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Letter from the President

By Susan Kegel

Dear Friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you enjoying a peaceful and safe summer. Here at SNSCA, we are planning virtual events to stay connected with you and with our friends in Nantes. You will have seen the invitation to join a Zoom exchange with four of the artists who have donated images of their works to our art exhibit in Nantes. I hope many of you can attend to hear directly from the artists about their inspiration. All four of these artists work and exhibit locally. You can find out more about them below.

Our fifth artist, Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, who is based in Vancouver, may be familiar to you from previous exhibits at the Seattle Art Museum. In fact, his latest work, *Carpe Fin*, which was commissioned by SAM, is currently on exhibit, though of course it is hard for us to see it right now. Featured in our art show in Nantes are pieces from his previous major exhibit at SAM, *Red. Red: A Haida Manga* was recently translated into French by a small publishing house in Vancouver, so we were able to send French versions of Michael's work to Nantes along with copies of the book available for purchase at the partner bookshop across the street from the museum.

In addition, the Muséum de Nantes reopens on August 8th and visitors who go inside will be greeted by the totem pole carved by Ralph Bennett (Haida) that was gifted by Group Health physicians and association members in honor of a medical exchange visit with Nantes around 1994.

Our exhibit has been so popular in Nantes that, after it had been installed for only one week, our colleagues contacted me to ask for more art! So we sent them more.

But back to our planned Zoom exchanges. We would like to do one each month and would love to have your ideas for topics. Please email us with your suggestions at seattlenantesSCA@gmail.com.

I hope you will find other articles of interest below, including a special tribute to Marie-Pierre Koban from member Misa Bourdoiseau Trinquet and some fun memories of the early days of our association from another longtime member Harry McLachlin.



Native Artists Exhibit in Nantes

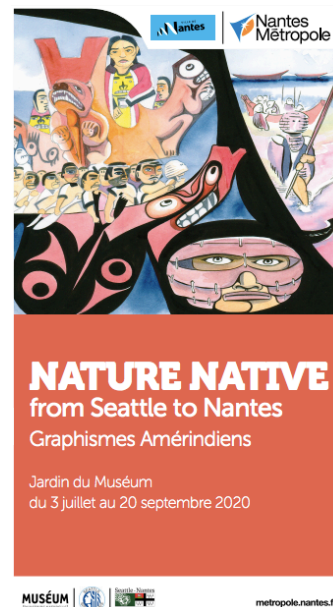
By Larry Laffrey

Among the activities and events that were to have marked the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Seattle-Nantes sister city relationship was an exhibition *Nature Native From Seattle to Nantes Graphismes Amérindiens* and sale of works by several native artists of Washington, hosted by the Muséum de Nantes.

Joe Seymour, Jr. (Squaxin Island/Pueblo of Acoma), Micah McCarty (Makah), Peter Boome (Upper Skagit), and Alex McCarty (Makah) were prepared to exhibit several works each, and travel to Nantes to participate in educational outreach activities. In addition, Vancouver, BC-based Haida artist Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas was slated to exhibit several panels of his 2009 graphic novel *Red* outside in the garden of the museum.

When the global pandemic forced a postponement of the exhibit to 2021, we worked with the museum staff to devise a clever idea to build interest for next year's event. Since we were already planning to display prints of *Red* on weatherproof plaques outside along the garden fence, we asked the other four artists if they would send us high definition photos of their works as well. We were so happy when all four agreed to participate in this new revamped exhibit. The new format allowed them to submit photographs of carvings and drums in addition to prints.

In total 22 works are on display. The Green Line tourist walking path of Nantes winds past the museum, ensuring exposure for the artists. The plaques were hung in late June and will be on display through September 2020 as part of the Voyage à Nantes summer arts festival.



To find out more about the artists, visit the following sites:

Peter Boome | araquindesigns.com

Alex McCarty | alexmccarty.org

Micah McCarty | starbrightend.wordpress.com/micah-mccarty

Joe Seymour | joeseymourart.com

Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas | mny.ca/en

Nantes Trivia Quiz Answers

In the April edition, you read a list of Nantes trivia questions that attendees of the crêpe dinner enjoyed. As promised, here are the answers.



