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ASCI Newsletter

July 2016

Promoting
International
Partnerships



FEATURE

Bastille Day July 17

Le Jour de la Fête Nationale!

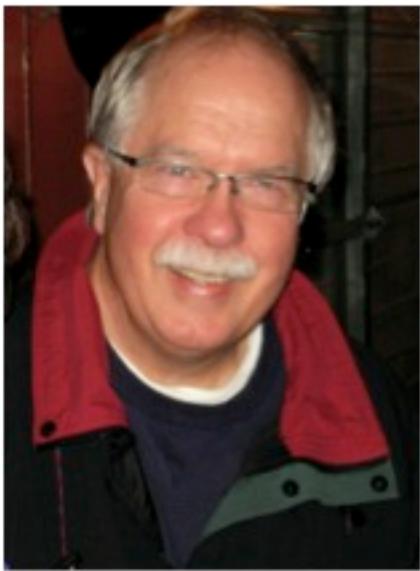
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Message from the President: From where I sit / The trip to Greece

By Andrew Craig

Needless to say, I am going to carry on about (1) our delegation visit to Karpenisi, and (2) the wonderful fundraising dinner at The Med.



The delegation visit was nothing short of phenomenal. Dr. Andronikos Falangas designed the trip/itinerary with the perfect vision of what a delegation should be: not just a hello, we're from ASCI and we're here to help, but with an eye to the participants actually delving into the culture of the country, their heritage, their food, their housing, their habits, (and to some very limited extent, their language--just try Greek!), all of the things that a committee member should be aware of in order to appreciate and assist the delegation city's organization. We did all of that. We toured Athens, a sprawling metropolis, crowded with buildings, cars, scooters, and people, nice people, helpful people. Athens contains fully half of the population of Greece. We visited the Acropolis, museums, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, all things that speak to the history of Greece, all giving us a better understanding of the history of the country that once was the center of the known world.

We ventured from Athens to Delphi, to several monasteries along the way, many with most excellent collections of antiquity, to include pottery and sculpture, arriving late one afternoon at a small village outside of Karpenisi, because the bus could not get to the city center, where we were met with a warm and friendly reception from our hosts. Many of us would not see Karpenisi till the following day, as we departed from that village to our host families.

Meeting with the Deputy Regional Governor

During our stay in Karpenisi, we were treated exceptionally well by our hosts. My counterpart is Leonidas Papadopoulos, President of Karpenisi Sister Cities. Let me tell you, he did an outstanding job, aided by two outstanding interpreters, the women's arm of KSCI, and the hospitality of the local officials. I had the privilege of meeting with the Deputy Regional Governor, the Bishop, called there the

Metropolitan, and the Mayor, all of whom were exceedingly gracious to our group.

We were treated to lunch at a fine restaurant just outside of town called River Art, whose proprietor was a woman of great artistic talent, who had painted the restaurant from top to bottom, yes, to include the floors. Lunch there was our first extravaganza, and, thankfully, the speeches were not, but were all



kind and welcoming.



As part of our cultural awakening, we visited a number of monasteries, the primary monastery in the Karpenisi area being the monastery of Proussos, from whence came the Metropolitan. The monasteries do not exist totally as tourist attractions, but are living, breathing, centers of religion, where monks live and work. They are something that few of us have ever experienced, and many have spent time reflecting upon.

With the Metropolitan and his translator

Karpenisi is known as the

“Switzerland of Greece” due to the proximity of Voluchi, the ski area. We visited there on a very chilly, very windy day. Of course, it being May, the area was closed, and, since it was not quite spring enough, the shepherds were not there with their flocks. But this ski area is part and parcel of some of the problems in Karpenisi. It did not snow this past year. At all. This, of course, put a hardship on the town and many of its citizens. And this is where we discovered that our delegation could do the most good, an offering to help the poor of the city. So, in the name of ASCI, our delegation donated \$561 to Father George, Priest of the largest church in Karpenisi, and the organization that has a focus on aiding the poor and needy.

Our other contribution was in the form of joining. The women’s group of KSCI, the Evryania Women’s Group, needs office furniture. So ALL of our 13 women JOINED their group! This gives the group an international flavor, and well over \$100 to purchase office furniture. Way to go, ladies!

With President Leonidas Papadopoulos

And then there was the farewell banquet, complete with spit-roasted goat, Tsipouro, wonderful Greek food, some speeches and gift exchanges, and, of course, Greek dancing. Needless to say, none of this in Karpenisi could have

happened without the leadership of their president, Leonidas Papadopoulos, and his members, to include Stavros and Joanne (who has done most of my translating too.). They went beyond all expectations, to say the least, arranging for home hosts, getting hotel rooms, providing us with information, and, of course, being gracious hosts in every way possible. We owe Leonidas and his organization a huge debt of gratitude. We hope to be equal hosts when they arrive here!



