

Entre Amigos: Club was very active in 2017



During Fourth of July activities in 2017, the Ashland Amigo Club invited Hispanics from around the Rogue Valley to its sixth annual Spanish-language poetry declamation recital at SOU's Schneider Museum of Art. Pictured are six of the participants, (from left) Marina Kendig, Dilia Vercella, Glenda Wood, Mina Turner, Ana Maria Plazolles and her daughter Ada Hodgen. [Amigo Club photo]

By Kernan Turner Amigo Club

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The Ashland Amigo Club elected board members at its annual membership meeting in November.

Elected were incumbent President Betzabe “Mina” Turner, Vice President Karen Grove, Secretary Lynn Lamoree and incumbents Treasurer Sean Van Ausdall, Housing Coordinator Marina Kendig and Guanajuato Liaison Graciela “Chela” Tapp-Kocks. Thirteen members volunteered to serve as at-large board members.

The board oversees the nonprofit’s mission of “actively promoting” Sister City relations founded 49 years ago between Ashland and Guanajuato, Mexico.

Turner reviewed Sister City activities in 2017, including;

— Guanajuato Nights: In November, the Amigo Club’s third annual “Guanajuato Nights” dinner and auction netted more than \$31,000, including “matching funds” donated by Guanajuato’s Faffie Siekman, for the club’s endowed scholarship fund administered by the SOU Foundation. Three years from its inception, the endowment has grown to more than \$120,000 and financed four scholarships for SOU exchange students attending the University of Guanajuato.

— Entre Amigos: Publication of the “Entre Amigos” column continued in the Ashland Daily Tidings on the third Tuesday of each month.

— Little League: Eleven Ashland Little League players and parents went to Guanajuato in March 2017 for the third annual Sister City Classic. City Councilor and Amigo Club member Rich Rosenthal oversees the program in Ashland, and Armando Preciado in Guanajuato.

— Fire fighters: Thee “bomberos” of the heroic Volunteer Fire Fighters Corps of Guanajuato participated in May in the TRENX fire suppression training offered by the Ashland Fire Department in Ashland’s nearby hills.

— Guanajuato visit: Ashland High School students Mumi Thiaw and Brook Hall represented the City of Ashland at the Fiestas de San Juan y Presa de la Olla, Guanajuato’s major summer festivals. Others in the delegation included City Councilor Traci Darrow, Amigo Club Liaison Senora Chela Tapp-Kocks, and Ashland High School Spanish teacher and chaperone Carmen Tillery Adams.

— Fourth of July: The Amigo Club hosted and found housing for an eight-person official Guanajuato delegation to Fourth of July celebrations in Ashland. The guests included two councilors, two volunteer firemen, and the Guanajuato Summer Festival Queen, all of whom rode in the annual parade. Among other activities, they attended a mayor’s breakfast, an SOU president’s luncheon, a Chamber of Commerce barbecue, an OSF play, and an Amigo Club poetry recital and annual party.

— Guanajuato student nurses: Eight nursing students and a faculty adviser from the University of Guanajuato visited Ashland for three weeks in October-November as the latest participants in a three-year-old international student exchange program with the Ashland campus of the Oregon Health and Sciences University’s School of Nursing.

— Ashland mural: The Amigo Club helped link Kathryn and Barry Thalden with city officials in Guanajuato who authorized the painting of an Ashland-themed wall mural in Guanajuato. The mural with the theme “Ashland — Where Culture Meets Nature” will be painted by Denise Baxter, who painted the mural on the side of the Ashland Emergency Food Bank building.

— 50th anniversary coming up in 2019: The Amigo Club has begun coordinating with various sectors of Ashland on plans for Sister City and Amigo Club 50th Anniversary celebrations in 2019.

Guanajuato Little League to visit Ashland

Ashland Little League coordinator Rich Rosenthal reports that donations to assist Guanajuato players meet travel costs have assured a fourth annual Sister City Classic will be played July 19-24 in Ashland.

“Thanks to contributions on both sides of the border, I’m overjoyed the Sister City Classic will return to Ashland this summer as planned, on the eve of the 50th anniversary between the sister cities, Rosenthal says. “Politicians in Washington are talking about building border walls, but we’ll be talking about hitting baseballs over outfield walls in friendly competition with our excellent friends from Guanajuato,” Rosenthal said.

Players' families have donated \$2,500. An additional \$2,000 is needed for meals, transportation and other hosting costs for Guanajuato players aged 14 and under. Donors or anyone interested in hosting players may message Rosenthal at rosenthal@opendoor.com.

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