PRESIDENT’S REPORT 2018

It is my pleasure to report to you about the activities, events and accomplishments of the Amigo Club of Ashland during the just-concluded year 2018. As always, our members are guided in what we do by the Club’s purpose, as defined in its Constitution:

*“Mission:*

 *The objective of this nonprofit corporation shall be to actively promote the Sister City relationship between the City of Ashland, Oregon, U.S.A., and the City of Guanajuato, Guanajuato, Mexico, by supporting, without limitation, personal, educational, cultural, civic, social, medical, dental, and other exchanges between the two cities.”*

I would like to highlight just some of the ways that our members have sought to exemplify the Club’s purpose:

**ENTRE AMIGOS**The *Entre Amigos* (Between Friends) column, which began in July 2015, has published 44 articles to December 2018. It appears on the third Tuesday of each month of the Ashland Daily Tidings.

**2018-2019 Board Members**

The Amigo Club held elections in January 2018 and the Board of Directors members for the period January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019 is as follows: **Betzabé “Mina” Turner (President), Karen Grove (Vice President), Sean Van Ausdall (Treasurer), Sra. Chela Tapp-Kocks (Guanajuato Liaison), Marina Kendig (Housing Coordinator), and Lynn Lamoree (Secretary).**

**Members-at-Large**

The Amigo Club included Members-at-Large into the Board of Directors. A board member at large doesn’t have a specific role but serves as a liaison to the general membership and participates in club activities. A board member at large may be assigned to serve on committees or undertake special projects. Duties may change as defined in organization bylaws or as needed to fulfill board requirements and address overall organizational goals.

**The new members at-large members are: Cynthia Trujillo, Gary “Joaquin” Powell, Glenda Wood, Jacquie Milikien, Jay Ach, John Morrison, Kernan Turner, Libia Trask, Marian Telerski, Marty Fabian-Krause, Snow Mountain, Suzanne Haveman, Josie Wilson, and Tom Lamoree.**

**AMIGO CLUB WEBSITE**

Thanks to Amigo Club board member Karen Grove, the Amigo Club launched the renovated Amigo Club website in September 2018.

All the Entre Amigos columns are added to the site, as a historical piece of the Amigo Club.

Now, you can even pay your membership dues, give a donation, or pay for the Guanajuato tickets online.

A great achievement!

**LITTLE LEAGUE**

This is one more element to be added to the array of connections – cultural, educational, police, fire department, etc.

The fourth-annual Sister City Classic initiated by City Councilor and Amigo Club member Rich Rosenthal in Ashland and Armando Preciado in Guanajuato planned for the Guanajuato Tigres and their families (a total of 31 persons) to arrive in Ashland on July 17. A complete schedule of events was prepared for this special visit.

The Amigo Club offered a warm welcome to the Guanajuato guests with a brunch.

**2018 ASHLAND HIGH SCHOOL AMBASSADORS AND ASHLAND DELEGATION TO GUANAJUATO**

Ashland High School representatives Leila Kenner and Uma McGuire traveled to Guanajuato in June, representing the City of Ashland at the *Fiestas de San Juan y Presa de la Olla,* Guanajuato’s major summer festivals. Leila and Uma danced, sang and delivered speeches during their 10-day visit to Guanajuato. As part of the annual community delegation, Public Works Director Paula Brown represented Mayor John Stromberg and the city government. Others in the delegation included Amigo Club liaison Sra. Chela Tapp-Kocks, and Ashland High School Spanish teacher Gladys Contreras, who served as a chaperon.

**FOURTH OF JULY**

Our Amigo Club Fourth of July traditional hosting of the annual Guanajuato delegation was an enormous success due to the efforts of our members and friends. Thanks to great teamwork we had an enchanting celebration with our Guanajuato friends.

The Amigo Club coordinated a jam-packed calendar of activities for the visitors, including a City tour, City breakfast, Wildlife Forensics Lab tour, SOU breakfast, Chamber of Commerce BBQ, Water Treatment Plant Tour, Ashland winery tasting, Oregon Shakespeare Festival play, “Romeo and Juliet,” Fourth of July parade, Poetry Recital, Amigo Club annual potluck party, Hellgate Boat excursion, Crater Lake trip, Emigrant Lake sailing, Fireworks display, and other private breakfasts, luncheons and dinners.

