



Newsletter Las Noticias

February 2008



Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City Committee P.O. Box 3718 Santa Barbara, CA 93130

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Presidents Corner

Hola Saludos,

We are, all of us, on the way to a happy and rewarding new year. Finishing off 2007 in Bakersfield, Marcia and I were able to spend some wonderful evenings with our members there. To our Bakersfield members I would like to say thank you for your hospitality. The New Year for SB/PV Sister Cities began with our first activity on January 2nd. The dinner meeting! Sadly, attendance was low, under fifty. We did, however, have a great fun filled evening. The meeting was structured around a slide show of pictures of the PV Visitation. We have three CDs of Pictures. If you would like copies please call or write me. At the meeting we were fortunate to have more than one prospective new members attend as guests. This is a very good way to start of the New Year. A warm thank you goes out to those who invited and hosted these newcomers. For the next meeting we are expecting the Law Enforcement Exchange Sheriffs Deputies to speak to us about the exchange and tell us about what they presented to the Officers in Puerto Vallarta.

The US / Mexico Sister Cities was held on the week end of the 11th in Ontario, California and by all accounts was a great success. I am sure the

success was due in large part to the efforts of President Gil Garcia whose many hours and days of preparation rewarded all of us with profound results. Following the conference four Mexicans from Union de San Antonio visited Santa Barbara and Goleta. The purpose of their visit was a step toward establishing a Sister City relationship with Goleta. Four of us hosted them in our homes for the visit and others prepared the food for wonderful dinner parties that were enjoyed by all who participated. Although this visit was not officially a Santa Barbara/Puerto Vallarta Sister City activity, it was an opportunity to spread the one-to-one citizen diplomacy of that we are all about.

On January 25th many of us are planning to attend a Traditional Irish Folk Music Concert to benefit at-risk youth programs in Santa Barbara. You saw this in the last issue of Las Noticias. It is/was sponsored by your Committee, and if you were unable to attend it is not too late to support this project. You may do so by sending your TAX Deductible check with a memo that it is for the "Irish Concert" to our PO Box. *Gracias por tu apoyo!*

Regarding Cinco de Mayo, there have been two committee meetings so far and a third one is planned soon. To date we are on track acquiring sponsors, but there is more to do. If you have any free time at all please volunteer to help. Call me and I will get you on the list. I would like to stress that one of the many ways that the Cinco de Mayo project is relevant to Sister Cities is that it provides a great example to our Sister City, through demonstration, of how to make your own City a better place to live. This is a real opportunity to put a little back into our own community, and I am not asking for money but instead a little time and effort. *Gracias para tu.*

On a personal note I admit that my Spanish does not seem to be improving.

However, my appreciation of the beautiful language is growing. One of my greatest stumbling blocks is that I rarely get the chance to practice. *Practicas formans perfeccionor!* I know that I am not the only member whose Spanish language skills need improvement, so I ask those of you who speak the language to please give some thought to ways that you can help the rest of us. Call, or e-mail, me and share any of your ideas.

Now is the time to finish your preparations for 2008. Please, Please, Please think about our up coming activities for the year and give them a high priority. For example: Our Strawberry Festival will be here before you know it. The dinner meetings are always on the First Wednesday, *Miercoles*, of every month and your attendance is very much needed because you are part of the committee and we miss seeing you. The best example of attendance for all of us is Lupe and Danny Hernandez. The visitation will be happen again this summer and we will need housing for our guests and other help during this very busy and happy time. Visiting with our brothers and sisters from Puerto Vallarta is one of the most important activities we do and we do it only once a year here in Santa Barbara, so hold that guest room and prepare to party. *Viva la Fiesta!*

This month my award for the most active non board member goes again to Marti Garcia. When you see her at the meeting tell her "Gracias." Runners up, are Rose and Kevin O'Dea, do not forget to thank them as well. Come to the dinner meeting, celebrate your membership, meet new members and enjoy the company of your friends. On the Subject of being and traveling together, *Dime con quien andas y to dire quien eres.*

Sincerely,

Craig Nielsen, President

NEXT BOARD MEETING

6:30 pm Tuesday, Feb 12 is our board meeting at the Re/Max Realty, 1900 block of State St. It was formerly the McDermott-Crocket Funeral Home.

