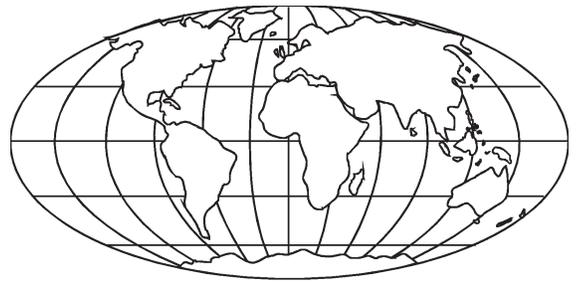


EL CHISME

de Neighbors Abroad



Volume 54, Number 4

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

July-September 2016

Neighbors Abroad Annual Meeting, with Dessert and Speaker Sunday August 28, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Community Room, Lucie Stern Community Center 1305 Middlefield Road, Palo Alto

It is important that many of you attend. We need to vote for new board members Maya Escudero and Lee Merkle-Raymond who have joined the board and become sister city vice-presidents. But we will also be asked to re-elect these existing board members for another term: Ruth Carleton, Jim Newton and Bruce Wilner.

This meeting is also an occasion to thank Barbara and Joe Evans for their many years of service as co-presidents of the organization, as well as taking on many other responsibilities, including membership, hospitality and directory editors, and to welcome new Neighbors Abroad president Bob Wenzlau, who takes over on September 1st. Please see both outgoing and incoming presidents' messages on pages 2 and 3.

*Speaker for the evening will be Iranian-born scientist Azadeh Tabazadeh who has written **THE SKY DETECTIVE: A MEMOIR: HOW I FLED IRAN AND BECAME A NASA SCIENTIST**. Dr. Tabazadeh earned a doctoral degree in chemistry from UCLA. She has worked at NASA, taught at Stanford University, and published more than sixty scientific articles. She will describe life in Iran, before and after the 1979 Islamic Revolution and during the war with Iraq. Azadeh fled Iran in 1982, two years after the Iraq invasion of Iran. Her book will be available for purchase and autographing.*

Please gather at 7:00 for social time before a short Business Meeting at 7:30 followed by a dessert buffet. Speaker at 8:00 p.m. Q & A at 8:30. RSVP to Barbara & Joe at 650-856-0618 or evansbanjo@sbcglobal.net so we know how many to plan for.

Outgoing Presidents' Report

Nine years ago when we became co-presidents of Neighbors Abroad, we looked on it as an interim position. As they say, "Wow, time flies!" Now we have the opportunity to turn over the presidency to Bob Wenzlau, who brings both experience and enthusiasm to the office. We are grateful to Bob for stepping up to lead the organization.



We are also grateful to all the long time board members who have also become friends:

Mary Ashley, who has been both president and secretary

and has edited *El Chisme* with energy and skill for many years; Michel Campmas, long-time VP and tour leader for Albi; Ruth Carleton, whose devotion to all the Children's Projects went beyond her position as VP for Palo; Betty Gerard, who produced press releases for every occasion and served as interim secretary for more years than she would have liked; Marion Mandell who is famed for her commitment to Oaxaca and will always remind visitors to "take a suitcase to the Albergue;" Jim Newton, our invaluable treasurer and advisor on all things financial; Chris Torres who keeps us in touch with doings in Palo and Bruce Wilner who, with his past happy memories of Linköping, has fought to keep that sister-city relationship alive.

Among long-time members now retired from the board, Heidi Berndt, put forth extraordinary effort as program hospitality chair; Margaret Greene as board member at large, helped everyone; Keiko Nakajima organized the Japanese student exchanges that lead to the creation of the Tsuchiura-Palo-Alto sister-city affiliation; Joni Reid, longtime VP and cheerleader for Enschede, seemed to have been hostess to a good proportion of the Dutch population; Carol Stevens the founding VP for Albi, initiated a whole series of adult exchanges.

