

## Minutes

International and Multicultural Advisory Committee (IMAC) Meeting

Columbia Association

May 10, 2016 – 7:00-8:30 pm

Vision Room, CA Headquarters

**In Attendance:** Larry Bachman, Sue DiPaula, Magdalena Castro-Lewis, Valerie Montague, Arna Rubman, Jean Salkeld, Larry Schoen, Suzanne Waller  
**Subcommittees:** Soledad Bolig (Haiti), Hui Dong (China), Susan Olubi (Ghana), Debra Paper (France)

**CA Board:** Alan Klein

**CA Staff:** Laura Smit

1. Welcome and Introductions – We went around the room and introduced ourselves and our village.
2. Chair's Report – Valerie Montague
  - a. She welcomed Alan Klein, a CA Board member.
  - b. She remarked on how entertainment-filled and well-attended the recent Eastern European Culture Fest was and how much she likes the new IMAC table at the culture fests.
  - c. She also mentioned attending the Build Haiti Foundation annual fundraising event on 16 April.
3. Program Manager's Report – Laura Smit
  - a. There is a new campaign called Yay, CA! Information about it will be available in the Columbia Flier.
  - b. She passed out a schedule for the high school exchanges with students from France, Spain and Ghana.
  - c. She noted that there are 12 U.S. high school students going to Spain and 6 going to France.
4. Approval of Minutes
  - a. There was one correction to the March 2, 2016 minutes.
  - b. The minutes were approved with the correction.
5. Reports from Sister Cities Subcommittees
  - a. Tres Cantos (Spain) Sister City Committee – Laura Smit reporting for Pat Fisher
    - (1). Nothing heard back from Tres Cantos yet.
    - (2). An adult wine and food exchange is envisioned for April, 2017 to coincide with a regional festival there.
    - (3). Our partner organization there was supposed to make a presentation to the new administration, but we do not know the outcome. Laura will try to find out.
  - b. Cergy-Pontoise (France) Sister City Committee – Debra Paper
    - (1). She received an email from Chantal of CAJA proposing 22-29 October for the adult art, architecture and cuisine exchange.
    - (2). Debra made a motion that the IMAC approve those dates, which it did.
    - (3). She will notify Chantal, who will advertise for participants.
  - c. Tema (Ghana) Sister City Committee – Susan Olubi

(1). There are 12 high school students from Ghana coming to Columbia from 15-31 July. Six host families have been identified, but more are needed. She passed out host family applications.

(2). She informed us that the Tema Book Collection Committee is collecting books for children and adults for the

Tema Public Library and the Narh-Bita Nursing School. Collection boxes will be located in Howard County libraries through the month of May. Since we are almost halfway through the month already, a question was raised about extending the book drive through June. Laura will ask if that is possible.

(3). The book collection committee is coming up with criteria for “appropriate” books. Librarians in Tema will also be sending their wish list and criteria soon.

(4). Preliminary criteria include: hardback books, children’s story books and non-fiction books, adult career oriented books, nursing school books no older than 2000, books that show diversity in characters and storyline, and books by African-American and African authors.

(5). We do not want to be inundated with books. We also need a cool, dry place in which to store and sort the books that are collected. If you want to participate on the committee, let Laura know.

d. Cap-Haitien (Haiti) Sister City Committee – Soledad Bolig

(1). The committee is working with the head of the Ft. Lauderdale Cap-Haitien committee, which has been very beneficial.

(2). Bob Anantua, chair of the committee and president of the Build Haiti Foundation (BHF), and David Weeks, Global Education & Community Service Director at Glenelg Country School, will be going to Haiti from 31 May to 5 June.

(3). The BHF’s Global Leadership Program (GLP) will take high school students, college students and for the first time Howard County adults to Haiti from 6 to 15 July. Applications are still being accepted. While there, Bob and David plan to have the new mayor sign the official sister city agreement to be witnessed by the GLP participants.

e. China Sister City Planning Committee – Hui Dong

(1). There was a meeting of the committee on 3 May. The chair reported on her recent trip to Liyang, where she met with numerous officials.

