



# Around Our World

ROANOKE VALLEY SISTER CITIES, INC.

Volume 12, Issue 2

JUNE 2008

## “Une Fête Accomplie: 10 Years of Friendship” by Mary Jo Fassié, chairwoman

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Our **10th Anniversary** got off to a wonderful start with beautiful spring weather and 27 excited French travelers arriving in Roanoke on Friday, April 18. A group of 16 adults and 11 students visited us for seven days, commemorating this important date of our strong relationship with our Norman confreres.

**Jeanine Vérove** organized the group and even had to turn away applicants who heard about the trip too late to meet the deadline. Before arriving in the Roanoke Valley, the group visited **New York** and **Washington, D.C.**, and left us with not only memories but new friends.

Host families took charge over the weekend, and our visitors experienced a variety of activities. Some went to baseball games or other sport events. Picnics were organized as well as walks in the countryside. Many visited **Mill Mountain** and took photos of the valley from below the Star. Teenagers went bowling and “hung out” together at their host families’ homes and at music venues. We went to **Booker T. Washington National Memorial and Park** for a fun picnic and outing and an informative view of the history of this most impressive man from our area.

In the evening, there were dinners and cocktail parties as the host families got together to enjoy conversation and learn about one another in a relaxed setting. Some adults discovered the night life in downtown Roanoke as they went clubbing and dancing. On Sunday, many went to church with their host family and were acquainted with another aspect of American life.

Monday morning the group gathered at **William Fleming High School** and left for a tour of **Lexington** via Abbott bus. A few host family students went with the group, which was led by **Bernard Marie**, President & CEO of **Penta Corporation** --- a Norman native who was five years on D-Day ’44, and by **Elizabeth Stewart**, French teacher at WFHS.

In Lexington, they began their visit with the **George C. Marshall Museum**. Later that morning, they visited **Lee Chapel** and the **Stonewall Jackson House**. After a morning steeped in military history, they ate lunch in downtown Lexington. Plans had to be changed in the afternoon because of inclement weather, so the group bypassed Natural Bridge and went to the **O. Winston Link Museum** in Roanoke.

At 6:30 p.m., people started to arrive for an evening of good food and entertainment. We had planned a potluck dinner for approximately 65 people, but around 20 more showed up at **St. Elizabeth’s Church**. **David Lisk** opened up the doors so that we could get things organized early. Food kept pouring in as people arrived, stopping to talk and meet new friends and renew old friendships. We ended up with over three tables of food and a variety of desserts.

Guests included **Dr. and Mrs. Roth**, **David Lisk**, **D-Day veterans Jack Sutherland, Chuck Neighbor, and Bob Slaughter** (Margaret, too!). **Dr. Jeffrey Sandborg**, choral director at Roanoke College, came by to say hello to his friends from Saint-Lô, where the choir will be performing in May. Along with him was **John Long**, history professor, and his wife, Candy, who were excited about visiting France with the Roanoke College group.

**Jack Sutherland** shared his memories of his trip to Normandy in 1944 as a soldier and engineer. Jack was in charge of blowing up the bridge in Saint-Lô and then rebuilding it. He was glad to see that a new bridge is called **Le Pont de Roanoke** and that our new sister city newsletter is named “**Le Pont**.”

After a delicious dinner and wonderful company, we were treated to a performance of Norman folk dancing by costumed adults from our sister city. Several of us joined in and learned the dances. You may expect a future performance by our Roanoke committee as I now have the music and steps written down! After gift-exchanging and speeches, we ended a wonderful evening.

Tuesday morning, the group met at **Center in the Square** for a tour of downtown Roanoke by **Whitney Feldman** from the **History Museum of Western Virginia**. We stopped by the **Century Square** so that everyone could view the Saint-Lô column and take photos. As the tour continued, I translated for the group as we saw the recently dedicated **Martin Luther King** statue and walked along the rail-side Park. It was interesting to see our visitors’ reactions as they learned about their sister city.

After the tour concluded, some shopped on the market before we went to the Civic Center, where the city of Roanoke treated the group to a delicious luncheon with local specialties such as peanut soup, which was a big hit! **Mayor Harris**, **Vice Mayor David Trinkle** and City Council member **Alvin Nash** greeted the group from Saint-Lô. Other guests included **Susan Lawyer Willis**, Principal of William Fleming High School, and **Dr. Vella Wright**, Roanoke City Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, **Dr. and Mrs. Roth**, **Bob Slaughter**, Patrick Henry French teacher **Katie Kenny**, and the Roanoke/St-Lô Executive Board members, **Mary Jo Fassié**, **Peggy Wells**, and **Ann Hackworth** with husband, **Bill Hackworth**, Roanoke City Attorney.