All whose names we have listed are the board members who have brought vitality and kept Neighbors Abroad alive. They deserve our thanks and yours.

We have also had the pleasure of getting to know new board members over the last few years: Laurence Albet-Khatib added another French accent to the board; Jennifer Buenrostro who, with Diana Nemet, has been VP for Tsuchiura since the retirement of Keiko Nakajima, and organized and lead several trips to Japan with the exchange students; Maya Escudero joined Chris Torres and brought new energy to the Palo connection; Hank Heubach as a former president, provided special insights; Lee Merkel-Raymond has already traveled to Albi as VP and made contacts there; Diane Nemet was the behind the scenes

organizer for the Tsuchiura exchange; Luz Sanchez who is from Oaxaca, demonstrated her willingness to take part in all NA events; Bob Wenzlau in just a few years on the board, introduced an email list for NA, promoted social media and facilitated the donation to Oaxaca of Palo Alto's surplus fire vehicles.

Over the years these board members have also contributed to the enjoyment of the general membership: Michel Campmas and his wife Danielle, along with Carol Stevens kept the Bastille Day tradition alive with French food and songs. Bruce Wilner and his Linköping committee produced an extremely popular crayfish dinner for many Augusts. And Ruth Carleton and Marion Mandell with their fund raising (Family Fun Day, Holiday Party, and piano concerts) worked very hard to keep the money flowing to the Children's Projects.

Looking back, a few things stand out in our minds. Joe remembers kite flying with the visitors. I have great memories of square dancing with the French visitors in 2009.

2009 – Forty-fifth anniversary party for one hundred people, celebrating the Oaxaca-Palo Alto affiliation in 1964 with Kiwanis serving on the barbecue line.

2010 – Magnificent Japan Festival largely organized by Keiko Nakajima, then VP for Tsuchiura, and her committee 2011 Tsunami caused devastation on the coast of Japan, canceling the planned exchange visit. Neighbors Abroad raised money for earthquake relief under the leadership of Treasurer Jim Newton.

2012 – "International Café" with food from all six sister cities and talk by author Donia Bijan.

The 25th anniversary of the Linköping-Palo Alto sister-city affiliation: the visit of a delegation from Linköping was celebrated with Barbershop and Blue Grass music and chicken barbecued by (guess who?) the Kiwanis.

2013 – Neighbors Abroad's 50th anniversary: Exhibition "Around the World in Six Cities" was held in the Lucie Stern Ballroom with booths showcasing each of the sister cities, games for children including a Midsommer pole created by Mary Ashley and French crepes prepared by Hubert Morel-Seytoux and Chula.

2014 – Palo, The Philippines was overwhelmed by a typhoon in late 2013. Tens of thousands of dollars were donated in 2014 both by the city and by Neighbors Abroad members and immediate aid was dispatched for medical and food relief.

In June a delegation from Palo Alto including then-Mayor Nancy Shepherd and other council members and City Manager Jim Keene traveled to Oaxaca to celebrate the fifty year anniversary of the Oaxaca Palo Alto relationship.

In September the Japan Tsuchiura Festival celebrating the fifth anniversary of our affiliation was held at Lucie

Stern Community center with demonstrations, displays, food and entertainment by dancers from Japan.

2015 – Continuing our tradition of inviting an interesting person to speak at our General Meetings, we learned about Neighbors Abroad member Barb Makraz's project that is helping to build English language libraries in high schools in Morocco.

This was the latest in our attempt to bring speakers with a global theme to our general meetings. In the last eight years, we have heard a Knight Journalism Fellow who photographed in Afghanistan, met Fullbright scholars from Indonesia, Tanzania and South Korea, and learned about the Kiwanis International vaccination campaign against Tetanus in Guinea. We will have another internationally themed talk at the August General Meeting.

