

ASHEVILLE SISTER CITIES INCORPORATED



Building Global Connections

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ASCI Newsletter December 2014

Promoting International Partnerships

Message from the President: From where I sit

By Russ Martin

Two years seems like a long time when one volunteers for a position of leadership. However, my term as president of Asheville Sister Cities has literally flown by. What an extraordinary group of members we have! Successful



delegations from abroad, trips to visit our sister cities, winning recognition from Sister City International for one of our projects, and above all the wonderful cooperation and volunteerism of our

members has made my term an absolute delight. Thank you everyone!

Follow ASCI activities on the web!
<http://ashevillesistercities.org>

Like us on Facebook - keep up with ASCI news.

REMEMBERING BARBARA

Our beloved Barbara Ann Hodgson, age 78, of Asheville, passed away on October 5, 2014 at the Keever Solace Center. Born April 25, 1936 in Paris, Kentucky, the second of five children, to Golda Mae Gilbert and Sanford Daley Rinesmith.

She graduated from the Nazareth School of Nursing, Lexington, Kentucky and spent her career in health care. She lived in Asheville for 35 years and actively served numerous community organizations: American Field Service; Asheville Community Theater, Historic Resources Commission, Pack Place, Grove Park-Sunset Association, Preservation Society, Riverlink, Asheville Symphony; Coalition of Asheville Neighborhoods, and various precinct roles with the Democratic Party.

Barbara shared her passion for life, travel, theater, music and Christmas with so many. She was a



keen, talented leader in the community, a generous and caring friend, a loving Oma, and an entertainer who loved to throw a party. No one was ever a stranger and she welcomed them with open arms. She was a proud "Chestnut Chick" and one of her favorite organizations was **Asheville Sister Cities, where she dedicatedly served on the board of directors and organized the Saumur, France Committee.**

Barbara's historic home on Evelyn Place was also well known in Asheville as the "Christmas House" where she maintained magical year round Christmas displays, including approximately 50 Christmas trees. Her house was always open to many groups and school children. She hosted countless fundraisers and receptions for organizations such as the Old Timers Model A Club and delegations from around the world. Her love of all things Christmas extended to world-wide travel and co-organizing the Golden Glow of Christmas Convention in Asheville in 2012. One of our favorite memories was her home's upside-down Christmas Tree. Barbara and her great friend Marylyn Seyler, also in ASCI, had wonderful collections of Christmas trees. Barbara kept her trees on display for everyone to enjoy.

She is survived by her sister, Clara Coughlin; brother, William Rinesmith; three daughters, Jenny, Meg and Suzanne Molloy; three sons-in-law, Alan Tessier, Cameron Binnie and Terry Albrecht; and seven grandchildren, Emma and Henry Tessier, Erin and Heather Binnie, and Zoie, Jack and Clayton Albrecht. She is predeceased by her son, Tom Molloy; sister, Dottie Rinesmith; brother, Charles Rinesmith and "mate" husband, Dennis J.R. Hodgson. Dennis was also a great part of Asheville Sister Cities.

A tribute of love to a dear friend who has shared so much... BARBARA

It seems that we have known Barbara Malloy Hodgson for a lifetime, and certainly we did. Barbara was a dynamo that seemed would never run down. Her daughter Suzanne spoke of how the doctors exclaimed that her spirit was struggling for life when the body showed all signs of

succumbing. But as must happen with all life at some point the energy ceases and internal life support recycles into the next dimension and one continues the path into eternity.

This Kentucky-born belle entered Asheville society as a single mother raising a bevy of young who have all attained success in their endeavors. They were introduced to an eclectic world enlarged to meet those on this planet far beyond the borders of the oceans surrounding North America. Exchange students were moving in many directions as the Malloy kin embraced and became part of the throng.

Ever the nurse Barbara was known to be tending friends in distress. Evolving from these supplications came many more friendships. In time one friendship grew into loveliness as she and Dennis found a new life together.

The Hodgsons were a traveling team embracing new friends from around the world. Likewise, Barbara entered into the world of Christmas with their vast collection of yuletide memorabilia...and it remained with her through her final days. Of enormous pride was the restoration of the William Jennings Bryan house at 107 Evelyn Place subtitled, "The Christmas House" as the decorations never came down ...and still lives in the lives of her family and in the memories of her many friends.