**Mayor Harris** gave a gracious greeting to the group, pledging our continued friendship as we commemorated this 10th anniversary of our twinning. **Jeanine Vérove** read a message from **Mayor François Digard** of Saint-Lô, which spoke of his commitment to our relationship. Gifts were presented to Jeanine for St.-Lô, including an aerial photograph of Roanoke and a print of the city by local artist **Sheila Wiley**. Mayor Harris then presented gifts to each French visitor, including certificates making them honorable citizens of Roanoke. The luncheon began and concluded with songs by two Roanoke students, **Shanta M. Morgan and Dexter Malone**, accompanied by WFHS choir director **Lenora Turner** on the keyboard and with photos of this important event.

Tuesday afternoon, the group was accompanied by **Bob Slaughter** to the **National D-Day Memorial** in Bedford. After translating all morning, I turned it over to Katie Kenny to relay the moving and historical commentary of **Jim McCann**, Site Operations Manager of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation, and D-Day veteran Bob Slaughter. **WDBJ (Channel 7)** sent a crew to film the visit and interview the people from Saint-Lô. In addition to this coverage, **The Roanoke Times** sent a reporter and photographer who followed the group around all day from early morning to our visit in Bedford. The next day, an extensive article appeared in the newspaper, drawing interest from the public to our sister city organization, and perhaps some new members as well.

After an evening spent with host families, the Saint-Lô group gathered together early Wednesday morning for a trip to Charlottesville, accompanied by Pierre and Mary Jo Fassié and quite a few students from WFHS. First stop was the UVa campus and a tour of the Rotunda given by very informative and helpful college students. This was a good starting point for the group to get acquainted with the background of the university's founder, Thomas Jefferson. We then had time for lunch in a university cafeteria, where we ran into two-time St.-Lô traveler and UVa student, **Monty Johns**, who had a chance to reconnect with some of his St.-Lô friends.

Wednesday afternoon, the group traveled to Monticello to complement their vision of our third president and his architectural inventiveness. The weather was beautiful and warm as the group strolled the grounds, visited the graveyard, and toured the property. Visiting the inside of Monticello is always a pleasure, and the Norman group learned about Jefferson's connection with France as ambassador.

After returning to Roanoke, the teenagers had planned a cookout at **Cristina Sanchez-Jones'** house for their last evening together. The adults stayed with their hosts where they shared one last meal and friendships that will last beyond this visit.

I will remember many highlights of this visit: folk-dancing with my Norman friends, watching them as they were listening attentively to a recording of Martin Luther King's "I Have A Dream" speech near his statue in Roanoke, seeing their reaction when they first saw the Saint-Lô column in Century Plaza, enjoying the French and American teenagers' enthusiasm as a group, and singing "**Ma Normandie**" with **Arlette Dugué** and **Bob Slaughter** under the D-Day Memorial as everyone joined in unison.

"Quand tout renaît à l'espérance,  
Et que l'hiver fuit loin de nous,  
Sous le beau ciel de notre France  
Quand le soleil revient plus doux,  
Quand la nature est reverdie,  
Quand l'hirondelle est de retour,  
J'aime à revoir ma Normandie,  
C'est le pays qui m'a donné le jour."

"When everything is reborn in hope  
And winter flees far from us,  
Under the beautiful sky of our France,  
When the sun returns gentler,  
When nature has turned green again,  
When the swallow has returned,  
I like to see once more my Normandy,  
It's the country where I saw the light of day."



*Young St.-Lo visitors and Roanokers huddle for a souvenir flick.*



*Jeanine Vérove, with Mary Jo and Mayor Harris on either arm, shows a gift art view of Roanoke by local artist Sheila Wiley.*

## “OPOLE UPDATE” Dr. Kris Bulas-Slowikowski

We are looking forward to our annual kielbasa/sausage fundraiser at **Local Colors**. **Henryka Mikosza**, director of the music school, extends warm greetings to all and sends an invitation to all to visit when in Poland.

**Michas**, the Polish dance group that entertained us four years ago, will return May 17<sup>th</sup> for Local Colors this year to perform and teach Polish dancing. *Get your dancing shoes on!!* We will welcome several new families of Polish descent to the Roanoke area and look forwards to their participation in local events.