1. Nantes is the capital of which region? **Pays de la Loire**
2. Nantes is the capital of which department? **Loire-Atlantique**
3. Nantes is the former capital of which duchy? **Bretagne (Brittany)**
4. Which French king signed the Edict of Nantes in 1598? **King Henry IV**
5. Which famous writer was born in Nantes? **Jules Verne**
6. Which two rivers flow through Nantes? **Loire and Erdre**
7. Which brand of cookies originated in Nantes? **LU cookies; founded by Monsieur Lefèvre and Mademoiselle Utile.**
8. Which alcohol is in the Gâteau Nantais and why? **Rum is used in the cake. Its historical significance connects to the transatlantic slave trade, from which Nantes benefited. Rum, sugar, and vanilla were imported from the Caribbean and became important ingredients in the cake.**
9. What year did Seattle and Nantes become sister cities? **1980**
10. What are three things that Seattle and Nantes have in common? **Same latitude (47°N), port, fish industry, aeronautics, higher education hub...**
11. How many rings of Buren are there? **18**
12. How tall is the Elephant? **12 meters**
13. Which wine grape comes from the Nantes region? **Muscadet**
14. Which sauce for fish was invented in Nantes? **Beurre blanc**
15. What grain is traditionally used for crêpes in Brittany? **Buckwheat**

Students' Impressions of Seattle

By Alaina McCallum

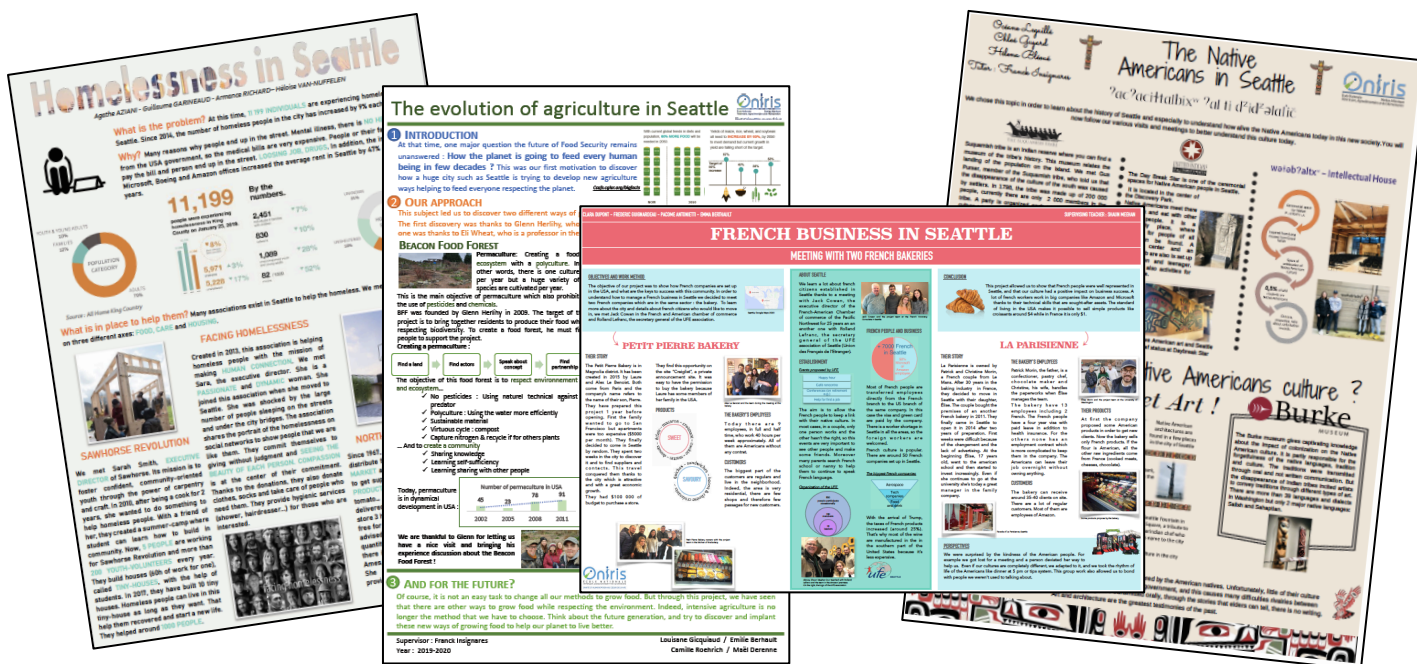
As you may recall, a group of university students from Nantes visited Seattle for two weeks in February. The students attend Oniris, a college of veterinary medicine and food science and engineering, in Nantes. Before arriving in Seattle, the students selected a topic that they would research during their visit.

