

Sister Cities of Columbia, IL Newsletter

Volume XXIII Issue 1 Winter 2013/14

An Overview

A busy year for Sister Cities – 2013 – is soon drawing to a close. Highlights of the year include the visit of the 24 students from Gesamtschule Gedern for three weeks in April and the visit of 45 adults from Gedern for ten days in May for the official visit to Columbia – both visits celebrating the 20th Anniversary of our partnership with Verschwisterungsverein Gedern/Columbia. In October, our Sister Cities was selected as the 2013 Illinois Sister City of the Year. The Awards committee stated: “The involvement of your community and the Gedern community in the relationship and exchanges is very impressive. Your 20–year youth exchange involvement is also impressive. The level of relationship that has developed between your two cities speaks to the commitment your communities have toward Citizen Diplomacy and world peace.” The success of our partnership with Gedern is the result of the interest, dedication and commitment of the members of our two communities! The award was presented to Mayor Kevin Hutchinson on Oct. 18 at the Municipal League Conference in Chicago. Mayor Hutchinson recognized Sister Cities officially and presented this Award on Nov. 4 at the Columbia City Council meeting. We were truly honored by this state–wide recognition!

2014 Stammtisch/Membership Meeting

Tues. Jan. 14 Stammtisch at Tequila’s
850 Columbia Centre, Columbia, 6:30 pm
Tues. Feb. 11 – Stammtisch at Imo’s Pizza
1450 N. Evergreen Ln., Columbia, 6:30 pm
Tues. Mar. 11 – Stammtisch at Thai House
109 S. Main St., Columbia, 6:30 pm
Thurs. Apr. 24 – Spring Membership Semi-Annual Meeting, American Legion foyer,
372 E. Locust, Columbia, 7 pm. This will not be a dinner meeting. We will feature a free program of interest to our members, with the opportunity to socialize with Sister City friends afterwards. Details on the program topic will be announced later. We hope you will join us as we try to offer variety in our meeting formats! Our Stammtisch evenings will continue to offer an informal evening of food, drink and conversation with fellow members and friends at local Columbia restaurants.

Increase in Dues for 2014

For the first time in our organization’s history, there will be an increase in our dues, effective Jan. 1, 2014. **Members may still pay their 2014 dues at the old rate until Dec. 31, 2013 (postmarked).** If you’ve been considering becoming a lifetime member, now is the time to upgrade your membership to that level before the new dues rate takes effect! See the last page of our newsletter for rate information.

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2015 Official Visit Dates

The dates for the next official visit to Gedern have been finalized! They are: **May 21 – 31, 2015!** Our friends in Gedern will now begin planning the special activities that will make this trip memorable. As soon as we get information about group air fares for a roundtrip flight from St. Louis to Frankfurt, Germany, we will make that available to you so that you can plan to be part of this visit delegation. We will ask for interested members to sign up at a later date.

Geneology Research

Our partnership with Gedern is unique because it has very close historical ties to our community. Due to harsh economic conditions in the Gedern area during the early/mid 1800's, the community of Wernings (156 citizens) made the difficult decision to sell everything and immigrate to the U.S. in 1842 in search of a better life. They sailed from Germany to New Orleans, then traveled north until they reached the Monroe County, IL area, where they then settled and started their lives anew. Have you ever wondered what happened to these immigrants of 1842? Could you or someone you know be a descendant of one of these immigrants? One of our new lifetime members, Mary Ellen Huetsch, also a veteran geneology researcher, has done a monumental job of digging in an attempt to

shed some light on these questions! Mary Ellen has compiled a detailed binder of information that she has been able to locate about these original immigrants. She has used local cemetery records, church records, local newspaper clippings/death notices, gravestones, and public family tree information to verify and substantiate the information about the original immigrants. We would like to make this information available to any descendants interested in their family history. We are very grateful to Mary Ellen for using her expertise in providing us with such a rich catalog of information about these early settlers in our area! We will provide more information in future newsletters.

Two current families – Linda Schrepel and Don Gleiber and daughter Donna Dinkelacker – have been able to trace their ancestors back to the original immigrants from 170 years ago. Their accounts were featured in our 20th Anniversary Commemorative Booklet.

Past Event Reports

Fall Dinner Meeting/Election of Officers – Oct. 17: The many members who attended our Fall Membership Dinner Meeting at the Waterloo Country Club enjoyed a fine evening of dining and visiting with one another. Special guests this evening were four students from Gedern who are spending the 2013/14 school year at Columbia High School. Each student (Alexander Peppel, Christian Nickel, Lisa

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Engber and Henrik Oechler) spoke about their experiences during the first two months here in Columbia – settling in with their host families, meeting new friends and adjusting to the American school curriculum, all while sharpening their English language skills.

