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## Our Thirtieth Anniversary Trip to Nantes

**By Jean Leblon --**

Another milestone reached! Having come from different places at different times, the members of the Seattle delegation gathered, on May 8 last at 9 am, on the steps of Saint-Pierre cathedral in Nantes for the start of the weeklong program of official ceremonies to which we were invited, and other events prepared especially for us by the City of

Nantes and the Nantes-Seattle Sister City Association. The Seattle group was headed by City Councilmember Tom Rasmussen; other members were: Tom Bennett, Pamela-Ann Hughes, Marie-Pierre Koban, Jean Leblon, Alaina McCallum, Harry McLachlin, Randy and Ann Revelle, Pieter and Tish Van der Meulen.

*(Continued on pages 2 - 5)*



## Our Thirtieth Anniversary Trip to Nantes (*cont'd*)

**Saturday May 8** marks the anniversary of the end of WWII (VE Day) that is celebrated throughout France. Thus our first invitation was to a solemn high mass in the cathedral attended by the mayor Jean-Marc Ayrault, the members of the *Conseil municipal*, members and veterans of military units carrying their flags, and other VIPs. From there we followed the procession to the 50 Hostages monument where Tom Rasmussen accompanied the mayor for the wreath laying. After another ceremony at the *Monument aux Morts* of all wars, we were invited to the *Mairie* (City Hall) for the annual mayor's reception of his fellow citizens. He delivered a rousing speech for the occasion, which he preceded with a thoughtful welcome to us and a summary of our 30-year collaboration.

A lunch was hosted by Christine Renard of the *Centre de Coopération et Solidarité Internationales* of Nantes Métropole. At 2:30 pm we attended the city's official reception of our delegation. The mayor and Tom Rasmussen exchanged short speeches and signed the *livre d'or*. Tom Bennett presented the mayor with a painting by the Northwest artist Shaun Peterson. Many shared the podium in order to thank specific persons who have devoted much time and effort to our cities' 30-year relationship. Each one of us also received a box of samples of the region's goodies. From there we were taken by a guide to a visit of the cathedral and a walk over to the *Maison des vins* for a tasting of various Muscadets.



*Tom Rasmussen and Mayor Ayrault*

*Mayor Ayrault and Tom Bennett*



## Our Thirtieth Anniversary Trip to Nantes (*cont'd*)

*Sunday May 9* was a bit less rushed. First we had a long and interesting visit of the Château des Ducs de Bretagne, with a very knowledgeable guide who took us through the major rooms illustrating the evolution of the city from the many islands to what it has become today. A particularly interesting section recalls the history of the slave trade to which Nantes participated in and profited from in the 19th century.

After lunch on our own in small groups, we gathered in the afternoon to view the *Machines de l'île*. In the warehouses of the former shipyards in Nantes, they are a series of created mechanical animals and vehicles visualizing a travel-through-time world at the crossroads of the imaginary worlds of Jules Verne and the universe of Leonardo da Vinci. The most famous one is a large elephant that lumbers around the buildings loaded with passengers (many children) on balconies on its top and sides. Some of us had a chance to ride on the Giant Crab, the Squid, the Sea Serpent, etc.

In the evening, we were the guests of our counterpart sister city association for dinner in the rooms of the *Mémoire de l'outre-mer* (France's former and current departments and territories). Mariette Cassourret, the current president of the Nantes-Seattle association, welcomed us and introduced several of their members. Tom Bennett presented her with a gift of Seattle glass. It was a very convivial evening during which we could speak to our potential guests of their trip to Seattle, a first for some of them, but not for others. In such gatherings, it becomes evident that time has cemented many friendships across the Atlantic.



*Pieter Van der Meulen at the command of the Giant Conch*

*Mariette Cassourret and Tom Bennett*



## Our Thirtieth Anniversary Trip to Nantes (*cont'd*)

**Monday May 10** gave us a free morning, a chance to do a little shopping or discovering on our own. Tom Rasmussen, however, had an appointment at the Chamber of Commerce at 10 am. Since President Jacques Chirac proclaimed it, May 10 has been celebrated as the commemoration in France of the abolition of slavery. Thus, from about 2:30, several activities took place in a public space along the Loire. Tom Rasmussen and a few of us attended Mayor Ayrault's laying of the first stone for the future memorial garden and museum; there were speeches by the mayor, various local and regional officials, and two representatives of the French Caribbean *départements*. A moving moment was the succession at the podium of a dozen young students of diverse ethnic backgrounds who read short passages they wrote in evocation of slavery.

