

**Minutes**  
International & Multicultural Advisory Committee (IMAC) Meeting  
**October 5, 2016 – 7:00-8:30 pm**  
Board Room, CA Headquarters

**In attendance:** Magdalena Castro-Lewis, Paulomi Desai, Sue DiPaula, Marcy Gitt, Kathy Martin, Valerie Montague, Linda Potsiadlo, Arna Rubman, Jean Salkeld, Larry Schoen, Suzanne Waller, John Zahor

**Subcommittee Chairs or Representatives:** Pat Fisher (Spain), Jun Han (China), Momina Malik (Haiti), Susan Olubi (Ghana), and Debra Paper (France)

**CA Staff:** Laura Smit

**Guest** – Marlys East, managing director for the Columbia 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations

**1. Welcome & Introductions.** We went around the room and introduced ourselves and our village.

**2. Chair’s Report – Valerie Montague.** Valerie, Laura and Pat went to the Kennedy Center on 2 October to hear the Beijing Orchestra and the Howard County Gifted and Talented Orchestra and thoroughly enjoyed them. Tickets were provided by Jun Han. A site has been found to store the books being gathered for Tema, Ghana. A press release on Columbia’s official sister city relationship with Cap-Haitien, Haiti is now on the CA website.

**3. Program Manager’s Report – Laura Smit.** Laura is still working to find people for the Central America and Mexico CultureFest.

**4. Approval of August 3, 2016 Minutes.** SueDiPaula will include the three corrections made to the 3 May 2016 minutes and resend to Laura and Valerie. There were two corrections to the 3 August 2016 minutes: under China Sister City Planning Committee, change “National Sister City Management Committee of China” to “National Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries”; and under Annual Report FY16 & Plans Submitted to Board for FY17, omit “everything” and change “that” to “what” - ...the board needs to know what we are doing. Sue will resend the 3 August 2016 minutes with these corrections to Laura and Valerie.

**5. Election of IMAC Officers for 2016-2017**

Chair – Valerie Montague

Vice-Chair – Marcy Gitt

Secretary – Sue DiPaula

Those present unanimously approved the above slate of officers.

**6. IMAC participation in Columbia’s 50<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations – Marlys East**

Marlys handed out to everyone a brochure and a working draft of the calendar of events. The celebration will begin on 19 March 2017 and run for 27 weeks. The goal is to start building awareness now. A timeline is on the wall by the Lord and Taylor department store at Columbia Mall; the CA logo will be included in the Symphony of Lights from 23 November 2016 to 8

January 2017; there will be banners along Little Patuxent Parkway and in the Columbia Mall parking lots; and 50,000 daffodil bulbs will be planted. The weeks of 16 and 23 July 2017 have been designated to feature IMAC activities, including an art show with works from our Sister Cities. Pat Fisher suggested highlighting our IMAC CultureFests; Suzanne Waller suggested inviting representatives from each Sister City; and Laura suggested music from each of our Sister Cities. Volunteers to form a subcommittee to work on IMAC's participation in the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations include: Paulomi Desai, Jun Han, Momina Malik, Debra Paper, Linda Potsiadlo, Arna Rubman, Jean Salkeld, and Suzanne Waller.

## **7. Reports from Sister Cities Subcommittees**

**a. Cergy-Pontoise (France) Sister City Committee** – Debra Paper, Chair. There were not enough participants for an exchange this year from 22-29 October. The new dates being proposed are 8-15 April 2017. Chantal Makhbous from CAJA thought there would be more interest if this were an art exchange. We are not entirely sure what that means so Debra will get back to Chantal for clarification. Laura said we should focus on getting them here in July during the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations and they could bring art with them for display in a Howard Community College art gallery. Debra will pitch this idea to CAJA.

**b. Tres Cantos (Spain) Sister City Committee** – Pat Fisher, Chair. Pat expressed frustration at the lack of response from Tres Cantos regarding an adult exchange. Suggestions concerning the exchange were sent to Tres Cantos in 2015 and, to date, nothing definitive has been arranged.

**c. Tema (Ghana) Sister City Committee** – Susan Olubi, Vice-Chair. Three library interns from Tema are coming to Columbia in March 2017 for 4 weeks. In light of the visa problems for some of the students during the summer high school exchange, Francis Aboagye, chair of the Tema Sister City Committee, met with Tema officials. They also want to meet with the U.S. Ambassador to Ghana. They intend to begin the visa process earlier. The book collection for Tema Public Library and the Narh-bita Nursing College will run from October to December, with hopes to ship the books in mid-December. Shipping costs will run from \$2,000-\$3,000, which CA will not pay. We will have to do some fundraising, probably through the Alex Waters Fund to which we can make tax deductible donations. Laura is working on a flyer and a press release about the book drive. A book wish list was distributed to those present. Reference books should not be older than 2005.

**d. Cap-Haitien (Haiti) Sister City Committee** – Momina Malik, Chair. The relationship between Cap-Haitien and Columbia is now official since the agreement was signed by the new mayor on 13 July. David Weeks and Bob Anantua will do a presentation to the CA Board on 27 October during Resident Speak-out. We were concerned about the effects of Hurricane Matthew on Cap-Haitien, but Bob Anantua said it has not been damaged to date; the southwestern part of Haiti is currently being affected. The committee wants to hold a HaitiFest with art, music, dancers and food in January 2017.

**e. China Sister City Planning Committee (Liyang, Jiangsu Province)** – Jun Han, Chair. Liyang now has to apply for pre-approval status from the National Chinese People’s Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries in Beijing. A Letter of Intent in English and Chinese has to be signed by both cities as it is a required document for applying for pre-approval status. An invitation letter from the mayor of Liyang for CA President and CEO Milton Matthews, Laura Smit, and CA board members to visit Liyang in 2017 has been delivered to Laura. Jun noted the best time to visit would be mid-April to mid-May. Americans need a visa to enter China and Jun could help with that process. Liyang has the long term goal of building an international school there. They want to do a 2-way exchange of school students next summer. Laura noted that the minimum age for the French and Spanish exchange students is 15 years old. Paulomi Desai knows the Chinese teacher at Glenelg Country School and will give Jun her contact information.

**8. Central America & Mexico CultureFest (CA/HC Library)** – October 16, 1:30- 4:30 pm. Laura passed around a sign-up sheet to elicit help with the event. Volunteers are needed to man the IMAC table, stamp passports, and prepare food and drinks. No food trucks or vendors are going to be available as with previous CultureFests. Pat Fisher passed out snacks from Costa Rica that she wanted us to try as they are planning to use them for the fest. Laura is still looking for people to staff tables for Nicaragua, Honduras and El Salvador. There will be five performances but Laura would love to have a mariachi band if one could be found that would play for free.

**9. Ghana Book Collection** – Starting 15 October, books can be dropped off at the Lakeside Deli in the American City Building every Saturday from 10:00am-2:00pm. Volunteers will be needed for 2-hour shifts to sort the books and box them for shipment. Laura will send out a sign-up sheet.

**10. Upcoming Multicultural Programs & Events**

**a. Oct 8, 2016: Oakland Mills Fall Festival (Oakland Mills Village Center)** – no IMAC table at this event.

**b. Jan 15, 2017: HaitiFest (Slayton House), 3:30-5:30 pm.** This date may have to be changed due to Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend celebrations. (Note: Will now be Jan 22, with snowdate of Feb 5.)

**11. Proposed Meeting Dates (1st Weds):** 2016: Dec 7; 2017: Feb 1, April 5, June 7.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue DiPaula, IMAC Secretary