



Fredericksburg, Virginia
Fréjus, France
Sister Cities Since 1980



NEWSLETTER – October 2021

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bonjour tout le monde,

We are now about a year from finally celebrating the **40th anniversary** (1980-2020) of becoming a Sister City with Frejus, France. (Of course, our 40th will actually become the 42nd due to two postponements because of the COVID pandemic.) We hope that this time there will be no problems for a celebration in the **fall of 2022**, when a delegation from Frejus plans to come to Fredericksburg.

With this in mind, the Board of Directors has voted to appoint a planning committee to develop a program for the anniversary celebration, emphasizing American traditions and activities in which all members of FSCA will be invited to participate.

Committees will include **Anniversary Host Committee, Official Gifts Committee, Official Events, Program for Visitors, Host Families**, and others. **We will request and need your help and participation as we prepare for this special anniversary visit. Watch for more information in the mail and/or at the Annual Meeting in November.**

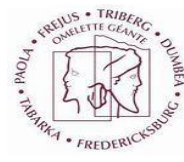
A la prochaine fois, *Judy*

Judy Hansen, FSCA President

Great news from our FSCA Secretary:

Moriah and husband Nathan are pleased to announce the birth of their son, Alden who was born September 24 at 3:35am, 7lb 5.5oz, 19.75 inches long **Congratulations!**





Maryse Rigoulot

Director of Fredericksburg Section

NEWS FROM FRÉJUS

Dear friends

*" It was a normal morning in America,
People went to work, kids went to school,
Then the unthinkable happened,
You would think ... not even a fool...
Would have done this;
Something so drastic ,
IT WILL ALWAYS BE REMEMBERED "*

There are no better words for me than these first lines of the poem by Celeste Brown to express our feelings twenty years after.

And in Fréjus, we thought it was our duty, as a Sister city, to let you know that we do and will always remember.

Michel Gras, Vice President and a forerunner of our Sister City Association, read the translation in French of this beautiful poem.

Then, I addressed the public followed by Mr Pascal Pipitone, City councillor in charge of Sister cities, who represented Mayor Rachline.

The ceremony concluded with the playing of the Star Spangled Banner and a floral laying.

I am enclosing are a few photos from the day and the poem by Celeste Brown



Our gift from our Fredericksburg friends



The group gathers for the ceremony

Continued on the next page



Mr Pascal Pipitone, City councillor in charge of Sister cities, address the group as Michel Gras and I stand by, Michel Gras, Vice President of the association read the translation in French of this beautiful poem.

911

By Celeste Brown – age 13

*It was a normal morning in America,
People went to work; kids went to school,
Then the unthinkable happened,
You would think...not even a fool...
Would have done this.
Something so drastic,
It will always be remembered,
Something so scary,
It will always be feared,
Something so tragic,
No man can be replaced,
Something so destroying,
It will never be the same,
Something so evil,
It will never be funny,
Something so frightening,
It stirred up the entire nation.
Yet, there is something stronger,
Something so strong,
It pulled together as a nation,
Something so strong,
It left no one behind,
Something called America,
So strong and independent,
Nothing can get us down.*



FAVORITE HAPPY MEMORIES



Our “Happy memories” series continues as we patiently wait for the pandemic to be behind us. Merci mille fois - to our friends who shared memories with us in this issue as well as our previous guest presenters. If you would like to provide something for our future newsletters – email me at acpcw1@gmail.com. I would love to have more volunteers. Each “Memory” is unique and interesting. I am receiving many compliments on this project that has helped get is through these many months of forced inactivity. Phyllis – your newsletter editor.

Debbie Bouslog

Whether it's the French verb or the English noun, *Souvenir*, they both fit - I have so many memories and mementos from my 25 years of association with the Fredericksburg Sister City Association. As I sit reminiscing about events over the early years, I'm regretting a bit that the now-ubiquitous iPhone had not been invented yet. Maybe it serves to make those mental imprints even more important. With four trips to Fréjus, hosting two students and one chaperone from Fréjus, sending both my children on exchanges, serving as Treasurer and President for the Organization... even though I've moved away from the Fredericksburg area, je me souviens.