Asheville Sister Cities became a worthy vehicle for this worldly citizen to propel many into the corners of our world just as she had accomplished in doing for her family. Barbara chartered into Asheville Sister Cities Inc shortly after its founding. Barbara became "Keeper of the Achieves" as ASCI grew. It takes sturdy tables to hold these huge scrapbooks that are filled with the details ranging from the initial searching for the first Sister City in the former Soviet Union to recent events. This spans twenty-four years.

Within these massive journals is the illumination of the many individuals participating in welcoming the world to Asheville and in sharing Asheville with the world as "Citizen Diplomats". Barbara took leadership in that role. Along with her husband Dennis, they paved the way to Saumur, France in developing this relationship with Asheville.

Ever the Kentucky Belle, once again with her husband Dennis, perhaps the only Australian Kentucky Colonel ever, they introduced all delegations to the Big Derby if the visitors were in town that day. Otherwise, the famed Mint Julep was readily available at 107 Evelyn Place. Not to upstage her home town, Barbara also initiated our many guests in the society of honorary Tar Heels with the elixir of the mountains and governors decree.

When the door of this life closed for Barbara her spirit continues to live in her family, her extended family into many corners of the world...and all those who knew her in so many different ways.

*The following is a note from Barbara which she read at Ken's June 6, 2004 birthday celebration:

FOR ALMOST A QUARTER OF A CENTURY KEN AND I HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TOGETHER THROUGH OUR COMMON INTERESTS: THINGS INTERNATIONAL; HERITAGE, LOVE OF FAMILY, PEOPLE, OUR CITY, OUR COUNTRY; DESIRE FOR A BETTER WORLD: AND OF COURSE, THE GRAPE. WE MET THROUGH AFS WHEN CONSTANCE WAS A TEENAGER AND WE WERE IN OUR MID-BLOOM. THEN WERE HIS ENTERTAINING WINE TASTINGS. NOW FOR ABOUT TWELVE YEARS WE HAVE SHARED THE MISSION, GROWTH AND EXCITEMENT OF SISTER CITIES. AS STRONG, SOMEWHAT OPINIONATED PEOPLE WE HAVE OCCASIONALLY DISAGREED ON HOW THINGS SHOULD BE DONE BUT HAVE ALWAYS REMAINED FRIENDS AND RESPECTED EACH OTHER'S WAY. I HAVE LEARNED MUCH FROM KEN I TRUST HE HAS LEARNED A BIT FROM ME. NOW, I TOAST THIS MAN WHO, ALTHOUGH HIS ROOTS ARE NORTHERN, IS A TRUE SOUTHERN GENTLEMAN WITH OLD WORLD ELAN. TO KEN: RACONTEUR, SOMMELIER, FRIEND, LOVING FATHER, ATTENTIVE HUSBAND, CITIZEN OF THE WORLD MAY YOU HAVE OLD WOOD TO BURN, OLD WINE TO DRINK, OLD FRIENDS TO TRUST, OLD BOOKS TO READ. A VOTRE SANTÉ! LOVE, BARBARA

And Barbara...right back at you...We honor you in all these ways that you honored us.....

Irene and Ken Richards

A few thank-you notes to Barbara from old friends...

Thank you so much for your enthusiasm and support of our neighborhood. If it's a great place to live, it's because you had the foresight to start a neighborhood association and embrace new ideas and new people! I appreciate your sense of humor and guidance. I will never forget sipping lemonade under the lovely gazebo in your garden and the mint juleps in your kitchen at the first Tour of Homes progressive dinner. You have made a difference for all of us. *Suzanne Escovitz*



When it came to being of service, if there was a need to be filled or a problem to be solved, you never hesitated to step up to the plate. In 2012, the Father's Day Garden Tour took place in Grove Park. I asked you to allow us to use your lovely gazebo for a lemonade stop. Unbeknownst to me at the time, you were knee-deep in preparations for another benefit at your home. Nevertheless, without a

moment's hesitation you said yes. Not only did you let us use your gazebo, but your garden looked like a million bucks! *Marsha Shortell*

Thank you for the Christmas House and for your mastery of Etiquette and of Diplomacy and of Tact. Thanks for everything you do! *Valeria Watson-Doost*

As the best host ever, you always made us feel welcome and valued. Thank you again for all the good times. *Lynn Eddy and Don Kessler*

I recall one particular party. It was a brutal winter snowy day when you called us. It seems you were to have hosted a large dinner party but because of the weather it was cancelled. So, you called around asking neighbors to join you for food and camaraderie – and come casually. We did and had a most memorable evening with some folks we'd never met before. It really didn't matter, as your home was a welcome respite from the storm. It was a special evening! *Linda Sarubbi*



You and Dennis opened your warm, inviting, historic home for gatherings large and small. No matter... your parties are legendary for their uniqueness, welcome, creativity, liveliness and fun. Your home oozed with joy! *Jan*

Speaking for the Board and the membership of Asheville Sister Cities, Barbara, we miss you, but you left us all better individuals and helped make ASCI the organization we are so proud of.