So....Let's eat kielbasa , dance and have a great time. See you there!! **Kris**

## “A National Treasure Incinerated” by Kim So-hyun (sophie@heraldm.com)

This startling story is about a tragedy that happened unexpectedly in Seoul, Korea in February 2008. It took front page coverage throughout Korea, virtually none in the U.S.A. A 69-year-old man, previously convicted of setting fire to a royal palace, confessed to incinerating the most revered national landmark in Korea ---**the Namdaemun Gate ---The Great South Gate.**

Police believe he committed the arson out of anger over what he claims was insufficient compensation for his land in an urban re-development case. **The 610-year-old National Treasure #1, officially called “Sungnyemun,” was left in ruins early Monday morning, February 11,<sup>th</sup> 2008.**

Police apprehended the elderly man, identified only by his surname Chae, on Monday on Kanghwa Island, west of Seoul. According to police, he climbed to the second floor of the wooden pavilion above the stone base, poured flammable material on it, and lit a fire at around 8:50 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 10<sup>th</sup>. **He apologized to the public as he was taken into custody at Namdaemun Police Station.** Chae was convicted in 2006 of starting a fire that caused 4 million won (\$410,000) worth of damage to Munjeongjeon, a part of the Choseon Dynasty royal palace, Changgyeonggung. He was given a 13 million won in fine and a suspended one and a half year prison term. Chae told police that he chose Sungnyemun because it was easily accessible and poorly guarded. Seoul City built a plaza and five crosswalks around Sungnyemun in 2005, making it more accessible for pedestrians. The gate is overlooked only by security cameras and infrared radiation sensors during the night. In contrast, Gyeongbokgung and Jongmyo royal shrine downtown are watched over 24 hours by security guards.

Seoul **Mayor Oh Se-hoon** reiterated yesterday that the city government will invest unsparingly in the restoration and management of cultural properties. "There is a controversy over who is legally accountable for the Sungnyemun fire, and I believe Seoul City should also take responsibility," Oh said. **Yoo Hong-joon**, Chief of the Cultural Heritage Administration, said he turned in his resignation to President Roh Moo-hyun.

"We will try to turn the misfortune into a blessing by restoring the walls on each side to bring back more of the original form," Oh said. Sungnyemun, meaning "*gate of revering decorum*," was the southern gate of the walls that circled Seoul during the Choseon era (1392-1910). It had survived a series of catastrophes, from Japanese invasions in the 16th century to the 1950-1953 Korean War!

### “Universal Pain”

After 6 months exploring south China in '95, **Pearl Fu** ended her search by choosing **Lijiang, Yunnan** to be our Roanoke Sister City early, January '96. Within a month, a tragic rubble-maker earthquake occurred demolishing much of the centuries old city. Many people died. Within days, Roanoke-Lijiang Committee responded immediately; a thousand dollars in relief funds was sent via the **Red Cross**. Historically, several major China quakes antedated that event. We all knew it could happen again. Two and three mile high mountains in this part of Asia guarantee them.

**On May 12 it happened again, stronger, more horrendous. No, not in Lijiang! But in neighboring Sichuan Province, 7.9 on the scale. Epicenter : a medium city, Wenchuan, 50 miles northwest of Chengdu and 300 mountainous miles from Lijiang. All suffered. Destruction was complete in the center, devastating in and around Chengdu. The count is still going up: 80,000+ dead with many more missing, entire villages completely submerged in landslides, floods, 4 million homes damaged, destroyed. For a couple of days, communications, rescue, relief were virtually impossible. Heroic efforts on foot by 130,000 dispatched soldiers and locals extracted the injured. Many schools, 7000 classrooms became tombs for thousand of students. The quake struck mid-afternoon!**

As hope drifted away, the Chinese Government nationally conducted 3 minutes of silence and 3 days of mourning. Here in Roanoke Valley on May 21<sup>st</sup>, in little more than 24 hrs., **Pearl** and **Rebecca Chang** pulled together a **Candlelight Service** in the heart of Roanoke's market. Solemn city leaders stood in a large wide circle among 100 somber citizens, every race, ethnicity and nationality , Chinese and friends of the Chinese people --- surely many Local Colors and RVSC adherents. The site, **Century Square** in front of the Lijiang column, became sacred space. The **Rev. William Davidson**, SRUMC, shared scripture, *“If one part hurts, all other parts hurt and are involved in the healing;”* The **Rev. Diane Scribner Clevenger**, Unity Church, biblically defined us *“all are part of one body”*; The **Rev. Kirk Ballin**, Interfaith-Valley Character, shoved off gait by a gust of wind, *“How vulnerable we are to the forces of nature,”* sharing his grief in a song of faith; **Claudia Whitworth**, Roanoke Tribune, *“The candle weeps its life away, drop by drop, to give its light!”*; Chinese poetry, Bahai and Indian Hindu prayers for the dead and survivors followed.

Among those sharing grief, Vice-chair of Lijiang Sister City Committee, **Rebecca Chang** was one whose heart was jarred by the quake. *Her hometown is Chengdu!* She contacted her Father and Brother, but several uncles and cousins are still missing in crumbled crushed suburbs. She read this through tears, hers and many others in the humbled wide circle:

[Last week after seeing a Chengdu mother cradling her dead daughter, I wrote this letter to the sisters in Chengdu on behalf of the sisters in Roanoke Valley. Even from so faraway, I wanted to tell them we feel universal pain.]

