



# Nantesense

Seattle-Nantes Sister City Association Newsletter • July 2026

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## Letter from the President

By Susan Kegel

Happy Summer!

We have had a very busy spring with familiar annual events like the Nantes Park cleanup and pétanque and new ones like our first happy hour and our first cultural roundtable. I especially enjoyed the roundtable because it clarified some things that have always puzzled me a bit about the French; for example, the tendency to phrase things in the negative. When I watch French TV. I hear over and over “c’est pas faux” when in English we would say “you’re right.” An interesting cultural quirk!

Another new event was the wonderful art exhibit between the artist from Nantes, Eric Fonteneau, and the Seattle artist, Suze Woolf. Huge thanks for that go to all the volunteers from the association who made it possible, but especially to Bunny Schmidley! It was her idea and she drove it from start to finish, surmounting many obstacles (ask her about the visa issues) and forging ahead through thick and thin.

Many of us cheered on *les bleus* as they played Norway during our sister city match-up watch party with our colleagues in the Seattle-Bergen Sister City Association. Will they make it to the final? There’s a very good chance. If so, look for a last-minute gathering to watch!

In other news, I’m excited to announce that we are participating in a Seattle Sister Cities Street Fair on Saturday, September 19 at Lake Union Park from 11am to 4pm. Mark your calendars and order good weather. All 20 Seattle sister cities will be represented. There will be live music, food trucks, and culturally-themed games and activities. SNSCA will be hosting pétanque with our partners at the Seattle Pétanque Club. We will send out more details over the summer as plans firm up.

Hope to see many of you at our Bastille Day picnic on July 12th!



**French Culture Roundtable Discussion**



**Eric Fonteneau at Citizens of Nature exhibit**



**pétanque**

## Connect with Us

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## Spring Happy Hour

By Inger Tangborn

On April 12, Association members gathered for a casual happy hour gathering at DeLille En Ville to enjoy local wine, hors d'oeuvres, and conversation.

This was our first no-host happy hour event, and the turnout was great!

We look forward to having more happy hours at other venues in the Seattle area.

Our summer no-host happy hour is on Sunday, August 16 from 4pm to 6pm at Obec Brewing in Ballard.

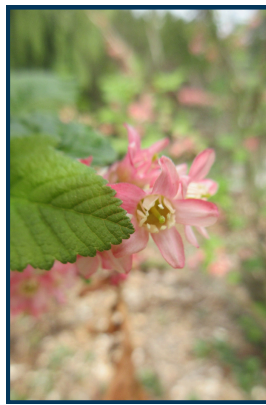




## Nantes Park Clean Up

By Alaina McCallum

We had our spring cleanup at Nantes Park on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>. As normal, the Seattle Parks and Recreation Department provided the tools and a large pile of mulch. The mulch is always quite daunting, but thanks to the help of several SNSCA members and a few folks from A Cleaner Alki, the pile of mulch was nicely dispersed across the flowerbeds. In the end, the only pile left in the park was that of the weeds, which Seattle Parks picked up around noon.





## Citizens of Nature: Seattle-Nantes Artists Exchange

By Bunny Schmidley

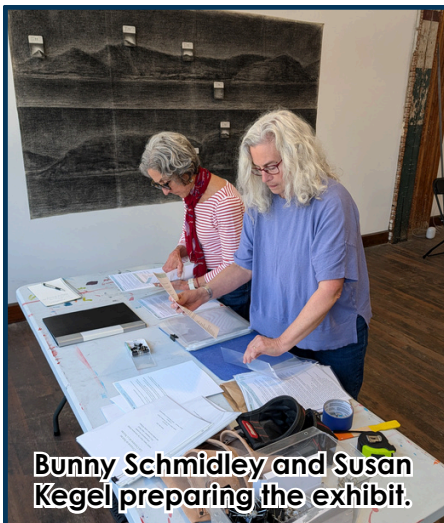
The Citizens of Nature Exhibition took place May 1-24 at Base Camp 2 Studios in Belltown. Planning for the project began two years prior to that. Getting a venue was the number one priority as the type of space we needed was fairly specific for the artwork that would be displayed. Getting the French artist from Nantes on board was also undertaken in this first year. The second year focused on all of the planning for putting the exhibition together and looking for grant money to help support the project. On May 1, 2026, the opening ceremony for the exhibition took place.