The group arrived on Thursday, June 27, and departed on July 5.

* **Adrián Camacho Trejo Luna, Chairman of the House of Representatives (Presidente de la Diputación)**  – representing the Mayor of Guanajuato (Edgar Castro Cerrillo)
* **Guanajuato Queen Jessica I (Jessica Leycegui), accompanied by her mother and sister.**

All this joy and support is what has kept us together for 49 years and looking forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary in 2019 of Sister City relations and the founding of the supportive Amigo Club.

The City breakfast gave every single guest the opportunity to introduce themselves and to get better acquainted with councilors, and city employees.

As you know the City of Ashland is a dues-paying member of the Amigo Club and in support of Sister City relations.

The Amigo Club is now a tax-exempt corporation, has an Endowed Scholarship administered by the SOU Foundation that supports the exchange of students between the University of Guanajuato and Southern Oregon University.

**GUANAJUATO STUDENT NURSES PARTICIPATE IN EXCHANGE PROGRAM**

Eight nursing students from Ashland Sister City Guanajuato, Mexico, completed a three-week visit to the Rogue Valley before returning home early November 2018.

The students undertook several health surveys, visited a home hospice center in Medford, La Clinica in Medford, the Three Rivers Hospital in Grants Pass, and a home hospice center.

The students worked in pairs on several studies, with themes ranging from obesity in Mexico compared with the rest of the work to differences between dental and end-of-life care in Mexico and the United States. They presented study results to a gathering at an OHSU Nursing School conference room in Churchill Hall on the Southern Oregon University campus.

The University of Guanajuato and the Ashland extension of the OHSU Nursing School have participated in student exchanges for four years. Ashland nursing students will next visit Guanajuato this coming spring.

Amigo Club offered a toast (“brindis”) in honor of the group before their departure.

**GUANAJUATO NIGHTS**

The Amigo Club held its FOURTH ANNUAL “Guanajuato Nights” fundraiser for the Club’s endowed scholarship fund administered by the SOU Foundation on November 10, 2018. The event took place at the Rogue River Room Southern Oregon University with the attendance of more than 130 guests.

*Guanajuato Nights* featured a silent auction and a live auction of various vacation homes in Mexico and Oregon. It also featured an authentic Mexican dinner prepared in Ashland by Southern Oregon University’s world-class SOU

catering director, Shawn Kjosa. It was a delicious meal based on an ancient Mexican recipe and a nice social night.

Amigo Club members and local businesses generously donated items to the auction, ranging from gift certificates to valuable articles and professional services.

Several people from Guanajuato traveled to Ashland for the event, including our scholarship fund benefactor, Faffie Siekman Romero, Professor Dr. Erika Gonzalez, representing the Universidad de Guanajuato Rector, Luis Felipe Guerrero Agripino, Clarissa Arrache de Abascal, President of the Amigo Club of Guanajuato, and her husband Luis Abascal.

Other out-of-towners included former SOU President and Oregon Chancellor of Higher Education Dr. Joe Cox and his wife, Regina, from Eugene. They are longtime, enthusiastic supporters of Sister City ties.

Among current city government and university leaders at the dinner were Mayor John Stromberg, University President Dr. Linda Schott, Provost Susan Walsh, City Councilor Stefanie Seffinger, Ashland Chamber of Commerce President Mary Gardiner, SOU Vice President of Development who is also director of the SOU Foundation, SOU vice president of development and executive director of the SOU Foundation Janet Fratella.

The gross proceeds of this fundraiser were $19,913.05. After all costs and expenses were deducted, we had net proceeds of $15,267.77. We deposited $15,000 in the scholarship compared to 7,000 last year in the scholarship, adding to the $24,000 donated by Faffie from the Siekman Foundation. The current scholarship fund balance as of **Jan. 5 is approximately $150,000**.