WELLNESS



A sympathy card was sent to the family of

Polo Cardenas

also to

Virginia Gough.

She lost her 12 year old grandson

Get well cards were sent to

**Hilda Plag
and Gloria Franco**

If you know of anyone who is ill, PLEASE let either a board member or DEE DEE LANE know! No cards can be sent unless you let us know how our members are doing. The phone numbers for your board members are included in every newsletter. Dee Dee may be reached at 967-7596. Thanks for your help!

UPCOMING CALENDAR

Jan 25 - The Irish Are Coming!
Concert at Marjorie Luke Theater to benefit At Risk Youth Programs

Apr 24-27 – Mexico National Conf – Torreon, Coahuila

May 3-4 - Cinco de Mayo Festival.

Oct 8-12, 2008 /S Mexico International Conference in Irapuato, Guanajuato. Stay tuned for more details!

BADGES

Let me know when you are coming to the dinner meeting so I can be sure to have your badge. Please either call me at 684-4724 to make arrangements to pick up your badges or come to our dinner meeting and see what a great time we have! This is what Sister City's all about. People to people.

Alice Vazquez

DESSERTS

Again....we have some great members who are willing to share their baking talents.... Please call Monica Falcon at 962-8406 and let her know if you're interested in sharing!

DINNER MEETING

Wednesday, February 6, 2008

Social hour: 6:00 p.m.

Dinner: 6:30 p.m.

Cost: \$18.00

Menu: Chicken Ballentine

Place: Elks Lodge

Program: Report from Police Officers on PV Training

Call Joe or Alice Vazquez at 684-4724 for reservations by Sunday, February 3. We prefer you make your reservations by e-mail to "baja.lot@verizon.net" if at all possible. PLEASE REMEMBER TO CALL IN NO LATER THAN **SUNDAY**....OR AS SOON AS YOU RECEIVE THIS NEWSLETTER!! Reservations are called in to the Elks on Monday afternoon. PLEASE CALL TO MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS EARLY!

Renewals

The following members have renewed and are continuing to have fun being part of this organization!

**Fernando/Elsie Zungri
Marlene Bulfone**

US/Mexico National Conference – Ontario, California
January 11-13, 2007

You missed an incredible conference. Besides seeing our friends from Puerto Vallarta (Ismael and Alicia Perez and Laurel and Hito Garcia) we met and made more friends. This was Gil Garcia's last act as National President and he went out in a blaze of glory! It was a most successful conference. The workshops were well attended and quite informative and lively. And besides Gil receiving plaques of recognition from various parts of Mexico besides his plaque as outgoing President, we also had one of our Santa Barbara students receive a \$1,000 scholarship. The student is Vanessa Crawford, daughter of Rosanne and Harold Crawford. And....Santa Barbara once again won the Excellence Award. If you read last month's newsletter, I'm sure you saw the list of accomplishments that took place in 2007.

Be sure and come to the February meeting and share the glory! Gil might even be

persuaded to give a recap of the conference....try it....you'll like it!!

TRUE MEANING OF SISTER CITIES

I would like to share with you all one aspect of my visitation to Puerto Vallarta in 2007.

We all found out who our host families were going to be on the second day, at our breakfast. It was from that point on my girlfriend Bertha Castelo and I were with our hosts Ramon and Ester Gonzalez almost daily. Yes, I had met both of them before, but now we were able to get to know these two wonderful people on a very personal level.

We were taken to breakfasts, lunches, dinners, shopping, (took me to give the stuffed animals to the sick children at the hospital) and even taken miles away on a day trip to Sayulita for a lunch on the beach and tour of that beautiful city.

We all got along like peas in a pod, we

laughed so hard so many times that tears were streaming down our cheeks. We learned so much about them and them about us, and our words flowed freely on all levels, as if we had known each other for twenty years. Our feelings for one another grew stronger everyday. This was the real highlight of our trip.

Now this is the true meaning of what Sister Cities is all about. This is what Audrey Welby told me about Sister Cities when she got me to join. It's about people-to-people, and social exchange. You were so right Audrey!

