



Around Our World

ROANOKE VALLEY SISTER CITIES, INC.

Volume 22, Issue 1 | January-June 2019

Like us on Facebook!

A life-changing experience in a South American gem

By Dr. Andrew Hanna
Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine
Class of 2019

If I could make one recommendation to anyone reading this article, it would be to travel. If I could make two, the second would be to travel to Florianópolis, Brazil. The month I spent in Florianópolis was undoubtedly the happiest month of my life. I was able to learn how medicine is performed in a very different health system, meet wonderful, welcoming people, all while drinking up the warm rays of the Brazilian sun.

Before I arrived, I had hesitations about what it would be like. I was worried it would be unsafe, so I made sure not to speak to my Uber driver when I rode away from the Florianópolis airport. Little did I know that Floripa (as many of the locals call it) is one of the safest cities in Brazil, and safer than a lot of U.S. cities.

I started off in Lagoa da Conceição, a beautiful community surrounding a large lagoon of the same name in the center of the island. I had the most interesting, cosmopolitan family host me for several days, helping me settle in this new city where I didn't know how to get around or speak the language. My host was a



Andrew poses with a group of fellow students, plus his physician host, Dr. Gustavo Pinto (upper right).

medical student who seemed to have visited every country I could imagine, and he helped me to see things from a more multinational perspective.

I was also amazed at how much his wealthy situation was different from those who lived in the nearby *favelas* (slums), and how aware he was of it. Brazil has a very high degree of income inequality, and this is what's driven a lot of the recent changes in the country. I was reminded quite often that Florianópolis is an island paradise, and

the places I stayed were a paradise within a paradise. Much like Hospital Regional De San Jose, the hospital where I spent most of my time, the people in Brazil often made do with what they had, and the income inequality meant that few had a large amount of resources, and many more did not. In the U.S., we live in a land of incredible abundance. Though my trip was very comfortable, it truly helped me to value the resources I have here myself, and to be a good steward as I start my medical career.

Time would fail me to speak of the amazing physicians and staff at the Hospital Regional and the Hospital Infantil (the pediatric hospital). The best clinician and preceptor I've ever had was Dr. Gustavo Pinto, my physician host. He had an amazing fund of knowledge, an incredibly strong focus on educating me and the other students, and an exceedingly facile way in connecting with his patients. He adeptly navigated

(Continued on Page 3)



Andrew's selfie with Lagoa da Conceição in the background.

In this Issue:

Medical rotation in Florianópolis	Page 1 & 3
President's report	Page 2
Mark Your Calendars New Members	Page 3
RVSCI Intern Report	Page 4
Roanoke/St-Lô report	Page 5
Sidebar: St-Lô intern's report No. 1	Page 6
Sidebar: St-Lô intern's report No. 2	Page 7
Roanoke-Opole report	Page 8
Roanoke-Lijiang report	Page 9
Roanoke-Kisumu report	Page 10
Roanoke-Wonju report	Page 11
Sidebar: Wonju intern's report	Page 12
Roanoke-Pskov report	Page 13
Roanoke-Florianópolis report	Page 14
Young Artists Showcase winners	Page 15
List of officers and donation/membership info	Page 16

President's Report

Personal contacts have biggest impact on sharing our mission



By Mary Jo Fassie
President, RVSCI
mjfassie@gmail.com

What I enjoy the most as president of Roanoke Valley Sister Cities is the contact with people in the community, describing the mission of RVSCI and getting younger people involved. Since January, there have been many occasions to realize these endeavors.

From January to March, it was a pleasure to get to know the charming art student Elise Dubuis who interned at the Taubman Museum of Art. We hope to see her again this summer in St-Lô. From Wonju, S. Korea, I enjoyed meeting the two bright medical students who were in Roanoke to participate in our medical exchange.

In February, the Lunar New Year celebration at the Taubman was a great event in which to promote our mission and to present another culture with members of the the Lijiang committee. They did not only calligraphy but also gave out hundreds of cookies in honor of the Chinese Year of the Pig. In addition, WDBJ-7 reached out to RVSCI to know more about our Young Artists Showcase and interviewed me at the station for



With St-Lô intern Elise Dubuis in downtown Roanoke.



WDBJ-7 interviews Mary Jo about the Young Artists Showcase.

a segment that aired on the afternoon news.

In March, I presented a PowerPoint program about RVSCI to the Newcomers Club - Roanoke Valley and reached out to students at the Roanoke College Internship Fair. With the help of Brian Counihan, the high school artwork that was submitted for the RVSCI Young Artists Showcase was displayed at the Liminal Gallery in downtown Roanoke. A reception was held, and students and art teachers as well as RVSCI board members attended. Nine monetary prizes (\$25-\$200) were awarded to young people who interpreted the theme, "Global Citizens: Resilient Communities."

In April, RVSCI sponsored the second annual Polka Party featuring the young and vibrant Chardon Polka Band from Ohio. There was a great turnout and dancing to a variety of music as we continued to communicate the RVSCI mission. At the Northview United Methodist Craft Fair, we sold T-shirts and pointed out our involvement in the valley and around the world.

In April and May, I met with Roanoke Vice Mayor Joe Cobb and a committee from the Taubman Museum, Hollins University and the Roanoke City Arts Commission to discuss a cooperative venture with RVSCI and the Roanoke Valley to bring artists from our sister cities to the valley as several of our sister cities and the Taubman will celebrate anniversaries in 2020 and 2021.

This month I also attended a meeting

at Roanoke College so that RVSCI would get involved next year in the film festival that French professor Elizabeth Groff started.

Local Colors and our Annual Dinner in May are wonderful venues to explain how our organization encourages others to come together to share their cultural heritage and make friends locally and internationally. Our thanks to our musical performers, Joshua and Caleb Xie of Blacksburg; our keynote speaker, the Hon. Joe Cobb; and Chef Matt and the Roanoke College Catering staff for a memorable and delicious evening.

Since January there has been a lot of RVSCI business to attend to as I helped update the bylaws, ordered tote bags, met with the acting dean of VTCSOM, filed a report with a Richmond office, planned board meetings, organized the Young Artists Showcase, met with a variety of folks, etc. However, it will be the personal contacts that each of us on the RVSCI board has made that will stand out and will have made the biggest impact in carrying out the RVSCI mission – "...one individual, one community at a time."



Left: Roanoke Vice Mayor Joe Cobb was our keynote speaker at our annual dinner. He spoke about his official trip to China last year. Here he is holding a hand-painted scroll he was given by students and faculty at a high school he visited. **Right:** Mary Jo at Local Colors.

(Continued from Page 1)

the murky waters that come with speaking to patients at the end of their lives, in telling them difficult news, and in counseling their families. This was because of the open and friendly relationships he had with his patients, clearly different from those I've seen in the US. Often, an interaction with patients was like seeing old friends reuniting.

This was likely due in part to the incredibly friendly, collegial, and joyful attitude that Brazilians have among one another. The bonds were quite strong among the people I met both in and out of the hospital. My hosts introduced me to several other native *Manezinhos* (or natives of Florianópolis), who showed me around the island, which included the beaches Praia Mole, Lagoinha do Leste, and Jurerê. I would have to take a few more issues of this newsletter to describe



Mole Beach

how good the food was. The *churrasco* (Brazilian barbeque) is unparalleled. Because the largest Japanese diaspora is in Brazil, the sushi was the best I ever had. Last of all, I would challenge you to guess the strange and interesting toppings Brazilians choose to place on their pizzas!

I could go on and tell you why, but the plain truth is that Florianópolis is a gem in South America, one that most Americans don't know about. I told myself multiple times how fortunate I

was not only that Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine allowed me to go, but that there was this sisterhood between the two cities that allowed me to have this experience. It's a time that grew me as a person, broadened my horizons, and showed me a different way of life. Thank you so much to the Roanoke Valley Sister City program!



Andrew at his apartment in Pedra Branca (white rock).

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

June

- **June 3-July 1:** Roanoke College student Liesl Greider interning in St-Lô
- **June 22- July 9:** Trip to St-Lô, Paris, Normandy, Versailles, Loire Valley chateaux.
- **June 28-30:** Roanoke/St-Lô 20th anniversary celebration weekend in St-Lô
- **Through Sept. 8:** "Colette Fu: We Are Tiger Dragon People," Taubman Museum of Art

July

- **July 14:** Bastille Day potluck picnic, Longwood Park, Salem, 5-7 p.m.

September

- **Sept. 3:** RVSCI board meeting, Center in the Square, 5:30 p.m.

October

- **Oct. 5:** Korean Alphabet Day celebration, Taubman Museum of Art

November

- **Nov. 5:** RVSCI board meeting, Center in the Square, 5:30 p.m.

New members

Welcome to some of the new RVSCI members who have joined since our last newsletter!

Cynthia Belanger
Debra Boulé
Nathalie Fassié and Stan Sagalovskiy
Hannah Furrow
Liesl Greider
Jeff, Jodi and Hannah Hill
Aiden Jamison
Alex Kamwell

Judy Kniskern
Hana Loschner
Talia Logan
Ziwei Sparks
Nancy Valle
Teresa Wimmer
Hana Zvatorka

RVSCI intern report

A parting word of thanks from our hard-working intern

By Hannah Furrow
Roanoke College class of 2019

As a Sister Cities intern, I was given the unique opportunity to explore Roanoke's seven sister cities through events, cultural celebrations, and in-depth research. From January to May, I decided to work with this wonderful organization for credit, and it was the greatest thing I could have done during my final semester at Roanoke College. The organization's mission is to "promote peace through mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation -- one individual, one community at a time." Throughout my internship, I was able to see this mission carried through.

My first set of events I attended was the Roanoke College International Film series. The series showed films created all over the world, including films from our sister cities. While attending these on campus or at the Grandin Theatre, I was able to promote and spread the word about the organization. While it was disheartening to hear that many students had never heard of Sister Cities, I left those evenings knowing I was sharing the mission. While being able to watch movies about other cultures is fun, my favorite part of the internship was being able to actually meet people from all over the world and attend a variety of celebrations. I was privileged to meet Colette Fu when she spoke and presented her incredible pop-up books at the Taubman Museum of Art. I was able to go to the Lunar New Year event where I ate amazing, Chinese cookies and watched the most incredible performers. I attended the Polka Party Event where I learned (or attempted to learn) how to polka and line dance. For many of the events I attended, I help



Hannah Furrow (right), RVSCI intern from Roanoke College, staffed the RVSCI and Roanoke-Opole displays during the Polka Party with Mary Jo Fassié and Kris Slowikowski.

spread the word by distributing flyers around the Roanoke and Salem area, and sending emails to local schools and departments at Roanoke College.

While my favorite memories were created by meeting amazing people and attending cultural events, I learned so much through my research assignments. I was asked to research other Sister Cities organizations in Virginia and surrounding states so see if they had cities in one of the same countries we do. I collected the data and created a document that showed which other nearby organizations shared a common country. For future projects, this information could help create collaborations between multiple Sister Cities organizations and could bring even more people together.

In addition, I also searched which other states shared the same, exact city with us. Malibu, Calif., is Sister Cities with Lijiang, and Boulder, Colo., is Sister Cities with Kisumu, Kenya. Another potential project could have us working with other states to create a big project in our shared City.

I'm so lucky that I've gotten to see the work that the Roanoke Valley does to promote peace within our world. I was pushed to be creative in my projects and I've seen that the possibilities are endless. It was an honor and a privilege to work with the Roanoke Valley Sister Cities, and I'm so lucky they allowed me to join with them in promoting their mission.

Trans-Atlantic exchanges continue to thrive

By Peggy Wells
Roanoke/St-Lô co-chairwoman
hpgwells@aol.com

One of our goals in our Sister City relationship is to continue to involve the youth. Since January, we have seen several student exchanges between Roanoke and St-Lô.

Art history graduate student Elise Dubuis came to Roanoke for a two-month internship at the Taubman Museum of Art. She was hosted by three of our member families -- the Grundlehners, the Henshaws and the Muelenaers. The host families and the Taubman all reported being delighted to get to know her. Elise, in turn, reported that her experience at the Taubman and her homestays were all very satisfying. Read Elise's own report on Page 6

The Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine sent two medical student interns to St-Lô. Sahal Thahir went in February, and Andrew Gaddis was there in April. In May, all the international medical students presented a public program to report on their experiences. Sahal told the audience about his very positive time in St-Lô, both in the hospital and with members of the twinning committee. Read his report on Page 7.

We participated in Local Colors in May, staffing a display booth and marching in the parade. Members who participated were Bill and Ann Hackworth, Peggy and Hugh Wells, Bee Grundlehner, Chris Bohannon, Yvonne Gravely and Sherrie Henshaw.

Also in May, the Roanoke College Choir toured and performed in

Normandy, including in St-Lô, as part of the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

Liesl Greider, a Roanoke College student, will spend over a month representing us in St-Lô as an intern. She will be helping to translate and welcome visitors during D-Day remembrances in early June. In late June, she will interact with our delegation from Roanoke. We will have 22 Roanokers visiting St-Lô in June, visiting with friends, seeing new sights and celebrating our 20th anniversary of our Sister City relationship!

Looking ahead, we will have our annual Bastille Day Potluck Picnic on July 14 in Longwood Park, in Salem. You will be hearing more about this event as it gets closer.



Liesl Greider

Élise et Andrew, des étudiants transatlantiques

Un Américain à Saint-Lô, une Saint-Loise à Roanoke. Andrew et Élise, deux étudiants, racontent leur expérience à l'étranger dans le cadre du jumelage qui relie leurs deux villes.

Témoignages

Andrew Gaddis, 31 ans, étudiant en médecine

« C'est la toute première fois que je viens en Europe. J'ai tout de suite été emballé par la beauté de la Normandie ! J'ai découvert le Mont Saint-Michel et la ville de Saint-Malo (Ille-et-Vilaine). Je suis arrivé au début du mois d'avril et ma fiancée m'a rejoint la première semaine. On a visité Paris aussi ! L'autre jour, alors qu'on se baignait sur les remparts de Saint-Lô, je me suis rendu compte à quel point mon pays, les États-Unis, est beaucoup plus jeune que la France. Chez nous, tout ce qui est « vieux » est protégé derrière une vitre et il faut payer pour le voir (rires) ! Alors qu'en France, l'Histoire est bien plus accessible et se trouve à chaque coin de rue. Au total, je vais rester trois semaines en stage à l'hôpital Mémorial. Je termine ma dernière année d'études, en spécialité psychiatrie. Mais à Saint-Lô, je travaille aussi la neurologie et la cardiologie. Le fonctionnement de l'hôpital français est assez similaire à celui des États-Unis. On utilise les mêmes médicaments, le même vocabulaire médical. Mon français est rudimentaire (rires) mais j'arrive à comprendre les diagnostics. Ce jumelage entre Saint-Lô et Roanoke (Virginie) est très important. Il faut venir ici pour se rendre compte et réaliser ce qu'il s'est passé pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale. C'est fou ce qui a été reconstruit en si peu de temps et c'est très réussi. »



Andrew Gaddis, un Américain étudiant en médecine et Élise Dubuis, étudiante en histoire de l'art, a effectué un stage au musée d'art contemporain de Roanoke (Virginie).

Élise Dubuis, 23 ans, étudiante en histoire de l'art

« Je ne peux pas dire que j'en reviens bilingue ! Mais j'ai fait des progrès. Il faut dire que les gens qui m'ont accueilli à Roanoke ont fait beaucoup d'efforts. Ils sont très ouverts et très à l'écoute. Ce qui m'a le plus surpris ? D'abord le temps que l'on passe en voiture. Il y a peu de transports en commun, la plupart des trajets se font en voiture. Par contre, toutes les familles que j'ai rencontrées cuisinent très bien. On est loin

des clichés sur la malbouffe ! Ce qui m'a étonnée aussi, c'est la place très importante qu'ils accordent à la religion. Mon départ pour Roanoke, entre janvier et mars 2019, c'est un peu le fruit du hasard. J'ai terminé mon master d'histoire de l'art à la Sorbonne, à Paris et je me suis accordé une année de sésame pour acquérir une véritable expérience professionnelle. L'été dernier, j'ai fait une saison au musée des Beaux-Arts et c'est là que j'ai rencontré un jeune américain qui venait de Roanoke et l'existence

de ce jumelage. J'y ai effectué un stage au musée d'art contemporain c'était très enrichissant. La culture la mémoire est très ancrée à Roanoke et à Bedford également (une ville où che de Roanoke dont sont originels 29 soldats qui ont trouvé la mort de les premières minutes en débarquant à Omaha Beach, le 6 juin 1944). Les familles d'accueil y sont très attachées. Ils savent tous où se trouve Normandie. »

Propos recueillis par Mathieu CHARRIE



A poster advertises the four free concerts performed by the Roanoke College choir in Normandy.



A portion of the delegation that's going to Normandy in June.

This is a clipping from the newspaper Ouest France, which interviewed Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine student Andrew Gaddis (left) about his rotation in St-Lô as well as Elise Dubuis of Agneaux, who interned in Roanoke at the Taubman Museum of Art.

St-Lô intern report No. 1

Feeling at home, despite cultural differences

By Elise Dubuis



Conrad and Bee Grundlehner with Elise at Monticello.



Tim and Sherrie Henshaw took Elise to Washington, D.C.



Elise (second from right) poses with some of her Taubman colleagues (from left): Mariam Foster, Ana Morales, Alison Lee and Nancy Henderson.



Elise and Andy Muelenaer made crepes in Richmond.

For me, the goal of this trip was to do an internship in a museum, in an English-speaking country, but in reality it was much more than that.

I was hosted by three families during my stay. Which means three different ways of living, three different houses, three changes. ... But most of all, it meant people who are warm, welcoming, attentive and sincerely kind. These people made me discover the United States through food (I was very lucky, they were all very good cooks!), trips (Monticello, Washington D.C., Richmond), and through their friends and families. During two weeks, a month and another two weeks, I was an integral part of life in these families ... And I thank each of

them for all these discoveries and this hospitality.

I did an internship at the Taubman Museum of Art, which enriched me a lot. I was in the "Art Venture" section, in contact with children and public of the museum, which allowed me to speak English constantly. My job was to welcome the public, to translate exhibition texts from English to French and to help to prepare workshops for children. It is a very lively and warm museum, which encourages discovery! Indeed, I was very impressed by the multitude of activities available in this place. I also met very attentive people and colleagues. It was a very nice climate to do an internship in a foreign country.

This experience could help me in my professional life in France.

Of all these experiences, I also remember the big cars, big roads and supermarkets, skunks ... And the superb desserts (not very light) with peanut butter! It is a very different life than mine, and I was sometimes surprised by the cultural differences... But I will mainly remember the beautiful meetings which made me feel at home.

Thank you to each of you, to the sister cities of Roanoke and Saint-Lô and to the people who are in charge of it, for their time and kindness. Also, thank you to my host families and all good persons I met! I can say today I discovered a part of the United States and part of its cultures.

St-Lô intern report No. 2

Intrigued by French culture, medical and otherwise

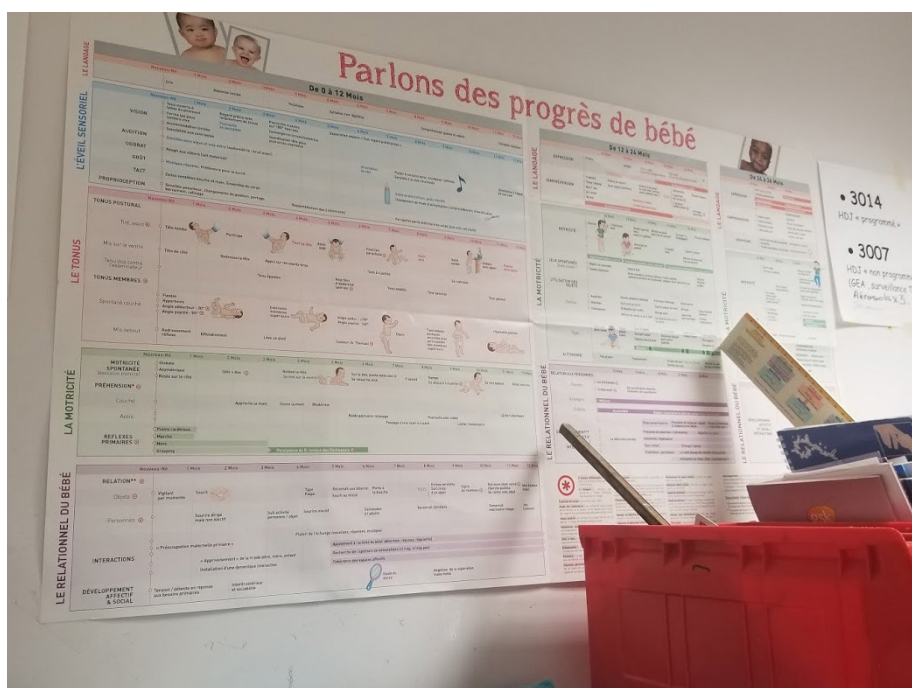
By Dr. Sahal Thahir and Dr. Andrew Gaddis
Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine
Class of 2019

As medical students at Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, we had the opportunity to visit Saint-Lô earlier this year. Sahal went in February and spent much of his time in the pediatric inpatient, ICU, and neonatal wings of Centre Hospitalier Mémorial France - Etats-Unis. Andrew went in April and spent time in the psychiatry and cardiology wards.

We both were intrigued about the French medical culture -- it was nice to work in casual clothes! The atmosphere seemed very collegial and relaxed for the learners, educators, patients and families. We became quick friends with many interns and medical students who shared our interests and anxieties about medical school. Both of us presented at the medical school in Caen about the American healthcare system to third-year medical students. Through these experiences, we found many French healthcare concepts that we feel could benefit the U.S. system. One concept, the *Carnet de Santé* (a health record that contains the medical information necessary to monitor the child's health until the age of 18), seems to be easily translatable here and could be used for improving child health services.

Outside of the hospital, we had a wonderful time traveling around La Manche with Jeanine, Michael, and Madeleine. Those three were definitely a highlight of the trip! We were able to tour the World War II invasion beaches, many of the historic chapels and markets, and Mont St. Michel.

Both of us were blown away by the Norman cuisine and people. We appreciated all their efforts to understand our Franglish and make us feel welcome. Our last days in Paris were, of course, incredible! Overall it was a fantastic and unique experience and we were grateful for the opportunity.



Sahal Thahir did part of his rotation in the pediatric wing of Centre Hospitalier Mémorial France - Etats-Unis.



To the delight of both students, Jeanine Verove treated them to home-cooked meals.



Sahal poses outside le Mont St-Michel.

Keeping on our toes with medical exchange, dancing and D-Day

By Kris Bulas-Slowikowski
Roanoke-Opole chairwoman
krisbulas@cox.net

The Poland/VTCSOM medical exchange has been active in both directions. In April, two students from VTCSOM traveled to Wroclaw. In August, two rising 5th-year medical students will arrive in Roanoke from the medical university of Wroclaw to spend a month at Carilion clinic.

The following is an excerpt from a report by Dr. Steven Crane, VTCSOM class of 2019, about his month in Poland:

"I really enjoyed having time to both see the hospital and clinical setting as well as the cultural aspects of Poland. I enjoyed my rotation in anesthesia. I was given the opportunity to work in either the operating room or the ICU. I chose to spend most of my time in the operating room. Each day I was asked what I would like to see, either the ICU or the



Steven Crane

operating room, and whether there was a specific type of operation I would like to see. It always felt like they had my best interest in mind and were trying to help me to get the most of the experience. I met multiple very welcoming faculty who spoke English very proficiently. I never had difficulty at the hospital with communication. I would recommend anesthesia as an elective for future medical students who are interested in either the operating room or the ICU.

"I feel this trip really allowed me to broaden my understanding of how medicine operates in other countries. Even though I only saw a small field, I was still impressed to see just how similar it all was despite being in a different setting. It was also interesting to hear the perspectives of both the medical students and physicians working in Poland. How both their education and practices are different. Some based on economic or cultural differences."

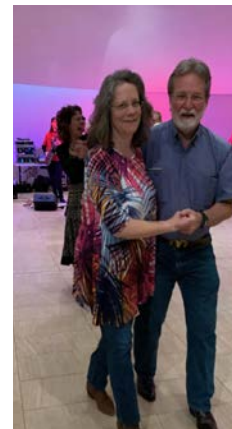
The Chardon Polka Band performed in April at the Taubman Museum to a foot-tapping and dancing crowd. Despite rainy weather, attendance was great. Young and old had a terrific time, and

most danced until the end of the event. Come back to Roanoke, Chardon Polka Band. Many thanks to Cindy Petersen and the Taubman Museum for the use of their space. Special thanks to Dave and Donna Spangler for their wonderful dance lessons.

We were honored to be part of the 75th anniversary D-Day celebrations June 5-6 in Roanoke and at the Bedford memorial representing Poland and its participation during the Normandy invasion in 1944. Our delegation included Robert Joskowiak, Honorary Polish Consul in Virginia, and his wife, Cindy; Polish army officers Lieutenant Colonel Michal Cymbalista and Senior Sergeant Grzegorz Sosnowski; and Jacek and Kristina Slowikowski from Roanoke Valley Sister Cities (Opole, Poland). The ceremony included laying memorial wreaths along with a flyover of airplanes from that era; a speech by Col. George Patton Waters, grandson of Gen. George S. Patton; and bestowing the French Legion of Honor in the rank of Knight to Dr. George Blume.



Jacek and Kristina Slowikowski who were part of the Polish delegation pose with Vice President Mike Pence during 75th anniversary celebrations at the Bedford D-Day Memorial.



Sheri and Bill Bestpitch take a turn around the dance floor during the 2nd annual polka party.



The Chardon Polka Band from Ohio played danceable polka tunes as well as waltzes and swing music.

Roanoke-Lijiang

From cookies to calligraphy, sharing our culture in the community

By Vivien Sparks
Roanoke-Lijiang member
ziweizhangsparks@gmail.com

The Lijiang committee of Roanoke Valley Sister Cities has been busy these last several weeks! Recent activities include:

- * Celebrating the Chinese Lunar New Year with the Roanoke community at the Taubman Museum of Art. The event showcased a regular and crowd-favorite Chinese calligraphy demonstration, in which visitors could have their English name written in Chinese. Calligraphy is a highly esteemed form of art in Chinese culture, and those who stopped by were thrilled to be able to have a personalized piece to take home. During the celebration, the Lijiang committee also gave out 500 butter cookies in the shape of the pig, which is the symbol of this year in the Chinese zodiac. This is the year of the Boar.

- * Attending VTCSOM's 2019 International Forum on May 2, in which many students shared their experience traveling and studying abroad. We also had a wonderful conversation with Dr. David B. Trinkle, Associate Dean for Community and Culture, about adding the city of Lijiang to their international rotations program.

- * Hosting a table at Local Colors on May 18 to talk about Lijiang Sister Cities with the broader Roanoke community. The day kicked off with women in the committee attending the parade dressed in traditional Chinese clothing known as qí pào. In addition to again showcasing Chinese calligraphy during the festival, the committee displayed art pieces presenting Chinese culture to festival-goers.

Upcoming activities include:

- * Continuing to pursue the possible opportunity with VTCSOM to connect them with Lijiang for an exchange



We had a lively turnout for the parade of nations at Local Colors.



Representing at our Local Colors booth



Chinese Lunar New Year at the Taubman Museum of Art Chinese calligraphy demonstration



These bakers made hundreds of Year of the Pig cookies.

program;

- * Hosting a potluck with the Roanoke Chinese community to more closely engage with them, and increase

awareness of the Sister Cities program;

- * Holding a "paint night" get-together for active Lijiang Sister City members (currently in the planning phase).

Roanoke-Kisumu

Joint projects continue to take root in Kenya

*By Bill Modica
Roanoke-Kisumu chairman
modicabill2@aol.com*

The Roanoke-Kisumu Sister City Committee continues its support of projects in Kisumu, Kenya. In May, we used funds raised from our members to purchase fruit and nut trees and planned to distribute them to homeowners in Kisumu County. To do this, we partnered with Trees.Food.Fuel, LLC, an NGO headed by Ruphina Okeyo, one of our members with family in Kisumu. The organization's mission is to encourage best management practices, increase food security and provide fuel for members of the local community.

With 750,000 Kenyan shillings, we were able to obtain 400 macadamia nut trees, 200 avocado, 200 mango, and 200 citrus trees. We also provided about \$300 to the God's Little Angels School to buy vegetables and fruit trees for the students to plant and maintain in their

new community garden. We especially thank Comacon Ltd., Engineering, for their help in transporting the trees from Nairobi to Kisumu. The GLAC school headmaster and support committee will oversee the new garden and harvest the fruit and nuts as they ripen. The new school year has just begun, and the dry season is coming to an end. The school still needs funds for improvements to their water well, so please donate if you can.

Trees were also distributed to about 20 local landowners to plant on their own land. The plantings were completed in May 2019 and had a survival rate of from 70 percent to 90 percent. Those that failed to thrive will become firewood and be used for cooking fuel. The landowners were not charged and contributed to the planting labor and watering tasks.

Our group also contributed \$157 to buy cameras for distribution to the GLAC school children as part of a documentary project that is currently underway. We plan to have a photo display prepared

that can travel around Virginia as a fund-raising and educational exhibit.

And finally, we set up a booth again at this year's Local Colors event in May to showcase our work, enhance our visibility and enlist new members. Working with other Sister City committees, we helped make the whole day a successful one, and everyone had a lot of fun, despite the dry heat.



Trees funded with donations by Roanoke-Kisumu members were distributed to 20 Kisumu County land owners.



Ruphina Okeyo staffed the Roanoke-Kisumu booth at Local Colors, while Linda Harrison greeted visitors at the Roanoke-Florianoópolis table.



Trees included macadamia nut, avocado, mango and citrus.

Fall festival promises to celebrate rich Korean culture

By Brian Counihan
Roanoke-Wonju chairman
brian@communityhigh.net

Thank you to everyone who came and chatted with me at the Local Colors Festival. I had a booth set up for Roanoke-Wonju, and we sold a lot of T-shirts with the iconic “Wonju Street” sign many of us pass on 581 every day. I had wonderful conversations with people, many who love Korean culture and a few coming to grips with complicated emotions about their Korean heritage.

A big reason for setting up my booth was let people know about a Korean festival we are planning for Oct. 5. I wanted to pitch ideas and see which ones seemed to interest people. And I wanted to solicit ideas from the community for things we should do,

both at the festival and throughout the year. The most popular idea was a K-Pop dance event at the Taubman Museum. We will put together a field guide for the older generations on who-is-who in the K-pop world. A fantastic group of students and very devoted teachers are putting together a video playlist, and we will be promoting the event in late July. There will be a dance competition, Sijo (Korean haiku) poetry collection by local poets, a kimchi making contest, and loads of craft tables. Let me know if you have ideas, and/or if you want to get involved.

I met a Korean student who is willing to teach Korean classes over the summer. Suji saw the booth at Local Colors and was amused. When we talked, I learned that she would love an opportunity to help teach her language to Americans. By the end of the day I had collected 16

names of people interested in taking Korean this summer or fall. So, if you are interested, get in touch as those classes will start soon. Woori Kwon has been a fantastic teacher for us, and I hope we will have her back soon. She is completing her master's degree and will not be available to teach this fall. Suji is a student at Roanoke College, so we are very thankful for her offer to teach while Woori is otherwise committed.

Finally, I will be helping out with the foreign language class logistics and working to make the festival happen, but I will be stepping down as chairman. We need people excited about creating exciting connections to step up and be a leader. I have found it very rewarding during my tenure.



At Local Colors, Brian Counihan modeled and sold several “Wonju Street” T-shirts. To Brian’s left are Veronica Counihan and her friend Anika Holley. To Brian’s right is Roanoke-Pskov chairwoman Patty Suppes.

Enriched by clinical work, touched by warmth and hospitality

By Sewhan Na
Yonsei University Wonju College of Medicine
Class of 2019



Sewhan with VTCSoM interim dean Dr. Daniel Harrington and his wife, Gil, who founded the organization "Help Save the Next Girl."

I was an exchange student from Wonju, South Korea, visiting Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine last winter. I was in my sixth and final year of medical school at Yonsei University Wonju College of Medicine. In South Korea, medical school lasts 6 years and most students go to medical school directly after graduation from high school. Students complete their clinical rotations in the hospital during their fifth and sixth years of medical school. This time is similar to the third and fourth years at VTCSoM. I rotated through Carilion Clinic with VTC medical students in January and February and am very thankful for this exciting experience.

My journey began at the Roanoke-Blacksburg airport on Jan. 20, but it was not as smooth as I hoped. Before departure, I was afraid that heavy snow in the eastern U.S. might affect my travel. Eventually, my flight was delayed, and I thought that I would miss the connecting flight in Washington, D.C., so I informed Ms. Keller of my situation. Fortunately, there was another flight going to Roanoke about 5 hours later

by United Airlines so I was able to safely arrive in Roanoke late at night. As soon as I got off the plane, I saw Dr. Harrington, Ms. Keller, Dr. Kim and his wife. They all were waiting to pick me up and welcome me with open arms in spite of the delay. I was so touched that I almost cried and thought that I had made a great decision in coming to Roanoke.

I am really interested in the nervous and musculoskeletal system. That is why I chose neurology and orthopedic surgery for my clinical electives. I spent my first two weeks in the department of Neurology at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital and my final two weeks in the department of Orthopedic Surgery at the Institute for Orthopaedics and Neurosciences. I am glad to have the opportunity to see the medical system in the U.S. and compare the practice with South Korea's. I was shocked when I first heard the medical bills and health insurance premiums. It was unbelievably expensive. I hope many students in my home medical school can have the chance to visit Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine.

I visited many places around Roanoke including Mill Mountain, Roanoke Public Library and Virginia Tech's main campus in Blacksburg. At the Mill Mountain Star, the view of the Roanoke Valley from the deck was breathtaking. Roanoke Public Library was not that big, but it had a lot of books and was a great place to study. VT's main campus was such a huge and beautiful place, and I bought some T-shirts and souvenirs at the bookstore. I also visited the April 16 Memorial in front of Burruss Hall to express my condolences. I also went to the medical student prom at the Corinthian Ballroom, the Docs for Morgan Basketball Game scholarship fundraiser at the Patrick Henry High School and Ballast Point brewery to hang out with VTC medical students. I watched Super Bowl with them as well.

I am also very thankful to Roanoke Valley Sister Cities' members who have made this an unforgettable experience. I would like to thank you for your heartwarming support and hospitality. I have met amazing people and learned so much not only about medicine but also about myself. I know it would never have happened without the background that Wonju is one of the sister cities of Roanoke, and I will be eternally grateful to everyone who was a part of it. It was the greatest moment of my life. Thank you so much again for taking me to the luncheon and the Taubman Museum, giving me awesome welcome gifts and all your care and concern. I truly appreciate your kindness. May God bless you today and always.



Sewhan Na atop Mill Mountain, where he called the view of the valley "breathtaking."



Watching the Super Bowl with VTCSoM students.



With Jean Broyles (from left), fellow Yonsei University medical student Jiwan Lee, and Brian Counihan at a luncheon at the Roanoker Restaurant.

Restoring longtime relationships and broadening our mission

By Patricia Sagasti Suppes, Ph.D.
Roanoke-Pskov chairwoman
psuppes@ferrum.edu



In May, Patricia Sagasti Suppes (left) reconnected with Ferrum College alumna and Russian major Heather Montoya at a conference in Washington, D.C.

In the last couple of years, Roanoke Valley Sister Cities has not had the strong connection with the city of Pskov, Russia, that we had traditionally. This is, in part, due to the loss of Russian classes at Ferrum College, because it was the Russian professor who always maintained that relationship through a collaboration with Pskov State University. This has resulted in two years of not having a student from Pskov at Ferrum College. However, we have since initiated a re-connection through a former student, Olga Glazkova, who was at Ferrum for two semesters from 2012 to 2013. She is now working at Pskov State University and helped me contact George Varlamov, Head of the Department for International

Affairs and Inter-University-Cooperation at Pskov State. We are currently communicating with the idea of developing future collaborations between our two institutions, and will hopefully have more to report in the next newsletter.

In addition to connections with the university, we are exploring ways to develop stronger ties between the city of Roanoke and the city of Pskov. This is an ongoing project, and we will be able to share more with you next time.

In addition to specifically Pskov-related news, this month I participated in the NAFSA (International Educators) conference in Washington, D.C., and ran into Ferrum College alumna and Russian major Heather Montoya, who is now living and working in Indiana and has started a career in international education herself. Heather was one of the students who helped teach Prof. Sasha Saari's classes a few years ago when Sasha was hospitalized. This experience, along with the connections she made with Russian students on campus, helped shape her perspective and made her an advocate for international cooperation and understanding. In this next generation, Sasha's wonderful legacy lives on!

Hollins U seeks Friendship Families

This fall, Hollins University will welcome a record number of international students – 30 -- to its first-year class. The university's Friendship Abroad Program is an opportunity for local families to be matched with these students. The goal of the program is to promote cultural exchange between the students and their American friendship abroad.

Friendship Abroad families help make the students feel welcome and comfortable in their new environment. The main things an international student needs from her Friendship Abroad family are friendliness and a sense of connection to the larger community. All international students have room and board provided by Hollins. What our Friendship Abroad families do for them is extra—and very special. The commitment is for one year to assist in their transitional year, helping them adjust to living away from home in a new country.

The plans do not need to be extravagant! Just spending time with the family and seeing a little of the area are wonderful enrichments of the student's experience. The occasional meal, a hike, a picnic, an athletic event, a visit to the farmer's market or a local historical site, or whatever it is the family enjoys doing together will be memorable for her.

For more information, contact Jeri Suarez, Associate Dean of Cultural & Community Engagement, Hollins University, at (540) 362-6382 or jsuarez@hollins.edu

Restoring longtime relationships and broadening our mission

By Joslaine Austin
Roanoke-Florianópolis co-chairwoman
joslaineinterpreter@gmail.com



At Colégio Batista Brasileiro in December 2018, (from left) Professor Esdras Fattobene, Joslaine Austin and Neil Holthouser met to discuss the pen-pal program with Hidden Valley Middle School.

Let me tell you how this pen-pal program started!

When I was only 6 years old, my English teacher at Colégio Batista Brasileiro showed up with a real puppy at our kindergarten classroom. I remember as if it was yesterday. Our teacher was the son of a missionary couple, and the puppy was an adorable Golden Retriever. The teacher's goal was to teach us English synonyms: dog, puppy, etc. A couple of weeks later he brought a real snake inside a jar, which he probably found in the biology lab, to teach the proper pronunciation of snake vs. snack. What he didn't know was that he sparked in me the goal to speak English as fluently as I spoke Portuguese. However, now I understand what he really did: He created in me the curiosity, acceptance and embracing of new languages, new cultures, new people.

My hope in planting the seed for this pen pal program between Hidden Valley Middle School and my old school in São Paulo is that

one kid out there might be opened to the same ideas and help us bring friendship, understanding, and peace to this world.

Thanks to Ms. LaRee Zabaleta, the English teacher coordinating the program at Hidden Valley Middle School, and to Professor Esdras Fattobene, the head of the program at Colégio Batista Brasileiro, the exchange is going well. Fattobene, the coordinator for the Centro Batista de Línguas, shared his thoughts about the program with us:

"Last year, Ms. Joslaine Austin invited our students to participate in a pen pal program with the students of Hidden Valley Middle School. We were thrilled with this invitation. We saw it as a great opportunity to provide our students a way to practice their English and learn about a different culture with teenagers at about the same age. We officially started last March, and we meet about every three weeks via Skype. The topics we chose for our conversations were from the course book they were studying. At the beginning, our students were a little shy and afraid of speaking to them. They weren't too confident. So, we prepared them with topics, questions and comments. We also taught them how to behave and do a presentation. As the sessions went by, they became more comfortable and confident in speaking. They have learned new vocabulary, they have improved their fluency and accuracy, and their listening skills. They have so much fun. In addition, they have found teenagers who like the same things they do and who have the same problems, dreams and wishes. I can say they have found friends.

"My expectations are to continue with the program and expand it to more students. It would be great if they could exchange emails to practice their writing skills. It would also be great if we could meet more often. I really believe that this program can help students in several ways. It can develop their abilities and competencies besides their language skills. They also can make friends, and why not be in an exchange program with them? I'm very grateful for having this opportunity."

We look forward to more opportunities to allow our children to become well-rounded citizens of this global world.

For more information, visit <https://www.batistabrasileiro.com.br/> and <https://www.rcps.us/Domain/23>.



In March 2019, at Hidden Valley Middle School, Joslaine speaks to pen-pal students during a Skype session.

Young Artists Showcase



First-place winner: "Heal the World," by Chisom Ezigbo

"Global Citizens: Resilient Communities" was the theme for the 2019 Sister Cities International Young Artists Showcase. Roanoke Valley Sister Cities held its own competition for the third time and received 37 entries in the high school art competition. Deadline for the competition was March 1. High schools in the Roanoke Valley were contacted last fall and again in January, and entries came from Arnold R. Burton, Patrick Henry, Salem, North Cross and Roanoke Catholic. Judges for the event were Roanoke artists and a member of the Taubman Museum staff.

The Liminal Gallery on 11 S. Jefferson Street in downtown Roanoke exhibited all of the pieces for two weeks in March. A reception for all participants, in which the winners were announced, was held March 8.



Second place (tie): "Peace by Piece" by Ava Lorens

The art pieces that placed were:

1st place: \$200 for "Heal the World," by Chisom Ezigbo of Roanoke Catholic;

2nd place (tie): \$100 each for "Peace by Piece" by Ava Lorens

of Arnold R. Burton and "Reaching Out to Our World" by Jenna Staton from Salem;

3rd place (tie): \$50 each for "Revival" by Charlie Card and "The New Businesswoman" by Ainsley McGinn both from North Cross;

Honorable mentions: \$25 each to Annie Stemp, Kendra Earls and Lana Roach all of North Cross, and Danielle Davis of Salem.

All of these pieces (except for 1st place) along with PH artist Erick Kilosha's "Shades" were displayed at the Roanoke City Main Library for Local Colors.

Thanks to the high school art teachers who encouraged their students to participate: Natalie Strum from Arnold R. Burton,



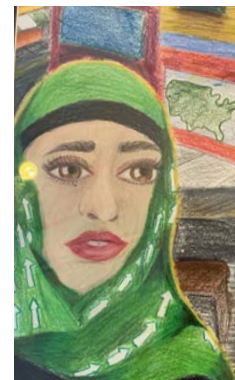
Chisom Ezigbo



Second place (tie): "Reaching Out to Our World" by Jenna Staton



Third place (tie): "Revival" by Charlie Card



Third place (tie): "The New Businesswoman" by Ainsley McGinn

Patty Pope from Salem, Amy Jackson from North Cross, Kim Spencer from Roanoke Catholic and Maddie Clark of Patrick Henry.

The first-place work was sent to Sister Cities International in Washington, D.C., for judging on the national level.

--Mary Jo Fassié

RVSCI Corporate Board Members

President: Mary Jo Fassié

Vice President: Bill Bestpitch

Secretary: Jean Broyles

Treasurer: Wayne Firebaugh

Members at large:

Anne-Marie Green

Dr. Cynda Johnson

John Makay

Sister City Chairmen:

Florianópolis: Linda Harrison & