



Sister Cities News Bulletins

Dandong to Beijing in the Fast Lane

September saw the grand opening of the high speed rail line connecting Dandong to Shenyang and many other key cities in the PRC. The rail project took 5 years to complete and now connects Dandong to Shenyang, Dalian, Beijing, Shandong, Shanghai, Jinan and Harbin directly without transfers. The initial speed is 180 km but will travel at a top speed of 250 km (155 mph) after it is been tested.



The differences in travel time and connecting cities are tremendous both for business and personal travel. For example, Mr. Chen in the

Dandong Foreign Affairs Office can visit his family in Shandong using the new rail service in 8 hours versus 21 hours. This makes the trip home for Spring Festival, or as it is more commonly known in the west, Chinese New Year's, much easier especially when traveling with young children. The photo above shows a performance by a stewardess on the new train wearing traditional Korean dress reflecting the ties between Dandong and North Korea.

Above photo contributed by: Chen Deyuan, Dandong Foreign Affairs Office

Sargassum: The good, the bad and the ugly



normally circulates throughout the Gulf, Mexico and the North Atlantic forming a nearly two million square mile Sargasso Sea (closest land is Bermuda). It is the only

sea without land boundaries and was first reported in Columbus' journals who was concerned his ships would not get back to Spain... 'since there was no wind and he feared they might hit bottom.' We are accustomed to seeing it on Atlantic beaches in spring and summer, though not in the amounts that we are seeing today.

In San Pedro like many municipalities that rely on tourism as the mainstay of their economies, sanitation workers have been working overtime this year to remove Sargassum from its beaches. One Florida based scientist that has been studying it for years reports that the Mississippi River is delivering a larger amount of nitrogen and phosphorous into the Gulf of Mexico causing a rise in the production of Sargassum. Some marine biologists believe climate change is contributing to the rise in Sargassum. Dispersants used to clean up the 2010 BP Deepwater Horizon oil spill may be another factor. Large amounts of the seaweed can produce nitrogen sulfide, a toxic gas that can affect wildlife on the beach and in humans. The Caribbean economies worry about the negative impact on tourism due to its foul odor and overpopulation of sand fleas. The upside of Sargassum is that it provides extra nutrients to the beach ecosystem and can even strengthen dunes protecting beaches from erosion.

The University of the West Indies (UWI) at Cavehill (Barbados) has been at the forefront of exploring ways to find opportunities in the growing sea of algae rather than focusing on the downside. In a collaborative venture with the Caribbean Sustainability Collective (CSC), the UWI Student Entrepreneurial Empowerment Development (SEED) a seminar was held in late spring to brainstorm ideas for how Sargassum and other forms of waste products could be commercialized and provide general employment. Potential areas of focus included: food, textile, animal feed, pharma, cosmetics and welding rods. Students expressed a strong interest in further investigating the chemical properties of algae to better inform potential investors and entrepreneurs.

Clearly, Sargassum provides both opportunities and challenges for coastal communities. It appears that the affected communities find themselves at a crossroad.

Transylvania Express – Bat, Rats and Spiders Galore

A wonderful side trip from Wilmington's sister city, Doncaster, is a ride through the scenic North Moors National Park on the Esk Valley Rail line from



Middlesbrough to Whitby for the semi-annual GothicWeekend.

The festivities start on the train with locally brewed ale and “Goth” music, and yes there may be a few bats, rats and spiders on

board. Tickets can be purchased online and the event runs Oct 29 – Nov 1. Once you arrive in this charming port and resort town you can learn about its history, and many myths and legends. You can visit the churchyard that inspired Bram Stoker's “Dracula,” and tour the house where Captain James Cook stayed in between voyages.

For a flavor of what to expect you can watch Sarah Macmillan's video from 2009 on YouTube (www.YouTube.com/watch?v=brCTEPJBU4A). If you are faint of heart or not interested in this genre, you can take the train from Whitby to Berwick-on-the-Tweed which is the most northerly town in England. Berwick is another Yorkshire town that is steeped in history. You can take the 477 bus to Lindisfarne to visit

Source: Scarborough Tourism Bureau

Other News

Sister Cities Commission

The theme for the 2016 Young Artists and Authors Showcase has been announced by Sister Cities International (SCI). The competition is focused on the 60th anniversary of SCI by celebrating 60 years of global citizen action and impact while looking ahead toward a better future.

Art and English secondary school classrooms that are interested in learning more about the guidelines can send an inquiry to membership@scawilmington.org. The deadline for submissions is April 2016.