The students worked in groups of four and explored the following topics: [Native Americans in Seattle](#), [French Business in Seattle](#), [The Evolution of Agriculture in Seattle](#), and [Homelessness in Seattle](#). The final product of the research was an informational poster. (Click on the hyperlink to view the posters).

On June 29th, Seattle and Nantes joined together on a videoconference call to hear from the students and their impressions of Seattle based on the research that they conducted during their academic visit. Representatives of Nantes included five students, professors Franck Insignares and Shaun Meehan, and director of sister cities in Nantes Christine Renard. Representatives of Seattle included several SNSCA board members, Seattle Pacific University professor Michelle Beauclair, several others from SPU, and International Affairs Director of Seattle Stacey Jehlik.

During the hour-long call, students presented their posters and shared their findings. The students who focused on Native Americans were surprised that there was not more visual representation of indigenous cultures around Seattle. The students who researched homelessness in Seattle were struck by the large number of people experiencing homelessness, in particular contrast to Nantes. Homelessness is a complex social issue, but the students mentioned that one support that is in Nantes and across France is Restaurants du Coeur, which offers food and hot meals for people in need. The students who explored agriculture in Seattle visited Beacon Food Forest, a community garden that none of the Seattleites knew about. The call provided a wonderful exchange that allowed students to practice their English while simultaneously educating SNSCA members about Seattle.

It was delightful to hear the professors from both Seattle and Nantes express enthusiasm toward continuing to strengthen collaboration that they had established in person during the visit. The call also proved to be a great format for collaboration in a coronavirus world.



In Memoriam

Marie-Pierre KOBAN (1929-2020)

By Misa Bourdoiseau Trinquet | Former AF Executive director | Seattle-Nantes member

It is with sadness that we heard of the passing of Marie-Pierre KOBAN on May 7th.

Many of us knew Marie-Pierre as she was such a prominent figure in the French community. However, for those who did not have the chance to meet her, the following is a modest attempt to introduce her and a few of her many endeavors.

Born in Morocco to parents originally from Corsica, Marie-Pierre started her studies in Rabat before coming to the USA with her husband Al KOBAN in 1955. They first lived in Arkansas where she got her MA in Education, then moved to Seattle in the 60s. Three daughters, Andree-Marie, Martine and Corinne, were born in the next few years while both parents were working as teacher assistants. In addition, Marie-Pierre was working on her PH.D. in French language and Literature that she obtained in 1972 from the University of Washington. Doctor Howard Nostrand, her thesis director, would become instrumental in the creation of the Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association in 1980 in which she was also involved.

Seattle and the Pacific Northwest became the stage for Marie-Pierre's incredible dedication to teaching, sharing her passion about anything French. Eager to share her knowledge and generous with her expertise, she contributed in shaping the way for many organizations.



In parallel to over 20 years of teaching at Lakeside Middle school, Marie-Pierre organized workshops for new French teachers who often felt isolated and lost at a time when there was no internet and very few resources. She served twice as President of the American Association of Teachers of French Northwest chapter. From 1979 to 1996 she spent most of her summers, when not travelling to France with students, organizing and directing the French language and culture program at the Canoe Island camp in the San Juan Islands, thus following the dream of its founder Dr. Austin.

During that same period, Marie-Pierre became one of the key players in the Bonjour Seattle festival under the leadership of Professor Nostrand. And in 1980, it would be the beginning of the *jumelage* between Seattle and Nantes with the official birth of the Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association. Marie-Pierre served on the SNSCA Board in various capacities including as its Historian. She became a true ambassador of the two cities. She organized the first student exchange between Lakeside and Françoise Kerneis' school in Nantes. An experience that created friendships lasting to these days and promoting a better mutual understanding of American and French cultures. Last, but not least, in 1987, Marie-Pierre was elected the very first president of the Alliance Française de Seattle. Although she and I had known each other for many years before, this is when we really became better friends, sharing common goals and paving the way for the respected organization it has become.

In whatever organization Marie-Pierre served, her work, her smile, her welcoming and warm personality, her passion for the French language and Francophone cultures have made a tremendous impact. We are grateful for the legacy she has left with language and culture, especially to teachers and students of French.