Our artists looked specifically at trees as a barometer of the dramatic climatic changes that are affecting our earth and subsequently our health. After a brief introduction to the exhibition, each artist talked about their work, explaining their passion for trees, and how their art reflects the changing state of our forests. Suze Woolf, our Seattle artist, expressed her art as portraits of individual burned trees being her metaphor for human impact. Painting them is a meditation for her on the climate crisis. Her installation was created from original paintings of burn trees, digitally printed on fabric in three layers: transparent, solid and black or text. These three-piece works of art were hung from the ceiling of the studio. With movement in the room or with guests walking among her art, it created an ephemeral forest.

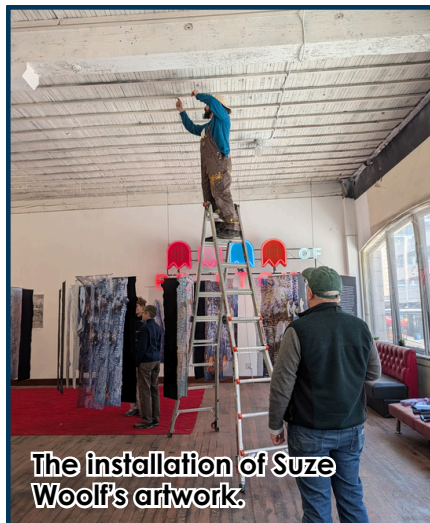
Eric Fonteneau, our artist from Nantes, said that his work is a meditation on the world and on the knowledge necessary to understand it. The forest is a recurring subject, as a source of his inspiration, and, above all, as a refuge from humanity’s harmful excesses. His tree drawings are a kaleidoscope of tree and branch shapes, drawn in black silhouette on white. The viewer’s gaze does not linger on any one drawing in particular. It moves from one drawing to another in order to take in the entire installation. The idea is to treat this natural panorama as a form of writing with signs rather than a landscape.

A collaborative artwork by the two artists is planned. They did the brainstorming to come up with ideas and they will likely be creating an artistic book about the exhibitions. This will be completed at the exhibition in Nantes.

*continues on page 5*



**Bunny Schmidley and Susan Kegel preparing the exhibit.**



**The installation of Suze Woolf's artwork.**



**Eric Fonteneau speaking at the exhibit opening.**



continuation of **Citizens of Nature: Seattle-Nantes Artists Exchange** on page 4

Eric, our French artist, spent 11 days with us here in Seattle. He was home stayed in Ballard and thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality that he was shown. We had several activities in Seattle for him. Some of these included the Olympic Sculpture Park, Chihuly Museum, the Space Needle, visiting a few local parks with outstanding views of the sound and downtown Seattle and wine tasting. We wanted Eric to know that Washington has great wines and he was convinced with a few of them. In addition, he spent a day with Suze Woolf in her studio and visiting galleries in Pioneer Square. A second day with another local artist and member, Dan Smith, who volunteered his time to show Erik a variety of interesting galleries and introduce him to the artists.

The success of the exhibition required the work of many volunteers who helped with translating artist statements and Suze’s tree stories from English to French, training docents who were then at the exhibition whenever the studio was open throughout the month, opening ceremony planning, graphic design work and accounting support. In addition, financial support was received from the Alliance Française, donations of wine and other beverages from local vendors for the opening ceremony and a City of Seattle neighborhood grant which we applied for and received to help pay for the project.

Overall, the exhibition was a wonderful success. The comments from our guest book were very positive and appreciative of the subject of the exhibition and the quality of the artwork.

“Fires experienced always remembered/forgotten at the same time. Rain and snow, renewal begins. Suze Woolf’s installation – a brilliant comprehensive view of the horror and beauty of fires, destruction. Science and Art.”

“I enjoyed it, especially the charcoal. I just love shadow Art. Each scratch in the charcoal goes into the amazing artist’s heart.”





