

ASHLAND DAILY TIDINGS

Ashland and Guanajuato exchange festival visitors

By Kernan Turner Amigo Club

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Ashland's Señora Chela Tapp-Kocks points out the donated Ashland fire truck parked on a Guanajuato city street during the Ashland delegation's visit this month to its sister city. Pictured from left are Ashland City Councilor Traci Darrow and son, Cooper; Guanajuato City Councilor Ana Gabriela Cardenas Vazquez; Tapp-Kocks; Guanajuato City

Councilor Juan Carlos Delgado Zarate; Guanajuato Festival Queen Maritere I; and Ashland High School representatives Mumi Thiaw and Brook Hall. [Photo courtesy of the Amigo Club]

Six Ashlanders have been visiting Guanajuato, Mexico, this month to help celebrate the Sister City's two major summer festivals, La Presa de la Olla and San Juan (St. John the Baptist).

The Ashland delegation includes Graciela "Señora Chela" Tapp-Kocks of the Ashland Amigo Club; high school representatives Mumi Thiaw and Brook Hall and their chaperone, Carmen Adams; and City Councilor Traci Darrow and her son Cooper.

Thiaw and Hall joined the court of festival Queen Maritere I (Maria Teresa Dominguez Silva), and are representing Ashland at events related to the two festivals.

The back-to-back festivals in Guanajuato began on June 15, with gatherings in the park at the Presa de la Olla dam in the days leading up to June 24, the saint's feast day. A few days later, celebrants will return to the park to witness the opening of the dam's floodgates, a tradition initiated in the 18th century to cleanse the reservoir. The festivals include music, dancing, fireworks and a variety of artistic and cultural activities.

Guanajuato Municipal Secretary Carlos Torres Ramirez officially welcomed the Ashlanders in the name of Mayor Edgar Castro Cerrillo at a City Hall ceremony, where Torres Ramirez said that the two cities' relations are based on "on love, affection, devotion and solidarity." Thiaw and Hall danced and sang songs in Spanish and English at the reception and other events during their visit.

Mayor Castro Cerrillo greeted the delegation with a folkloric dance and ballet spectacular in a city plaza, where he shouted, "Viva Ashland! Viva Guanajuato!"

Ashland has sent delegations to the festivities since the founding of Sister City relations 48 years ago, and Guanajuato has reciprocated by sending festival queens and municipal delegations to Ashland's Independence Day activities. The queen, dressed in colorful, folkloric blouse and skirt, traditionally rides in the annual Fourth of July parade.

This year's Guanajuato committee will be in Ashland June 28-July 5. Among those planning to come are the Guanajuato festival queen and her mother, Maria Teresa Silva; two city councilors, Juan Carlos Delgado Zarate and Gabriela Cardenas; Fire Chief Daniel Barrera; and possibly fire fighter Jorge Anguiano Jasso. Delgado Zarate is traveling with his son, Fabian, and Cardenas with her daughter, Margarita Cabeza de Vaca, representing the Guanajuato Amigo Club.

The Ashland Amigo Club is coordinating activities and host-family housing for the Guanajuato delegates. Among other events, they will participate in the Fourth of July parade, witness the reading of the Declaration of Independence at the Lithia Park bandshell and attend Southern Oregon University, City of Ashland and Mormon Church breakfasts, a Rotary Club luncheon, and the

Chamber of Commerce's annual Fourth of July barbecue. Other activities include tours of the city's water treatment plant and Hosler Dam/Reeder Reservoir and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Forensic Laboratory, attending an Oregon Shakespeare Festival play, catamaran sailing on Emigrant Lake, and possibly a visit to Crater Lake National Park.

Amigo Club awards scholarships

The Amigo Club has awarded \$1,000 scholarships to two Southern Oregon University students participating in the Amistad student exchange program between SOU and the University of Guanajuato. Each will spend a semester in Guanajuato this fall.

The students are Sarah Martinez, 22, and Cynthia Trujillo, 25. Martinez is a senior seeking a bachelor's degree in biology at SOU, and Trujillo is a junior Spanish-language major at SOU.

SOU recognizes the Amistad Program as the oldest student exchange link among its 35 study programs in 20 countries.

The Amigo Club has received more than \$90,000 in donations for its endowed scholarship managed by the SOU Foundation.

—Amigo Club's Entre Amigos (Between Friends) column about Ashland ties to its sister city Guanajuato, Mexico, appears (usually) on the third Tuesday of each month. Longtime AP reporter and bureau chief Kernan Turner is an Ashland resident and Amigo Club member.

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