Barbara and Joe Evans

Recently in Washington D.C., Sister Cities International, of which Neighbors Abroad is a member, celebrated its 60th birthday. Neighbors Abroad was honored when two of its past presidents, Ruth Carleton and Patricia Sanders, were added to its "Circle of Distinguished Leaders". Neighbors Abroad has been the recipient of awards from S.C.I. in the past—including several for efforts in Oaxaca under the leadership of Marion Mandell. The work of S.C.I. is nationally and internationally renowned. We are proud to be part of such an important and worthy organization.

Editor's note:

*Circumstances beyond my control prevented me from completing the July-August issue of El Chisme in time for July delivery. This issue includes that information, plus more recent news. Since I will be away for an extended period this fall, the next issue will come out November 1. Watch for updates on our website and at <https://www.facebook.com/NeighborsAbroad/>.
Mary Ashley, Editor*

Incoming President's Report

To Neighbors Abroad Members,

While I am enjoying chaperoning students in Oaxaca, a lull provides an opportunity to share some thoughts about Neighbors Abroad. I share these thoughts in the context of being tapped as the future president of the organization.

First, I can confirm the relevance of our service here in Oaxaca. While both committees are aging, we are supporting vital youth both through the exchange of students between Oaxaca and Palo Alto, but also through the eyes of the children we support at the orphanage Albergue Josefina. The eyes of the young and their smiles is ample fuel for our good work.

At the orphanage we spoke about mutual challenges affecting both Neighbors Abroad, but also our companion organizations in Oaxaca including the sister city committee and the overseers of the orphanage. The challenge is to bring in another generation who can extend the tradition for another 40 to 50 years. Each organization is challenged by lack of younger members.

As the President-elect of Neighbors Abroad, my interest is to build our base with parents and young people. While some might offer that the Internet and its communication have diminished the value of international exchange, I have realized that the Internet is a tool that creates interest in deeper exchange. For example, on the airplane flying down to Oaxaca with our Palo Alto students, I found that each arrived already achieving rich friendships through online chat—and the meeting was closer to a reunion than awkward first encounters. In many respects, the Internet can be our ally.

Looking to be president, I carry my own ideas that will blend with other members of the Board. I am excited that our Board has chosen to support a high school intern to bolster our social media and web presence with pictures and stories that might entice a younger community.

From our involvement with the BEAM program, Neighbors Abroad could pursue deeper integration of sister cities where the language of the sister city is in common with that of the core languages at our high schools—Spanish, French, Japanese and German. German, yes, to me this invites considering developing existing relationships we have with Heidelberg to create an alignment between language and sister cities.

As president I hope to invite considering evolution of how we are organized. For example, when sister city relationships have quieted, is it reasonable to consider honoring them with an emeritus status, but not burdening ourselves with a relationship that is no longer vital. There are some sister cities where this a reasonable question to ask.

We will of course have fun, as I have fun working with Neighbors Abroad. I look forward to seeing you all at the general meeting, and brainstorming on the future and reminiscing on past exchanges.

Bob Wenzlau



TSUCHIURA

Diana Nemet has regretfully resigned from her position as co-Vice President for Tsuchiura, as she and her family are moving to San Luis Obispo. In this issue we have articles and

pictures from Greg Scharff's experience at the Kasumigaura Marathon, and impressions of the Palo Alto-Tsuchiura student exchange by a student and a chaperone. *Jennifer Buonrostro*

On Wednesday, June 1, we sat down with Vice Mayor Greg Scharff at Printer's Inc Café on California Avenue. We were interested in hearing about his visit to Tsuchiura where he ran in the Kasumigaura Marathon in April.

Greg was invited and hosted by Tsuchiura City. He told us that he primarily runs half marathons, but since the sister-city relationship has developed, he has been hoping to be invited to run in the famous Kasumigaura marathon which takes place around Lake Kasumigaura near Tsuchiura. This marathon is unique in being also a Blind Marathon. Blind runners are guided by a cord connecting them to another runner. Greg was especially impressed by the coordination necessary between two people so joined who are also running very fast.

