



Two Ashland students to represent city in Guanajuato

BY Kernan Turner Amigo Club March 14, 2016

Two Ashland High School students have been selected as this year's Ashland ambassadors to Guanajuato's major summer festival. They are Kate Joss-Bradley, 17-year-old daughter of Jennifer Joss and Tom Bradley, and Halle Lowe, 16, daughter of Candace Turtle and Robert Lowe.

"I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to represent Ashland, the city in which I grew up and which I love," Joss-Bradley said Sunday at an orientation session offered by Señora Chela Tapp-Kocks of the Ashland Amigo Club.

Lowe shared her companion's excitement and said, "I'm looking forward to meeting the people in Guanajuato. Everybody I've met from Guanajuato has been extremely kind and friendly."

The students will represent Ashland at Guanajuato's Festival of San Juan and the ceremonial opening of the flood gates at the Presa de la Olla reservoir, an annual tradition dating back to the 1700s when the reservoir was the city's main source of water.

Señora Chela Tapp-Kocks, who first promoted Sister City relations between Ashland and Guanajuato 47 years ago, has accompanied student ambassadors to Guanajuato each summer since then. The students become members of the festival queen's court.

Sunday's orientation covered everything from Guanajuato history and culture to advice on what kind of shoes not to wear at the festival queen's inauguration.

University of Guanajuato provost leads delegation to SOU

University of Guanajuato Provost Dr. Héctor Efraín Rodríguez de la Rosa and two other top administrators visited Southern Oregon University this month to discuss revitalization of programs that link the two universities.

They also began planning visits by each university president to the other's campus, most likely in May, to seek agreement on reviving the Amistad student exchange and Masters in Management

(MIM) programs. MIM allows Guanajuato students to earn dual master's at UG and SOU by attending some classes in Guanajuato taught by SOU professors.

Rodríguez de la Rosa was accompanied by Dr. Erika Lourdes González Rosas, coordinator of MIM in Guanajuato, and Dr. Claudia Susana Gómez López, director of the UG's Division of Administrative Economic Sciences.

While in Ashland, the trio met with members of the Ashland Amigo Club, which intends to grant its first Amistad exchange student scholarships this fall. González Rosas and Rodríguez de la Rosa are alumni of Amistad who earned master's at SOU.

More than 750 students have participated in the Amistad exchange program since 1970, with as many as 44 in a single year (1997-1998). Numbers have dwindled in recent years, dropping to only four students in 2015. Three SOU students have shown an interest in studying in Guanajuato in the coming school year.

Guanajuato receives first snow in 19 years

Last Wednesday will go down in history in Guanajuato, Ashland's Sister City, as the day it snowed on the surrounding mountains for the first time in 19 years.

By Ashland standards, the mountains received a light dusting of snow that reached depths of as much as 25 centimeters (9 inches) in places. Some families drove to the mountains to throw snowballs and build snowmen.

The newspaper El Universo reported that the Guanajuato State Office of Public Security closed the road that connects the city of Guanajuato with Dolores de Hidalgo, a popular route for tourists retracing the path taken by independence leader Father Miguel Hidalgo and his insurgent army in 1810. Both Guanajuato and Dolores de Hidalgo are at close to 6,500 feet in elevation.

Temperatures dropped to 3 degrees below freezing in the city's northern heights. El Universo said the state education director kept schools open, but suspended truancy penalties.

Weather forecasters blamed the snow on this year's severe El Niño weather pattern.

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.