### “A Letter to the Sisters in the Quake “ Rebecca Chang

May 12, 2008, a beautiful spring day. My dear sister you saw your child off to school. You gave her a kiss and said things to her like, “Be careful crossing the street, do not talk to strangers, be a good girl. What you like for supper, I will make and have for you. I'll be waiting.” But like many, she never came home. That afternoon in less than 10 minutes your whole world changed. Surrounding you, collapsing buildings. People running, great confusion, full of crying and dying. You ran faster than ever before in your life to school. In horror you saw it --- a huge pile of fuming dusty debris, crumbled concrete, steel. Your tears made it hard not to stumble. In a crowd of desperate mothers, like them you searched, digging with your fingers. There under the concrete slab you found her. Her face smeared with blood and dirt, her hands turned purple. She did not answer you. You held her close. You kissed her a thousand times. You told her how much you loved her. But she did not wake. My dear sister, though thousands of miles away, I want you to know that I am, we are crying with you for your beloved child and many others. I can't image the depth of your pain. It is too much. But, my dear sister, I am, we are with you in sorrow. Remember her beautiful smile, remember her laughter.

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Most importantly remember that she loved you. Her love will be forever with you in beautiful mountains, rivers and streams. Remember spirit never dies, she will always be with you. And our love will always be with you.

After condolence messages, Rev. Diane lit the Unity Candle, welcoming all to join as one. Attendees quietly approached the service table each lighting a devotional candle. The large circle became a close tight circle with lighted candles, each mourner protecting the flickering flame against threatening gusts of wind... a desire to join, be closer together as the service ended.



*Rebecca and Rev. Diane share closeness in grief and sadness --- - seek hope in the flickering candles in our hands. [Courtesy: The Roanoke Times, Jared Soares]*

Pearl and C.C. Fu have eyes and ears in Yunnan on the day close by the Myanmar and Sichuan borders. Colette, #3 daughter, a photojournalist on '08 Fulbright Grant, is researching the culture of 55 minority peoples in South China where most live. She didn't see the devastation but felt it, just like China's 1.3 billion people did in one form or another! E-mail is her communication lifeline:

As of May 20, [10:00 GMT ] The death toll from the devastating earthquake in Wenchuan, Sichuan Province, rose to 40,075 nationwide as of 6 p.m. Tuesday, while 247,645 people were injured, more than 32,000 people remain missing.

The Chinese government is grappling with the next urgent task in the aftermath of last week's 8.0-magnitude deadly earthquake -- how to shelter up to 5 million residents in Sichuan Province who are now homeless.

To date, 159 aftershocks measuring above 4.0 on the Richter scale have been recorded in Sichuan. 26 of the aftershocks were above magnitude 5.0, and another four above magnitude 6.0. The Sichuan Seismological Bureau says another aftershock with a magnitude of six to seven is likely to hit the epicenter, Wenchuan.

Chinese insurance companies have so far paid 18.2 million yuan in claims related to the country's 8.0-magnitude earthquake, amid calls for the speedier establishment of a catastrophe insurance scheme to spread risks. By May 19, insurance companies had received 103,000 claims, the China Insurance Regulatory Commission said yesterday. But only 5 percent of the more than \$20 billion of damages from the quake is covered by insurance, according to an industry estimate.

Nearly 80 U.S. companies have contributed to the relief efforts, with the cash donations amounting to over 30 million U.S. dollars.

Some scientists have been puzzled by the lack of precursors to the 8.0-magnitude earthquake that devastated southwest China on May 12. However, other experts believed there had been signs a major seismic event was about to take place.

"There were no foreshocks, and there weren't many minor quakes around the epicenter for quite some time before the earthquake," deputy director of China Seismological Bureau (CSB) Xiu.

He said there were none of the other typical precursors usually used to predict major quakes before the recent disaster, such as anomalies in wildlife behavior and groundwater levels.

According to Zou Wenwei, director of the publicity and education department at Beijing earthquake bureau, earthquakes are still too complicated to forecast, especially because they are so abrupt. China's earthquake prediction program was developed when CSB was founded in 1971.

Chinese seismologists successfully predicted a 7.3-magnitude quake near Haicheng, Liaoning province, Feb 4, 1975. But a year later, to forecast the disastrous Tangshan earthquake July 28, '76, Zou explained that it was because the two earthquakes came in different patterns. While the major Haicheng earthquake was preceded by smaller quakes, the quake that devastated Tangshan, like the one that devastated Wenchuan last week, wasn't.

