



Nantesense

Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association Newsletter • December 2025

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Letter from the President

By Susan Kegel

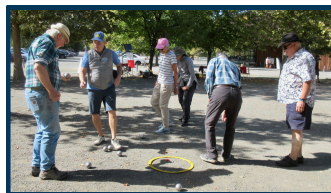
What an amazing anniversary year! 2025 was packed with events and projects.

Fifteen of us journeyed to Nantes, joined by artist Barbara Earl Thomas, chef Kristi Brown, and Councilmember Joy Hollingsworth to inaugurate the Jardin de Seattle and celebrate 45 years of friendship with the people of Nantes. We awarded six scholarships to incredible Washington students who are pursuing their French language studies this year in France. We played pétanque; we enjoyed wine and crêpes for la Chandeleur; we raised the flag for la Fête Nationale; we shared carrot ginger soup at the inaugural Sister City Soup Sampling; we watched 15 shorts from nine sister cities, including six from Nantes at the first ever Sister City Short Film Festival; we spruced up Nantes Park in the spring and later put it to bed for the winter; we shared our love of Nantes and France at three community events; we listened to La Chorale Francophone at their spectacular holiday concert; and most of all we enjoyed each other's company all year long!

Next year will be equally fun! The board got together for our annual planning retreat in early December and created the calendar of events for 2026, which you can read about later in this newsletter on page 8. Our goal is to have at least one social event each month, so that you have more chances to participate, starting with the private docent-led tour of the Farm to Table exhibit at Seattle Art Museum in January.

We have heard your feedback! We are considering several different options for the picnic with hopefully better parking! We're adding a second pétanque event and a holiday party. And you may have heard that France qualified for the World Cup! So far, they have no Seattle games, but they are scheduled to play one of our other sister city countries, Norway, so, of course, we are planning a friendly rivalry watch party with our colleagues at the Seattle-Bergen Sister City Association.

Thank you for all your support! Bonnes Fêtes!



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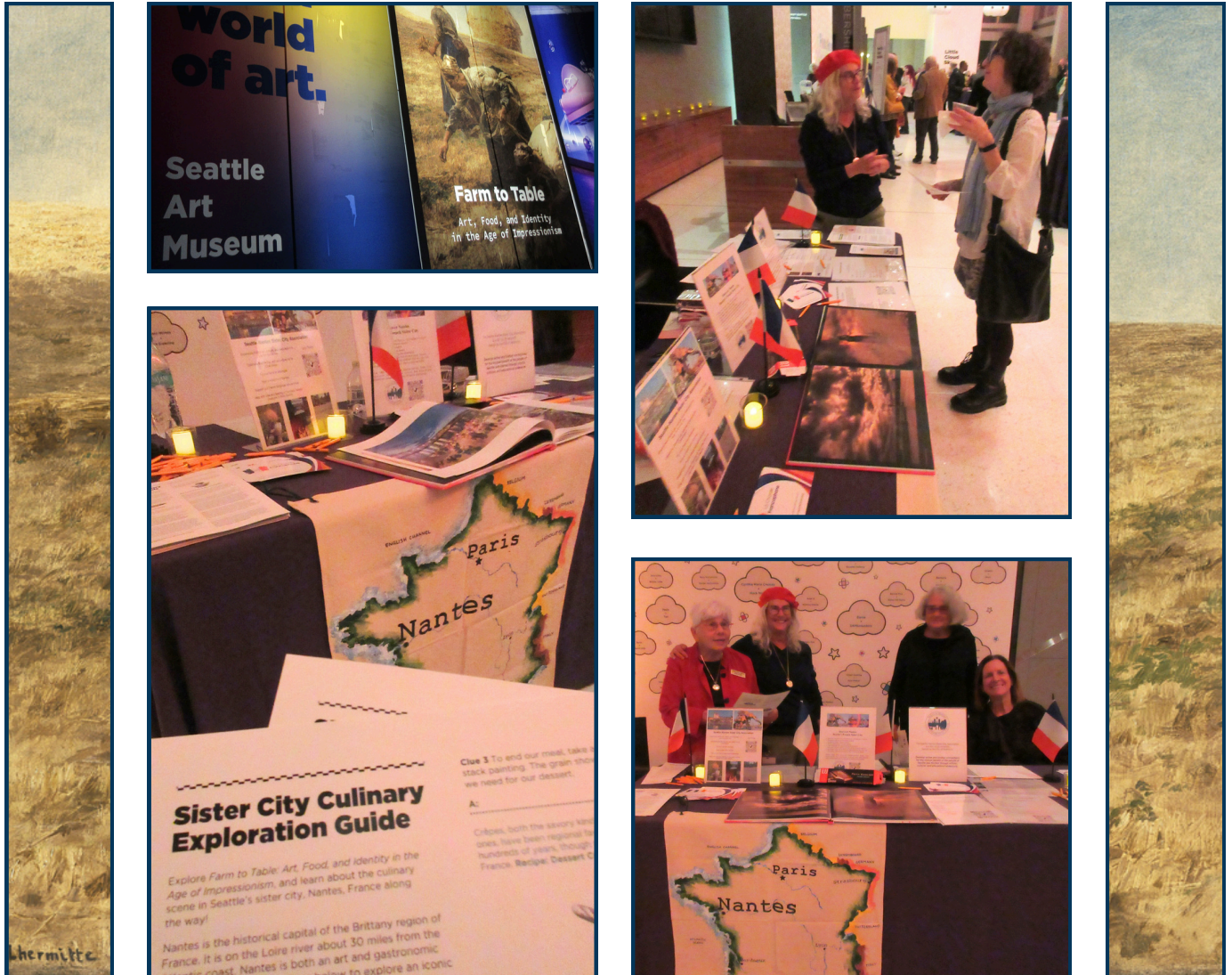
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Farm to Table at the Seattle Art Museum