(2). Laura received a draft letter of interest in the Sister City program from the Liyang Bureau of Foreign Affairs. She asked Larry, Marcie, Linda, Valerie and Alice to provide feedback on the letter.

(3). A delegation from Liyang is planning to visit Columbia this fall (October). There is an invitation for a Columbia delegation to visit Liyang next spring (2017).

(4). There has been a complaint from some members of the U.S. Chinese community that Liyang may not be good enough to be our sister city since it is a third tier city. Hui explained that cities with a population of 10+ million, like Beijing and Shanghai, are first tier cities. Provincial capitals, like Nanjing, with a population from 5 to 10 million, are considered second tier cities. Cities with less than 1 million people are considered third tier. Liyang has 700-800,000 inhabitants. We think Liyang is just fine.

(5). Two concerns are: 1) getting the U.S. Chinese community to agree on Liyang and 2) getting more committee members to attend the scheduled meetings.

(6). Liyang High School is ready to welcome Howard County high school students as they already have host families for 20-40 students.

(7). Liyang High School students are coming here from 5 to 10 July to attend a summer camp at Glenelg Country School, then go to visit other cities on the East Coast.

(8). Depending on their level of English, Suzanne suggested they may need a translator to get the most out of their experience in the U.S. Hui informed us that English is taught in Chinese schools beginning in third grade.

f. Magdalena asked about having a sister city in Latin America. Valerie explained that it had to be proposed by interested people who form a committee to work out the details. Laura will send out the process of becoming a sister city to everyone on the IMAC Committee.

6. Review draft of FY16 IMAC report for the CA Board

a. The CA fiscal year goes from 1 May to 30 April. So this report goes from 1 May 2015 through 30 April 2016.

b. Laura wants feedback by 20 May.

c. When Laura reported the demise of the World Food Passport program, Arna suggested that a high school or college student could create an app for that.

d. Laura mentioned the Multicultural Youth Council of Howard County that works to create a more welcoming and supportive environment for foreign-born students in conjunction with the Foreign-Born Information & Referral Network (FIRN).

7. Plans for FY17 (1 May 2016 through 30 April 2017)

a. Sister Cities

(1). Youth exchanges during the summer with Tres Cantos and Cergy-Pontoise; feasibility of sending U.S. students to Tema, Ghana in 2017; Haiti Global Leadership Program; Hui suggested a spring break school trip to China.

(2). French adult exchange from 22-29 October; Spanish exchange for April 2017 not yet confirmed; invitation for Columbia delegation to visit China in 2017; Tema library interns to come to Columbia in fall 2016 – host families needed.

b. Multicultural Programs

(1). There will be a Central America and Mexico culture fest on Sunday, 16 October, from 1:30 – 4:30 pm at the Miller Library.

(2). To coincide with Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, there will be an Oceania (Hawaii, Tahiti, Polynesia, Australia and New Zealand) culture fest on 7 May 2017.

(3). Possible participation in the St. Matthew Orthodox Church multicultural festival on 1 October.

(4). Oakland Mills multicultural festival.

c. Ongoing Programs

(1). World Languages Café at the East Columbia 50+ Center on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month – well-attended.

(2). International Book Club at CA on 10 May and 8 June

8. Suggestions from the IMAC committee

a. Have information sessions in the schools about a trip to Ghana to develop interest, also inform the parents.

b. Have an information day at CA during the next Open House since Ghana is a country not well-known in the U.S.

c. Jean mentioned the Howard Community College international film festival in November.

d. Alan brought up the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of Columbia. Laura said they want to have a Sister Cities art show and bring people over from all of our sister cities if funds permit. The schedule is: celebrating the past (March-June); enjoying the present (June); and imagining the future (June-September). Arna suggested a music and dance festival.

9. Let Laura know if you have any ideas for new programs. The next IMAC meeting is scheduled for 6 July 2016 (Now rescheduled to August 3).

Respectfully submitted, Sue DiPaula, IMAC Secretary