Some pointed to strange cloud formations as warning signs that the quake was about to take place, and many people said that on May 9, the countryside of Mianzhu, a city near Wenchuan, was besieged by tens of thousands of toads. People also recalled noticing other strange animal behavior at zoos before the quake.

He Yongnian, an expert with the CSB, said the cloud formation prediction method was first put forward by Japanese scientists, but, like many other methods, it is not yet sophisticated enough to make accurate forecasts.

#### **List of Big Yunnan Earthquakes:**

Jan. 5, 1970: 15,621 are killed after an earthquake measuring 7.8 in southwestern Yunnan.

May 11, 1974: 10,000 die in Sichuan and Yunnan after an earthquake of 7.1 magnitude.

Oct. 24, 1995: An earthquake measuring 6.5 kills 52 in Yunnan.

Feb. 3, 1996: 228 perish and 3,700 are injured in a quake measuring 7.0 near Lijiang.

July 21, 2003: An earthquake measuring 6.2 leaves 16 dead and 300 injured in 70 communities in the Chuxiong, an autonomous prefecture comprised of the Yi minority, in Yunnan province.

July 23, 2006: 22 people are killed and 106 injured as an earthquake measuring 5.1 hits Yunnan. More than 6,000 homes are destroyed and 38,000 buildings damaged across 13 municipalities.

#### **Colette e-mail update 5-22-08**

Today 243 people injured in last week's Wenchuan earthquake arrived in Kunming for medical treatment. As Sichuan's medical infrastructure feels the strain of tens of thousands of dead and hundreds of thousands of injured, the Chinese Gov is shifting 8,000 injured out of Sichuan to Chongqing, Shaanxi, Guizhou, Guangdong and Yunnan.

It is the largest shifting of injured since the Tangshan earthquake in 1976 that killed a quarter of a million people.

Hospitals including Stone Forest Tianqi Hospital are preparing entire floors of beds for quake victims. The hospital said it had been preparing more than 200 beds taking up three floors since Monday.

Located on Sichuan's southern border and home to a large Sichuanese population, Yunnan has made significant contributions to the relief effort. According to Kunming media, as of 2:00 pm on Wednesday the entire province had donated nearly 370 million yuan (US\$53 million) in goods and more than 338 million yuan in cash to the cause. Yunnan schools are also accepting children from Sichuan whose schools were destroyed or damaged.

### **Colette e-mail update 5-27-08**

The English-language website of **People's Daily** is reporting that more than 40 orphans from Shifang, Sichuan have been relocated to the Lijiang Orphan School. The relocation was organized by the **All-China Women's Federation**. In a strange twist of fate, the orphanage home to more than 460 orphans was built in 1999 primarily to assist orphans from Lijiang who had lost their parents to deadly earthquakes in 1996 and 1998.

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**Rebecca answers, "How can I help?"**

**"Send funds: Red Cross, memo "Chengdu/Dujiangyan Quake."**

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### **"Pskov Update" Prof. Sasha Saari**

The Roanoke/Pskov/Pskov Oblast' Sister City group faithfully continues its support of daily hot meals for Pskov children in need. We are looking forward to our annual picnic get-together in August, time and place to be announced shortly. Our major fund-raiser, which supports the Pskov meals program, will once again be held at Roanoke College, October 10<sup>th</sup>.

We have added a number of student members from the Ferrum College Russian Club to our Pskov group and look forward to their participation. Some students were committed to helping with our booth at Local Colors. Two members of the Club were recognized during Ferrum's May 3<sup>rd</sup> graduation exercises with top awards for seniors: **Amy Casper**, President of the Russian Club 2007-2008 was awarded the Arthur Owens Award for Outstanding Student Leadership and **Derek Lee Sewell** was awarded the **James Catlin award for Outstanding Student Citizenship**. Both of these fine young people graduated with majors in Russian, and have actively supported our Sister City group through their years at Ferrum. **John Burton**, another club member, has been named a participant in **Marshall University's "Teach in China" program**, and will be leaving for a year in Shanghai in the late summer. In addition to these individual honors, the **Ferrum Russian Club** recently received an award for **"Best Camp Site"** during the College's **"Against Cancer- Annual Relay For Life"** in April. The students simulated a Russian 'gypsy camp' complete with a tent, colorful costumes, singing and dancing and even some fortune-telling. ...

A number of Ferrum students remain in touch with students from the **Pskov Pedagogical University**, so warm personal relations between these 'sister institutions' continue.

The new Russian club tee-shirts sport (in Russian, *of course*) the proverb: **"Live a century, Learn a Century"**  
 - certainly wise words for all of us! [Editor's note: It takes a 100 years to finish the course!]