In appreciation of her work and services, Marie-Pierre was awarded the prestigious distinction of Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Academiques in 2002 by the French Education Nationale Minister.

Marie-Pierre, your spirit lives on, you will be missed but not forgotten.

Memories of SNSCA: 1979-1981

By Harry McLachlin

My earliest recollection of connecting with the Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association is meeting the engaging UW Professor Howard Nostrand in 1979, perhaps even before it was formally established. From Howard, I learned of the plans for a sister-city relationship between Seattle and Nantes, like Seattle a large city in the northwest of its country not far from the sea. Having visited France a few times and loving the French language, I enjoyed meeting other francophiles—and it was not long before I joined the board. In addition to Howard and his wife Frances, I recall Marie-Pierre Koban, Tjitske Van der Meulen and Jack Noyes from board meetings and other gatherings downtown.

A special memory is the visit of a delegation from Nantes in the spring of 1980, which was welcomed at a festive dinner near Pioneer Square. At that dinner I became acquainted with Daniel and Maria Peneau, who remained friends for several decades. (By volunteering to help chef François Kissel in the kitchen, I was even able to attend a private reception with the delegation a day or two later—it never hurts to ask!). Daniel later succeeded his father as head of the local Nantes group promoting the sister city relationship.

The next year 1981, I found myself planning to move to work in Amsterdam in the fall—with the chance to join the SNSCA delegation led by Jack Noyes on its visit to Nantes in September, truly a great privilege! We were shown the highlights of Nantes and its region. I visited Clisson and local vineyards, which was festive and delicious as it included my first ever *beurre blanc* dinner at a château with *chansons*. There was a day trip to Guérande with *déjeuner* in La Baule. In a fashion, few Americans ever experience such immersion, let alone arrange!

My host for that week was Michel Jouannic, a close friend of Le Depute-Maire Alain Chenard and *bon vivant*—accompanying me to (my first and nearly only) European football match in Nantes and introducing me to Hélène et Jean-François, local singers of the Loire Valley, who also hosted a member of the delegation, and who have been friends ever since. I learned from Michel that he had been Mayor Chenard's secret scout of the Seattle sister city project, having been hosted on a short visit by Annie and Chuck Goldmark (with whom he jogged!).

Toward the end of the visit (perhaps returning to Nantes from La Baule), Jack Noyes shared the plans of the City of Nantes to host a *Fête des Villes Jumelées* (celebration of the twinned cities) in September 1982 including Seattle and its other sister cities Tbilisi (Georgia, USSR), Cardiff (Wales, UK), and Sarrebrück (Germany). What American entertainment might we suggest? Having heard folk singers Reilly and Maloney and Tom Dundee in Seattle, I suggested their names as musicians to accompany the delegation—and there were large enthusiastic crowds in Nantes that weekend! The *jumelage* was off to a great start!



Harry McLachlin, a retired lawyer living in Connecticut, has been a member of SNSCA for 40 years and has visited Nantes many times since 1981, most recently in 2014 for the Rendezvous de l'Erdre (RDV) jazz festival. He is on the Board of Alliance Française of Greenwich and a member of the Selection Committee of Focus on French Cinema (www.focusonfrenchcinema.com), which celebrated its 15th anniversary in April 2019 and plans its 2020 edition for October.

Photo taken in 2010 during the 30th Anniversary delegation visit to Nantes. Left to Right: Pieter Van der Meulen, Ann Revelle, Tom Bennett, Harry McLachlin, Councilmember Tom Rasmussen

Scholarship Update

Due to coronavirus, our 2020 scholarship recipients will be unable to study abroad. We decided to honor the commitment despite the postponement or cancelation of study abroad program. We will use this an opportunity to leverage our connections in France to help them meet their French study goals in other ways.

For the 2021 scholarship cycle, we will put greater emphasis on the Frances Bennett Scholarship, which of the three scholarships the association offers does not have study abroad as one of the criteria.

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Monthly Board Meetings

The Board convenes on the first Wednesday of the month. During these times of social distancing, we are meeting via video conferencing. If you are interested, contact us at seattlenantessca@gmail.com.

Membership Renewal

Reminder, if you have not already renewed your membership dues for 2020. Thanks to your contributions, which help to organize events and support exchanges.

Please do so by either sending a check to:

SNSCA
5108 1st Ave NW
Seattle, WA 98107

Or using the [DONATE](#) button on our website.