By Susan Kegel

In October, the Seattle Art Museum invited SNSCA to host a table at their two member previews for the Farm to Table exhibit. Our goal was to create a fun and interactive experience that would entice visitors to look closely at the art while also learning something about our sister city. The result was a scavenger hunt in the galleries. Visitors had to find 10 specific paintings based on clues about the food and drink emblematic of Nantes in order to win free cookies, LU of course. Plus for each painting we provided a recipe from Nantes on our website.

It was a huge success! We gave out 270 cookies! Traffic on our website soared and we met new members. Thank you to Sue Lynette, Judy Deignan, Kathy Gorney, Bunny Schmidley, Andy Kegel, Alaina McCallum, and Gwen Geslin for scoring answer sheets, handing out cookies, and engaging with the valiant hunters.



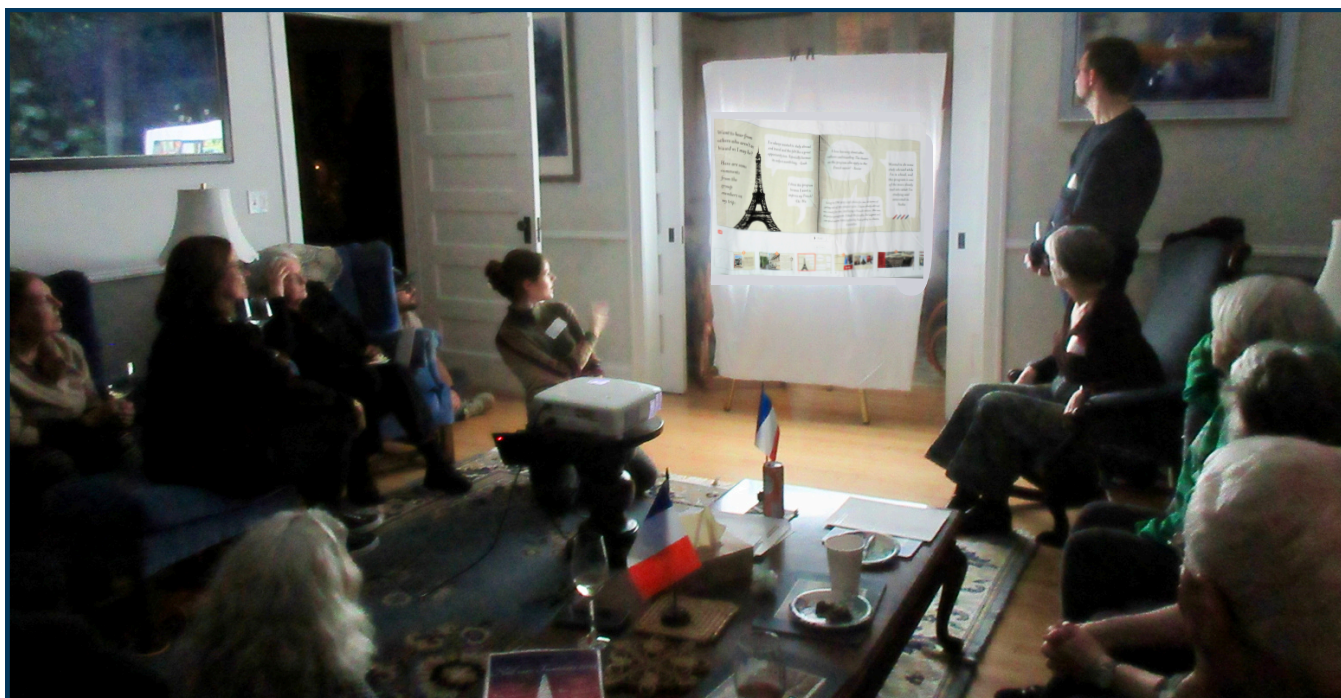


Annual General Meeting

Every year, and as directed by SNSCA's by-laws, an Annual Meeting is held for all members to come together and recap the year and elect our board members. Thank you to all who attended our 45th iteration of Seattle Nantes's flagship event, and many thanks to Ellen Taft for hosting the event!

Co-Presidents Susan Kegel and David Asher took turns recapping an exciting year and gearing up excitement for 2026. Last year was a fun one with a delegation trip to Nantes, a trans-Atlantic chef exchange, partnerships with the Seattle Art Museum and the Seattle Pétanque Club, and a number of cultural programming events in Seattle. We're looking forward to keeping that momentum going into the new year particularly as the United States, Mexico, and Canada host the 2026 Men's World Cup.

Our featured speaker was Sophie Biernacki, SNSCA's 2025 recipient of the Frances Bennett Scholarship. Sophie is French major at the University of Washington and recanted her experience studying abroad in Paris this year. The medium she selected was an online storybook that she created for her family and friends. Sophie's presentation highlighted the sights, food, parks, and memories she experienced during her time abroad. Thank you Sophie for sharing your experience with us!





Studying Abroad in Nantes

By Kai Odell, Goldmark Scholarship Recipient from Central Washington University