At the urging of fellow council member, Cory Wohlbach, who was also at the café, We asked Greg about the weather. While the weather was quite reasonable in the first couple of hours, a strong storm came up after that, so only the very fastest world class runners escaped a soaking. Besides the intense rain, there were "Tsunami Force" winds. Greg and most of the other runners were caught in the downpour.

But we heard nothing but good things about the rest of his trip. His very gracious hosts accompanied him to all the sights of the region. He was also taught how to make soba noodles and do calligraphy. And a special highlight was his visit to both an elementary and a high school.

Asked for his overall opinion, Vice Mayor Scharff spoke of the attention and care that he received. In his words, "The hospitality of Tsuchiura was amazing!"

Barbara and Joe Evans



At left: Greg mugs with school-boys; at right: local newspaper story with Greg, German guest runner and Tsuchiura mayor showing solidarity

The 12 days I spent in Japan flew by in a flash. The people, food, and culture of Japan have me hooked. I can't imagine not being able to visit ever again. The tastes of Japan still linger in my mouth. The onigiri, tempura, soba noodles, and the meals made by my host family were delicious. But the people were just as wonderful, if not better. The days I spent at my host student Haruka's middle school were some of my best. Everyone helped each other, regardless of gender or age. Similarly to America, Japan's schools were full of chatter. I was incredibly nervous to go to school. In the end, I shouldn't have worried at all, everyone was so polite and kind--it amazed me!

It was sad to leave the school grounds on my last school day. It was time to venture to other parts of Japan, meaning staying at Japanese hotels during our journey. The coolest hotel we stayed at was the Hakushika-so Ryokan hotel. Students and chaperones alike got to sleep on tatami mats. Not only that, but there were public baths there too. It was like a scene straight out of an anime. The architecture of the Nikko temples was beautiful. Of course, I believe a lot of the terrain of Japan is beautiful. The green rice fields, mountains, and trees were very refreshing. If you ever want to go outside of the U.S for vacation, Japan is one of the top countries I recommend.

Exchange Student Erin Lucich



Above: Exchange students watch noodle-making demonstration.



Ready to go on race morning!

When I think about Tsuchiura it brings to heart and mind so many vibrant and wonderful memories of the student-exchange program and the fellowship and friendship of our Sister Cities. For the sixteen students from Palo Alto, the visit was an opportunity to immerse themselves with their homestay host family, converse in the Japanese language for which they have been studying, attend and learn from the Tsuchiura Middle School's curriculum, and see Japan's many facets, from the fast-paced life in Tokyo to the beauty of the countryside and extending to the harmony of Zen meditation and Tea ceremony at a Kojo-an in Tsuchiura. The twelve-day visit was truly a memorable experience.

Arriving in Tsuchiura, with much anticipation in the air, we were greeted to an incredible reception—our host families' greeting was like a homecoming of loved ones. Full of excitement, a sea of smiles as students immediately rekindled their friendship and bonded with their family

As our students settled in over the weekend they enjoyed an array of traditional Japanese family meals and learned about traditional customs and etiquette. There were family activities, sightseeing Tsuchiura and neighboring cities, visiting Ushiku Daibutsu (World's tallest bronze Buddha), shopping at the Aeon Mall, attending the local and school festivals, and gathering with other families for an evening of fun fireworks.

For the next several days our Palo Alto students attended the Tsuchiura Middle Schools with their host student, immersing themselves in their studies. While the students attended school, the chaperones were invited to visit and tour several of the Middle Schools in which our students were attending. There we met with the School's senior staff and learned more of the school history and visited various classes. In contrast to Palo Alto schools, the initial site when entering a Tsuchiura school is immediately seeing rows upon rows of shoes placed neatly in the student bins in exchange for slippers which is a traditional custom of wearing clean shoes when inside. It's impressive to see the cleanliness and organization of these schools.

