

Contents

Memories from Nantes:
A Cultural Experience....1

La Folle Journée - a
Crazy Day in Nantes
and Elsewhere.....4

Nantes Park News.....5

The 2010 Annual
General Meeting.....6

La Chandeleur7

Meet Our Scholars
Thursday, May 26.....8

Host Family Wanted.....8

President's Message.....9

New Members.....9

The Annual Picnic
Will Have a
Different Look.....10

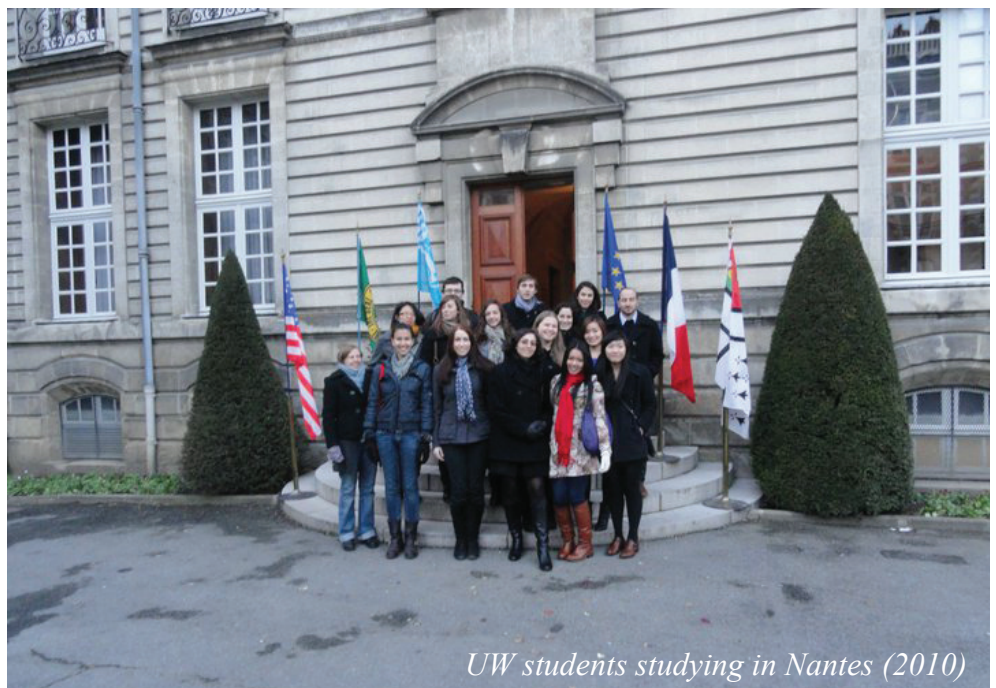
Memories from Nantes: A Cultural Experience

By Rachel Craig –

Finally! Two seven-hour flights, one twelve-hour layover, and one *TGV* ride later, I found myself in the middle of the bustling Gare Nord in Nantes, France. I had spent the last six months counting down to this moment, and now that it was finally here, I was thrilled yet slightly anxious. Having studied French for nearly five years, I felt more than ready to experience the French culture and language firsthand. But

the truth was, I didn't know exactly what to expect - after all, studying French in a classroom is one thing; living in France is something else entirely. I hoped that my study abroad would be just as exciting and fulfilling as I had imagined. Wondering exactly what would happen over the course of the next three months, I stepped out of the shelter of *la gare* and headed out into the city.

(Continued on page 2)



Memories from Nantes (*cont'd*)

If I had had any concerns, they were promptly put to rest as I passed through the lively streets of Nantes. I found it charming with its ornate architecture and, because there were few tourists and I rarely heard English, it was easy to fully immerse myself in the French culture. I quickly came to appreciate the convenience of the tramway. After spending the week in class, there was nothing better than taking the tram to Bouffay with friends, where we would share a dinner of *galettes* or couscous. Sometimes we would linger for hours afterward at our table, laughing and talking about our classes and exchanging anecdotes. That was one of the things I liked best about Nantes; I never felt rushed or pressed for time. I felt that I was able to live in and enjoy the present moment rather than constantly worry about my next plan of action.