Hello from Nantes, France! I have been here for about three months now, and I'm loving it. Here are a few things I've been up to while here in France:

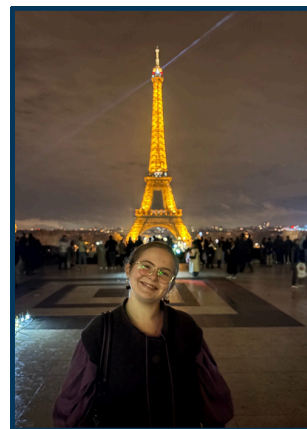
I am taking seven classes while here in Nantes- four at the Université de Nantes and three with I.E.S. (the institution I'm abroad with). I study English and French at my home university, and all of my classes here will go towards my French studies. I am taking a French grammar class, a translation class, an archaeology class, a literature of the Middle Ages class, an art history class, orchestra, and a teaching internship. I have orchestra rehearsal once a week, and we have a concert coming up on December seventh. My internship is four to six hours a week in a local middle/high school called Loquidy. This has really given me the opportunity to connect with French teachers and to see how the school system works. My classes at Université de Nantes have been lovely and it's been nice being able to meet and work with French students. I have learned so much while I've been here about a whole range of new topics (I'd never taken an archaeology class before this!) And, of course, my French has improved quite a bit, if I do say so myself.

I've mainly spent my free time exploring Nantes. I knew from the beginning that I didn't want to travel too much and that I wanted to get to know Nantes as a city. I feel I can say I've definitely succeeded in that! I live in downtown Nantes with my lovely host mom Michele, and I spend a lot of time exploring around our neighborhood. I've visited the Musée Dobrée, the Musée d'Histoire Naturel, the Jardin des Plantes, and the Île de Versailles (and many, many other places).

Now that it's close to Christmas, a Christmas Market has been set up in Place Royale. One of my favorite parts of my day is getting to walk past the market on my way home and see all the people and smell the wonderful food. Speaking of, there is so much good food in Nantes. My favorite restaurant that I've found is Le-St-Mihiel which can be found along the Erdre on tram line two at the stop St-Mihiel. They have really good fries, andouille, and hot chocolate. Every time I think I've found all the restaurants, a new one appears (same goes for cute boutiques).