At 5:30, Mayor Ayrault performed the now traditional act of throwing memorial flowers into the river from atop the footbridge going to the *Palais de Justice*; he distributed some to people around him who did the same. After that, there were several more short speeches on the stage of the big top. Soon it was taken over by musicians ushering in the main spectacle "Black Fire," a smashing creation of Bob Destiny, which he calls an "opera-rock," interpreted by his band of musicians and singers among whom was the well-known artist Cheryl Porter.



*Flowers ceremony, footbridge to Palais de Justice*



*May 11 luncheon at la Mairie*

**Tuesday May 11** gave us another free morning, while Tom Rasmussen was invited to a session on Nantes' common transportation at Nantes Métropole. At noon, the city held a formal luncheon for him, the whole delegation and the host families at City Hall. Tom left for the airport that evening.

## Our Thirtieth Anniversary Trip to Nantes (*cont'd*)

**Wednesday May 12.** We gathered on the cathedral square to be guided by Jean-Claude Marais, past president of Nantes-Seattle Sister City, to the Biscuiterie Nantaise for a visit of the manufacturing and packaging facilities. We went to lunch in a nearby restaurant and some of us had coffee at Jean-Claude and Annick's. Our next group visit was at the Chateau de La Galissonnière, one of the many Muscadet vineyards outside Nantes where we were treated to a wine tasting by the owner Pierre-Yves Lusseau. Some of the group broke rank by then as they planned to leave Nantes and continue their trip through France and Europe. The rest of us were invited to Clisson, a nearby Italianate town where Bob Destiny's wife Pauline treated us to an impromptu buffet, and Bob regaled us with a rehearsal of his Wednesday night gospel and soul choral group.



*Biscuiterie Nantaise*



*At the Mémoire de l'outre-mer*



*Muscadet tasting at Chateau de la Galissonnière*



*Gospel and soul in Clisson with Bob Destiny*

**Thursday May 13.** The rather inclement weather caused the cancellation of the planned boat trip on the Erdre River. Mariette Cassourret, current president of the N-S association, took a couple of our people to a local sculptor's studio. By then, many of our group had already left or were getting ready to leave Nantes and pursue their travels.

**IT IS NOW TIME FOR US TO PROGRAM OUR RECEPTION, HOUSING, TRANSPORTING AND ENTERTAINING OF THE THIRTY MEMBERS OF THE NANTES-SEATTLE ASSOCIATION WHO WILL ARRIVE JULY 10. IF YOU CAN HELP, PLEASE CALL OR WRITE [jean.leblon@seattle-nantes.org](mailto:jean.leblon@seattle-nantes.org)**

# Welcoming Interns Can Enrich Our Love of France: A personal experience at Northwest Folklife

By Michael Herschensohn –

The Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association often welcomes people of all ages from Nantes who come here to get to know our city and its surroundings while improving their American English. Sometimes, they spend little more than a long weekend, sometimes they come here for a week or two, and occasionally they come for an extended period as part of an internship marking the end of their university studies. Once, I had the great good luck of hosting an intern who stayed two years working part of the time as temporary employee. The internships usually take place in the offices of a Seattle business or not-for-profit. During their stay the interns share the daily life of a local family. All of the interns have taken courses in English and are expected to get by in the language.

Between 1998 and 2008 as director of Northwest Folklife, I welcomed eight French students. They included three young women – one each from New Caledonia, Vence and Nancy – and five young men from Nantes. The young men had all studied English at the Institute of Technical Studies (IUT), a business school.

We placed our visitors from Nantes in the homes of people who wanted to perfect their French or support the work of Northwest Folklife, the arts festival that takes place every year at Seattle Center over Memorial Day weekend. As for my interns, they spent 50% of their time preparing a study on a particular aspect of Northwest Folklife's business model. They devoted the balance of their time to helping us produce the festival. As for my role, I directed the preparation of the study which required my approval for the interns to graduate from the IUT. As a former university professor, I loved combining teaching with running the business.

Of the eight projects I supervised, my favorite was the work of a student who combined both halves of his internship into a single meaningful project. He had a strong interest in computers and their application in the business world. He created a searchable database which permitted Folklife enthusiasts to know when and where their favorite musicians were going to play during the weekend. Since he intended to pursue a career in Internet marketing, the internship at Folklife served him well.

The Northwest Folklife employees really liked having French interns in our offices. As with many small not-for-profit organizations, our employees were young, and most of them had not traveled abroad. The interns taught them that the young people of all industrialized nations share similar lives even though there are big differences between life in France and the United States.