On one visit to a middle school, our chaperones had the opportunity to have lunch with the Tsuchiura students. The lunch period differed greatly from the experience of Palo Alto students who typically eat lunch in the cafeteria or outside on the school grounds. Instead Tsuchiura school lunches are held in their homeroom in which the hot meal served was similar to a meal at home. For the first time in this program's history, we also had an opportunity to tour one of Tsuchiura's High Schools to view the school club programs. A much larger campus in comparison to the Middle school it continues to carry forward the curriculum in the student's path to college. The high school also has a vibrant student body. When we arrived, we were greeted by the students from the International Club who took us on a tour of the many after-school activities. One in particular was the calligraphy club where the chaperones were able to try their hand at the art and afterward were presented a special gift to frame the art work by the students. Another presentation was by the Koto, or Japanese harp, club where the students played beautiful music for us. We then continued our visit through the halls where

students practiced with their music and then over to the gymnasium to view the badminton, table tennis, Kendo, Shorinji-Kempo, and pop-music dance clubs. The school tour experience was breathtaking and unforgettable.

Not to be overlooked. During our stay in Tsuchiura we also experienced a mild earthquake. Being from California it seems to be normal but it was truly amazing and unexpected.

I could not have imagined how exciting and rewarding our Sister-City student-exchange program was until I was able to experience this personally. I, along with all of the students and chaperones, had a wonderful and unforgettable experience. I got to meet and know so many people and make new friends along the way. Accolades to Diana and Jennifer, whom through their dedication, love, and fostering made our Tsuchiura-student-exchange program successful. We are truly and deeply grateful for the support of our dear friends with Tsuchiura International, the Tsuchiura City Office, the many Tsuchiura city officials, Tsuchiura Middle Schools, our Neighbors Abroad organization, and most cherished our Palo Alto and Tsuchiura families whom without their support could never have made it possible.

Chaperone Wilfred Tsang



Working on lessons in a middle school classroom.

Students mimicing "the three monkeys" in Nikko—see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil!



Welcome presentation in Tsuchiura

Dear Friends:

I am saddened to announce I received an email from Hilda Ferwerda about the passing of her husband and Neighbors Abroad's friend Paul Bijleveld on May 28, 2016. Paul and Hilda had a young son named Hugo.

Paul visited Palo Alto many times meeting with Palo Alto city officials and with members of Neighbors Abroad. Paul was a lively, highly intelligent, and an immeasurably kind man. He was conversant on many subjects, had a ready smile and gave one his full attention as he engaged in conversation.

Paul was a full professor in Regional Development at Saxion University of Applied Sciences in Enschede. His specific areas of interest included, regional innovation policy; academic spin-offs' Kennispark projects and labor management. Paul had extensive experience consulting and working with local and international governments in advancing and implementing strategic development programs.

Paul was instrumental in realizing the Economic Alliance Agreement between the cities of Palo Alto and Enschede in 2007. This bi-city agreement is the only such instrument in the constellation of sister cities in Neighbors Abroad.

Paul will be sorely missed by all who had the extraordinary pleasure of knowing him. I certainly will miss him a great deal. I always looked forward to visiting him and Hilda when I went on my annual visit to Enschede.

Joni Reid



We have received news from the Philippines from Librarian Sheilane Cabag.

Greetings!!!

The GIANTS celebrated their 65th Anniversary on May 1, 2016. Election of new officers was followed by induction of the new officers and turn over of the Presidency from Giant Francisco P. Villaganas Jr. to Giant Felipe Ygrubay Jr. Our new President, Mr. Felipe Ygrubay Jr., is an employee from LGU, a secretary from Sangguniang Bayan Office, now detailed at the Mayor's Office as Administrative Officer. He is 47 years old.

The Library is doing good... Since June, start of classes, many students are coming here to research and read. Hoping for more books from you.

We now have a Facebook account. GIANTS CLUB OF PALO, INC. I printed out the e-mails you sent, and will give it to our new president. Thank you very much.

