

Guanajuato films to play at World Film Week

ENTRE AMIGOS by Kernan Turner Ashland Amigo Club
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Guanajuato students Patricio (front row, far left) and his sister, Joanna Rojas Rivera (front row, far right) joined with their mother, Dr. Patricia Romero Hicks (back row, fourth from the left) and their grandmother, Joan Hicks (back row, third from left) at a Calle Guanajuato brunch organized by the Ashland Amigo Club. Others pictured: (l-r, back row) Dave Young, his wife Linda, Chela Tapp-Kocks, Betzabe "Mina" Turner, Gladys Contreras, and (l-r, front row) high school student ambassadors to Guanajuato Aubrey Reynolds and Taiga Sherman.

World Film Week at the Varsity Theater will feature a program in October of short films from the Guanajuato International Film Festival.

Richard Herskowitz, artistic and executive director of the Ashland Independent Film Festival, said in a news release that this year's World Film Week "is a celebration of Ashland and its international ties." The festival-sponsored week runs Oct. 4-11, with 13 films representing 11 countries.

Ashland and Guanajuato marked the 50th anniversary this year of sister city relations.

Herskowitz said the executive director of the Guanajuato festival, Sarah Hoch, will present an opening-night program of highlights from the festival's first decade. Hoch will be honored at a pre-screening dinner and at a reception following the opening presentation.

Her presentation will feature short films selected from the Guanajuato festival's training program that each year selects a single short film to premiere at the Guanajuato festival.

Herskowitz will hold a preview night for World Film Week at 7 p.m., Sept. 30, at Ostras Tapas and Bottle Shop, 47 N. Main St., Ashland, where he will discuss how films were selected and show some film trailers.

Tickets are available from the Ashland International Film Festival. For the complete World Film Week schedule and tickets, see the festival's online site at ashlandfilm.org.

Two Guanajuato students attend Ashland High School

Two Guanajuato high school students are attending Ashland High School this year, continuing a family tradition of study in Guanajuato's sister city.

The students are junior Joanna Rojas Romero, 17, and her brother, freshman Patricio, 14. They arrived in August, accompanied by their mother, Dr. Patricia Romero Hicks and her mother, Joan Hicks.

Two of Hicks' sons, Juan Carlos and Jose Luis Romero Hicks, were early participants in the Amistad student exchange program between Southern Oregon University and the University of Guanajuato. They received master's degrees and later received Distinguished Alumni Awards given annually to those whose career achievements have brought extraordinary credit to the university.

Counting Joanna and Patricio, 10 Hicks' grandchildren have studied in Ashland public schools, including five children of Juan Carlos, two of Jose Luis and three of Patricia, whose other daughter, Priscilla, attended high school here three years ago. She currently is enrolled at the medical school in Guadalajara, her mother's alma mater.

The Guanajuato family spent their first night in Ashland with David and Linda Young, longtime friends of Joan Hicks and the Romero Hicks clan. The students have since joined their homestay families, Patricio with Susanne and Rich Haveman, and Joanna with Karen and Daniel Kahn.

The day after their arrival, Joanna and Patricio overnighted on Mount Ashland, attending the high school's Fresh Start orientation retreat at the ski lodge. The program prepares new students for transition into high school.

Amigo Club announces 5th annual Guanajuato Nights

The Ashland Amigo Club has announced that its fifth annual Guanajuato Nights dinner and auction will be held Nov. 9. Doors will open at 5 p.m. in the Rogue River Room at Southern Oregon University.

Proceeds support the club's endowed scholarship fund, which has provided six scholarships in the last four years for SOU exchange students at the University of Guanajuato. It expects to grant four scholarships this year, two for SOU students studying at the University of Guanajuato and two for Guanajuato students attending SOU.

Guanajuato Nights will feature silent and live auctions of Mexican handicrafts, silver jewelry, textiles, vacation retreats, and a variety of items donated by Ashland merchants.

SOU Dining's executive chef will prepare Mexican cuisine.

Amigo Club President Betzabe “Mina” Turner promises “a delicious dinner and a memorable social night.”

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.