I've traveled a bit with I.E.S. around France to Normandy, Brittany, and La Loire Valley. It's been lovely seeing other regions of France. If I'm not traveling or exploring, I'm definitely studying with my friends in a library or reading my eight hundred page book for my literature class.

Thank you for helping me be here and have this experience; it's truly been wonderful!





Supporting Our Scholarships

By Alaina McCallum

We have awarded over 90 scholarships since 1989 thanks to generous endowments, donations, and purchases at our fundraising events such as FrenchFest.

Our scholarships are open to students who live in Washington and have a passion for French and successful academic studies in the French language and culture. Our three current scholarships, the Goldmark, the Frances Bennett, and the Thomas H. Bennett, are all endowments meaning that they have additional requirements that are unique to each scholarship. For example, the Goldmark Scholarship is for college students specifically studying in Nantes while the Thomas H. Bennett Scholarship is for high school or college students studying abroad in a francophone country.

Having been on the Scholarship Committee for over a decade and chairing it since 2018, I have been consistently amazed by the incredible scholars who apply. It is an honor to get to know the scholars through our application process and stay connected with them as they advance in their French studies.

The quality of our applicants demands that our selection process be rigorous. Our Scholarship Committee examines all the applications which consist of an essay, a transcript, and two letters of recommendation. All applications are evaluated using a rubric that is aligned with the specific qualifications of each scholarship. If qualified, applicants advance to the second round, which is an interview with the Scholarship Committee. Based on the qualifications of each applicant and our scholarship budget, the Committee brings recommendations to the SNSCA Board for awarding the scholarships.

Each scholarship awards up to \$2,500. This year, we were grateful to be able to offer six scholarships thanks to your continued donations to our scholarship program.

With the application deadline on February 1, 2026, we look forward to granting all qualified applicants with a scholarship. You can help make this happen by donating to our scholarship program today at paypal.me/snsca!

Thank you in advance for your support of talented young scholars who share a passion for the French language and culture!

2025

Kendall Odell, Goldmark Scholarship
Sophie Biernacki, Frances Bennett Scholarship
Natalie Anderson, Dr. Thomas H. Bennett Scholarship
Lily Bauer, Dr. Thomas H. Bennett Scholarship
Nia King, Dr. Thomas H. Bennett Scholarship
Emma Myers, Dr. Thomas H. Bennett Scholarship

2024

Mikaela Seelke, Goldmark Scholarship
Basil Elsner, Dr. Thomas H. Bennett Scholarship

2023

Kian Power, Goldmark Scholarship
Ousmane Barry, Dr. Thomas H. Bennett Scholarship

2022

Rachel Bliven, Dr. Thomas H. Bennett Scholarship
Marlo Duong, Goldmark Scholarship

2021

Antoine Dréan, Frances Bennett Scholarship
Annelise Hoover, Dr. Thomas H. Bennett Scholarship

2020

Amelia Gilbert, Dr. Thomas H. Bennett Scholarship
Greta Scheve, Goldmark Scholarship
Shahrazad Tehrani, Goldmark Scholarship

2019

Hannah Holmgren, Seattle-Nantes Scholars Scholarship

2018

Emma Shipman, Goldmark Scholarship
Lia Koklic, Seattle-Nantes Scholars Scholarship

2017

Sophia Mahr, Frances Bennett Scholarship
Laura Phillips, Seattle-Nantes Scholars Scholarship
Marsella Quinones, Goldmark Scholarship

2016

Elmer Coria-Islas, Seattle-Nantes Scholars Scholarship
Sierra Dodd, Goldmark Scholarship
Allison Hall, Seattle-Nantes Scholars Scholarship
Erina Horikawa, Seattle-Nantes Scholars Scholarship
Emma Van Orden, Seattle-Nantes Scholars Scholarship

2015

Sharanya Sarathy, Goldmark Scholarship
Sophie Donohue, Seattle-Nantes Scholars Scholarship
Adriana Elliott, Seattle-Nantes Scholars Scholarship
Megan Gleason, Frances Bennett Scholarship
Natalie Riel, Seattle-Nantes Scholars Scholarship

