

ANNUAL REPORT May 20, 2009

The 25 "People and Places of Sarasota" photos are now on the SSCA website. Click on the link for "SSCA Photo Contest" on right side of home page. You will then see a link on top of the page to view selected photos.

People and Places photos from all seven of our Sister Cities will be judged soon and then be placed on the SSCA website.

Plans are underway now to exhibit photos on a slide show at the Art Center Sarasota on July 12 and at the opening exhibition at the Ringling College of Art and Design on November 6 with a reception.

Greg Carlson and Kim Sheintal, SSCA photo contest co-chairs, want to thank the city directors, vice city directors, and those people who helped obtain the photos from each of the seven Sister Cities. Special thanks to Bill Sikes and Bob Reck, because without them the photos would not be able to appear on the website

Dunfermline, Scotland – Interim City Director, Bill Wallace

Dunfermline has had a very busy year with three separate exchanges and the hosting of two other families related to our sister city tie – and most of it has happened with the past 45 days!

In early April, Dunfermline film maker Murray Grigor was honored by the Sarasota Film Festival, receiving top honors for his documentary "Infinite Space". The committee created a 3-day special SSCA and Caledonian Club group of events to acquaint Murray and his companion with Sarasota – and to get him to the Asolo Repertory Theatre! It was Murray and his wife who were primarily responsible for saving the Dunfermline Opera House from the wrecking ball and – Voila – it is now the main stage of the Asolo. When he saw it, he was stunned with the beauty of the restoration.

On April 15, a joint luncheon was held with The Caledonian Club Club of Florida West, the sponsor of our tie with Dunfermline and the creator of the Scottish display at the Airport. Pauline Mitchell, President of the Caledonian Club, presented the program which highlighted David Ewles, a renowned Scottish photographer, whose work will be the primary focus of the new, now completed display.

Dunfermline set a record by submitting 64 plays (of the 5,520 sent in) and two were acclaimed winners. Those two winners and their chaperones were here for five days of festivities including the Awards Day at Florida Studio Theatre and

Holly Hall. Winners this year included Callum Fairbairn, who was a winner last year and Craig Walton. Interestingly, Craig is both Callum's cousin and best friend! Both are students of Miriam Foy, who has had multiple FST winners in the past!

This summer, there is the possibility that Interim City Director Bill Wallace will be in Dunfermline following the Sister City International Conference in Dublin, Ireland in late July. His mission will be to explore new and possibly different exchanges with our Scottish sister city.

Hamilton, Ontario – City Director, Gloria Grenier

The Hamilton committee has concentrated on planning a tour to Hamilton and its surroundings which will take place September 19 to the 24th, 2009.

The main purpose of the tour is to acquaint Sarasotans about our oldest Sister City.

Anne Termaten of the Hamilton Mundialization Committee has been instrumental in arranging the details for the tour and since she spends a few months in the St. Pete area, Anne was available to make an excellent presentation at our January luncheon.

Hamilton is submitting entries in the photo contest, "People and Places" For 2010, our 2 cities are planning a sculling contest in Sarasota. Hamilton also plans on participating in Embracing Our Differences

Treviso, Italy – City Director, Mirco Chiodi

- Visual art exchange between MCC and Liceo Artistico di Treviso
- Treviso as well as all our Sister Cities participated in the Trees Around the World celebration with Selby Gardens last December
- Sarasota Key Chorale was invited to perform in the municipality of Asolo within the province of Treviso this summer

- Treviso is participating on the photo contest of “People and Places” exhibit.
- In spring or summer 2010, they are planning a tour to the province of Treviso during the “Giorgione” celebration - one of Treviso famous artist’s. This is the 500th anniversary of his death.
- They plan on participating in the Embracing Our Differences exhibition as well as the Young Playwrights contest

Vladimir, Russia - City Director, Gundula H. Coleman

Our Sister City, Vladimir Russia, had 3 FST Young Playwright winners this year. Two youth, Alina & Ivan as well as their teacher & chaperone Yulia traveled to Sarasota for the awards ceremony. The delegates were generously housed and hosted by Dr. Alexander & Yuliya Gaukhman and their four children in Nokomis and all of the delegates from all three countries, Russia, Israel & Scotland had a chance to interact & experience various customs.

Vladimir also participated in the photo contest submitting 26 photos for the contest. Due to time constraints, Vladimir was unfortunately unable to participate in the 2009 Embracing Our Differences competition and regretfully due to budget constraints we were unable to send students to the Youth Parliament Congress held in 2008 in Vladimir, Russia.

Plans and Project for upcoming year:

Even though still very supportive and willing to help out whenever he can with SSCA functions & projects, Vice Chair, Boris Tsatskin, agreed that SSCA may be better served by appointing another Vice CD due to time constraints . Nikolay Safonov, President of the Russian-American Association, graciously agreed to serve as Vice City Director for the upcoming year, even though he also has a demanding business schedule as a business consultant. Nikolay has always been and is an invaluable asset to any international & Russian-American cause and has been instrumental in facilitating the 2009 FST exchange by helping with

translations, providing cultural input, as well as coordinating housing efforts with the Gaukhmans for the delegates.

For the upcoming year, we hope to enhance our current cultural relationships with Vladimir, but also look to strengthen business relations and are gearing up to explore and promote new opportunities which will further bridge and benefit both communities.