We are all doing fine here. Regards to everybody.
Sheilane



Above, new Giants officers taking the oath of office. Top right, Anniversary sign and decorations. Below right, new officers and spouses pose for an official picture.



OAXACA

The student exchange has come and gone, but happy memories and many photos remain. A few here, but many others at <https://www.facebook.com/NeighborsAbroad/>

In late May, before the exchange, Deirdre Morrissey and John La Blanc and their two boys Olin and Magnus, friends of Mary Ashley, visited Oaxaca on a volunteer medical exchange. Deirdre is a Nurse-Practitioner in San Francisco. They arrived late after being marooned in Houston, but were able to travel with Paty Molina to the mountains to visit remote villages, where they slept overnight in the church in one village, and really got to see Niño-a-niño in action. Back in Oaxaca City, Committee members graciously took them to the Orphanage and also the Calpulli project. They report that the experience was a unique opportunity for them all and were greatly impressed with all the projects.

Palo Alto exchange students left for Oaxaca on June 14th with chaperone Bob Wenzlau, who was also facilitating the delivery of fire fighting equipment from City of Palo Alto to Oaxaca through Neighbors Abroad. (See his report below.) Students arrived back in Palo Alto with their Oaxacan brothers and sisters on July 12.

Marion Mandell

Two and perhaps up to five fire vehicles are in play for Oaxaca. For sure one ambulance will arrive. The City Council has approved in late May a donation of an ambulance to Oaxaca. The ambulance had a surplus value of \$10,000. Through Council's action, \$7,000 was donated by the City of Palo Alto with the balance made up of a \$2000 donation by Neighbors Abroad and a \$1000 purchase by the State of Oaxaca. Neighbors Abroad will also cover transportation to the border as well as fees to cross the border. These may approach another \$3,000. While this shipment is pending, Oaxaca has also expressed interest in a large surplus "Quint" vehicle - the name quint denotes that the vehicle provides five important firefighting functions. Finally, there are two additional surplus ambulances that may be donated by a private party. The many opportunities has slowed the movement of the vehicles, but this is for a good cause. Given the unrest in Oaxaca as well as the construction of a new fire station, our vehicles fill an important role.

Bob Wenzlau



Family members wish 'Bon Voyage' to Palo Alto exchange students on June 14th at SFO.

Welcome to Oaxaca! 50th Anniversary Banner does double duty for excited families and committee members.



Early stop at the orphanage to deliver many suitcases from Palo Alto.

Below, Andrew Hansen with his Oaxacan brothers and sister.

Below, John La Blanc with sons Olin and Magnus deliver suitcase to local villager. Below right, Olin plying soccer with Albergue children



EL CHISME

de Neighbors Abroad

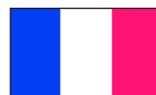


Neighbors Abroad
P. O. Box 52004
Palo Alto, CA 94303
U.S. A.

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

August 2016

Sunday, 28th, 7:30 p.m.

Neighbors Abroad Annual Meeting with Dessert and Speaker; Community Room, Lucie Stern Community Center, 1305 Middlefield Rd. PA. See cover for more information.

September 2016

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

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

Neighbors Abroad members and friends are invited to attend the World Affairs Council Peninsula Chapter Fall Kickoff on Sunday, September 18th, a lecture and wine/hors d'oeuvres reception at a lovely Atherton estate. The topic is "Foreign Policy Challenges for the Next President". The distinguished speaker is Jeremy Weinstein, formerly National Security Council Staff and Deputy to the UN Ambassador under the Obama Administration, and current Professor of Political Science, Stanford University. Check in: 2:30 pm; Program: 3:00 pm; Reception: 4:30 pm. Council Members: \$10; Non-members: \$15; Students: \$5. Register by Thursday, Sept. 15. Call (415) 293-4600. For information, call Carol Stevens at (650) 494-0757."

Next El Chisme Deadline—October 10, 2016

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