INTRODUCING TWO NEW FACES OF ASCI

OUR NEW SAUMUR COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR ALLISON WEEMS

While speaking no other language than pure Southern, I grew up on a family farm in Tennessee. I learned to garden, make molasses and feed cattle with my grandparents, who happened to be my next-door neighbors too. My parents were entrepreneurs selling everything from gasoline and beer to fine china and jewels. We didn't travel much, unless a yearly trip to Hilton Head counts. I had a fulfilling childhood learning the tricks of the trade from my parents' businesses, helping on the family farm and roaming around the state playing golf in junior tournaments. That's a simplistic overview of my first eighteen years, but the day I began studying French under Dr. Akers at Wofford College, my life took on a new worldly dimension. A year and a half later, I boarded my first commercial airplane outbound for Chicoutimi, Québec. Despite the frigid January temperatures while studying abroad in Canada, I immediately fell in love with language and travel. Elated by the revelation, I called Mom revealing my decision to major in French. Her initial response verbatim was, "What the hell are you going to do with that?" (Not exactly the reaction I had hoped to hear.) Well, so far, I have earned a B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. in French, taught students in kindergarten through graduate school, founded the Asheville French School, and co-led 75 college students abroad. Now, I hope to be able to put my skills to use with ASCI and the Saumur Committee. The point is, studying and speaking French have changed my life for the better.



OUR NEW KARPENISI COMMITTEE CHAIR SOPHIA UNGERT

Sophia Stefanidis Ungert joined Asheville Sister Cities to chair the Karpensisi Committee. Her parents are both immigrants from Greece who raised her in Queens, NY, with a strong Greek-American identity. She studied political science at Tufts University near Boston, MA, and spent her junior year in Paris studying French history and literature at the Sorbonne, and comparative European politics at the Académie des Sciences Politiques. While a senior at Tufts, she met her future husband, Frank Ungert, a German traveling through Boston. Following graduation, she pursued a career in Hong Kong and New York City and dated Frank long-distance until finally moving to Frankfurt, Germany, to marry. She worked as an investment banker for Deutsche Bank in London and Frankfurt before leaving her job to have her children – Harrison (now 15), Maximilian (13), and Anna-Olivia (11). In 2005, she moved with her family to Asheville, NC, where Frank – a structural engineer with a background in timber frame construction – found employment. Sophia is employed by UNC Asheville as a Corporate Relations officer. She speaks fluent Greek, French and German and travels to Europe frequently. Her children spend a few weeks every summer with their German grandparents in either Germany or Spain. With quite a bit of family still living in Thessaloniki, Katerini, and Veria, and owning a piece of property on the island of Euboea, Sophia has been to Greece many times. The last



time she visited was 2003, when she traveled to Chalkidiki to celebrate her daughter's Greek Orthodox christening with family.

The **San Cristóbal de las Casas** committee is announcing details for the 2015 delegation trip, May 13-20.

Photo of Greg Clemons with 2012 mayor Francisco Martinez Pedrero at a ceremony giving "official papers" for Sister Cities arrangements.



The group traveling to San Cristóbal will include university students and Asheville Sister Cities members and friends,



always a great mix! The estimated cost per person is \$1800.00 including round-trip airfare from Charlotte to Tuxtla Gutiérrez, the state capital. This also includes ground transportation/travel to the sister city of San Cristóbal de las Casas. Also included are visits to archeological sites such as Palenque in the state of Chiapas and local sites in and around San Cristóbal. For more information or questions about this

exciting trip please email the Chair of the San Cristóbal committee, Dr. Greg Clemons at [ncchamo\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:ncchamo(at)gmail.com). Stay tuned for other exciting plans for 2015 being made by the San Cristóbal de las Casas committee. ¡Feliz Navidad y Próspero Año Nuevo, 2015!

Saumur Committee Reminder Our After-the Season Christmas party will be held on **January 11, 2015** at the **River Ridge Clubhouse**. Please contact Allison at [weems.allison\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:weems.allison(at)gmail.com) or Jacque at [jnightengale\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:jnightengale(at)gmail.com).