My first trip back to France since high school, where I discovered my love of everything French, was in 1997. My son went too and was hosted by the French student we had hosted the summer before. I was amazed by the genuine hospitality and of course the beauty of the area. One of my fondest memories during that trip was from Paris, a group dinner on our last night. I still have **the wine bottle from Restaurant du Beaujolais on Quai de la Tournelle**, not too far from Norte Dame. Somewhere there's a great pic of me, Charlie Sieracki, Ginny East, Cathy Bolinger and her daughter, Cathy Herndon and Kathryn Willis - all of us around the table enjoying a tres typique meal. The students sat at a table nearby and enjoyed a few sips of wine I'm sure. What a great way to wrap up our completely amazing trip, Merci Charlie!



The wine bottle –compressed
Flat – a great souvenir

My next souvenir is from closer to home. In 2003 Fredericksburg was celebrating its 275th anniversary. One event was the Washington-Lafayette Ball held at (then) Mary Washington

College. I had worked with French Embassy personnel through my job in the Department of Defense and a colleague and I were able to arrange for the Embassy's Minister for Defense Cooperation, Major General Jose D'Antin to attend the dinner. He told a magnificent story of his ancestor who fought with Lafayette during the Revolutionary War and was fortunate to meet George Washington. MG D'Antin read from his ancestor's diary entry recounting the day Washington visited his ship. Neither my colleague nor I had any idea about this story beforehand and we, along with the other guests were amazed to hear his story.



Fielding Lewis, Russ & Debbie Bouslog with Col Gabe Leyva (US Army) *** Other party guest at cocktail party at Beck's

Another great memory I'll share happened in Germany where I was fortunate to work and live from 2004-2006. When the Fréjus Sister City heard that Gail Howard, who was FSCA president at the time, was visiting me in Germany, they set up a visit for us to Triberg, Germany, another Fréjus Sister City. We were given a city tour, taken to dinner and generally treated like royalty. It was such a special visit that truly embodies the meaning of Sister Cities.

There are so many more experiences, but my last visit to Fréjus in 2015 brought me full circle - experiencing the Omelette Geante in Fredericksburg and France! I cracked eggs, stirred the huge pan with a wooden paddle, sliced numerous loaves of French bread and served the hungry crowd at the annual Saint-Aygulf event. Looking forward to the next Omelette in Fredericksburg!!



Here I am, (can you see me fighting the steam off the pan?)helping to stir that giant omelette so all those hungry people in the background can enjoy a taste of our cooking and a piece of great French bread.
Lot of work –
but great fun!

. Looking forward to the next Omelette in Fredericksburg!!

Undoubtedly there have been many, many souvenirs created over the years by residents on both sides of the Atlantic. I know now as I knew when I first learned about the Sister City concept, this is what the world needs more of 😊

Kathryn Willis

One of those happy memories and delights was the Giant Omelet in 2015, in Fréjus. We had a large delegation from Fredericksburg, and all of us pitched in to help...I remember cracking eggs in the factory-like process, achieving the seemingly impossible task of preparing 10,000 eggs for the day's central event. There was a palpable joy and feeling of goodwill and friendship that day, informed by years of visits and individual relationships, well cultivated....



Here with Mirabelle

and then the White Dinner and dance that followed...everyone was on the floor, dancing to the music



Dancing pause for photo op

Another was going to the many small museums dotted along the coast near Fréjus. I spent days with Thierry Winum, the artist who had a one-man show in Fredericksburg in the late '90s, driving to places such as Fondation Maght in St. Paul de Vence, the Nicolas de Stael museum and the Picasso Museum in Antibes, all totally new to my eyes. We stopped and I climbed the twisting path up the cliff to see the breathtaking view at Eze. During those days, I discovered warm goat cheese salad, and I made it my mission to order one at every restaurant we visited, accompanied with cold local rosé served in a chilled earthenware pitcher. I now have my own version of warm goat cheese salad, which I prepare on special occasions.

And another was my first trip to Fréjus, in the late '90s. It was the visit during which Cathy Herndon exhibited a one-person show in Fréjus, and also taught several small art classes to Fréjus children. Just being there engaged all my senses...I discovered the old cathedral, and marveled at the exquisite paintings of grotesques based on biblical descriptions...paintings that entwine along the ceiling of the inner courtyard of the cloister. I discovered the perfectness of chilled rosé to quaff the thirst of Mediterranean summer's hot, dry weather. I discovered the twisty turns of Fréjus Old Town, and time-traveled through history to the early era when those walls and narrow streets were framed.