Guanajuato Nights has already become an annual fundraiser and social event, and the Amigo Club intends to hold its Fifth Guanajuato Nights in November of this year. The proceeds will continue to be invested in the SOU Foundation’s Amigo Club endowed scholarship fund.

**Appreciation Awards**

The Amigo Club awarded seven appreciation plaques to Sister City advocates during the Guanajuato Nights event to:

* Clarissa Arrache de Abascal, President of the Amigo Club of Guanajuato
* Meiwen and John Richards
* Suzanne Haveman
* Marty Fabian-Krause
* Marina Kendig, and
* Josie Wilson

Clarissa Arrache de Abascal, president of the Guanajuato Amigo Club for 20 years, has housed dozens of visiting Ashlanders in her house. She is a founder of Guanajuato parenting and women’s organizations, including one representing women tourism directors in the State of Guanajuato. Arrache has worked closely with Ashland in coordinating Sister City anniversary celebrations, including the 50th this year.

The Richards have hosted many Guanajuato exchange students in their home and actively supported the Sister City relationship in other ways. John Richards and Josie Wilson are retired professors who served as coordinators of the Amistad Program and spent time in Guanajuato teaching and recruiting Mexican exchange students.

Suzanne Haveman, Marty Fabian-Krause, and Marina Kendig have served on the Amigo Club board of directors and actively supported multiple Sister City activities for years, including hosting visitors from Guanajuato.

**AMIGO CLUB ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP**

We are committed to making our Amigo Club Endowed Scholarship have a real impact on student exchanges between Ashland and Guanajuato. In the past four years, we have already granted five scholarships.

The SOU student, 2018 awardee is Chantelle Seehower. Chantelle is a very talented 24-year-old SOU student. She wrote an excellent essay, loves to teach,

and has traveled the world by herself. At first considering staying only one term in Guanajuato, she agreed to stay the whole year and so received the entire $4000 scholarship.

**ASHLAND MURAL IN GUANAJUATO**

Under the coordination and sponsorship of Kathryn and Barry Thalden, Guanajuato inaugurated the Ashland Mural in Guanajuato, painted by Ashland artist Denise Baxter.

The theme of the Guanajuato mural is “Ashland – Where Culture Meets Nature.” The mural is 75 feet long and 12 feet high at the end of Paseo Ashland, one of the major entrance streets to the Guanajuato downtown.

Denise Baxter was selected to create the painting. Baxter is the former director of the Ashland Art Center and was the mural artist who painted the 50-foot long mural on the side of the Ashland Emergency Food Bank building.

The Guanajuato City Council (Ayuntamiento) gave its approval on Nov. 30, 2017, for painting the mural of Ashland on the Paseo de Ashland at its intersection with the main entrance to the city.

Amigo Club members in both Ashland and Guanajuato have been intimately involved in the process.

**50TH ANNIVERSARY – 2019**

The Steering Committee chair Mary Gardiner along with Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Sandra Slattery are holding meeting with the different sectors of the city. Preliminary schedule of events has been prepared for the 50th Anniversary activities in 2019.

The dates are as follows:

**Guanajuato to Ashland – April 4 to 11, 2019**

**Ashland to Guanajuato – May 27 to 31, 2019**

The official delegation from Ashland will consist of a certain number of representatives from the different organizations.

It is expected to receive approximately 60 or 70 guests from Guanajuato, and a similar number of visitors from Ashland as well.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower initiated the Sister City program 63 years ago on the premise that people-to-people contacts could contribute to world peace.

He once said, “I believe that people, in the long run, are going to do more to promote peace than governments.”

I take this opportunity to thank Ashland for truly believing in and supporting the Sister City program and its mission – Peace between all peoples on our small planet.

**CLOSING**

Dear Amigos, thank you for your enthusiastic and continued support. I would like to remind you that while most teams are based on rules, procedures and instructions, our club’s team is also based on trust, friendship, cooperation and support, as always demonstrated by the club’s Board of Directors and energetic member participation.

We don’t take for granted the support from our members, officials, organizers, and volunteers. It is very much appreciated by everyone connected with the club.

It’s always an immense pleasure working with you.

Betzabé “Mina” H. Turner

President

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