



Fredericksburg Sister City Association, Inc.

Fredericksburg Sister City Association
Annual Report
November 2015—November 2016

Annual Meeting
November 19, 2015

Snowden House, Mary Washington Hospital Foundation

In celebration of 35 years of our sister city relationship, we organized a festive event in the elegant Snowden House. We began with a solemn remembrance in tribute to the November terrorist attacks in Paris by creating origami swans and recording our remembrance wishes. The evening's joyous note, in recognition of 35 years of student exchanges, friendships, and programming around French culture, lightened the mood with the capacity gathering. We welcomed Dr. Andrea Livi Smith, UMW professor and French native, who offered an engaging talk, "Bridges and Viaducts of Paris," annotating the history of the bridges and passageways of the City of Light. We also remembered and paid tribute to one of our founding members, and native of Paris, Lydie Mann, whose recent death saddened us all. We previewed our ambitious 2016 programming, and welcomed new members.

February 5 2016

We celebrated Mardi Gras, complete with costumes, zydeco and traditional French tunes, jambalaya, and costumes, at the Dorothy Hart Community Center. Joining us in this traditional revelry were our fellows from our Este sister city, from our Schwetzingen sister city, and from our Kathmandu sister city. Great times and friendship. Over-the-top costumes, awards for audacity, and international sharing were also on our menu.

March 2016

A Day With Rodin

We planned a luncheon, private lecture and viewing of the Rodin exhibit at the Virginia Museum, and worked with VMFA for an exclusive day for FSCA members and their

guests. A minimum of 10 reservations, at \$45 per person (including transportation) was not achieved by the preliminary cancellation date, and thus the excursion was cancelled.

May 2016

FSCA participated in the Community Give, a one-day philanthropy campaign for area nonprofits, organized and supported by the Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region. While the organizations supporting health and human services, hunger and housing, veterans and child services, garnered the majority of online donations during the day, FSCA nonetheless received over \$500 of online donations from eight unique donors. We are grateful to them for their generosity and ongoing support of our student exchanges, international outreach, and cultural programming.

July 2016

Bastille Day, July 14, was an unprecedented success! Well over 300 attended the festivities that included music with a European accent, delivered by the talented Whiskey Django Foxtrot, which set the perfect tone for a night of gentle music, sweet conversations, and tributes to France. A somber note sounded as we once more declared our support for sweet France due to the terrorist attack on the Boulevard des Anglais in Nice. However, Bennie of Normandie offered up wonderful crepes, French wines were poured, and the Tricolore flew bravely in the soft summer evening breeze. Our Frejus visiting students offered a musical performance, and of course, the Marseillaise and our own National Anthem helped set the tone for our long-lasting friendship.

On July 13, just the day before, 13 fresh-faced Frejus students arrived at Dulles, to begin their 10-day stay and hosting with our area families. In addition to living in the homes of their American high school counterparts, the young people enjoyed trips to Monticello, to Richmond, VA., and to Washington, DC, as well as to many area historical venues. Swimming, picnics, and low-key casual summer fun were also on their visiting menu.

In September,

On the 12th, Bill Beck and Kathryn Willis joined forces to talk about Fredericksburg sister city activities on WFVA's Town Talk, hosted by Ted Schubel. The interview included an overview of many events and cultural programming contributions to the region, as well as a preview of what was being planned for future offerings.

On the 24th, one of those offerings came to pass: The Lafayette Birthday Dinner. Hosted by the Perroys, owners of the elegant venue of Fredericksburg Square, a capacity dinner seating enjoyed pre-dinner cocktails, fine dining, wines and

General Lafayette in full French regalia, our special guest. He was serenaded by *Edith Piaf*, channeled by the talented Simone Marchant and her pianist, Ray Dempsey. Our own Mandy Carr sang our National Anthem. We had special guests: Bernard Marie, French native and French National Honor of Merit, awarded for his long service honoring American veterans of World War II; Nicolas Valcour, Honorary Consul of France in Virginia; Michel Charbonnier, Consul of France in Washington, D.C., and our Mayor, the Honorable Mary Katherine Greenlaw. A special appearance by *Marilyn Monroe* (Nathalie Bullock) surprised our guest of honor with a breathy, smoky rendition of Happy Birthday, and highlighted an evening where we turned out in our best dress for a grand and sparkling evening.

In November,

Leigh Perret Dowd, French teacher and Spotsylvania's Teacher of the Year, once more organized le Congres de Francais, a day-long Saturday dedicated to bringing together area French students for sessions exploring French subjects from art to history to culinary explorations to visual arts. Well attended, the sessions bring extra enrichment to our budding Francophile young people. Many of our number lead sessions, including, over the years, Bill Beck, Cathy Herndon, Connie Ogeron, and Kathryn Willis, among others.

In addition:

Giant Omelet 2020—In preparation for our 40th anniversary celebration, FSCA worked with a regional coffee blender to create our own brand of 100% Arabica coffee, to be offered for donations as a fundraiser toward our Giant Omelet and anniversary celebration in Fredericksburg. The coffee is being offered at events throughout the year, and has met with favorable review from our java fans.

French flags for the City—In fulfillment of the goal of supplying French flags for every downtown lighting pole in the Historic District, FSCA took advantage of a special sale by the City's preferred flag vendor. We have now purchased flags and poles so that with each French-centered City event, the Tricolore can now be visible throughout Old Town streets.

We also thank the Fredericksburg Economic Development Corporation for their generous support of Bastille Day 2016 with a grant of \$1000 to help offset the expenses for this free and open to the public celebration of our French sister city relationship.

Three major events, a student exchange, support of our fellow sister city programming, regular online postings and newsletters, an annual meeting, grants

writing, fundraising, and long-range planning made for a full 2016. We are looking to 2017 to expand our cultural offerings, our exchange activities, and our happy times as we celebrate our French Connections.

We invite all with an interest to become a part of our group, and to create their own French connections.