Taking it Global is also sponsoring a competition for students ages 13-30 on “Climate Change in My Backyard.” You can submit photography, paintings, and digital graphics along with a text document of up to 500 words that tells a story through the perspective of a

creature of your choice that is being impacted by climate change. The deadline is coming up for this initiative – October 16, 2015. Prizes will be awarded and range from an iPad mini 2 or a \$200 Amazon gift card to an iPod shuffle or a \$50 Amazon gift card. For more information educators can go to: www.tigweb.org

President Xi Jinping Kicks Off US Visit with a Sister City in Washington State

This September when President Xi Jinping visits the U.S., his first stop will be in Tacoma, Washington. Seattle would not be an unusual place for the president of the largest nation on earth to visit, especially since it is the home of Microsoft, but Tacoma? What most people do not know is that 21 years ago, President Xi personally witnessed the establishment of Tacoma's sister city relationship with Fozhou Municipal People's Congress. Since then over 30 delegations from Fuzhou have visited Tacoma to engage in educational, cultural and business exchanges. *Excerpt from article by Mary D. Kane, President & CEO Sister Cities International – for full article visit www.sistercities.org*

UNCW Hosts Education Conference



COBEC
Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation

The Watson School of Education at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington served as host for the Consortium for Belize Educational Cooperation (COBEC) in July. The

consortium has been operating formally since the 1990s and its members include post-secondary schools from Belize and throughout the US (AR, FL, GA, HAI, IN, KY, OK, MN, NC, NY, & WI). The COBEC mission is to share best practices, collaborate in teaching and research practices, aid in the professional development of Belizean educators, and promote internationalization of colleges and universities.

Belize Governor-General Colville Young participated in the COBEC summer conference held in Wilmington along with 50 plus educators and administrators. Sir Young was welcomed to the area during a private dinner with Mayor Bill Saffo and Dr. Ed Paul, General Consulate to Belize on his first day. Chancellor Jose V. Sartarelli met with Sir Young and personally welcomed him to campus.

The two-day event included a series of workshops on a range of topics from use of technology to deliver instruction, to trends and issues in student affairs.

Everyone had the opportunity to visit the UNCW Marine Biology center. Dr. Paul hosted a *"bashment Wilmington style"* on Thursday night and Sister Cities contributed tote bags to hold all that paper we inevitably collect at conferences and possibly a few souvenirs from their time in Wilmington. The next conference will be held on the Placencia Peninsula (Belize) in February 2016.

JR Jones
Charles Blanton
UNCW Upperman African American Cultural Center

Tony Ventimaglia
UNA Coastal Carolina

Upcoming Events

2015 International Students receive a warm welcome at City Hall



Citizen to Citizen Diplomacy Honor Roll

SCAW attempts to involve as many people and institutions as possible to achieve its mission in Wilmington and the international community. We want to recognize the individuals and groups that have made a contribution in the past calendar quarter through their active participation or support of a Sister City program activity.

Shanhong Luo
Marilyn Cantarella
George Schell
Qian (Chad) Fan
Juliana Tremaglio
Randy Shackelford
Szechuan 132
Mayor Saffo
Jonathan Barfield
Andrea Hawkes
Jake Zlotnick
Evan Vetter

Scott Czechlewski
Fenton Maxwell
Rachel Satzman
Raymond Burt
Patty Proutey
Elijah's
Slice of Life
UNCW-OIP
City Council
Bridget Kelly
Paulina Capar
Amanda Boomershine

Oct 12-14 – The 2015 BioMarine Business Convention will be held in Wilmington at Cape Fear Community College's Union Station. Explore ways cities and countries may work together to promote and grow the Blue Economy globally. For more info and to register – www.mbcoi.net

Oct 25 (Sunday) UN Day Celebration Luncheon will be held at UNCW McNeil Hall from 1-3 PM. The guest speaker is Dr. Herb Berg who will talk about the Syrian refugee crisis. For more information or to make reservations contact Amanda Boomershine by phone (392-1631) or email (boomershinea@gmail.com).

Nov 12 (Thursday) The International Filmmakers Luncheon will be held from 12:00 to 1:00 at Riverboat Landing (S. Water St.). Join us for lunch with the international filmmakers in town for Cucalorus and hear about their submissions, what inspired them and what to expect. Reservations are required a "Members" lunch pass \$10 and non-members \$12. Advance reservations required by email membership@scawilmington.org no later than Nov 8 (cash or check payable to SCAW and can be paid at the event – no credit cards please)

Nov 15 (Sunday) Movie and a Dinner Exclusive Sister City Dinner Packages will be available for a specially selected festival film (TBA) and a post-show dinner for \$40. Only 30 dinner packages will be available on the last day of the festival. Check the SCAW website the last week of October for the film selection. Dinner will be at the newly open restaurant PinPoint on Market St. The prix fixe dinner will include a choice of one of three entrees; a starter; and a dessert. You have the option of running a separate bar tab. Anyone interested should reserve their tickets by email no later than November 5 at membership@scawilmington.org. Any questions, please call 343-5226, not Cucalorus or PinPoint. There are no refunds and checks must be made payable to Sister Cities Association of Wilmington (SCAW).

Nov 30 (Monday) Barbados' Independence Day Parade attracts both locals and tourist alike, with hundreds of members of service groups alongside military attachments and their armed and unarmed units, marching in keen precision and displaying their skills in various formations at the Garrison Savannah. Other community based events are organized by the Community Independence Celebrations Secretariat, and include Independence Lighting Ceremony and Bajan Folk Brew in the city of Bridgetown, Parish Talent Zonal Shows, the Spirit of the Nation Show, Spirit of Independence Tour, a Mini-Parks & Gardens Competition and a variety of other activities throughout the parishes.