abroad, does to help in various ways, especially children in Oaxaca.

When they mentioned bringing books and clothing to the Albergue children, that appealed to him so much that he began on his own to collect childrens books in Spanish to to Oaxaca. He soon appeared at Marion Mandell’s house with 100 childrens books in Spanish and also several large bags of both girls and boys clothing to contribute to the orphanage. Marion says it will be a rejuvenation for the Albergue library and is already packing them to send with travelers.

Anthony says that he initially collected books simply by asking all the people that he knew as well as getting some from the Spanish immersion preschool nearby in his neighborhood. Friends and were happy to donate lightly used clothing.

Now he is planning to hold a larger book drive with Escondido School, which has a Spanish immersion program as well, to collect even more books this year.

Thank you Anthony!



OAXACA

Well, it's time to think about the summer 2018 Student Exchange to Oaxaca. This edition I will introduce you to the two fine students we have at the moment, and by next edition we hope we will have more students for you to meet.

The JonesMitchell family of Palo Alto is sending their third and last daughter to Oaxaca this year. The previous two exchangees from this wonderful family had terrific experiences with their exchanges—as did the father of the family, Bill Mitchell, thirty years ago when he represented Palo Alto as an exchange student to Oaxaca. This year's family member is Naja JonesMitchell. Her past experience in a Spanish Immersion program provided her with impeccable language skills, which gives her a great head start. She is on her school's basketball team, is a student body ambassador, a cheer leader and has been a junior counselor at the Jack and Jill Family Camp. She was a Grand Prizewinner at a Science Fair at her school and is on the Honor Roll. One of the reasons she wants to go to Oaxaca is because the trip has left such a big imprint on the rest of her family—her sisters, her aunt and her father. She feels sure it is also right for her. She has an open mind and loves to try new activities. Her teachers give her terrific recomendations!



Our second exchangee this summer will be Paige Ashton. Paige's teachers also feel that she is an ideal candidate for the student exchange because she cares deeply about other cultures and people. She also has strong leadership qualities and served as a counselor at a leadership camp. She is great at meeting new people and making them feel welcome. According to her teachers she has a good understanding of Spanish and the practice of speaking it daily in Oaxaca will stand her in very good stead.



Both girls have wonderful welcoming personalities and will be both gracious guests in Oaxaca and hosts here afterward.

If any of you readers out there are acquainted with other teens who might like to apply for the Oaxaca exchange, be sure to give them a copy of the information flier inserted in this edition of *El Chisme*. They should apply AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

On another topic entirely, do you all realize that in October of this year the Albergue Infantil Josefino (the orphanage in Oaxaca that we all help support) will be 25 years old? They will be celebrating that auspicious occasion in mid October and would love to have visitors to help celebrate. An interest-finder form is included below to get an ides of how many people would like to go to Oaxaca to help them celebrate. If you are at all interested in our organizing a trip, please sent the interest finder to me ASAP. If enough people are interested we'll plan a trip with estimated costs and possible activities and send the details out.

Marion Mandell



INTEREST FORM

OAXACA ORPHANAGE 25th ANNIVERSARY TRIP – OCTOBER 2018

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

Others in your party: (names) _____

Would you be bringing any children? Yes ___ No ___ If so, Names and ages _____

Is this your first trip to Oaxaca? Yes ___ No ___

If you are traveling alone, would you like to be assigned a roommate? Yes ___ No ___

I would like to room with: _____ or I prefer my own room Yes ___ No ___

Please return this form ASAP by mail to : Marion Mandell, 250 Parkside Drive, Palo Alto, 94306 or email the information to marionb@sonic.net or call 650 493-3798 .

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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, Tsuchiura in Japan, and Heidelberg in Germany. Its activities have served and continue to serve the community interests of international and intercultural understanding.

Bob Wenzlau, President	248-4467
Jim Newton, Treasurer	854-4360
Mary Ashley, Newsletter	494-1829

<http://neighborsabroad.org>



Neighbors Abroad Plus Community Events Calendar

March 4, Sunday, 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., 2018
Palo Alto Chinese New Year Fair. Mitchell Park
Library, 3700 Middlefield Road. Palo Alto

March 5, Monday 9:00 a.m. Sister City Signing
Ceremony. Palo Alto City Hall, 250 Hamilton Ave.
Palo Alto. 6:00 p.m. Address to City Council. Palo
Alto City Hall

March 10th, Saturday, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m., World
Friendship Day by Friendship Force of the San
Francisco Bay Area. Los Altos Youth Center, #1 San
Antonio Road, Los Altos

March 17 – 25, one week Saturday to Sunday,
Palo Alto – Tsuchiura Middle School Student
Exchange. See cover for schedule of activities that
you can participate in.

March 21, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Neighbors
Abroad Board Meeting. 1409 Dana Ave. Palo Alto

April 18, Wednesday, 7:30 p.m., Neighbors
Abroad Board Meeting. 1409 Dana Ave. Palo Alto.

Visit our website at www.neighborsabroad.org and
our Facebook Page: Neighbors Abroad for
the latest schedule of events and many more photos
of past events.

Next El Chisme Deadline—TBD

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