Holiday Bazaar

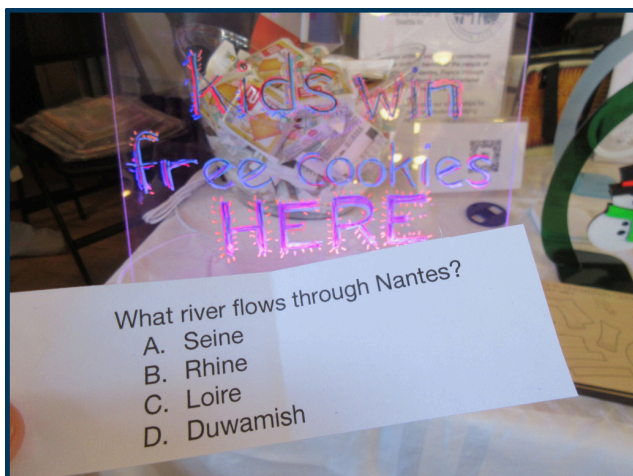
By David Asher

For it's second consecutive year, SNSCA participated at the Alliance française's Holiday Market, officially known as Joyeux Bazaar, on December 6th at Washington Hall.

The Alliance Française Holiday Market is an annual tradition in which vendors, schools, and organizations all around the Puget Sound come together for a joyful holiday market supporting artisans and nonprofits. The event featured performances by choir groups at the French-American School of Puget Sound, the French Immersion School of Washington, and the North Seattle French School; by the Polish Dance Group; and the Ladies Musical Club of Seattle.

SNSCA members staffed a small but mighty booth - selling an assortment of holiday ornaments designed by SNSCA's own Susan Kegel to help fundraise for scholarships next year. In addition to the ornaments, SNSCA also hosted a "free cookies for kids" trivia where kids were able to answer France-related trivia questions to win a free LU (Lefèvre-Utile) cookie. While the trivia questions were made to be answered by elementary-school aged children, there were a few questions that stumped a good amount of the adults. Did you know that cheddar cheese originated in England?

Thank you to all who came out - and Happy Holidays!





Thank you, Larry Laffrey!

By Alaina McCallum

Larry Laffrey threw himself into the workings of SNSCA by joining the Board at Annual General Meeting in November 2012. After 13 years of serving on the Board including being president from 2016-2019, Larry has decided to step down. His enthusiasm, hard work, and leadership will be missed!

I went through my emails and found my first correspondence from Larry from December 2012, only a few weeks after he joined the Board. Larry's message to the Board responding to us brainstorming a venue for la Chandeleur started with: "Friends, I happened to walk past the Crêpe Café (65th and Ravenna) today on a bagel run..." This message made me smile, because it is indicative of many amazing suggestions that Larry offered over the years that were actualized; the first reference of this being that SNSCA's 2013 la Chandeleur event was indeed held at Crêpe Café as Larry suggested.

Over the years, I have had the joy of running into Larry more than once while out and about at cultural events. His love of art, food, and beer has benefited advancing the mission of the association as noted by some important collaborations that Larry spearheaded such as the Native art exchange and beer exchange.

From July 2020 to September 2020, large photos of art by Joe Seymour Jr (Squaxin Island/Pueblo of Acoma), Alex McCarty (Makah), Peter Boome (Upper Skagit), and Micah McCarty (Makah) were on display outside the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle in Nantes as part of the exhibition titled Nature Native. While the artwork was on display in Nantes, all four artists participated in virtual presentations for SNSCA members; the recordings are still available at seattle-nantes.org/native-art. Larry was able to draw upon his deep appreciation for Native art and culture and longtime connection with the late Makah artist Alex McCarty to make this memorable art exchange a success.

When Susan Kegel shared with the Board the idea of doing a beer collaboration, Larry offered his knowledge of craft beer and connected us with Chris Engdahl of Lantern Brewing. Chris teamed up with Nantes' Bubar Brasserie to create the unique 8000km beer that consisted of cranberries sourced from Washington and sel de Guerande from France. The result of the collaboration was not only the beer, but Chris became a great supporter of SNSCA, and we ended up hosting several events at Lantern Brewing.

Larry has helped at many events over the years from helping deliver books to FrenchFest to gardening at Nantes Park. I always have appreciated the fresh ideas that Larry brought to our Board discussions and his dedication to making those ideas happen.

Thank you, Larry, for your service on the Board! We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event!



Larry next to all of the empty boxes after a successful FrenchFest.



President Larry with Karen and Kristen as they present an endowment scholarship check in memory of their dad Tom Bennett.



The Native art exchange exhibited outside the museum in Nantes.



8000km beer label



Larry weeding and mulching at Nantes Park in West Seattle.



What is to come in 2026!