It seemed that there was always something to do in the city. Sightseeing never lost our interest - we managed to discover something new each time we went out. I enjoyed visiting the Château des Ducs de Bretagne and strolling through the Jardin des Plantes; I gazed up in awe at the elegant, imposing cathedral. Weekends were reserved for attending outdoor markets that sold various knickknacks and exceptional baked goods; during the week it was fun to see an occasional French movie or simply wander the streets in search of new shops and souvenirs. In the evening I loved walking



Cathedral de St. Pierre et St. Paul

along the Erdre River - it was always relaxing to stand along the cobble sidewalk and look out at the lights reflecting on the surface of the dark water.

I spent eighteen hours each week studying at *l'Université de Nantes*, where I developed greater insight into the French education system. I enrolled in history, art, writing, culture, phonetics, and conversation courses. I appreciated the fact that all of my professors were extremely friendly and very open to sharing their opinions and ideas. As the weeks passed in a flurry of essay writing, presentations, and grammar exercises, I watched my knowledge of the French language and culture grow by leaps and bounds.

(Continued on page 3)



L'Université de Nantes campus

Memories from Nantes (*cont'd*)



Tramway in downtown Nantes



Downtown Nantes



Sunset over the Loire

There were some difficult moments, but I think I learned the most from them. Before Nantes, I always felt as if I had to control and plan out every moment of my life. But while studying abroad, the challenges I encountered helped me learn to worry less and become more accepting of current circumstances. In late September and October a series of strikes occurred in Nantes in protest against the new French retirement age. As a result, the trams were often forced to stop running, so it became very difficult to get around the city. Some mornings I would arrive at school to find the entrance barricaded and classes cancelled. I was also surprised to find that stores closed early during the week and all day on Sunday. At first, these experiences frustrated me. But as time went on, I came to see that I just needed to relax, adjust my schedule, and maintain a good sense of humor. After all, it was certainly an exciting time to be in France - I was living French history firsthand! Looking back on my experience, I know that it allowed me to make a number of positive changes in my life. I am now more willing to take chances, I live more in the present moment, and I am more independent.

As the weeks progressed, I knew that it would be hard to say goodbye to Nantes and all of the wonderful people I had met. While I had initially felt like just another foreigner in Nantes, by the end of my stay I considered it a second home. I could easily find my way around, and I had made a number of new friends and acquaintances in my dorm and at school. I enjoyed being able to speak French whenever I wanted.

Rich in culture, history, and opportunity, Nantes is an impressive city that never ceased to amaze me. I can say without a doubt that I will be returning in the future. Until then, I will cherish the memories and look forward to the next time I step off of a train at Gare Nord, ready to begin my second great adventure *nantaise*.



La Folle Journée - a Crazy Day in Nantes and Elsewhere

By Jean Leblon - For your next weekend, actually from Wednesday through Sunday, how would like to have a choice of 248 [sic] short musical events and 50 lectures to attend? That is what is offered in Nantes each winter during what is called “*La Folle Journée*,” a day that has become five days over the years. This year the programs were scheduled from Wednesday February 2 to Sunday February 6, in 10 halls of the Palais des Congrès, the 3 smaller ones seating 80, the other 9 holding 120, 200, 300, 450, 800, and 1,900 seats, plus the great SRO central hall. Most programs last no more than 45 minutes, the few exceptions reserved for large orchestras and longer pieces. The breaks of 30 to 45 minutes give patrons ample time to move from one venue to the other since they are all under one roof.

This year the overall major theme was “*Les Titans de Brahms à Strauss*” that included works of Mahler, Liszt and Schoenberg. Next year, the major feature will be Russian music. One of the major objectives of the Folle Journée is to make classical and other music available to all people whatever their origin, their age, their economic condition, their culture. Classical music is made accessible to young people for whom there are also remarkable presentations of less “difficult” music by artists of their own age. The effort made by the city is itself a vast one; for instance, special 10 euros tariffs are offered by the SNCF for people coming from all over the region of the Loire, Brittany and Center regions. In the city, free shuttle buses are provided (in which the drivers are dressed in formal garb).