My wife Julia and I also hosted one of the interns. I liked that a lot and suggest that the members of Seattle-Nantes welcome young people from Nantes in their homes. It is a great opportunity for helping our organization and the cities of Seattle and Nantes all the while spending time that will revitalize your fondest memories of France!



## Community Shopping Day at Macy's Raises Funds for Scholarships

**By Margaret Johnson –**

On May 15th at Macy's in Bellevue Square, WA, Seattle-Nantes Dollars for Scholars took part in a Community Shopping Day that benefited shoppers, local nonprofit organizations and Macy's as well. Shoppers were invited to purchase a \$10 shopping pass valid that day for a variety of in-store savings. The proceeds from the ticket sales prior to the event went to the selling organization. Then the proceeds of same day ticket sales were divided among the participating nonprofit organizations. While the final numbers are not yet available, Seattle-Nantes Dollars for Scholars made \$500 from pre-event ticket sales, and we expect to make at least that much from same day ticket sales.

12 nonprofit organizations, including Seattle-Nantes Dollars for Scholars, participated in the all day event. Shoppers enjoyed complimentary espresso drinks, a DJ playing a variety of tunes, and a live Jazz trio entertaining throughout the day.

Seattle-Nantes Dollars for Scholars awards scholarships to college students in western Washington who will study French language and culture. The primary criterion is that applicants demonstrate a passion for French. Students are encouraged to study in France, especially in our sister city Nantes.

A very special thanks to Marie Moffitt, Jaclyn Eruhow-Hagan, and Stacey Kammerer for volunteering at the event and helping make it such a success. As always, we appreciate the efforts of our volunteers.

## Seattle-Nantes Awards Four \$1000 Scholarships

**By Tom Bennett –**

Our scholarship affiliate, Seattle-Nantes Dollars for Scholars, has chosen four very talented students to receive this year's scholarships. The scholarships are for students living in western Washington who have demonstrated a passion for French.

This year's recipients are:

- Anne Gaskins, who is graduating from Redmond High School and will attend Whitman College this fall;
- Melissa Peterson who is graduating from Lake Stevens High School and will attend Western Washington University this fall;
- Gennie Gebhart, a University of Washington student who attended last year's Sister Cities International Youth Conference in Belfast, Ireland; and
- Afton Tyler, a University of Washington student who studied in Nantes last autumn.

We sincerely thank all of you who donated to our scholarship program, and to the Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board which provided a \$2000 matching grant. Your generosity enabled us to help these deserving students.



## Annual Seattle Sister Cities Reception

**By Jean-Loup Baer** – The Annual Seattle Sister Cities reception took place on April 29th at its usual place, the Bertha Landes Room in City Hall. About 300 guests, including Mayor McGinn, several City Council members and a dozen members of our Association attended the event. The four “focused” Sister Cities were Chongqing (PR China), Mazatlan (Mexico), Pecs (Hungary) and Mombasa (Kenya). They provided the recipes for the delicious food, the entertainment (typical dances of their regions) and items for the silent auction. A special tribute was given to retired Council Member Jan Drago for her tireless contributions to the Sister City cause.

Although this reception is always an enjoyable event, the acoustics of the Landes room and adjacent area are such that even with the best sound system, speakers and music for the performances often become inaudible because of the surrounding noise. The Sister City Coordinating Committee is looking at various alternatives but unfortunately cost is an issue. If you have suggestions, do not hesitate to contact Jean-Loup ([jean-loup.baer@seattle-nantes.org](mailto:jean-loup.baer@seattle-nantes.org)) and he will forward them to the organizers for next year.

## Soirée with Mercer Island Sister City Association

**By Tom Bennett** –

On Saturday, March 13, members of Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association joined with Mercer Island-Thonon-les-Bains Sister City Association in a grand soirée and auction to celebrate the four sister cities.

Guests enjoyed an elegant evening of desserts, dancing, wines and entertainment at the Mercer Island Community Center at Mercer View. Music and entertainment were provided by the great Pearl Django, wines selected by Vinum Distributors, desserts created by pastry chef Amanda Merkle, and

an amazing array of silent auction items donated by local merchants and individuals. Among the auctioned items were a week’s cruise on Holland America to the purchaser’s choice of destination, five nights at Vallarta Torre in Puerto Vallarta, dinners and getaways locally and at exotic locations, family adventures, artwork, and items created by local artisans. Because of the large number of auction items contributed, purchasers obtained these for unbelievably low prices.