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## “LET THE HEALING BEGIN”

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Almost five months after the December ‘07 presidential election, Kenya is beginning to heal from post election violence that tore apart neighbor from neighbor and entire communities with 1,000 deaths. Re-elected **President Mwai Kibaki** and opposition leader, now **Prime Minister, Raila Odinga** have pledged to work together for reconciliation and cooperative governance. The tribal clashes that took place caused at least 200,000 people to be forced out of their homes. Through our good friend in Kisumu, **Dr. Ruby Sokwala**, the **Roanoke-Kisumu Sister City Committee** was able to donate funds to support several families living in IDP (Internally Displaced Persons) camps in Kisumu. While traumatized parents worried about finding food for their families, their kids wanted most of all to be in school. Going back to school signified a step in the direction and sign of normalcy. Our donation to the IDP relief effort helped provide food and supplies to the several families and allowed their kids to attend schools in Kisumu until their families were able to return home. We would like to thank members of the **Kisumu-Roanoke Sister City Committee**, especially secretary **Robert Gonzi**, and members of the **Fellowship Bible Church** for showing us a way to help our brothers and sisters in Kisumu.

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April 27<sup>th</sup>, Roanoke had some special visitors from Kenya sponsored by the **U.S. State Department’s Exchange Program**. Eight Kenyans with diverse tribal backgrounds led by **Dr. Patricia Kelly** from **Virginia Tech** arrived at the RVSC columns in Century Square downtown to find a large group of Roanokers ready to welcome them. **Mayor Nelson Harris** also gave them an official welcome on behalf of the city, while digital cameras clicked and TV “Channel 7 News” followed the action. After the welcoming reception., the group walked through the Central Market area to the **Binaba Shop** to meet with store manager, **Atieno Asiyu**, who is from Kisumu. This was a meaningful visit for two members of the group who are also from Kisumu.

May 2<sup>nd</sup>, the exchange group returned to Roanoke to meet with city leaders. They finished the day with a trip to **Mill Mountain Zoo** which sits on the mountain overlooking Roanoke. As Zoo veterinarian, I was able to guide them on a zoo tour. I explained in detail some of the zoo’s conservation programs, “Green” related.

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Before departure, I asked several members what things impressed them the most about the U.S. Several said they had come here with the wrong impression of what our people would be like. They expected Americans to be cold, detached, and unwilling to listen. Instead, they found warmth and graciousness in abundance.

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Since the group was made up of folks from several tribes, I asked if being together had helped them find common ground with regard to the turbulent political situation in Kenya. All agreed that this trip left them with the responsibility of going home and starting the healing process between their tribes. Being together made them realize they had more in common than they had differences. Little did the **U.S. State Dept.** know when they planned this exchange that they would have a hand in bringing tribal harmony, national reconciliation and peace to Kenya.

**Dr. Diane D’Orazio**  
**Chairman, Kisumu Sister City Committee**

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Mayor Nelson Harris welcomed the Kenyan guests gathered around the Kisumu Column. (L- R) Mayor Harris, Jebet, Dr. Roth, Dr. Josiah Tlou (Va-Tech staff), Esther Chege, Makori Moronge, Ochieng Khairalla, and Christine Agalo. [Courtesy Dr. Pat Kelly]



Friendly faces.



Kenyan Flag presentation.



The Roanoke Chapter of The Links, Inc. (International Trends Committee) welcomed the Kenyan guests at Harrison Museum of African American Culture. Each of the guest received special gift bags from The Links International Trends Committee. [L to R] Elaine Adams, Helen Harris, Helen Haynesworth, Lucy Harmon, Marylen Harmon, Betty Kolb. Members of The Roanoke Chapter of The Links, Inc.- International Trends Committee.



Guest perusing artifacts at Harrison Museum.



Joe Dashiell, Channel-7 TV interviewing a Kenyan guest.

**“News: Much Tragic, Some Sad, Some good”** Dr. R. F. Roth

[From China]

Colette Fu reports from Yunnan, not far from the epicenter, 5-26-08:

“Shaking with fear and desperately clinging to trees for support, many Pandas had to be coaxed down to the ground as the quake and after shocks had uprooted forests and sent boulders as "big as Volkswagens" crashing down from nearby mountains.

And despite the massive operation some of the 1,600 pandas living in the wild in the Sichuan district remain missing, three of them on the world famous Wolong reserve which was just 20 miles from the epicentre of the quake.”



