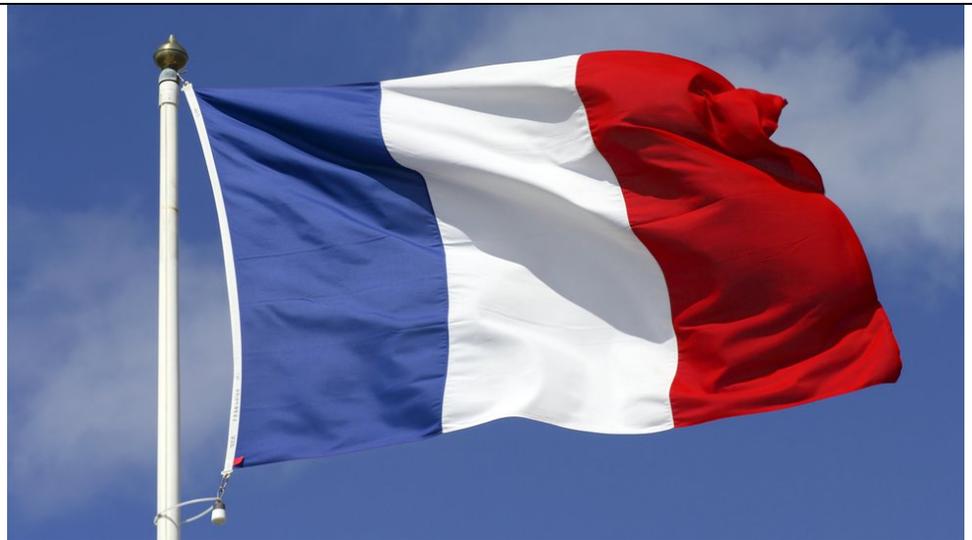




ASCI Newsletter July 2021

Promoting International Partnerships



ASCI's Bastille Day July 14 Fête

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<http://ashevillesistercities.org>*

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Mission Statement: Asheville Sister Cities, Inc. promotes peace, understanding, cooperation and sustainable partnerships through formalized agreements between International cities and the City of Asheville, North Carolina. Website:

www.ashevillesistercities.org

Message from the President

by Ken Nelson



Welcome Back!

As we come back together with in-person meetings and events, I am sure most of you are like me – ready to move ahead with our lives and to put the past sixteen months behind us. While we have not been standing still, overall it has been a difficult period infused with feelings of isolation and loss. The good news is that through our Member's efforts, our bridges both among our Committees and with our Sister Cities are stronger than ever, and we are extremely excited for the second half of this year as we look to build upon the virtual as well as the physical connections we have developed. And I am very happy to welcome our new Members, and especially to

recognize our new Committee Chairs Allison Weems (Saumur) and Rebecca Ann Robertson (Valladolid) as well as Nora Maybury and Annie Jennings, our new ASCI interns. Welcome! If you haven't already done so, I encourage you to purchase tickets and attend our Bastille Day Celebration on July 14th – personally I am viewing this fete as much a celebration of all of our members as if sharing a festival with our friends in Saumur. Being held outdoors, we believe we can gather safely though we will be encouraging any non-vaccinated guests to be respectful and wear a mask.

Again! I want to thank all of you for your support of ASCI through this difficult period. Your creativity as well as your commitment has inspired me, and I can't wait to share a meal or raise a glass with you – TOGETHER IN PERSON!

We are pleased to present the new and improved Asheville Sister Cities Website where we hope to grow awareness and access to our amazing organization.

Named Sister Cities International Best Overall Program for a city with a population of 50,001–100,000 in 2019, we continue to blaze a path forward for citizen diplomacy and friendships worldwide.

We hope this website will be one tool in our continued success by allowing our content to be shared easily, provide new forms of visuals like our YouTube Channel videos, and give access to lots of new resources plus archives and institutional knowledge.

If you would like to discuss ways to help bring awareness to ASCI and/or become a community partner for our organization please reach out to ashevillesistercities@gmail.com

Our summer intern by Jessica Coffield and Allison Weems

The summer interns are Annie Jennings, a rising sophomore at UNCA and Nora Maybury, a rising senior. They are working with Jessica on various ASCI projects related to social media, marketing, and special events. Annie is currently designing materials for the Bastille Day celebration.



For 30 years, ASCI has worked to develop an award-winning, amazing program that has connected Asheville with 7 wonderful cities around the world. And for 20 of these years, we hoped to have a directional sign pointing to each of our sister cities in a prominent spot right here in Asheville. The time has finally come!

Photo at left: The directional sign in our sister city, Saumur, France. The ASCI sign will be located in Pack Square. The sign will cost about \$5,000. Donations are appreciated. See newsletter cover for ASCI address.

