



NEWSLETTER – December 2021

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bonjour, tout le monde,

As you may have noted, at our Annual Meeting in November (once again on Zoom because of the pandemic), a new Board of Directors was elected for the 2022-2023 term. It is my great pleasure to welcome Craig Vasey as the newly elected president of FSCA. A former professor at UMW, Craig is a longtime FSCA board member, fluent in French, and active in many of Sister City's traditional activities. Perhaps best known for his portrayal of the Marquis de Lafayette, he may again represent this famous French general if/when we host a dinner to celebrate Lafayette's birthday.

Though we regret having had to cancel the 40th anniversary program because of the COVID pandemic, plans are under way to celebrate in 2022 the signing of Fredericksburg's 1980 "twinning" with Fréjus. We look forward to returning the summertime student exchange program in which well over a thousand local high school students have participated. and also to renewing personal connection with our many Frejus friends.

I extend heartfelt thanks to the FSCA Board of Directors, who has made my term as president memorable, as well as manageable. It's a board to be proud of--supportive, responsible, cheerful, and inventive. Every organization president should be so lucky!

A special thank-you to Phyllis Whitley, who volunteered near the beginning of the pandemic to come out of "retirement" and edit the FSCA newsletter. During many months of shutdown and with no group activities, Phyllis and her newsletter were the only game in town for FSCA. Her amazing stash of photos rekindled memories of people and events from years past. Well done, Phyllis, with our thanks!

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I have much enjoyed my years as president of the Sister City board and will savor the memories of Fréjus as well as the many "friends of France" whom I have met through FSCA activities. It has been invigorating to meet and work with many of you through the years, and I look forward to seeing you when we can return to normal activities.

Plan to participate with us in 2022!

Judy

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT-ELECT

Bonjours mes amis

I'm delighted to be asked to serve as President of the Fredericksburg-Fréjus FSCA for the coming term. I've been a member of FSCA for about twenty years, but have only actually visited Fréjus once, back in 2002, with my wife and son. We were warmly welcomed, and shown around the city and the port. We met Cherine Gebara on that visit, the regional archaeologist, and have twice invited her to Fredericksburg, where she has given public presentations on the Roman origins of Fréjus. We're all looking forward to next summer, hoping we can re-start our student exchange program again, and then in the fall host our Fréjusien counterparts here in celebration of the 40th anniversary of our jumelage (albeit delayed by two years).

In the meantime, we hope all vaccinated members will plan to join us for a Mardi Gras party at the beginning of March. We'll be working on the details of that in January and will let everyone know when and where.

Because of Covid, we haven't been meeting in person or hosting activities for our membership since the Bastille Day gathering at Old Mill Park. If conditions allow, I'm wondering if we might start up a FSCA Book Club in the spring, and get together every couple of months to talk about a French novel (in translation, of course). A recent and short one that I'd propose is The Meursault Investigation, a modern-day return to the story of Camus' The Stranger, told from the point of view of the murdered man's brother. I'll take this up with the Board when we meet next in January, and if the idea seems attractive, maybe we'll create a Book Club Committee to think through how best to organize this. If you have thoughts on this, please let us know.

I want to express my deepest thanks to Judy Hansen for her service as President (again!) and to Phyllis Whitley for the wonderful job she has been doing as editor of our newsletters.

Best wishes to everyone for the holidays!

Craig

MEMBERSHIP NEWS – Nancie Lightner

As you know, member dues were exempted for 2021 for those members who paid dues in 2020. Beginning in January I will be collecting dues for 2022. Any extra donations or contributions to FSCA are always greatly appreciated. Just go to our website, fredericksburgfrejus.com and use the membership application that is there to pay dues and to make any donations. Hopefully this pandemic will be over soon, and we will need to gear up for student and adult visitors from Fréjus.

Looking forward to future events and participation, I have been fortunate to expand our membership committee to include Carol Butler and Moriah Webster. If you are interested in helping with greeting prospective members and/or are knowledgeable in XCEL spreadsheet date input, contact me - Nancie Lightner, Membership Chair ncblightner2014@yahoo.com or call me at 434-378-1556



Maryse Rigoulot

Director of Fredericksburg Section

NEWS FROM FRÉJUS

Dear friends,

It was such a pleasure to see most of you on the screen for the retrospective of our twinning that Philippe proposed at our “Grande soirée Fredericksburg” on November 26. The joy and smiles on your faces increased our desire to see you again!

The Fredericksburg quiz was a big success too and first prize was won by a new member: good thing! I cannot resist showing you question N°8 and of course I am sure that all of you know the answer! If you want to see the whole quiz, it is available, for fun



Question n° 8

En quelle année s'est installé
le célèbre Glacier CARL'S ?

