



Contents

Letter from the President1

Nantes Park3

Student Tile Project4

Les Totémiques5

Delegation Dinner6

Reception7

Suquamish Visit8

New Members9

Scholarship Recipients9

Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

In mid-April, we welcomed 39 people from Nantes to celebrate our delayed 40th anniversary of twinning. Nine people came for discussions about the maritime industry, eight for aerospace, and 22 for institutional and cultural meetings with counterparts here in Seattle. The group included two deputy mayors, many heads of cultural institutions, professors and vice-presidents from universities, the vice-president and others from Pays de la Loire, several CEOs, and representatives from La Maison des Etats-Unis.

It was a whirlwind week! All of it was planned in only two months, due to the uncertainties of the travel situation, which was only complicated by losing a number of delegates at the last minute due to failing the Covid test for entry into the US.

We kicked off the week on Sunday with the long-awaited celebration in Nantes Park and gifting to our guests hand-sewn Seattle-fabric bags stuffed with local chocolate, visitor guides, and a commemorative Nantes Park bookmark. We were able to complete two-thirds of the beautification project in time.

Monday morning was devoted to meetings with Mayor Bruce Harrell, Tribal Relations Director for Seattle Tim Reynon, and Lieutenant Governor Denny Heck. Then we took the delegates to Pike Place Market for lunch and afterwards the Space Needle and Chihuly Garden and Glass. Dinner was held at Ellen Taft’s house (thank you, Ellen!).



On Tuesday, we got down to business with a series of meetings and visits tailored to each group: maritime, aerospace, government, education, arts, and parks. The Pays de la Loire contingent worked with the Port of Seattle on the maritime program. The FACC planned the aerospace visits. SNSCA and Stacey Jehlik planned the other four groups. Highlights are captured on page 2. All groups came together on Wednesday night for a reception at the Port of Seattle.



The education group met with the Office of Public Instruction and faculty at the University of Washington, including representatives from the Jackson School of International Studies, the French Department, and people involved in innovation, the applied physics lab, environmental sciences, and global affairs.

The government group met with a wide range of officials and organizations, including Chief Seattle Club, Mary's Place, El Centro de la Raza, Rainier Beach Action Coalition, Seattle Women's Commission, Seattle's Chief Equity Officer, and representatives from the Gender Justice Project and the Race and Social Justice Initiative. They also participated in a live housing panel discussion at city hall.

The parks group visited Seattle Parks and Recreation, UW Urban Farm, Beacon Food Forest, Olympic Sculpture Park, Amazon Spheres, the Ballard Locks and Botanical Garden, UW Japanese Garden, and the WSU Puyallup Extension Research Center.

The arts group had tours and meetings at MoPOP, the Burke Museum, the Henry Art Gallery, the Seattle Art Museum, and the Office of Arts and Culture at King Street Station.



Somewhere in the schedule, we also found time to visit MOHAI, tour the University of Washington, deliver more sel de Guérande to Chris Engdahl at Lantern Brewing so that he can brew more of our beer, and hang out with beer and pizza at Obec Brewing. The week ended with a trip to the Suquamish Heritage Site hosted by Tribal Chairman Leonard Forsman.

It was a phenomenal week with many new connections created between Nantes and Seattle. I am looking forward to seeing what follow-on projects materialize and in helping to nurture them.

- Susan Kegel

Nantes Park

Two Saturdays of weeding, mulching, and trimming, another 12-hour Saturday of tile installation, and a Sunday morning of installing the Claude Ponti sculpture culminated in the celebration on Sunday afternoon when we welcomed the delegation from Nantes at the park. Despite rain, cold, and spring break, about 65 people attended the event. Attendees enjoyed all local apéro platters from Metropolitan Market, cakes from Bakery Nouveau, and live music by Damascus Papers <https://linktr.ee/damascuspapersband>. There were also coloring pages that Claude Ponti had designed early on in the pandemic as part of a coloring series.

Acting Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation, Christopher Williams, kicked off the speeches, followed by Adiam Emery, Chief Equity Officer for Seattle, Christena Coutsoubos, Aide to CM Herbold, Pierre-Emmanuel Marais, Deputy Mayor of Nantes, and Franck Coutant, Nantes Parks Department.

