



ROCKVILLE SISTER CITY CORPORATION NEWSLETTER

Rockville Sister City Incorporated is a non-profit corporation founded in 1986 in order to support and promote mutual understanding through personal experience based on Youth, Educational, Cultural and Commercial Exchanges among Sister Cities throughout the World.

www.rockvillesistercities.org

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Comments from the New President

By Brigitta Mullican, President—RSCC

The Rockville Sister City Corporation was formed 26 years ago, and it continues to be active with exchanges between Pinneberg and Rockville. I want to thank all of our members who have supported the sister city program since 1986. RSCC's main source of funding is the membership dues and donations. It is hoped that each of you will renew your membership, which runs from January through December. Please use the form on the back of this newsletter or the one on our sister city website (www.rockvillesistercities.org) to join the organization, if you have not done so already, or to renew your membership, if you already belong.

I am honored to serve as the 2013 RSCC President along with Tim Nixon, Vice President; Marika Brown, Treasurer; James McConkey, Secretary; and board members George Albrecht, Gerrie Checkon, Sam Choi, Denny

Freezer, Bing Huang, Chris Malone, Carol Nickolas, Karen Rawlins, John Rodgers, Nancee Simonson, and Liz Von Kaenel. We are delighted to have Tom Moore as our Mayor and Council Liaison.

Among the many continued exchanges, this past summer The Finest! Performance Group visited Pinneberg. (I hope you read about their trip in our last newsletter and on our Facebook Page.) In return, the Pinneberg Tanzschule Leseberg wants to visit Rockville in 2013. In other exchange-related

news, we want to thank Ms. Susan Thorpe, Arts Resource Teacher and Ambassador Advisor of Wootton High School, for coordinating the Pinneberg/Rockville student exchanges these past few years. Sue reports, "The experiences were extremely meaningful and reflect the RSCC mission of promoting peace, through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation—one individual, one



Ye Xu, Yun Huang, Guozhong Gu, Phyllis Marcuccio (Rockville Mayor), Brigitta Mullican (RSCC President), Rongfa Zhang, Renrong Zhao, and Bing Huang (RSCC Board Member) at the dedication of the new peony garden

community at a time."

The latest news from the City of Pinneberg is the election of their new mayor, Bürgermeisterin Urte Steinberg. She was born and raised in Pinneberg

and graduated from the Theodor-Heuss-Schule. The Pinneberg Bürgermeister(in) is a full-time position, unlike Rockville's mayor.

Rockville has engaged in a Friendship Agreement with Jiaxing, China. Please read a summary of our latest efforts on this initiative in this newsletter. There have been two exchanges from Rockville to Jiaxing and two visits from Jiaxing to Rockville. In November, the second Jiaxing delegation was in Rockville for the peony garden dedication at the Rockville Civic Center. In addition to this dedication, the Jiaxing delegation of five attended the "2012 Rockville Summit" and a formal dinner at the VisArts Building. Thank you to the sponsors of these events: *Westat, Kaplan University, Chamber of Commerce, Asian Pacific American Chamber, MMP Survey Services, RBC International, and the City of Rockville.* We sincerely hope that our relationship with Jiaxing will become as strong as the one we have with Pinneberg.

tolerance and understanding of our differences, thereby leading to more peaceful relations and friendship among diverse communities, both domestic and foreign."

Also, a special "thank you" goes to James McConkey for serving as the past president and working so hard to get the Jiaxing Friendship started. Another big "thank you" goes to Steve Fisher who has served as the RSCC treasurer for 17 years.

Finally, THANK YOU to all our members for your continued support.

CULTURAL EVENTS

Pinneberg Students Visit Rockville

By Bernd Adler and Bente Gnoyke

Everybody was so excited when we left Germany in the middle of September to travel to Rockville. All the German pupils knew the five Wootton High students who had made the trip to Germany in June, and they were all eager to meet the friends they had made in Lübeck, Hamburg, and—of course—Pinneberg.