It was very hard to say good-bye at the airport to our very close friends, but I know we will have this wonderful couple as true friends forever and ever.

Dan Michel

Trash Talk

The Chinese people use three billion plastic bags per day causing the country to refine 37 million barrels of crude oil each year to make the bags. Last week, the Chinese government, citing the problem of serious pollution and waste of energy and resources announced the ban on ultra thin plastic bags encouraging citizens to return to the use of cloth bags and baskets. They will issue fines and confiscation of product to firms that ignore the new law. They are encouraging people to return to carrying cloth bags, and using baskets for their vegetables, etc. When you have a population of 1.3 billion and rising, you cannot mess around with those pesky plastic bags.

In the United States most recently, the city of San Francisco banned the use of plastic grocery bags. But what about us? What about the lucky folks who call Santa Barbara home? Damn those bags are convenient. They make our hectic lives easier. But is it really that difficult to switch over to cloth bags or recycled paper bags especially if we become aware of what is at stake?

These bags are found in the middle of our oceans polluting and killing marine life. They do not biodegrade. They are around for a million years. Animals ingest them, especially turtles and marine mammals. They are lightweight and float and fly easily, littering our environment and contaminating soil and waterways. They are made from the extraction of petroleum that is a non-renewable resource.

We need to stop what we are doing, take some deep breaths and decide what kind of a world we are creating and is it really that difficult to start making some changes. Cloth bags can be found at thrift shops. You can buy them on line or at Trader Joe's. At the very least, we can reduce our dependence on plastic bags, use less and take the bags we do use back to the market for recycling. In the words of one of my favorite clichés, we can be part of the solution rather than part of the problem. Any comments, additions, suggestions, please write to "Trash Talk" at SBPV Sister Cities, P.O. 3718, Santa Barbara CA 93130.

Jan Oliva

Good News Section



Blanche Johnson celebrates her 92nd Birthday



Joe Vazquez hits the Big 70!



Happy Birthday



Javier Bravo, Mayor of Puerto Vallarta & Craig Nielsen at the Law Enforcement Exchange in Puerto Vallarta

2007 - 2008 Board of Directors

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U.N. YOUTH FORUM ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY OCTOBER 25TH 2007

Our youth forum was once again held prior to our adult UN dinner at the Cabrillo Arts Pavilion on October 25th 2007. The subject was Environmental Sustainability. From 3:30pm to 5:30pm youth leader Vanessa Crawford and ten other students from Dos Pueblos and Santa Barbara High Schools shared their concerns and visions in this area. They are hoping to create a community service project later in the Spring. Some goals are to recycle more, consume less and find ways to increase community awareness about our fragile environment. Jan Olivas was a big help with this event.

Our youth group is now participating on an international level through the OneWorldYouth project with Sister Cities International. We have asked Puerto Vallarta to team with us on Millennium goal #7 Environmental Sustainability. One of our new members Christina Demetro with her background in outdoor education and passion for environmental protection has been very helpful in interfacing with participation in this international project.

For more information go to www.oneworldyouthproject.org and see the button at the top that says project sites. You will see Santa Barbara and Puerto Vallarta along with other countries participating.

At this time we are in the active selection process

for our students going to Puerto Vallarta on our Student Exchange this spring. This year our students will go to Puerto Vallarta over their spring break, March 26th thru April 5th. We are fortunate to have Rosemary Santillan as our student chaperone. She is bilingual and works with students all the time in the foreign student program at Santa Barbara City College.

At the US/Mexico Sister Cities conference Friday January 11th thru 13th I was very proud to accept on behalf of our entire committee the Excellence Award. Our Board was presented this award for all of our wonderful projects including our student exchange program.

Vanessa Crawford received a student scholarship award of \$1000.00 towards college expenses. Her essay can be viewed at www.usmsca.org. Vanessa is very grateful for all of the opportunities she has had with Sister Cities from student exchanges to international conferences. She is in the college application process now and graduates from Santa Barbara High School this June.

As always it is a pleasure working with fellow board members on this special program and having the support from our membership.

Rosanne Crawford