Sunday, January 11, 2:30pm: SNSCA Tour of “Farm to Table” at Seattle Art Museum



SNSCA has arranged for a private tour of the Seattle Art Museum’s recently inaugurated “Farm to Table” exhibition. The exhibit covers “art, food, and identity in the age of Impressionism”, with a special shout-out to Nantes!

Sunday, February 1, 3:00pm: Crêpe Soirée - A “La Chandeleur” Celebration



Join SNSCA for our annual La Chandeleur celebration at Evergreen Family Wines (same location as last year). What better way to celebrate this unique French tradition with tasty crêpes and delicious wine?

Sunday, March 22, All Day: Seattle’s French Fest



SNSCA is a proud participant at Seattle’s annual French Fest at the Seattle Center. We will have a booth selling used books to fundraise for scholarships and spreading the word of our organization. Come on by!

April: Scholarship Awards Celebration

Saturday, April 11: Nantes Park

Friday, May 1: Vernissage for SNSCA’s art exhibit featuring Suze Woolf and Eric Fonteneau

Saturday, June 13: Pétanque

June 2026: FIFA World Cup



We’ve all heard the news: Canada, Mexico, and the United States will be hosting the 2026 Men’s World Cup and France will be participating! Below is France’s confirmed match schedule in group play:

- Tuesday, June 16, 12pm: France vs Senegal (East Rutherford, NJ)
- Monday, June 22, 2pm: France vs TBD (Philadelphia, PA)
- Friday, June 26, 12pm: Norway vs France (Foxborough, MA)

Stay tuned for a collaboration watch party with our friends at Seattle-Bergen!

Sunday, July 12: Bastille Day Picnic

Saturday, August 22: Pétanque

September: Wine tasting Fundraiser

Saturday, September 12: Nantes Park

Saturday, October 24: Annual General Meeting

December: Holiday Market with the Alliance Française

Sunday, December 6: Holiday Party



Membership Update

We are excited to welcome the following new members to Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association:

- Sophie Biernacki
- Becci Larreau
- Sallie Bodie
- Tracey and David McMorris
- Christina George
- Renzo Francisco Logan

We appreciate our longtime and new members; it is through your contributions and participation that we are able to put on our programs throughout the year.

Your 2026 dues are due now!

With a new year approaching, it means that it is time to renew your annual dues. Dues can be paid online at seattle-nantes.org/membership or checks made out to SNSCA can be mailed to:

Marsella Logan
11204 SE 192nd Pl
Kent, WA 98031

Join Us Today!

Meet fellow Francophiles and experience authentic French art, culture, and language in a way no tourist can. Members help shape what events and activities we offer. Your dues support all our programs and scholarships. Your participation keeps the association strong and lively.

Please renew your membership every January by check or online!

Individual Annual Dues

Student: \$10
Senior Citizen: \$15
Individual: \$25
Family: \$35
Sponsor: \$50
Patron: \$100
Donor: \$250
Benefactor: \$500

Corporate Annual Dues

Patron: \$50
Donor: \$100
Benefactor: \$500

Please complete this [online form](#).

Pay by Mail

Mail your check (to the order of SNSCA) to:
Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association
c/o Marsella Logan
11204 SE 192nd Pl
Kent, WA 98031

Pay Online

Choose your category from the dropdown menu below and add to cart.

Yearly Membership Dues

Student \$10.00 USD

Add to Cart

If you are a **new member** or have **changes** in your address or email address, please also send an application form to the address above or email it to seattlenantessca@gmail.com.

SNSCA Board Members

OFFICERS

Co-President: Susan Kegel

Co-President: David Asher

Treasurer: Susan Hulbert

Secretary: Alaina McCallum

AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBERS

Judy Deignan

Margaret Johnson

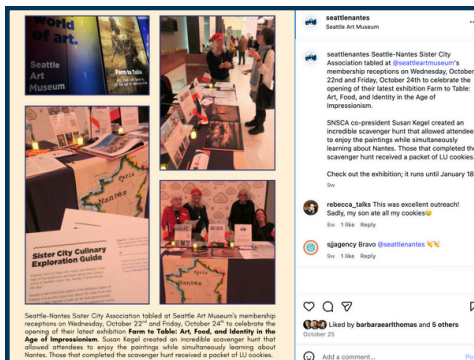
Marsella Logan

Bunny Schmidley

Tom Waite

Monthly Board Meetings

The Board convenes on the first Wednesday of the month. We are meeting via video conferencing. If you are interested in attending a board meeting, contact us at seattlenantessca@gmail.com.



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