Secondly, there was the Greek Fund Raising Dinner at The Med. We were a bit afraid that our subscription would not be met, but, true to form, our ASCI supporters came through, often at the last

minute and we began our meal with even more than we had planned. And the meal was a culinary masterpiece, prepared and supervised by Pete and Paula Apostolopoulos. We had a plate full of appetizers, a beautiful salad, and lamb shanks to die for! What a meal! And, after expenses, Pete and Paula made a very generous donation to the Karpenisi Committee, for which we are most grateful. Thank you, Pete and Paula and staff for an incredible evening dinner, accompanied by a very successful fund raising!



Our board members with the mayor and translator.

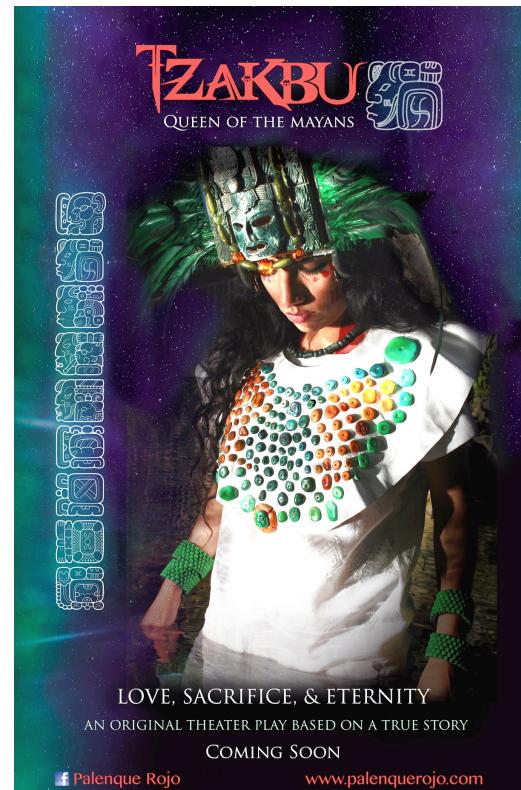
TZAKBU – Queen of the Maya Save the date!

**SEPT 30TH AT WESTERN CAROLINA
UNIVERSITY**

**OCT 2ND AT DIANA WORTHAM -
MATINEE AT 2 AND EVENING
PERFORMANCE AT 7:30.**

**MAYAN PERFORMERS FROM SAN
CRISTÓBAL DE LAS CASAS.**

TzakBu – See next page...



[Palenque Rojo](#)

www.palenquerojo.com

COMING SOON

COMING SOON – TZAKBU – QUEEN OF THE MAYA



If you were fortunate enough to see a performance of **Palenque Rojo** in 2012, and remember the excitement, costumes, sounds and smells of the Mexican jungles, you should be very happy to see that the same group is returning to Asheville and Cullowhee this fall. If you missed it, you are in for a treat!!

Hiram Marina, wife Lauren Farrell (photo below) and the actors and tech support will be bringing the powerful story of **TzakBu** to our area for us all to enjoy. Hiram is the Producer and Director of this performance and has many other story/performances to his credit. (google Hiram Marina or Palenque Rojo). Hiram is from Tuxtla Gutierrez and San Cristóbal de las Casas in the Mexican state of Chiapas.

The two Mexican Committees of ASCI will work together to sponsor this amazing opportunity for us all to learn more of the Mayan culture. Valladolid, in the Yucatan, and San Cristóbal, in Chiapas both have strong Mayan heritage and incredible archaeological sites.

After arriving in Charlotte, the group will spend a couple of days in Asheville, promoting the show. On the 29th of September, the group travels to Cullowhee and Western Carolina University, where they will prepare for the evening performance on the 30th in the Bardo Performing Arts Center – thanks to Denise Drury and Dean George Brown. During the day, a few of the actors will provide a workshop for the Drama Department of WCU. On the 1st of October, the group will be hosted for a cultural day with the Cherokee, visiting the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Oconoluftee Village and discussion on cultural similarities. Both nights the group will be hosted by WCU and the Cherokee Language Department of WCU, thanks to Paul Worley and Hartwell Frances.

Returning to Asheville on the eve of the 1st of October, the actors and staff will have a short time to see a Saturday night in Asheville before the full day at Diana Wortham Theatre on the 2nd of October. Two performances are scheduled, one at 2pm and one at 7:30pm. There will be special opportunities offered closer to show time. On the 3rd, there will be a much-deserved free day around Asheville with a closing gathering hosted by the two Mexican committees.