- A 1947
- B 1952
- C 1980



Philippe and I wish you all a warm and happy Holiday season.

Maryse

FAVORITE HAPPY MEMORIES

Merci mille fois to our friends who have shared happy memories with us in previous issues. With so many promises on the horizon for a return to our normal activities we have drawn this feature to a close. . Phyllis – your newsletter editor.

A TREAT FOR YOU FOR THE HOLIDAYS:

CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS OF PROVENCE

"Alegre, Diou nous alegre, cachofué ven, tout ben ven, Diou nous fague la graci di veire l'an que ven. Se sian pas mai, que siguen pas men!"

"Let us rejoice, and may God keep us merry, for Cachofué, the season of All Good, is coming. May God protect us in the year ahead. and if we cannot grow fat, may we at least not be lean!"

Christmas. . . an important holiday in Provence, certainly the most popular, the most joyous. It is the great holiday of reconciliation, when one renews relationships with family and friends.

Family members who may have been separated from each other all year make an effort to reunite on December 24th for "La veillée de Noel"--an evening of feasting and socializing.

In the same way, it is the custom for a person who may have had an argument or difference of opinion with another during the course of the year to visit his "enemy," accompanied by a relative or neighbor, and patch up the quarrel over a glass of nut or muscatel wine. The visit is then reciprocated.

In Provence, preparations for Christmas begin long in advance of the actual holiday and the festivities are prolonged until January 6th, the official date of the end of the Christmas holidays.

The fireplace and chimney are well cleaned in advance of the burning of the "**buche de Noël**" (Christmas log). The fire from the Christmas log is a symbol of the reunion of the family. It warms the home, cooks the food, lights the dark evenings, and bears witness to outsiders that the home is occupied. Many traditions follow and ends with The "Gros Souper" (Grand Supper)

The table is prepared with three white tablecloths [one on top of the other] to represent the three members of the Trinity – with three white lighted candelabras and three saucers of sprouted wheat germs planted on St. Barbe's Day [see description above]. Absolutely no mistletoe, believed to bring bad luck! (continued next page)

An extra place is set at the table “for the poor” to remind that Christmas is the celebration of charity and that the Savior was born in humble circumstances. The first slice of the special bread was always reserved for this “poor person,” in case he stopped by, in which case he would be invited to the family table.

The great supper is paradoxically made up of 7 lean dishes in memory of the 7 sufferings of Mary. It is served with 13 bread rolls followed by the 13 desserts, which represent the Last Supper with Jesus and the 12 apostles.

These lean dishes differ from one part of Provence to another. The dishes often served are anchovies, spinach, salad, cheeses, omelette, garlic soup but never any meat, simply fish, shellfish, gratins, vegetables, soups and anchoïade [anchovy paste]. The only abundance is that of the thirteen desserts [described below]. In Provence, traditionally the meal consisted of only what they grew.



Thirteen Desserts of Christmas

The thirteen desserts are eaten after Midnight mass. They will remain on the table for the following 3 days, until 27th December. At one time it was the custom to tie the four corners of the third tablecloth to make a bundle and to bring of to the poor the remains of the supper. It includes thirteen different foods, each with a specific symbolism. Though no one really seems to agree on why thirteen is the magic number — and indeed, in certain areas it can swell to fifteen or more — it is generally thought to relate to Christ and his twelve apostles.

Whatever the number, the idea is simple and sweet. The thirteen desserts consist mostly of fresh and dried fruits, selection of almonds, figs, raisins, and walnuts, called mendiantes, represent the color of beggars' robes. Nougat, a confection made of almonds and honey (and as traditional to Provence as the olive trees), mandarin oranges, apples and pears, dried golden prunes, can all figure in the selection. Some areas include simple fruit tarts; others, callissons, or boat-shaped almond candies. Breads made with olive oil and flavored with anise and orange-flower water are served broken by hand, and not cut, to ensure successful future harvests. Each family may add its own variations. Chocolates often accompanying them with the delicious Vin Frizzant de Muscat.

These traditions have been translated from personal recollections & several French documents by Judith Hansen. Merci mille fois, Judith

FSCA DIRECTORS elected for 2022-2023

President – Craig Vasey cvasey@umw.edu

1st VP, Student Exchange – John East eastjack1@outlook.com

2nd VP, Membership – Nancie Lightner ncblightner2014@yahoo.com

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Judith Hansen – Ex-officio - Immediate Past President judyhansen@yahoo.com

Bill Beck - Ex-officio - Anniversary Advisor bill@becksantiques.com

Newsletter Editor: Phyllis C. Whitley acpcw1@gmail.com / 540-786 -7010 I accept credit for any error in this newsletter