## French Culture Roundtable Discussion

By Inger Tangborn

On May 31, the Association hosted two speakers from France – Emy Chevalier, a lecturer in French at the University of Washington, and Emma Guyon, an undergraduate in International Studies – for an engaging discussion of cultural differences between the U.S. and France, in particular from the perspective of university and exchange students.

Some of the Association’s current scholarship recipients joined the event and briefly shared about their upcoming study abroad plans. The event was held at the Northeast Branch of the Seattle Public Library, where guests enjoyed a variety of French cheeses and desserts.





## World Cup Watch Party

By David Asher

Seattle has been busy this World Cup. You don't need to go far to stumble upon one of the many watch parties and activities scattered throughout the city. Whether you're a fan of the sport or not, it's been amazing to see people from all around the world come together for a single event.

SNSCA joined in on the World Cup fun with a watch party of our own. Well, partially our own. SNSCA proudly co-hosted a watch party with our friends at Seattle-Bergen Sister City Association and Obec Brewing in Ballard!

The main event was the third group stage match as France took on Norway, played in Gillette Stadium – sorry Boston Stadium – most known for being the home of the New England Patriots. The east coast venue meant a 12pm start for us in Seattle, but that didn't stop well over 100 fans from showing up at Obec on an overcast Friday afternoon proudly wearing their red and blue (Norway and France's primary team colors, respectively). There's something special, even a little funny, about Norwegians and French fans drinking Czech beer at a Seattle brewery while eating Mexican tacos.

As for the game? France cruised to a 4-1 victory, including a hat trick from Ousmane Dembélé. Norway fans will be quick to remind you that star player Erling Haaland did not play. Fair point – maybe the game would've ended 4-2, France.

A special thank you to Stacey Jehlik at Obec Brewing and Steffen Torgersen with Seattle-Bergen for their help co-coordinating. This was SNSCA's first direct collaboration with our Bergen counterparts, and we're excited to collaborate again in the future.

Thanks to all who came out – Allez les Bleus!





## Pétanque

By Alaina McCallum

On Saturday, June 27, about ten SNSCA members spent the afternoon throwing *les boules* in the gavel at South Lake Union Park.

At any one time, there were five different games going on as members of Edmonds Pétanque Club also joined Seattle Pétanque Club (SPC). To accommodate that number of games, SPC outlined pétanque pitches using string. SPC is collaborating with the City of Seattle and permanent pétanque pitches are in the works.

We are most grateful to Seattle Pétanque Club's hospitality and guidance!





## Be Our Membership Chair!

Marsella Logan recently resigned from the Board in order to spend more time being a new mom, which has created a Membership Chair vacancy. Are you interested? We need your help!

The role requires good attention to detail, ability to use a spreadsheet, and a willingness to follow up with members who have forgotten to pay their dues. It happens. The hours are flexible. You get to know everyone. As a board member, you will have your finger on the pulse of the association and hear all the news first.

Please email [SeattleNantesSCA@gmail.com](mailto:SeattleNantesSCA@gmail.com) to sign up!

## Mark your calendars! Upcoming Activities!

**Sunday, July 12, 3:30-5:30pm:** Bastille Day Picnic, Ravenna Park, Shelter 1

**Sunday, August 16, 4-6pm:** No-host Happy Hour, Obec Brewing

**Saturday, September 12:** Nantes Park Clean Up

**Saturday, September 19, 11am-4pm:** Seattle Sister Cities Street Fair, Lake Union Park

**Saturday, October 24:** Annual General Meeting

**Saturday, December 5:** Holiday Market with the Alliance Française

**Sunday, December 6:** Holiday Party



## 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

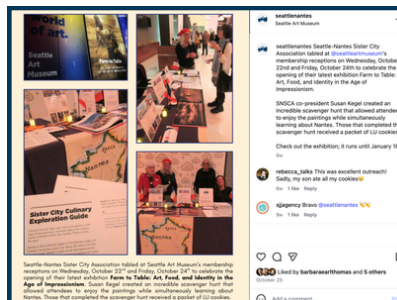
Bunny Schmidley

Inger Tangborn

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](mailto:seattlenantessca@gmail.com).



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