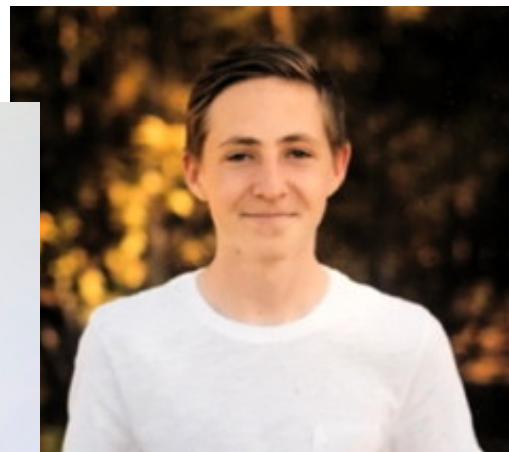
Tickets will be going on sale in mid July. We expect the same sell-out crowd as in 2012. Mark your calendar! We are looking for sponsors to help with the cost of transportation for these amazing actors and staff. We will send an e-blast to tell you when the tickets are on sale. Plan to come and bring friends! If you would like to help in some way, or need more information, please contact Gwen Hughes- Special Projects, or Lori Davis- PR/Media Chair for the Board.

gwenh@charter.net loel.davis@gmail.com



ASCI's prize-winning photographer of Mexican culture

Noah Hughes



Pictured: Elena Beatriz Sanchez Vasquez from Zequentic.

Sister Cities Int'l announcing Noah's winning entry.

Dear Noah,

My name is Ted Carroll and I manage youth programs at Sister Cities International. Thank you very much for participating in our YAAS competition this year. Judging has concluded, and I am very happy to tell you that one of your photos has been selected as a Finalist. Congratulations!



Hola! We on the San Cristóbal de las Casas committee are building momentum for exciting fall programming for our committee! Paul Worley and Ms. Denise Drury of Western Carolina University are leaving on the 18th of July with students to travel to San Cristóbal and work on specific projects regarding Maya textiles and handmade books and paper. The students going

with them on this trip, each a recipient of a Sister Cities travel scholarship, are excellent choices to participate in this program. The group will provide reports of their experiences during the months after they return so be on the lookout for their news!

For this trip our committee will be gathering school supplies, art supplies, and tooth brushes to give to our friends there. While there are 3 top projects on the ground in San Cristóbal our main focus will be the school of our sister city chair – Inés Paniagua – whose school is high in the mountains. Her school has no designated school building and no heat. To make matters worse, there is no water in the village of Zenquentic! Inés and a fellow teacher started teaching there two years ago with 8 male students to help them finish high school. She now has 80 students – now half the class is female! But they are in desperate need. These students walk to school, up to one hour and many have very little to eat. We are dedicated to helping Inés with this and are working on specific ideas so please consider contributing to our growing package of school and art supplies. We are developing a little video clip greeting from the Mayor of Mars Hill or Marshall to present to the Mayor of Zenquentic, the village near San Cristóbal. Our hope is that with this digital welcome their mayor, Manuel Martinez, will become more engaged with this huge community need and the incredible students who study in Zenquentic.

In other news, we are preparing for the showing of an amazing theater production this fall – **TzakBu** from San Cristóbal.. More about it in this issue.

If you can help with donations of school supplies for Inés's school in San Cristóbal, please contact me at ncchamo@gmail.com or text me at 561-927-8312. ¡Gracias! --Dr. Greg Clemons, Chair, San Cristóbal de las Casas Committee.

Valladolid Committee: Sharing, Farewells, and Looking Ahead

By Karon Korp, Chair



The first week of June Gabriella Aragonez completed the seven..-week Spanish class she taught with great results. Participants enjoyed it very much, and it was a great fundraiser for the Valladolid committee. An idea was put forth to hold a conversational class in the future. We'll let you know!

Our Farewell Party for Cori Rosciggno and Juan Carlos Dupinet, the two exchange students who spent a year at Asheville High, was held at Gwen & Carroll Hughes' home this month. Laughter and a few tears were shared by all, and they go home with great memories of Asheville and many new friends.

We have a request to host a student from Valladolid for 3 weeks this summer, Manual Mena, who is Sandra Loria's son – she was a part of the delegation who

visited here in Oct. 2014. He is 17, will be a senior next year, and his English is good. Dates: late July to mid-August/TBD – please call me if you can help – 828-254-4651.

Sybil Argintar is working on arranging another student exchange from Valladolid, Andrea, who will spend a year at Asheville High School. She is looking for a host family who has students already at AHS.



— ASHEVILLE SISTER CITIES INVITES YOU TO —

BASTILLE DAY CELEBRATION

— AT METRO WINES —



SUNDAY, JULY 17TH FROM 3-5PM

169 CHARLOTTE STREET \$10 AT THE DOOR

Featuring Live Entertainment, Open Air Markets Featuring Local Artisans
and Producers, Silent Auctions, Food Tastings, Wine and Much More!

ashevillesistercities.com/events

Celebrating World Traditions – Mountain Style

By Ken Richards

Through Sister Cities the world comes to Asheville and pumps life into our heritage.