The 3-year terms of office expired in Oct. 2013 for Dave Mehrmann, Diane Hanna and Jean Marie Conrad. They all agreed to continue serving on the board and were elected unanimously by the membership at the dinner meeting. Congratulations to Dave, Diane and Jean Marie as they begin their new terms of office!

Stemler Trail Walk – Nov. 10: About a dozen members enjoyed a crisp, cool but sunny day while walking on the Stemler Trail. More members joined the group later at Metter Park for a delightful afternoon of good conversation, wine and cheese.

Christmas Party – Dec. 10: Forty-five Sister City members enjoyed a festive Christmas Party at Tiny's. Each member attending contributed to the wonderful "spread" of holiday foods, appetizers and desserts. Santa Claus took time during his busy schedule to stop by, bring Christmas greetings to all and treat some lucky guests to attendance prizes of traditional German Christmas cookies – Lebkuchen (ginger-bread) and Speculatius (thin almond). A

special "Thank you" goes to Don Voelker for hosting this evening at Tiny's Pub and Grill.

New Members

We welcome the following new lifetime members: Dan and Tiffany Davis, Mary Ellen and Bob Niemietz, and John Joseph and Jennifer Conrad. Thank you also to current members who have elected to become lifetime members: Al and Allison Wolfe, Sonja and Mike Madlinger, Mike and Laurie Grubb and Chris and Donna Neumann. We appreciate your strong support of Sister Cities and look forward to seeing you at our events!

In Memoriam

We remember several of our members who have passed away recently and offer condolences to their families.

John W. Coats – The former Columbia mayor (1989–93) passed away on Sept. 28, 2013 at the age of 72, due to complications from a vehicle crash. Coats was mayor as the Sister City partnership between Columbia and Gedern was established. He was part of the first delegation from Columbia that visited Gedern. During that visit, he signed the Friendship Declaration (April 29, 1992) along with his counterpart, Buergermeister Rainer Schwartz of Gedern.

Elfriede Roth-Roffy – Elfriede and her late husband Bill were active in the early days of Sister Cities. They were very helpful during our first visits. Elfrieda was living in St.

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Louis. We appreciate her daughter contacting us to notify us of her passing in 2013.

Doris Tolbird – Doris passed away on Oct. 26, 2013 at the age of 83. She enjoyed the festivities during the official visits from Gedern to Columbia and enjoyed attending the semi-annual meetings.

Deb West – Deb passed away on Nov. 19, 2013 at the age of 63. She and her husband Tom Pautler supported Sister Cities by traveling to Gedern in 2006 to attend the 650th Anniversary celebrations there.

Student Exchange Visit

Twenty-two Columbia High School students will be part of the student exchange to the Gesamtschule Gedern from June 14 to July 7, 2014 along with their German teacher, Mr. Taylor Nickerson.

Affiliations

Sister Cities of Columbia, IL is a member of *Sister Cities International* and *Illinois Sister Cities Association*.

Web Site

www.columbiasistercities.com

Follow us and post comments on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/columbiasistercities.

New Membership Dues Rate

old rate –ends 12.31.13 new rate – 1.1.14

\$ 5.00	individual membership	\$ 10.00
10.00	family membership	20.00
25.00	business membership	50.00
50.00	lifetime individual	100.00
100.00	lifetime family	200.00

Board of Directors

Ingrid Soraghan – President
Jean Marie Conrad – Vice President
Dave Mehrmann – Treasurer
Barb Miller – Recording Secretary
Diane Hanna – Corresponding Secretary
Cindy Straub – Membership Chair
Dennis Patton – Historian
Chris Neumann – Director
Don Womack – Director

Newsletter Committee

Our Newsletter Committee: Barb Miller, Tom and Ingrid Soraghan. Questions and comments are welcome! Please contact Ingrid at jrbill1@htc.net or phone/fax at 618-281-7864.

Dues for 2014

Please use the handy form below to renew your membership for 2014. *To see if your membership is current, please check for the year on your address label.* Thank you for your support of Sister Cities!

Name_____

Address_____

Phone_____

e-mail_____

Today's date_____

Please make your check payable to:

Sister Cities of Columbia, IL and mail to:
Sister Cities of Columbia, IL
208 S. Rapp St. P.O. Box 467
Columbia, IL 62236

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