Siming District / Xiamen - City Director, Dr. Carolyn Bloomer

This year has been exciting indeed for the development of our Chinese Sister City relationship.

A six year old first grader from Egret River Elementary School in Xiamen won first prize in the Student Division of Embracing Our Differences, which carries a \$1000 cash prize for her school. This was the second year that a student work from Xiamen was accepted into the Embracing Our Differences exhibition.

A play submitted from Egret River Elementary School was one of six entries accepted into the international "Seven Up" category of Florida Studio Theatre's Young Playwright's Contest. The play will be performed on Saturday May 16. (If you are interested in attending, please call the FST box office.) Two other plays from Xiamen were accepted into the international "Under Six" category.

Two artists from Xiamen University -- an ink painter and a watercolorist -- visited Sarasota for two intense weeks last month. They were jointly hosted by SSCA, Art Center Sarasota, and the Gulf coast Chinese American Association.

Please visit the SSCA web-site to see pictures of the young artist, the young playwrights, and the Xiamen University artists.

This year's annual electronic art exchange at Manatee Community College will feature artworks received by students in the Art College of Xiamen University. The opening will be in June on the Venice campus.

Carolyn will visit Xiamen in June, at which time she will consolidate these relationships and explore new opportunities for exchange. The Siming Committee is especially interested in promoting medical exchange. SSCA members interested in this or any other areas of exchange please contact Carolyn or Irene Leung Vice City Director.

Tel-Mond, Israel – City Director, Betty Greenspan

Ilan Hirschowitz, a Tel Mond photographer, had an exhibit of his photographs on display at the Venice Library and the Federal Building in Sarasota. Ilan and Greg Carlson came up with the idea of creating an International Photo contest which is now in an advanced planning stage. It is slated to begin in November at the Ringling College.

Tel Mond resident, Ayelet Sha-Hak, first visited Sarasota 6 months ago. Ayelet, a teacher and mother of 3, lost a daughter to a terrorist suicide bombing attack during a birthday and holiday celebration in 1996 in Tel Aviv. Two of her friends were also killed in the attack. It was Bat-Chen's 15th Birthday. After her death, her family found her diaries, notebooks, letters and drawings highlighting her longing for peace and understanding between different people. The family decided to use the energy and despair of her death to strive for her longings and created a book out of her papers. The "Bat-Chen Diaries", now translated into 6 languages, has been disseminated throughout the world and they have used it to create presentations and school curriculums. The diary highlights Bat-Chen's legacy for peace.

Ayelet recently returned and she gave many presentations, including one at Riverview High School. After Ayelet's visit, the Sarasota School system purchased over a 100 of the books to incorporate into their curriculum for Holocaust and Genocide classes.

A photo from the Bat Chen's diary became one of the winning entries for this year's Embracing Our Differences.

During her visit in May, Ayelet also accepted an award for this during her very full schedule of speaking at different schools and organizations in the county. Several more projects involving the "Bat-Chen Diary" are in the works at the present time.

Betty Greenspan will be traveling to Israel this September to lay the ground work for the following years Sister City Delegation trip which will highlight Tel Mond artists and other Israeli art communities. At the present time there is an artist exchange program being developed with participating artists from Sarasota and Tel Mond with the thought that it will eventually incorporate all of the other Sister Cities artists in the coming years.

Those interested in joining any one of the committees' Artist Exchange, Diary program development and/or 2010 Art tour, should please contact Betty Greenspan.

Perpignan – City Director, Harry Dunn

- Grade School Internet Exchange
 - Myrna Bonhomme, a teacher at Island village Montessori School, continued the internet exchange between her students and those at Helene Boucher Ecole in Perpignan. This exchange has been facilitated with the help of people at OCCE in Perpignan.

- Visits to Sarasota by Perpignan Residents
 - Pierre Branle is a member of the Perpignan Villes Jumelés (Sister Cities). Mr. and Mrs. Branles were here to continue development of relationships with Sister City members and to experience our historic presidential election.
 - Hadda Lamotte who teaches English at Lucee Pablo Picasso in Perpignan visited with her husband. Hadda is the Perpignan inspiration for the upcoming student exchange with Riverview High School.
 - An adult student from Perpignan is in Sarasota to study English and to obtain a commercial pilot's license. The student has received room, board, and English language support from Sarasota Sister Cities members.

- Project and Exchange Development
 - Efforts have been focused on planning, together with the administration and teachers of Riverview High School to bring 23 Perpignan high school students to Riverview during the week of November 8, 2009. Riverview students will travel to Perpignan in April of 2010.
 - During the course of the year, the Perpignan committee has worked with many Sarasota businesses and organizations, including the:
 - PAL Sailor Circus
 - Ringling Circus Museum
 - Sarasota County Extension of the University of Florida
 - L-3 Communications
 - METI
 - FRAMCO

- Alliance Francaise
- Friendship Force of Sarasota
- Sarasota Convention and Visitors Bureau
- Spanish Point Museum
- Myakka State Park
- Sarasota-Bradenton Airport
- Sarasota County Parks and Recreation
- Selby Gardens
- SSCA Photo Contest

Sarasota Sister Cities would like to thank all our community partners who graciously assist us year after year. We value your contribution and support – thank you so much for all that you do!
Carla Rayman, President