Asheville Sister Cities has provided opportunities for cultural experiences and meaningful projects of mutual interest that benefit all involved. Some of our recent projects include: student connection/exchange between Saumur and Asheville; a delegation to Karpensi, Greece; Celebration of our School Fan

Project in Valladolid; a Weaver Delegation to San Cristobal, Mexico; and a delegation to Osogbo, Nigeria in the fall. Collaborating with Rotary, we will have sent 400 wheelchairs to our two Sister Cities in Mexico. Dunkeld & Birnam, Scotland has provided rich cultural exchanges of music and history. And we have so much more to accomplish.

BASTILLE DAY LAWN PARTY / *La Fête Nationale*

\$10 for ASCI members, \$15 for non-members.

You can pre-purchase entry tickets or purchase at the door. Each ticket includes a free glass of wine. Come play pétanque!

Come enjoy the evening with Asheville Sister Cities! Live music from Albi and The Lifters plus a performance by local high school student, Elliott Hove. Food will be available for purchase ahead of time on ASCI's website through July 10th. It will also be available at the event (while supplies last).

While the event will be held outdoors, we do ask that any non-vaccinated guests be respectful and wear a mask when not eating or drinking.



CELEBRATE BASTILLE DAY

JULY 14TH · 4-7PM
SMITH MCDOWELL HOUSE

BROUGHT TO YOU BY ASHEVILLE SISTER CITIES



**DETAILS AND TICKETS AT
[ASHEVILLESISTERCITIES.COM/EVENT](https://ashevillesistercities.com/event)**

MEMBERS \$10, NON-MEMBERS \$15
COMPLIMENTARY GLASS OF WINE WITH ENTRY

FOOD OPTIONS AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

Do you enjoy speaking French? *Venez parler!*

by Burt Leiman

Here's a description of a French conversation group, for people, like yourself, who may be curious about it:

- **Club Jeudi**, as we call it, meets for an hour **every Thursday at 12:30**. For the moment, we are meeting at the Green Sage restaurant on Merrimon Ave, until we find our post-covid location.
- Club Jeudi is sponsored by a cool organization, **Asheville Sister Cities**. Here's their web site: <http://www.ashevillesistercities.org/> Some people who come are Sister Cities members, but it's not a requirement. You can contact MarjorieMcGuirk@gmail.com for more information
- **French fluency also varies** quite a bit from week to week. Some weeks we have French language students, most weeks we have people who have decent fluency but are rusty, and one of our regular attendees is actually a French teacher. But, with that said, it's safe to say that just about every week, someone will get stuck on a word - "On dit, 'désabonner ou annuler?'" And typically, either one of us already knows that vocabulary - or we look it up on our phones. :-) It's a very supportive, non-intimidating group.
- **Our conversations tend to be unstructured and natural**. Just discussing what we've been up to, or planned trips, or a deal we found on Amazon, or frustrations with a new phone, or opinions of construction in Asheville, and so on, tends to take up the hour of conversation. Every now and then, we'll bring in a French news article for us to discuss.

A bit of Asheville Sister Cities history

ASCI to travel to Karpenisi in 2003.

Rick and Janna Lutovsky
Cathy Pons, Lillian Fischer, Dennis and
Barbara Hodgson and Carroll and Gwen
Hughes. Visiting the mountains outside of
Karpenisi with Georgia, sister of Helen
Kaltsunis, who was our amazing guide and
interpreter while we were there.



Celebrate La Festival de San Cristóbal!

Besides Saumur, another of our Sisters holds an annual celebration in July. Starting on July 13th and culminating on their patron saint's day on the 25th, San Cristóbal de las Casas celebrates with marimbas, food and fireworks. On the days leading up to the 25th, the city's main neighborhoods each conduct pilgrimages up El Cerrito (The Little Hill) to the San Cristóbalito Church at the top. On the 19th (Driver's Day), there is a tradition that the city's taxi drivers decorate their vehicles and caravan to the church, where they and their vehicle receive a blessing.



As with many of our annual traditions, the Fiesta was cancelled last year due to the pandemic. Seeing that Saint Christopher is the patron saint of travelers everywhere, let's all hope that we all will be invoking his protection as we begin to venture forth again into our world!

A retrospective by Ken Richards, Former NC/SC State Coordinator

René-Serge Marty, former French Consul General in Atlanta made ASCI a special destination beginning with a three-day weekend hosted in our city known as “Oui, Asheville:



Paris of the South”. ASCI was regularly featured in the Consul General's publications illuminating the leadership in Asheville of Franco-American programs in southeast United States.

Pictured at left is Consul General Marty with Irene and Constance Richards and Ken Richards, then NC State Coordinator for SCI.

He became part of the Asheville Opera scene when he and his wife would add this to their weekend visit to ASCI. His wife, as an expert on Rossini, would conduct a pre-concert background overview. He was a keynoter along with the Mexican Consul when ASCI hosted the event “Asheville Welcomes the World.”

He was delighted to carry with him while hiking a “Big Tom” walking stick carved by master craftsman, David Boone from Pensacola, North Carolina. He also has one of three desktop replicas of the statue at the Charles George Medical Center created by ASCI's Vadim Bora. Members of ASCI will always remember his generosity in the invitation to celebrate Bastille Day with the Consul General in Atlanta.

MEXICAN COMMITTEES - update

by Gwen Hughes

A very cheerful group gathered at the home of Gwen and Carroll Hughes to hold a joint meeting/potluck of our two Mexican committees and share news of shared projects.

WHEELCHAIRS ARE ON THE HIGH SEAS, en route to our 3 cities that are awaiting distribution to those in need. There will be a great team of ASCI friends, Rotarians, and City staff in each city to distribute and assist those receiving the chairs.

For our future efforts we discussed picking up where we left off; Valladolid will begin to gather funds for the Tom Jones School Fan Project - Phase 2. San Cristóbal will begin planning for the weaving delegation in late spring of 2022.

We are all energized and ready to roll. If you would like to get involved, please contact gwengh(at)charter.net for San Cristóbal or robertsonrebecca(at)yahoo.com for Valladolid. Our next joint meeting will be in August.

Strolling Down Memory Lane, and Looking Ahead to the Future!

by Karon Korp, ASCI President 2017-2020

Two years ago, in July of 2019, I had the honor of representing Asheville Sister Cities at the SCI International Conference in Houston Texas. There, ASCI was recognized for our achievements the previous year, receiving the “Best Overall Program Award” for a city our size. As our community, nation and world recover from the pandemic, we are all looking to the future to see what is possible in this new reality of ours. It WILL take a village, and each one of us with our commitment to citizen diplomacy around the world, and changing lives through the projects we do through ASCI and our seven sister cities.

Even now, your dedicated Board of Directors under the brilliant leadership of President Ken Nelson, has continued meeting by zoom, committees have been planning, communicating with their counterparts in our sister cities, and creating NEW opportunities for a renewed dedication to our shared friendships and vision for the future.

The Wheelchair Project for Valladolid and San Cristóbal in 2018? Another successful follow-up project happening this year! The visit by our French Students from Saumur in 2019 working with the Franklin School of Innovation? What about the joint worship services with Warren Wilson Presbyterian and the Cathedral in Dunkeld & Birnam? Or the amazing delegation visit from Osogbo, Nigeria and the many arts and culture programs we had. Or the Amber Artists and Poet from San Cristobal that came, with exhibits, and lectures, and programs? ASCI shares such rich, cultural opportunities in our local community, and with our friends around the world. Let’s all renew our interest, involvement and participation with our committees, so we can continue making a difference for generations to come.

OUR 2021 CORPORATE MEMBERS

Dillingham-Richards International, Inc. Blue Delta Energy

Metro Wines Harmony Interiors

President - Ken Nelson	knelson (at) bluedeltaenergy.com
Vice President - Jessica Coffield.	jeallen8 (at) gmail.com
Secretary – Alice Keller	gakeller (at) gakeller.com
Treasurer – Jackie Craig	appcraft (at) bellsouth.net

ASCI COMMITTEE CONTACTS

ASCI Board Meeting	3 rd Thursday of each month – 6:00 pm <i>United Way Office Conference Room, 50 S. French Broad Ave</i>
Dunkeld&Birnam Committee	time and date TBA – Contact Committee Chair <i>Rick Lutovsky – rlutovsky (at) gmail.com</i>
San Cristóbal Committee	Meeting time & date TBA <i>Gwen Hughes – gwengh (at) charter.net</i>
Saumur Committee	Meeting time & date TBA <i>Allison Weems – weems.allison(at)gmail.com</i>
Karpenisi Committee	1 st Monday of the month <i>Sophie Mills – smills (at) unca.edu</i>
Valladolid Committee	Meeting time & date TBA <i>Committee chair - TBA</i>
Osogbo Committee	1 st Monday of the month (contact President for time and venue) <i>Committee chair - TBA</i>
Vladikavkaz Committee	Time and Date TBA – Contact Committee Chair <i>Constance Richards – schtanzi (at) aol.com</i>
Global Outlook Committee	<i>Jay Harris – jayharrisglobal (at) gmail.com</i>

Now is the right time to renew your membership in ASCI!



USA



France



Greece



Mexico



Nigeria



Russia



Scotland

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