We aren't done yet with the beautification projects – once cement is readily available again, we will install the walkway with the remaining Claude Ponti art.



Student Tile Project

By Alaina McCallum

Nearly a decade ago, former SNSCA President Tom Bennett proposed the idea of having students design tiles to go along the inlay of the cement-seating wall.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, in the midst of the pandemic, students from the Seattle and Nantes region designed tiles to commemorate 40 years of friendship. Students demonstrated their creativity using an array of mediums from watercolor to digital.

Patricia de Butler and Laetitia Bouteiller from the Académie de Nantes reached out to schools, and we received submissions from Lycée Nelson Mandela and Collège Rosa Parks in Nantes and Lycée Emmanuel Mounier in Angers. Locally, students from West Seattle High School and Bishop Blanchet High School submitted tile designs.

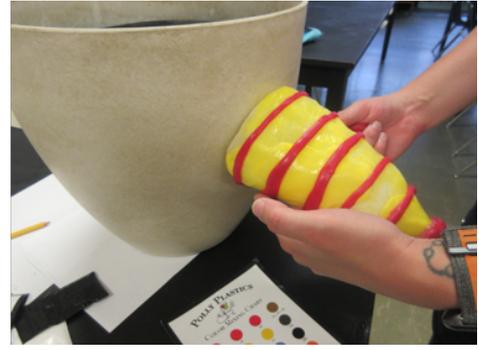
Upon receiving over 50 submissions, a small committee of community members and art teachers selected 31 designs to be printed on tiles.

Additional tiles were printed to encourage interactive experiences for park visitors. There is a search and find where visitors can look for commonalities in how students represented the cities and the sister city relationship; for example: How many tiles have elephants? / Combien d'éléphants y-a-t-il?

Also interspersed along the wall are tiles with the name and footprints of Claude Ponti's creatures that will eventually be stamped into the walkway.

With the tile installation completed on April 9th, it is incredible to finally have Tom Bennett's idea realized.





Les Totémimiques at Nantes Park

By Alaina McCallum

If you visit Nantes Park, you will now find five totémimiques emerging from of the butterfly garden. The final installation happened hours before the arrival of the Nantais to the celebration on April 10th, though there were many steps along the way.

Several weeks prior, the five wooden posts, cut down from Susan and Andy Kegel's backyard, were cemented into place. I worked with a fellow teacher Brei Tocci to mold bird-like faces out of poly plastic inspired by Claude Ponti's work in the Jardin des Plantes in Nantes. Adding plastic pellets to boiling water created a pliable material that we molded into beaks and eyes.

On the day of, Andy screwed the pots into the posts to secure them. Next, the pots were filled with soil and an assortment of plants became the hair of these creatures.

During the celebration, a message by Claude Ponti was read aloud as he expressed delight that les totémimiques inspired by his work may bring joy to those passing through the park:

*Chères personnes de Seattle qui avez oeuvré pour l'existence de ces œuvres recevez mes remerciements pour les avoir voulues, les avoir construites. Elles vous doivent leur existence au de-là de l'atlantique et des trois quarts des États-Unis. J'en suis fier et impressionné. Ravi aussi. J'espère que promeneuses et promeneurs, enfants, amoureux, poussettes, adolescentes et adolescents, grand-mères et grand-pères trouveront dans ce parc, un peu de rêve, un moment ailleurs, hors de leurs soucis ou contrariétés, bref des petits morceaux de plaisir ou de bonheur. Encore merci d'avoir invité mon travail qui avait pris naissance à Nantes la verte. Merci à celles et ceux qui ont mis la main à la pâte.
Je vous fait un grand serrement de toutes vos mains ensemble dans les deux miennes.
Claude Ponti.*



The Delegation Dinner

By Marsella Quinones

Good food, great conversations, and even a special piano performance all in SNSCA's April potluck! Members and visitors alike gathered around for a fun evening. During this event, our 2022 Goldmark Scholarship recipient Marlo Duong was presented a check for her studies abroad and Diane Baer took home the cookbook raffle prize! Huge thanks to Ellen Taft for welcoming us and hosting the dinner at her lovely home in Capitol Hill.