For an idea of the vast choice available, from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm on Friday in the various halls, there were the following:

- Orchestre symphonique de l'Oural, Dmitri Liss director - Brahms Symphony No.1

- Boris Berezovski, piano and Brigitte Engerer, piano - Brahms 4-hands pieces
- Quatuor Prazák and Quatuor Zemlisky - Brahms and Strauss - Sextuor for strings
- Voces B - Musical workshop for children
- Régis Pasquier, violin, Emmanuel Strosser, piano - Two Brahms sonatas
- Hervé Billaut, piano - Six pieces by Liszt
- Shani diluka, piano - Works by Brahms, Wagner, Strauss, Schubert/Liszt

In the great hall :

- Quatuor de guitares du Conservatoire de Nantes, Michel Grizard, director (or Renegades Steel Band Orchestra)

And in the two conference rooms :

- Patrick Favre: Anton Bruckner: *un maître de la symphonie à l'aube du post-romantisme*
- Françoise Coblence : *Mahler et la psychanalyse*

That was just the choice for *that* time on *that* day. Imagine the same variety on three full and two half days at intervals of roughly 1 ½ hour, in 10 venues, 25 to 35 concerts in each of them, and you will understand the rush on January 8 when the tickets went on sale at the window and on the website. The first year, 25,000 tickets were sold; this year, 134,500.

The organization and impact of the Folle Journée is not confined to Nantes. Performers come from all over France, Europe and beyond. The event itself is reproduced in varying importance in at least 10 smaller cities of the immediate region. It has also been exported to other cities in the world, namely to Lisbon, Bilbao, Rio de Janeiro, Warsaw, and in Japan to Tokyo, Nigata, Biwako and Kanazawa. Montreal is planning to organize one next year.

Should you want to see much more, there are numerous websites to visit, besides this short list:

<http://folle-journee-nantes.blog.artetv.net/rubrique/2011/mercredi-2-fevrier/>

<http://www.nantes.fr/culture/actualites-culturelles/folle-journee-de-nantes>

http://www.follejournee.fr/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=47&Itemid=85&lang=fr

Nantes Park News

By Pamela-Ann Hughes –

It has been over five years since Nantes Park was dedicated in celebration of our 25th Anniversary. Sadly, despite our and the Parks' Department efforts, it is not the pocket gem we would wish for and it has attracted little local use.

Enter Tad Davis, an old (sorry, longtime) member of the association, who is now involved with the West Seattle Garden Tours. He told me of grants they give each year and encouraged us to apply for the park. Right up until the last moment, I was uncertain how to go about enhancing Nantes Park in a way that eventually would be meaningful. Frank Robinson, of the Parks' Department, came up with a long range plan — Frank is the one who designed and carried out Seattle's booth at the Nantes' Floralties internationales, and as a result became a member of our association and now vacations in Nantes — that involves connecting the park to the upper and lower streets that abut it, and screening the adjacent houses. Obviously the scope of that project is not within the budget of the \$1,000 grant application, but we felt that working toward this vision will eventually result in a park that will be utilized, and be of horticultural and educational interest. The current grant we applied for is to establish screening plantings now, which will remain and grow; a large step towards the eventual plan completion.

The presentation went well, I think. It was a big group of about twenty-four who were receptive, but I guess now it is up to how much they profit from the tours and how strong our competition is.

Soon it will be time for the spring clean up in April. I'll be contacting you when I have firmed up the date. Please plan to attend to show our enthusiasm and support of Nantes Park.

Pamela Hughes
Chair, Nantes Park Committee

Editor's late breaking news:

We have just learned that The West Seattle Garden Tour has approved our application and will determine the amount of the grant at a later date. This year, the Tour will take place on July 17. Part of our commitment includes the promotion of the Tour's mission as well as our presence at a booth on the day of the Tour. Pamela will need help to insure a good representation of our association. If you like caring for our natural surroundings through community action, check the WSGT website at **www.westseattlegardentour.com** and get in touch with Pamela.

Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association

2010 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**By Margaret Johnson and
Jaclyn Eruhow-Hagan –**

The Annual General Meeting of the Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association was held at the North City Bistro and Wine Shop in Shoreline on November 7, 2010. Tables were set in the center of the main dining room surrounded by racks full of a wide variety of wine. The brick walls and subtle lighting added to the rustic ambience. The 20 or so attendees savored a dinner of either pork tenderloin or crab cakes with remoulade sauce, spinach and pear salad, baby potatoes with Golden Delicious Apples, green beans with orange sauce, and a glass of wine.

While the diners were enjoying a dessert of crème brûlée, Tom Bennett, the acting president, narrated a slide show of the visit of the Seattle members to Nantes and the Nantais' visit to Seattle for the 30th anniversary jumelage in May and July, 2010 respectively.

The first set of slides showed many of the events the Seattle members participated in while in Nantes, including a ceremony on VE Day, the official reception of our delegation by the City and Mayor Marc Ayrault, a visit to the Machines de l'Isle and the Biscuiterie Nantaise, and an excursion to and tour of the Château de La Galissonnière vineyard just outside of Nantes.

A second set of slides showed the 30 members from Nantes-Seattle Sister City Association enjoying many of the activities prepared for their participation including Bastille Day celebration at

Seattle Center, the Tours of Pike Place Market and Pioneer Square, meetings with our Seattle Council Representative Tom Rasmussen and with Mayor Mike McGinn, a barbeque at the home of member Karen Herr's home, dinner at the Seattle Yacht Club, and a cruise around Lake Washington and Lake Union aboard The Steamer Virginia V.

Pamela-Ann Hughes, acting Corresponding Secretary, conducted the business of the evening. Pamela reviewed the year's activities and recognized long-time members. Members voted on certain changes in the by-laws of the Association.

Members reelected to the board for two year terms were Jean-Loup Baer, Tom Bennett, Marie-Pierre Koban, Jean Leblon, Susan Hulbert, Margaret Johnson, Pamela-Ann Hughes and Alaina McCallum. Newly elected Jaclyn Eruhow-Hagan was welcomed to the Board this night.

As in previous years, the evening closed by revealing prizes won by members sitting in secretly marked chairs and a special prize to Tish Van der Meulen for being the first person to send in her reservation for the event.

A special thank you to Pamela-Ann Hughes for arranging the Annual General Meeting and Dinner, and to Karen Kerr for coordinating the slide show. We really appreciate the great efforts of all our volunteers.



La Chandeleur

By Jaclyn Eruhow-Hagan –

The Seattle-Nantes membership gathered for a crêpe dinner on February 9, at the Little Red Bistro in celebration of La Chandeleur.

With long red curtains hanging in the windows and artwork upon the walls, the Little Red Bistro's artsy atmosphere is given a touch of intimacy by the dark wooden furniture and low lighting. On other nights, the Bistro offers live music and jazz dancing, but even on a regular Tuesday there was an ample crowd, testament to the popularity of this bistro. Our party was comfortably hosted in a private back room which sported the same luscious red curtains and artwork.

After an appetizer of split pea soup or green salad, the dinner attendees were offered a choice between two savory crêpes. The French chef, Michel May, was gracious enough to depart from the regular menu and offered two more traditional crêpes to our

party: Chicken Tarragon, with grilled chicken breast, broccoli, mushrooms with béarnaise sauce, and the vegetarian option which consisted of jack cheese, tomatoes, spinach and mushrooms with garlic and herb sauce.

Towards the end of dinner, Chef May made an appearance to thank us for coming and to tell us a little about himself and the bistro. After dinner, Tom Bennett, acting president, presented Pamela-Ann Hughes with a gift certificate to Mrs. Cook's and a card signed by the membership to thank her for her years of dedicated service on the Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association Board.

A special thank you to Pamela-Ann Hughes for scouting out the Little Red Bistro and organizing a wonderful crêpe dinner evening, another demonstration of your initiative and dedication which we greatly appreciate.



Diane Baer, Tom Bennett and Pamela-Ann Hughes celebrate La Chandeleur, with Susan Hulbert and David Anderson at the rear table

Meet Our Scholars Thursday, May 26

By Tom Bennett – On Thursday, May 26, you are invited to meet some of the very talented scholars who have been awarded our scholarships to study French. From 6:00pm to 8:00pm you can visit with them and learn more about our scholarships which many of you have generously supported. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be donated by local merchants. The event will be held at the Stonington Gallery, 119 South Jackson Street. Parking is available either on the street or at Quest Field one block south.