Dr. Nelson and Mrs. Jane Hsu, donors of the peonies for the new friendship garden, with Bing Huang

So, at the start of my tenure as RSCC's new president, I am happy to report that our many sister city activities match our mission statement, which is: *"To foster and promote the exchange of information between people of different cultural and ethnic origins, especially among the youth, both in Greater Rockville and in our Sister Cities, through exchanges involving personal contact between people, resulting in greater appreciation, respect,*



Pinneberg students and teachers at the White House

More than five host families were needed to accommodate the twelve youngsters we brought on the trip. Most of them had never been to the US before, and some hadn't even been on a plane. All

of us were so happy to reach Wootton High School and see Sue Thorpe, the helping hands from the Rockville Sister City Corporation, and the hosts for the following two weeks. Our trip to Rockville was set to begin with a weekend with the host families.

The first days were spent in DC, particularly the National Mall, where we found it very unusual that people could just walk into museums as they pleased without worrying about entrance fees. The exhibitions were not only very interesting but also extremely well arranged for young people! A lasting memory is the walk from the Old Post Office Pavilion to the National Zoo, even more for the hosts than for us as it seemed, because the first reaction when we told this tale was a bunch of screaming voices declaring it must have been uphill all the way. That may well have been, but we didn't notice at the time. Also, the zoo inspired us with a full range of emotions. The baby panda was born while we were in Rockville, and then it passed away the night before we took off for New York.

the right that were higher than any street in Pinneberg is long!

Back in Rockville we had some mornings and a day in school, including the chance to actually "perform" the morning announcements on the Wootton TV channel. Another highlight was the trip to the outlet mall that, however, caused a major financial crisis in most of the group's purses. Hiking along the Potomac was another memory the students will not forget.

The great days spent in your homes will not be forgotten. Thanks to everybody on your side of the Atlantic Ocean who made this trip possible! We had a chance to meet friends in another country, to immerse ourselves in a different culture, to experience alternate habits and habitats and ways of thinking, to learn about history and stories, and most of all to get to know wonderful people who are willing to share their lives and open their homes to strangers to make them friends. THANK YOU!



Pinneberg and Wootton teachers, students, and friends at the farewell dinner

New York . . . Central Park, China Town, Staten Island, Ground Zero, (another long walk to) the High Line, *Spiderman* on Broadway, the Empire State Building, shops, shops, shops. We didn't sleep much in that city that never sleeps. It was also something between amazing and scary to be standing in a street with buildings to the left and to

An Affair to Remember

By Jack Rodgers

On the warm fall night of October 19th, 2012, several dozen guests gathered in the spacious, comfortable salon and dining areas of Glenview Mansion for the RSCC fall wine tasting benefit. For three hours, from 7:00 PM to 10:00 PM, they chatted and snacked on a variety of hors d'oeuvres while sipping nine different types of wine.

Along with other topics, the attendees shared opinions about the importance of the age, price, and packaging of wine based on a blind taste test. The event bartenders reported the following interesting conclusions. It seems many guests thought that while more expensive wine may taste somewhat better, the taste satisfaction difference was not dramatic enough to merit paying significantly higher prices. As for packaging, wine provided in a box was actually enjoyed more than the same wine distributed in a bottle. Of course, the guests did not

initially know which was the boxed and which was the bottled wine. As for bottle stoppers, the type (cork or screw top) doesn't seem to affect one's wine taste satisfaction response. The participants, including Mayor Phyllis Marcuccio and Council-member Bridget Newton, enjoyed the evening and the opportunity to test wines for factors influencing quality and/or satisfaction. At the end, all seemed to agree that the best way to establish one's wine preference is by directly sampling the product.

The benefit netted \$545, which will be used to support RSCC programs. While Glenview Mansion has been and will continue to be an important venue for RSCC wine tasting events, other locations including vineyards will be considered for future tastings. RSCC members are invited to provide suggestions about the location and time of the spring 2013 event.