The Reception

By Susan Kegel

All the delegates, everyone they met with, and all SNSCA members were invited to the gala on Wednesday night that was hosted by the Port of Seattle on the waterfront.

We planned for 125 people and I think we got them. While guests enjoyed wines from Washington and Pays de la Loire, our own 8000km Collab beer, and plentiful appetizers, Damascus Papers played French and American songs.

The program started with drumming from the Suquamish Tribe. Mariette Cassourret, President of La Maison des Etats-Unis, and I were the MCs. Speeches were given by Mayor Harrell (Seattle), Deputy Mayor Pierre-Emmanuel Marais (Nantes), Deputy Mayor Mahaut Bertu (Nantes), pictured below, as well as others. The city of Seattle gifted a Cosmic Crisp tree to Nantes, which was procured by SNSCA in a lengthy process over the last year. The tree will be planted in the fledgling Verger de Seattle in the Parc du Grand Blottereau.



Visit to Suquamish Heritage Site

By Larry Laffrey

Friday, April 15th dawned cool and blustery as two vans made a mad dash from downtown to the Edmonds ferry. Accompanied by Stacey Jehlik and Tim Reynon, the City of Seattle's International Affairs and Tribal Relations directors respectively, and board members Alaina McCallum and Larry Laffrey, 10 Nantais (including Deputy Mayor Marais and family) eventually pulled up at the Suquamish Museum to a warm greeting by Suquamish Tribal Chairman Leonard Forsman. Chairman Forsman would then personally guide the group through the museum following his 15-minute opening presentation in a conference room.



As we exited the building, Suquamish Tribal Council Treasurer Denita Holmes, along with two students from the Chief Kitsap Academy (the Suquamish 'Tribal Compact School') placed welcome necklaces over all our heads in a brief but moving ceremony. Very generous with his time, Chairman Forsman then walked us over the short distance to the Suquamish Cemetery where we gathered around the gravesite of Chief Seattle, all the while continuing to share the history of his and surrounding tribes. Finally, he would join us for lunch at the White Horse Golf Course, which the tribe recently acquired, and bid us safe travels.



Before returning to Seattle via the Bainbridge Ferry, we paid a visit to the Japanese American Exclusion Memorial. The sun shone brightly on the hundreds of brightly colored origami cranes surrounding the somber panels showing the shocking effect of 1942's Executive Order 9066. This capped off an emotional, worthwhile day that visitors and locals alike considered a highlight of the delegation visit.

Please welcome our new members:

Rachel Bliven
 Colton Carothers
 Michael Carter
 Richard Conlin and Sue Ann Allen
 Marlo Duong
 Chris Ward and Clarissa Lavery
 Elhadji Sougou
 Julie and Rich Viglione
 Holly and Larry Williams



Scholarship Recipients

By Alaina McCallum

After conducting interviews in March, the Scholarship Committee awarded Marlo Duong the Goldmark Scholarship and Rachel Bliven the Dr. Thomas H. Bennett Scholarship.

Marlo Duong has been studying French since freshman year of high school and is currently a sophomore as a Law, Society, and Justice major at the University of Washington. Marlo demonstrates incredible passion for French and enjoys learning casual uses of the language through French TV and music. In the fall, Marlo will be studying in Nantes and is looking forward to the immersive experience and to understanding the attitudes about government, policies, and how systems operate and serve people.

Rachel Bliven is currently concluding her collegiate experience by participating Evergreen State College's French study abroad program that begins in Rennes and finishes in Paris. As a photographer who focuses on portraits, Rachel is excited to strengthen her French communication skills. Rachel has a blog to document her creative process and experiences. Her April 29th entry begins with:

As I start my travels in France, it makes perfect sense to start my blog updates for France with my visit to the City of Nantes. In addition to being one of the most beautiful places I've been, it's also the sister city to the Seattle-based Dr. Thomas Bennett Scholarship award I received. The scholarship's purpose is to foster a relationship between the United States and France. In Nantes, I felt this spirit in the creative energy. Les Machines de l'île had a particular spark.

For more about her time in Nantes and photos, visit [Rachel's blog](#).

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.

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