*Even the young panda hangs suspended in sadness and fear.*



*Special attention to rare fauna: Rescuers hurry to save as many pandas as possible.*

Associated Press reports, May 26<sup>th</sup>, fourteen days post **Chengdu, Dujiangyan Quake**, that after shocks on Richter scale 4- 5 & 6 still are occurring with more deaths and destruction. A recent quake of 6 magnitude caused 71,000 homes, that had partially survived the original quake, to be totally leveled, and another 200,000 were in danger of collapse. Conservative death total since May 12<sup>th</sup> is more than 80,000, many are missing buried. This shock even caused office towers to sway in Beijing 800 miles away. Current estimate to this date: 15 million homes across the country have been severely damaged or destroyed. People are afraid to go inside their homes and buildings that did survive. Most are living in tents supplied by the government and charities on appeal.

Land and mudslides caused 35 new lakes to form threatening floods; in Sichuan, 69 existing dams are in danger of breaking, another flood hazard. Widespread evacuations are in progress. Fortunately, authorities have said that the world's largest water project – **the Three Gorges Dam**, about 350 miles east of the epicenter---was not damaged.

## “News Out of Africa: Kenyan and Kisumu” Dr. Roth

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2008 U.S. Presidential nomination campaigns of Republican and Democratic parties are being watched all across Africa, particularly in Kenya. Educated Kenyan not only speak English, they speak it exceptionally well. Government officials and leading civic groups such as Rotary members speak the Queens English with elegance. They read magazines like Newsweek, Time and U.S. News & World Report. I found that out when I led 21 members of the Roanoke delegation in June-July 1984 during our Presidential campaigns. People knew more about the candidates than average Americans; they were particularly over **Jesse Jackson's** bid for the nomination.

Fast forward to 2008: the Democratic campaign of **Illinois Senator Barack Hussein Obama** challenging **New York Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton** is a daily sensation in Kenya! Our **AOW Vol. 11, issue 2, page 11** reminded us that Obama's natural Father, who deserted the family when he was age 2, is from a village suburb of Kisumu. Senator Obama's visit to Kisumu in August '06 was to find paternal roots. Obama is pictured speaking and in another with former Mayor Shakeel Ahmed [now Kisumu's Member of Parliament], surrounded by welcoming citizens. Not available is a photo of Obama in a native outfit honoring him as a son of Kenya and, in particular, a son of Kisumu. *Actually, Obama was born in Hawaii, August 4,<sup>th</sup> 1961* of a Caucasian mother from Kansas and is a baptized Christian!

In 2006, Obama also visited **Kibera**, Kenya, one of the worst slums in all of Africa. As he came to the village, children from the outskirts of town, seeing him approach, turned and ran to the slum center, chanting, "*Obama biro yawne yo! Obama biro yawne yo!*" "Obama's coming. Clear the way."

A current **Kenyan joke**: Senator Obama's Father was **Luo**, the same ethnic group as newly appointed **Prime Minister Raila Odinga** who missed becoming president. He claimed the Dec. '07 re-election of a **Kikuyu**, Mr. **Mwai Kibaki** as president, was a rigged fraudulent election, kicking off massive violence which was finally settled by U.N. Secretary **Ban, Ki-Moon** with a *shared* governance. **Luos** have felt marginalized discriminated against for years! Among Luos this joke caused lots of chuckles: "*A Luo will be president of the United States before being elected president of Kenya.*" Laughing so hard that his eyes watered, Mr. Odinga quipped, "*Actually I beat 'em to it. I just wasn't sworn in!*"



**ROANOKE VALLEY SISTER CITIES CALENDAR - [www.rvsci.us](http://www.rvsci.us)****May: (2008)**17<sup>th</sup> - Local Colors - Elmwood Park, 11am to 5 pm**June: (2008)**10<sup>th</sup> – Kisumu - General Meeting, Main Roanoke City Library, 6:30pm17-20<sup>th</sup> Wonju**July: (2008)**12<sup>th</sup> - RVSC Corp. Bd Meeting - Annual Picnic, Roth Home SML, 2 pm sports, 4 Meeting, 5Dinner

TBA - Wonju - Roanoke Students depart for Wonju

16-19<sup>th</sup> – [SCI] Sister Cities International Annual meeting, Kansas City, Missouri20<sup>th</sup> – St.-Lo – Annual Bastille Day Picnic, Longwood Park, Shelter #4, 5 pm**August: (2008)**12<sup>th</sup> - Kisumu - General Meeting, Main Roanoke City Library, 6:30pm

??? - Pskov Annual Picnic ---- Date and site to be announced.