German-American Day Observed

By Gerrie Checkon

RSCC hosted its annual German-American Day dinner at Clyde's Tower Oaks on October 7th, 2012 to commemorate the first German settlement in Pennsylvania in the late 1600s. Good food, camaraderie, and a locale in our own city made the event successful. Thirty-seven persons attended. There were a number of new faces in addition to the "regulars." One guest even travelled from New York City to attend. The guest speaker was absent due to illness, so one of the members, George Albrecht, read greetings to RSCC from Germany's Ambassador to Washington. Should you have any suggestions for next year's event, please forward them to Gerrie Checkon via email



Jack Rodgers, Gerrie Checkon, Steve Fisher, and Brigitta Mullican at the German-American Day Dinner

at Gerrie.Checkon@longandfoster.com or by phone at 301-279-0708.

Progress on Jiaxing Relationship

By James McConkey

The relationship with Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, China has been developing slowly since it was first proposed to RSCC by Rockville resident Ying Chen and 15 other supporters in July 2007. The first formal proposal to the Mayor and Council was presented at a working session on June 30th, 2008. They endorsed the proposal unanimously.

An invitation was sent to the Jiaxing Municipal People's Government, and it was formally accepted by Jiaxing on August 27th, 2008. During the subsequent months, Rockville learned that a Sister City relationship would take considerable time and that the first step would involve some period under a Friendly Relations Agreement. Such an agreement was drafted and agreed to by both city administrations. A six-member delegation from Jiaxing was sent to sign the Agreement in Rockville's decorated Town Square pavilion on September 14th, 2009.

The following year, RSCC organized a delegation headed by Jim Coyle, former Rockville Mayor, and a group of 20 private citizens to tour Jiaxing and the highlights of China from July 5th to 21st, 2010. The delegation discussed possibilities for exchange activity and signed an agreement in the Jiaxing City Hall to work together towards implementing it.

RSCC received an invitation in December 2011 to send a delegation to a Jiaxing Mayor's Summit of their Sister City

Partners to discuss preservation of cultural heritage and development. Rockville's delegation included a four-person delegation led by Councilmember Mark Pierzchala, former Westat employee; Paul Neuman, Westat executive; Jim Wasilak, City of Rockville Chief of Planning; and Bingjib Huang, Rockville Sister City board member and Jiaxing Committee Chair. During their visit Jiaxing planted a tree in their Friendship Garden dedicated to Rockville.

On November 2nd and 3rd, 2012, Rockville hosted another delegation from Jiaxing to attend the 2012 Rockville Summit on future development plans. After that Summit, the delegation was led to the formal gardens at the Glenview Mansion where the City dedicated a peony garden, donated by Dr. Nelson and Mrs. Jane Hsu of Germantown, unveiling a plaque dedicating it to the friendship with Jiaxing. That evening, RSCC hosted a dinner at the Potomac Grill and held further discussions on the establishment of school matches, correspondence between elementary school students, and possibilities for student and adult cultural exchanges. The delegation took several pages of notes back to Jiaxing to get some of these exchanges started.

There is still no schedule for formalizing a Sister City relationship, but establishing a long-term friendship rarely happens quickly.

Pinneberg Room Decorated

By Liz von Kaenel

RSCC continued its long-standing tradition of decorating the Glenview Mansion's Pinneberg Room for Christmas. We have been working with the Mansion's staff since the middle part of the 1980s and are proud to be the group with the longest decorating history. The Christmas tree was adorned with German-style ornaments, such as wooden bead garland, nutcrackers, straw cones and stars, apples, hand-crocheted snowflakes, clip-on birds, gilded pine cones, and many more unusual ornaments, some even handmade. The display

cabinets were emptied of their normal contents and then filled with a collection of nutcrackers, wooden horses, a wooden train, and a three-tiered Christmas pyramid. The cabinets were topped with topiary deer and stuffed toys. The room and the mansion will be open daily until New Year's Day. Many thanks to Carol Malone and George Albrecht for their help with the decorations.