Want to study French? Allison is offering classes. Contact her at the above address.



ANNUAL MEETING!

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND

ASHEVILLE SISTER CITIES

ANNUAL MEETING!

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25,

3 P.M. – 5 P.M.

AT

Grove Arcade Boardroom

Please bring an appetizer to share.

Beverages Provided

Come and hear the

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2014

&

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE, 2015

*New member applications
and Membership Renewals will be accepted*

EXCITING NEW INITIATIVE

For all members of ASCI

The Board of Directors has approved the implementation of a “giving society” as a new initiative for fund development. This funding will be used specifically for scholarships for students and deserving adults as well as for major projects. No one knows better than you the impact this organization makes on the lives of the students who travel with us on delegation trips. These experiences are life changing for us all, but especially for students who may be traveling abroad for the first time – some leaving North Carolina for the first time!

This is our first effort to establish a giving society for designated scholarship/ major program funds. Members responding to this first request will be “Founding Members” and will meet to celebrate, name the society and further develop guidelines and goals to be used in future efforts. We hope to keep this as simple as possible to respect your time commitments as well as financial responsibilities.

*Dues for the Giving Society for the year 2015 will be \$100 per person plus membership dues as an individual or family.

*Your name will be used to announce the Society in the newsletter and at events. *You will also be introduced at our Annual Meeting to be January 25th, 2015.

*We request that you attend the first year gathering (summer of 2015) to be a part of the planning process.

We hope that you can consider this great opportunity with your gift of \$100. Please print out and return the form and mail with your check to ASCI as shown. Many thanks for your continued support of ASCI.



For more information, please call Gwen Hughes at 298-6620, or email gwengh@charter.net.

Left) Angelica Adkins, A-B Tech Student and Tykara Young, Warren-

Wilson College student traveled with a delegation to Valladolid in November 2011 with the help of ASCI scholarship funds.



Right) During the January 2014 Delegation to Valladolid, UNC Graduate Emily Quinlan visits with Carlos Quinones, who spent 6 weeks doing business internships in Asheville in 2013,

ASHEVILLE SISTER CITIES, INCORPORATED

WELCOME!

FOUNDING MEMBERSHIP IN THE ASCI GIVING SOCIETY

Please fill out the form below and return with your check made out to Asheville Sister Cities, Inc., PO Box 2214, Asheville, NC 28802.

You may also include your membership dues for the year 2015. A letter acknowledging your Society membership donation and membership dues will be sent upon receipt of your information and check.

Thank you for helping to ensure that the ASCI Mission of is fulfilled by helping to provide opportunities and scholarships.

NAME(S): _____

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Email: _____ **Phone:** _____

Past/current ASCI involvement: _____

Yes, I would like to be involved as a Founding Member of this giving society.

My check is included for the amount shown:

\$100pp x _____ = \$ _____

Membership dues for 2015:

Individual -\$25 : _____

Couple/Family - \$40: _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

ASCI EVENTS COMMITTEE PLAN FOR ACTIVITIES IN 2015

Osogbo committee – planning for our delegation to Osogbo in August, 2015

--- Contact Brit Castañeda at [thatguy1944(at)gmail.com]

Valladolid and San Cristóbal committees – ongoing project planning (see this issue!)

--- for Valladolid contact Karon Corp at [kkorp(at)attglobal.net]

--- for San Cristóbal contact Greg Clemons at [gclemons(at)mhu.edu]

Vladikavkaz committee – student art supply acquisition and distribution

--- Contact Constance Richards at [schantzi(at)aol.com]

Saumur Committee – Contact Jerry Plotkin at [geraldplotkin(at)hotmail.com]

Karpenisi Committee – meeting on November 05, 6pm, 33 Page Ave.

--- Committee Chair Sophia Ungert [sfungert(at)gmail.com]

ASHEVILLE SISTER CITIES, INCORPORATED MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ E-mail _____

It is important that we know your interests and some of your skills. Committee involvement is encouraged.

What Sister Cities are you interested in?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Saumur, France | <input type="radio"/> San Cristóbal de las Casas, Mexico |
| <input type="radio"/> Karpenisi, Greece | <input type="radio"/> Vladikavkaz, Russia |
| <input type="radio"/> Valladolid, Mexico | <input type="radio"/> Osogbo, Nigeria |

What are your language skills?

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> French | Proficiency _____ | <input type="radio"/> Spanish | Proficiency _____ |
| <input type="radio"/> Greek | Proficiency _____ | <input type="radio"/> Russian | Proficiency _____ |

Other _____ Proficiency _____

Annual Membership Dues: January to December, tax-deductible. Address on newsletter cover!

New Members and Renewals: Student \$10.00, Individual \$25.00, Couple/Family \$40.00, Corporate \$150.00

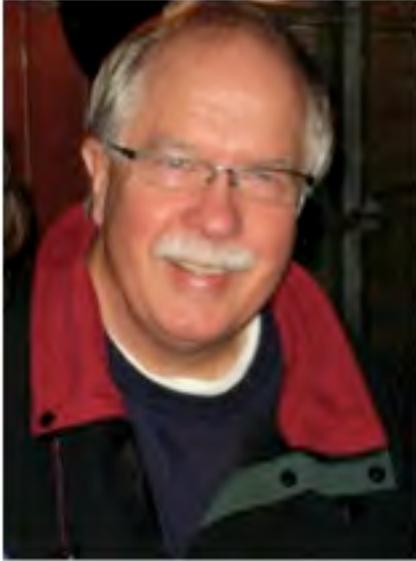
Welcome New Members!

Bonnie Siegel and Craig Maillous
Scott and Will Ransco
Sophia Ungert
Allison and Jeff Weems

FROM THE BACK OF THE ROOM

Greetings and best wishes for the New Year!

Our gratitude and appreciation go to Russ Martin for his successful tour as President of Asheville Sister Cities! It was good to have a man so well known and influential in city circles to promote our cause. Thanks, Russ!



Looking ahead, I will be privileged to again serve as President of our organization. I look forward to moving forward on several initiatives that have been underway, not the least of these a partnership with a city in Scotland, which is being lead by former ASCI President, Rick Lutovsky. There are delegations to assist in planning and offer support to; among them are the two to Mexico: Valladolid and San Cristóbal de las Casas.

One of my strong points is the various administrative “fine points” of an organization, and I will be interested in reviewing our administrative goings on and improving/streamlining them as necessary.

Alice Keller will be of inestimable assistance in that effort, as well as those with that wonderful thing called “institutional memory”, e.g., Ken Richards and Gwen Hughes, of our Special Projects committee.

In short, I look forward to an invigorating time as your President, and I look forward to any number of you answering the call to

service when I do call and ask you to serve on a committee or contribute your talents to a special function or event. Thanking you in advance for your service,

Andrew W. Craig, Ph.D.

President-Elect

OSOGBO Committee: UN Office for South-South Cooperation to Present Sister Cities International with the “2014 South-South Cooperation for Partnership” Award

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation will present Sister Cities International’s Sino-African Initiative (SAI) with the 2014 South-South Cooperation for Partnership Award. Valeria Watson-Doost and Brit Castaneda have been the heart and soul of the Asheville connection.

SAI, a unique two-year program that ended earlier this year, was designed to address the manner in which Chinese, African, and U.S. cities can collaborate on economic development and urban poverty issues in Africa. By working with Chinese, African, and U.S. public diplomacy networks, local municipal governments, and businesses, this initiative aimed to create strategies that ensured development and poverty alleviation projects addressed community needs, and promoted transparent business practices and government accountability. SAI will be recognized for its innovation as a unique program that leveraged trilateral, North-South-South partnerships. Partnerships included the African-U.S.- Chinese cities of Nairobi-Denver-Kunming, Osogbo-Asheville/Raleigh-Xiangyang, Zomba-Urbana-Haizhu District.

“SAI drew on the inimitable strengths of the sister city network – dedicated volunteers from across the community. The award is a recognition of years of hard work that our staff and sister city program members put in to ensure this program was a success,” said Sister Cities International CEO Ms. Mary D. Kane.

ASCI CALENDAR OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| ASCI Board Meeting | 3 rd Thursday of each month – 5:30 pm, 33 Page Ave. |
| San Cristóbal Committee | 2 nd Thursday of each month – 5:30pm, 33 Page Ave. |
| Saumur Committee | 4 th Monday of each month – Contact Committee Chair for venue. |
| Karpenisi Committee | Time and Date TBA |
| Valladolid Committee | Last Wednesday of the month - 5:30pm, 33 Page Ave. |
| Osogbo Committee | 3 rd Tuesday of each month – 6:00 pm, 33 Page Ave. |
| Vladikavkaz Committee | Time and Date TBA – Contact Committee Chair. |

If you have a particular interest in a committee, please email the chairperson to confirm time & place.



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