The Stonington Gallery features art of contemporary masters of the Northwest Coast and Alaska. The Gallery has sponsored very successful exhibits in Nantes and other cities in France.

There is no charge for the event as the food and location are donated, but we do request that you RSVP to rsvp@seattle-nantes.org

If you would like to learn more about our scholarships and scholarship winners, please see our scholarships web site at www.seattle-nantesscholars.org

Host Family Wanted

A young lady from Nantes will be coming to Seattle in May of this year to complete an internship in the Ballard neighborhood. The Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association is searching for a family or families willing to host this student for the duration of her internship or for part of it during her stay of 8 weeks from May to July.

She is 19 years old and currently studying at the International Business School in Nantes. She is very excited to be coming to the United States and wishes to stay with a host family to improve her English and immerse herself in American culture. Dogs and children are more than acceptable.

If you would like to host this student, please contact Jaclyn Eruhow-Hagan, Corresponding Secretary, at jaclyn.eruhow-hagan@seattle-nantes.org for more details.

President's Message

By Tom Bennett –

Bonjour everyone! The new year is well under way, and so is your Association. In addition to the activities described elsewhere in this issue, we hope to have many more of your favorite activities. How many depends on you.

We are encouraging all our members to plan “MiniEvents.” Would you like to watch a French movie with friends and discuss it afterwards? Pick a time and send an email to members@seattle-nantes.org. You can ask other Seattle-Nantes members to meet you outside a theater before starting time and plan to have a snack or drink after the show, or you can rent a video and invite people to come to your home. You can go to a concert or play. How about inviting people to a gourmet dinner at your home, having each guest bring a dish you assign? The possibilities are unlimited, the work or planning can be next to nothing, and if only two or three people show up, you will still have a successful evening!

We hope many of you will plan or participate in some of these MiniEvents. When you send an email to members@seattle-nantes.org we will get back to you if we think anything in your message is unclear or if we receive anything inappropriate from a nonmember, otherwise your message will go to our email list of members and others interested in the Association.

Another good way to meet new people is to volunteer to help at some of our major events, such as our summer picnic, Bastille Day activities at Seattle Center, or the May 26 event at Stonington Gallery. Margaret Johnson is our volunteer coordinator. You can email her at margaret.johnson@seattle-nantes.org, or call her cell phone at 425 802 3387.

Lastly, for those of you who did not see my recent email to members, we want you to know that Pamela Hughes has resigned from the Board, but will continue to be active in our Association, especially in the role of the major mover and shaker for maintaining and improving Nantes Park in West Seattle.

Bien amicalement,
Tom Bennett

New Members

We welcome enthusiastically the following persons who have joined or rejoined the Association this year:

Marilyse Benyakar
Ty and Bernadette Egbert
Hanah Joudi

We hope to see all of our new members again soon.
With thanks and best wishes from the Board.

The Annual Picnic Will Have a Different Look

By Tom Bennett –

Mark your calendars for Sunday, August 14, the date of our annual picnic. This year we will meet at Saltwater Park in Richmond Beach, north of Seattle. We have reserved a covered picnic shelter with a spectacular view of the Sound and Olympics. We will have our meal later in the afternoon so people can stay to watch the beautiful summer sunset. Because several tables are inside the shelter, we can have our picnic regardless of the weather.

The shelter is just above the parking lot, so it is easy to get to, but relatively private. The same parking lot serves the people going to the beach, so you can come early and enjoy beachcombing or beach games if you wish. We will provide more details as the date approaches.

2011 Officers

SNSCA Board Members

President: Tom Bennett

Vice-President: Margaret Johnson

Secretary/Treasurer: Susan Hulbert

Corresponding Secretary: Jaclyn Eruhow-Hagan

Board Member Responsibilities

Assoc. General Info: Jaclyn Eruhow-Hagan

Dollars for Scholars: Tom Bennett

Events Coordinator:

Historian: Marie-Pierre Koban

Hosting:

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

Nantes Park: Pamela-Ann Hughes