COMMUNICATIONS

Notes from Political Observers

By George Albrecht

RSCC received the following message from Bernd Hinrichs, President of the DAGRP (German-American Society Rockville-Pinneberg), just before our national election on November 6th: "All of us follow the election of the US President day by day. It looks like it will be narrow. By the way, last Friday (November 2nd) we had a very successful event. The consul of economy and politics of the US General Consulate in Hamburg, Mr. Robert Stevens, gave a speech on the election process in the US, together with David Patrician, who translated and moderated. We counted about 80 guests. Mr. Stevens and Mr. Patrician did a great job!"



Vice-Consul Robert Stevens (l) and David Patrician (r) explaining US Presidential elections to an interested audience in Pinneberg

David Patrician was a Rockville high school exchange student in Pinneberg and has continued with a successful career in journalism in the US, Germany, and Korea. He presently resides in Germany. You can find out more about David at www.davidpatrician.com.

Dispatches from Pinneberg

By David Patrician, Journalist—Radio Bremen

On November 2nd, 2012, I had the opportunity to moderate a discussion in Pinneberg dealing with the upcoming US Presidential Elections. Vice-Consul Robert Stevens was the guest speaker for the evening. It was a great feeling to look out into the audience and see so many familiar faces.

My relationship with Pinneberg is a long and special one. In 1989, I was the first ever Rockville student to participate in a high school exchange with Pinneberg. Learning German, living with a new host family, studying at a foreign high school, and traveling around Europe were just a few of the highlights during this exciting time. It also whetted my appetite for international travel and for pursuing a career that would enable me to explore the world.

While working at the Voice of America, I was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to live and work in Germany. I was able to find a job here, and for the past six years, I have hosted radio and television shows (in German) for a variety of German networks. I have also kept in touch with my host family and attended special events in Pinneberg, including an outstanding dance performance this past July from Rockville's The Finest!

Returning to the pre-election discussion in Pinneberg, Mr. Stevens and I answered questions on subjects ranging from the electoral college to the possibility of a Mormon sitting in the White House and what influence that could have concerning American politics. At the end of the night, we were standing in the lobby of Pinneberg's city hall having drinks and talking with old friends. Mr. Stevens

commented that it seemed like a sort of homecoming for me, and I couldn't agree more—Pinneberg is my second hometown!

I encourage Rockville high school students to become active in the Rockville Sister Cities Corporation and to visit Pinneberg. I certainly am glad that I did!

Pinneberg Elects New Mayor

Excerpt from the *Hamburger Abendblatt*
Trans. by George Albrecht

Urte Steinberg, a political independent, wants to show Pinneberg that she is a mayor for all, and she reached a clear, absolute majority in the mayoral election. Steinberg maintained her reputation as a busy bee, even on the night of the great victory. She had to thank her supporters immediately. Following those words of gratitude, the future mayor of Pinneberg left the election party about 11:00 PM. The press notified her via e-mail later that night, just after 1:00 AM, that she was victorious. In the morning, the winner of the elections was back at her desk at her employer, Sparkasse Südholstein in Neumünster.

Pinneberg voters gave her a clear mandate to take over the affairs of the head of the administration. Urte Steinberg received 6,376 out of 11,097 votes, a whopping 57.5% of the votes cast. The candidate for the coalition of the major parties, CDU and SPD, entered the race as the favorite with three competitors. Few observers expected the native "Pinnebergerin" would so clearly obtain an absolute majority. The representatives of the major parties demonstrated unity. "I'm glad it went smoothly. Cooperation with the CDU in the election campaign was good," said Herbert Hoffman, chairman of the SPD local branch. "It's good, if there are issues of importance, that there are clear majorities," said CDU leader Natalina Boenigk.

The winner said, "I come from a sports background. In tennis, I do not want [the match] to go into a

third set.” Pinnebergers now have a great opportunity to solve problems together. They wanted to assemble all the people they could. Theirs was a smooth, two-set victory, and they were victorious on election night. One downside: the turnout was only 33.6%; only 11,244 of 33,424 registered voters showed up.

RSCC Liaison Leaves for Wisconsin

By Brigitta Mullican

We recently received the sad news from Jon McLaren, the Rockville Sister City Corporation’s liaison to the city, that he has resigned his position and is relocating to another State. We wish him the best in his new position in Wisconsin. Here is the message Jon sent to RSCC:

I wanted to let some of the people that I've worked closely with (you) know that my last day with Rockville will be Friday, November 30th. I've accepted a position as Executive Director of the Lake Geneva Fresh Air Association, in Williams Bay, Wisconsin (between Milwaukee and Chicago). They can be found at www.holidayhomecamp.org. The association operates one of the oldest summer camps in the country, founded in 1887. The primary focus of the camp is serving underprivileged youth through summer camp and year-round leadership programs. They also operate a year-round outdoor leadership program for youth and corporate groups.

It's been a pleasure working with all of you, and I wish you the best. Please keep in contact at jon.mclaren@gmail.com.

—Jon McLaren

Board Meeting Schedule

RSCC board meetings are open to the public. Board meetings are held on the second Wednesday of each month—*except December*—at 7:30 PM in City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue, in Rockville.

MEMBERSHIP

Become a Member

We invite anyone who is interested in joining us to fill out the membership application in this newsletter. The only requirements for membership are completing the application and paying annual dues. Members, who haven’t done so already, please don’t forget to renew your membership.

Membership Report

By Brigitta Mullican

The Rockville Sister City Corporation thanks the following supporters for their membership dues and additional contributions. Our main source of income is our membership dues.

Corporate Members

Xiaosheng Bi and Cleo Kung—China Travel Service

Family Memberships

Sam and Kil-Cha Choi
Thomas and Stephanie Curtis
Denny and Linda Freezer
William and Tanya Gazdik
Barry and Aileen Klein
Thom and Sherri McKenna
Robert and Holly Meyer
Thomas and Carol Moran
Theodore and Patricia Reuther
John and Patricia Rodgers
Elizabeth and Gary Thompson

Individual Memberships

Marika Brown	William Michie
Gerrie Checkon	Eva Miller
Robert Ekman	Tommy Mosely
Steve Fisher	Brigitta Mullican
John Goon	John Pontius
John Hall	Nancee Simonson
David L'Heureux	Yi Weng
Bing-Jib Huang	Claire Whitaker
Rae Lynn Mandujano	Patricia Wolff
James McConkey	

ROCKVILLE SISTER CITY CORPORATION (RSCC)
Membership Application/Renewal Form

I would like to (check one) ___renew, or ___apply for membership. Enclosed is my tax deductible payment (check one):
_____ \$20 Individual, _____ \$30 Family, or _____ \$100 Corporate Membership, for the Calendar Year _____.
Additional tax deductible contribution of \$ _____, **Total enclosed \$ _____**. RSCC is a Tax Exempt, Not-For-Profit Corporation.

Please print below.

Please, Please provide your email address. Otherwise we have no way of keeping you informed of our activities and events.

Name: _____ Spouse Name: _____ Email Address: _____

For internal use only. We do not release to other organizations.

Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home Phone: _____, Work Phone: _____, Cell Phone: _____

Make checks payable to: RSCC Send to: Rockville Sister City Corporation, c/o Rockville City Hall,
111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850-2364

AREAS OF INTEREST: (TO ALL MEMBERS, NEW & RENEWAL, PLEASE, PLEASE CHECK AT LEAST ONE.)

I would be interested in: ___Hosting visitors from Pinneberg; ___Hosting exchange students (high school); ___Fundraising;
___Helping with membership drive; ___Helping w/ Wine Tasting Events; ___Helping w/ Memorial Day Parade; ___Organizing
Cultural or Sport Exchanges; ___ Bicycle Tours; ___Developing or Helping with Other Events; ___Serving on Board of Directors;
___Just participating; ___Other (specify below) (These are not commitments, but do help us understand our members' interests.)

Other Comments, suggestions, etc. _____

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Rockville Sister City Corporation
c/o Rockville City Hall
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