**September: (2008)****October: (2008)**10<sup>th</sup> – Pskov – Annual “Evening in the Old Country” dinner meeting, Roanoke College. 6:15 p.m.**November: (2008)**1<sup>st</sup> – Wonju- Harvest Moon Dinner Meeting. Time, place TBA**December: (2008)****Contact persons:** [[www.rvsci.us](http://www.rvsci.us)]Editor: **Robert F. Roth**, M.D., FACS [Ret.] Tel./FAX 540-721-6200 E-mail: [BobDotRoth@aol.com](mailto:BobDotRoth@aol.com)  
Pres., Roanoke Valley Sister Cities 100 November Lane, Wirtz, Va., 24184Executive Director: **David K. Lisk**; Cell 540-556-6829; Fax. 540-342-7230; Tel. (H) 540-342-5868**Membership Totals for 2000 – 2008 (as of 5-26-'08)**

<u>City</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Wonju	88	82	94	72	82	85	74	65	53
Kisumu	55	52	64	83	57	65	68	51	36
Pskov	68	64	66	68	78	70	57	58	43
Florianópolis	47	44	45	46	41	46	42	32	25
Opole	30	24	16	16	28	27	30	18	10
Lijiang	64	64	68	95	44	55	42	34	24
St.-Lo	69	60	76	63	87	76	71	67	57
	<b>421</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>443</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>248</b>

**"Membership year"** starts April 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Dues paid after Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 continue your active membership to Mar. 31, 2009.

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A "**membership year**" starts April 1<sup>st</sup> each year. However, dues paid after Jan. 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 continue your active membership to March 31, 2009.

(Form: annual membership in Roanoke Valley Sister Cities- 2008 )     new     renewal  
 An individual:  
 Annual membership dues per city (\*) of interest:    [Example: 1 city \$10.00  
 Individual  \$10    Family  \$25    Donor  \$50    2 cities 20.00  
 Sponsor  \$100    Sustainer  \$250    Corporate  \$500    5 cities 50.00

Special gift donations: (specify: Corporate Acct. &/or city/ cities)    A family: 1 city 25.00  
 Consul  \$250    Ambassador  \$500    President  \$1000    3 cities 75.00]  
 Special friend  \$ \_\_\_\_\_ For: \_\_\_\_\_ etc.]

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mail to: **Roanoke Valley Sister Cities**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ **P.O. Box 136**  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ **Roanoke, Va., 24002**  
 \_\_\_\_\_ [Executive Director: **David K. Lisk**]  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tel. (h): \_\_\_\_\_ (w): \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail - \_\_\_\_\_

**Make check out to ROANOKE VALLEY SISTER CITIES**  
 \* Record name(s) of your chosen Sister City (cities) in cheque "Memo" and check below:  
 Wonju     Kisumu     Pskov     Florianopolis     Opole     Lijiang     St. Lo  
 [All gifts/donations are tax deductible to extent provided by law.]

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Information: Tel/ FAX **540-721-6200**; FAX **342-7230**; also (Lisk) tel. **342-5868**; Cell **556-6829**

**\*RSVP**

**Roanoke Valley Sister Cities**  
 Wonju Kisumu Pskov Florianópolis Opole Lijiang St.-Lo  
**Annual SML Picnic Quarterly Board Meeting**  
 \*Bob and Dot Roth's lake home  
 100 November Lane, Wirtz, VA. 24184 721-6200

**July 12th, Saturday - 2008**

**2-4:00 Sports; 4- 5:30 meeting; 6 p.m. covered dish dinner**

To assure a varied menu, please call Dot Roth at 540-721-6200 and confirm attendance, proposed dish(es) and number of persons.Thanks.

**Florianopolis Page**

**"LOCAL COLORS EVENT BENEFITS ORPHANAGE IN BRAZIL" by Rose Ann Burgess**

The Roanoke Florianopolis Sister City was very successful in fund raising activity at May 17 Local Colors. **Guarana**, a drink from South America, was a big hit with the crowd. It sold out in less than two hours! This drink was purchased by **Rose Ann Burgess'** son **Dwayne**, who lives near a Brazilian grocery. He was almost unable to buy the drink as the owner of the store did not speak English and Dwayne did not speak Portugeseuse. **Fortunately, a customer came in and translated and the sale was made.** Thanks go to **Barney Craddock** of Callaway for bringing his ice cream machine to make the soft serve cones. **Lee Moseley** was a great help to Barney in the success of the ice cream which was also a big seller. Most importantly, the money raised by these sales and from the sale of other items from Brazil, go to "**Loves Little Nest**" an orphanage in Florianopolis. Most of this money is spent on medicine for the children. The committee has been involved in this service project for many years. We like to think that we have a small part in helping these children live long and healthy lives. We are grateful for others who helped in the event: **Laura & Bob Norfleet, Carol & Ray Mayberry, Linda Harrison, Daniela Santos, Cristiane Barcellos, David Helmer and Rose Ann Burgess.**

# ROANOKE VALLEY SISTER CITIES



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**ROANOKE VALLEY SISTER CITIES, INC.**

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**[www.rvsci.us](http://www.rvsci.us)**

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