Watch for announcements of next year’s soirée, and don’t miss this fantastic evening.

## Spring Clean Up at Nantes Park

**By Alaina McCallum** –

On April 24th, the date of the celebration of Earth Day, six members of the Association spent several hours of their Saturday participating in the spring clean up of Nantes Park. Before the volunteers arrived, the Seattle Parks Department dropped off tools and tarps to collect the yard waste. We spread out to focus on the most needed areas, and we removed invasive plants, weeds and litter. Two hours in, we took a short break to have our lunch and enjoy each other’s company. To supplement

our own, Pamela Hughes had brought coffee, soup and delicious pastries.

The newest addition at Nantes Park is on the park sign that now bears a plate a plate stating “France Sister City Park.” The park is located at 50th along SW Admiral Way.

We thank all the volunteers who helped make Nantes Park ready for when the Nantes visitors arrive in July.

## IES Abroad News: Nantes is a top study abroad destination

IES Abroad (formerly known as Institute of European Studies) has just published the results of its Study Abroad Mania survey of the Top Study Abroad Destinations. Among the 90 programs in 32 cities, after four weeks of voting by students, alumni, staff, faculty and friends, the Nantes program and the European Union program were voted top of the list. Among the two, the final totals were close: the IES Nantes program received 1,931 votes (50.5%) and the IES European Union program received 1,893 votes (49.5%).

## Visit of French Warship

Several of our members attended a reception on board the French frigate *Prairial* Friday, June 4 as guests of Capitaine de Frégate Renaud Bondil. The ship visited Seattle as part of a goodwill tour to the United States.

## State Superintendent Signs Agreement with French Academy

**By Misa Bourdoiseau** – On April 27, after two years of discussion and elaboration, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Académie de Nantes (Regional Education Authority for the Pays de la Loire). This document establishes a formal agreement between the two organizations under which each will agree to consider partnerships and exchanges, such as the sister school program, beyond those that exist already. Undoubtedly, this

will help more students from France and Washington to learn about the language, history and culture of their respective countries.

Teachers interested in such exchanges are invited to complete the form available at [aatf-northwest.org](http://aatf-northwest.org) and return it to Misa Bourdoiseau, president of the local chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French (AATF), at [mizab@hotmail.com](mailto:mizab@hotmail.com). About twenty educational institutions in Nantes are eager to match with schools in Washington!

## Community Bulletin Board

**Wanted:** Molly Gibson, a young member of our association, has been studying in Dijon. She speaks of her “wonderful host family,” and would like to return the favor by helping them find a Seattle area family to host a 16-year old male student for three weeks during summer vacation or the school year, with possible exchange. If interested, please contact Molly at [mgibson@pugetsound.edu](mailto:mgibson@pugetsound.edu)

**Wanted:** Nantes family, with three young children, seeks someone who wants to study French and experience being part of a French family from September 2010 to the end of June 2011. Independent free housing in exchange for child care. For further details, contact [pamela.hughes@seattle-nantes.org](mailto:pamela.hughes@seattle-nantes.org)

**Wanted:** Young Nantes male member of N-S Assoc. looking for biomedical internship from Feb 2011 for several months. [dfrivold@lorig.com](mailto:dfrivold@lorig.com)

## Save the Date: Annual Pique-Nique / BBQ

August 15, 2010  
1 pm until 4 pm or beyond

*at*

Ravenna Park  
2000 NE 58th St  
Seattle

\*This is a **family** event\*  
We'll have the coals hot

Bring your place settings, drinks  
choice of BBQ fare  
and a side dish to share

Look for a reminder and driving  
details nearer the date

### 2010 Officers

### SNSCA Board Members

**President:** Tom Bennett  
**Vice-President:** Margaret Johnson  
**Secretary/Treasurer:** Susan Hulbert  
**Corresponding Secretary:** Pamela-Ann Hughes

### Board Member Responsibilities

**Assoc. General Info:** Pamela-Ann Hughes  
**Dollars for Scholars:** Tom Bennett  
**Events Coordinator:** Pamela-Ann Hughes  
**Historian:** Marie-Pierre Koban  
**Hosting/Nantes Park:**  
**Membership/Website:** Jean-Loup Baer  
**Public Relations:** Alaina McCallum  
**University/Scholarship:** Jean Leblon

### Other Positions

**Newsletter Editor:** Jean Leblon  
**Newsletter Layout:** Maggie McGehee  
**Volunteer Coordinator:** Margaret Johnson