The **Scots** brought their traditions of bagpipes and kilts, haggis and whisky. One result is to see the gathering of the clans at Grandfather Mountain and ‘Kirkin the Tartan at Montreat, Hendersonville, Franklin and Highlands and beyond. Now we are engaged in developing relationships with counties in Scotland.



The **British** and **French** brought us music and folklore, turned into mountain buck and clogging, dancing and story-telling. “Shindig on the Green” is ongoing at City/County Plaza.



Our sister city in **Greece** brings us classical tradition of art, food and dancing.



Our **Mexican** sister cities bring us the rich lore of the Mayan culture and chocolate.

“*Traités nouveaux & curieux du café du thé et du chocolat*”, by Philippe Sylvestre Dufour, 1685.



From **France** we celebrate the wines which grow on our American root stock. Their rich array of food has promoted the cheese cultures of our mountains and gastronomy throughout the world.



Our lives are brightened as we adorn ourselves with the colorful garb and traditions of worship from our sister city in West Africa, **Osogbo, Nigeria**.



We thrill to the exuberance of Russian dancing and the paintings and statues adorning Asheville from our Russian sister city **Vladikavkaz**. Clogging is not far removed from the Russian Kozachok dancing.



And from the **Cherokee** we derive a sense of place of the rivers, fields and mountains of tradition.

Ever since Asheville took the name of Governor **Ashe** in 1797 these rich cultures have blended into the basis of all we are today. And the tradition continues to grow as more and more cultures and subcultures arise in Western North Carolina and throughout the United States.

Combining these foundations provides ASCI the opportunity to introduce an afternoon of “**Cultivating our Roots**” a year from now *in November 2017*.

This is an event to which we’ll invite delegations from our Sister Cities and our local community to join as “one” nation in sharing this heritage.

American Vitis Rotundifolia (Muscadine) The mothervine, Roanoke, VA (photo)



In succeeding issues of the ASCI newsletter we will present the various forms of discovery to introduce at the November 2017 event. First, let us deal with the grape of America, the *American Vitis*.

Of the six of the *Viti* native to North America, the best known in the south is *rotundifolia (muscadine)*. The grapes of Europe, *Vinifera*, draw a much larger world-

wide audience featuring Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Riesling, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. Yet these *Vinifera* have only survived because of the root stock of the American grape rescuing them from the devastation of the *Phylloxera*, which ironically was first introduced to the vineyards of California and Europe by Eastern American grapes which destroyed their crops.

Rotundifolia (muscadine) was the first species in North America to be heavily cultivated, and has a history of over 400 years. The living proof resides on Roanoke Island, North Carolina, known simply as the Mothervine.

This ancient muscadine is the oldest known grape vine in North America. North Carolina is the largest producer of muscadine, but over three hundred improved muscadine cultivars are currently growing throughout the southeastern United States.

Usually dark purple or black, *rotundifolia* also produces a bronze-colored grape, the most famous of which is known as the scuppernong. Sometimes the term scuppernong is used interchangeably with muscadine, but should not be confused, as muscadine is in fact the broader term encompassing all *rotundifolia*. **And it saved the vineyards of the world. (To be continued)**



**Alasdair Wylie of Perthshire, Scotland
At Highland Brewing in the company of
ASCI members**

President - Andrew Craig	kurmugon(at)bellsouth.net
Vice President – Marjorie McGuirk	marjoriemcguirk(at)gmail.com
Secretary – Alice Keller	gakeller(at)gakeller.com
Treasurer – Inge Robert	irobert68(at)bellsouth.net
Past President – Russ Martin	rmandkk(at)attglobal.net

ASCI CALENDAR OF COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

ASCI Board Meeting	3 rd Thursday of each month – 5:30 pm
San Cristóbal Committee	2 nd Thursday of each month – 5:30pm <i>Greg Clemons – ncchamo(at)gmail.com</i>
Saumur Committee	4 th Thursday of each month – 5:30pm <i>Allison Weems – weems.allison(at)gmail.com</i>
Karpenisi Committee	Time and place TBA <i>Andronikos Falangas – androfal(at)yahoo.com</i>
Valladolid Committee	Last Wednesday of the month - 5:30pm <i>Karon Korp – karonkorp(at)gmail.com</i>
Osogbo Committee	3 rd Tuesday of each month – 6:00 pm <i>Andrew Craig – kurmagon(at)bellsouth.net</i>
Vladikavkaz Committee	Time and Date TBA – Contact Committee Chair. <i>Constance Richards – schtanzi(at)aol.com</i>

If you have a particular interest in a committee, please contact the chairperson to confirm time & place.



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