I discovered the exquisite taste of
those tiny round cookies,
les macarons...



And finally, I remember the celebration here, in Fredericksburg, when our sister city honored the veterans of WWII who had fought in the French Liberation. It was to mark the 70th anniversary of D-Day. We mounted a rich evening at Mary Washington's Jepson Center, including a restored Army Jeep, and a display of weaponry and artifacts in the lobby. We heard moving testimonials from vets who played a part in the day. I also loved working on the small booklet for the occasion...I worked with Guy Sanguinet, who is active in Fréjus' history group, and translated dozens of stories about Fréjus during the German occupation. I learned so much about those days in Fréjus. I also met Eric and Brigitte Mongnot, French representatives of the military. We have since become good

friends...such friendships have been fostered throughout the history of our sister city, so it's appropriate to include the individual friendships that many of us have forged.

A TIMELY ARTICLE TO SHARE WITH YOU:

The Quasi-War Between France and the United States

The submarine deal is not the first time in the history of our two nations that diplomatic relations have been strained. Twice in the past, the United States and France have almost declared war on each other.

By Roland Flamini

Continued in the flowing pages



Battle between the
USS *Constellation* (left) and the
French frigate *Insurgente*, on
February 9, 1799. © Navy History
and Heritage Command, National
Archive

“Neither a borrower nor a lender be,” Polonius admonishes his son Laertes in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* – a warning that is consistently ignored by governments. Yet debts and loans can play havoc with bilateral relations – and they did just that in two epic disputes separated by 100 years or so between the United States and France. On both occasions France was the debtor, and many historians point to the resulting acrimony as root causes of France’s recurrent anti-Americanism.

In the 1830s there was tension between the two countries over compensation claims by U.S. citizens for goods and shipping seized under Napoleon Bonaparte’s 1806 embargo against neutral countries like the United States trading with Britain, then at war with France. The government in Paris made a counter-claim: The United States had still not fully repaid loans that had helped to finance the American Revolution. The U.S. had already paid France 6,352,500 dollars between 1778 and 1815,

but the two countries had signed a convention agreeing on a shortfall in the American debt of 1.5 million francs and capping U.S. claims against France at 25 million francs (5 million dollars).

When the first installment from France came due in 1832, no payment arrived: The French chamber of deputies had failed to ratify the agreement and to vote on the authorization. An angry President Andrew Jackson sent former secretary of state Edward Livingston, to France in the 74-gun warship *Delaware* to secure “prompt and proper fulfillment” of the agreement

In 1834, after postponing the issue for almost three years, the chamber finally voted on the appropriation, but rejected it by 176-168, greatly embarrassing King Louis Philippe and his government. President Jackson, who was noted for his short temper was furious, but so were the French. Deep public resentment had built up against what was seen as American ingratitude after France’s sacrifices in support of the American Revolution. Jackson delivered a tirade against the French in the U.S. Congress, hinting at possible action. Congress, he said, had to decide whether “to adopt such provisional measures as it may deem necessary,” which would be “faithfully enforced by the Executive.”

Resentment ran high in France. Diplomatic relations were severed and as tension mounted the French were reminded that the U.S. war fleet was stronger than its own. Pressed by the government, the French chamber voted again and the appropriation passed – but coupled with the demand for a “satisfactory explanation” of President Jackson’s remarks. Although Jackson refused to apologize, the day was saved when Britain intervened to cobble up a reconciliation, and the indemnity was paid.

But a residual rancor remained. At one point Lamartine observed sadly, “I have always been deeply astonished by the lack of sympathy and gratitude America has towards our country.” The French historian Rene Remond has been quoted as saying that after 1835, “[Franco-U.S.] friendship was replaced by indifference, or even by resentment. It would not be until 1917 and America’s intervention in our shores that the French population’s bygone friendship would be restored.”

By 1919, a new and more complex confrontation had built up over France’s refusal – along with the United Kingdom and 13 other World War I belligerents – to pay huge war time loans to the United States while at the same time pressing for equally large financial reparations from a defeated Germany. Two famous remarks captured the divergence in emphasis. The taciturn Calvin Coolidge, who became president in 1923 at the height of the controversy, pressed for repayment by the Allies, arguing, “They hired the money, didn’t they?” But for Louis-Lucien Klotz, the French finance minister, the number one issue was, “*L’Allemagne paiera*” (Germany will pay).

The resulting friction dragged on for 20 years, doing serious damage to the goodwill that had blossomed during the conflict. Differences emerged in the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919. For U.S. President Woodrow Wilson Germany’s economic and industrial recovery was paramount to restore international trade. The French government wanted a Germany weakened by punitive reparations to the Allies. As the French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau argued to Woodrow

Wilson, “America is far away, protected by the ocean... We are not.” Besides, France needed German reparations to help finance its own post-war reconstruction.

European belligerents had financed the conflict through loans, mainly from the United States, and as a result France owed the United States 4,137,224,354 dollars, about 80% of it directly to the U.S. Treasury and the rest to American banks. In 1918 the French issued a plea for “financial unity,” which was code for all the Allies sharing the cost of the war, with the U.S. absorbing some of the debt.

The American response became Washington’s refrain of postwar diplomacy: The war debts must be honored by the respective governments – an attitude that angered the French. A succession of French statesmen argued that the war had been a common cause, and the sacrifice of each nation should be taken into account. Louis Marin, a former finance minister, pointed out that 1,450,000 French soldiers had died in battle and another 500,000 later, from their wounds, and that should be worth at least 50,000 francs per soldier. The other French argument was that the French spent 2,997,477,800 dollars of borrowed American money in the United States on everything from weapons and ships to tobacco and food, so that in a sense, the Americans had already been paid. The French responded to American pressure by stalling. The image emerged of a U.S. growing rich and powerful at the expense of a shattered and impoverished Europe. “Rather than a promising lender, the uncle [Sam] has become a demanding creditor.” By 1923 the Germans had defaulted on the reparations so many times that France and Belgium occupied the Ruhr industrial area in what turned out to be an unsuccessful attempt to force Berlin to resume payments.

In 1924, yet another conference was convened, this time in London, at which the United States proposed the Dawes solution (named after later Vice-President Charles G. Dawes): The U.S. loaned Germany an initial 200 million dollars in U.S. bonds to help meet its financial commitments to France, Britain, and other claimants who, in turn would be in a better position to make payments to the U.S. At the same time, France and Belgium agreed to pull out of the Ruhr.

So long as the funds kept going the system worked. But the Great Depression wrecked the international financial system and the U.S. drastically reduced capital outflow, causing Germany to default again. In June 1931, in response to appeals from France and Britain, President Hoover postponed all Allied war debts for one year. On December 1932, when the annual payment of 19 million dollars came due after the expiration of the Hoover moratorium, France defaulted on its debt – as did all the other European debtor countries except Finland.

In a secret meeting with the poet Paul Claudel, then the French ambassador to Washington, the incoming president Franklin D. Roosevelt (who had not yet taken office) was conciliatory, saying he would forgive France the interest on the loan, but Congressional and public opposition proved too strong, and Claudel later reported that the Americans continued to insist on full payment. And as U.S. anger grew, so did American isolationism.

With the outbreak of World War II, Roosevelt instituted the Lend-Lease program which in essence

loaned them weapons, planes and equipment – but not cash. But with the end of the second world conflict, Washington and Paris again turned to the unfinished business of the first one: the outstanding loan. This time the mood was different, and in 1946 a partial consolidation of the French debt was agreed in which 2 billion dollars were written off. The balance was absorbed into U.S. contributions to France from 1947 under the Marshall Plan for European recovery (2.296 billion dollars).

How much France paid of the original debt is hard to determine. Both the French Embassy in Washington and the U.S. Treasury declined to provide information. The best estimate is that nearly 53% of the French debt was cancelled in part by adjusting interest downward (compared, for example with 75.4% of the Italian debt). Of all the 15 original debtors, only Finland repaid the full amount.

Article published in the April 2016 issue of *France-Amérique*. Subscribe to the magazine.

And on the last page – a list of your faithful Directors

FSCA DIRECTORS – 2021

Merci mille fois to all our Directors who continue to lead us in 2021

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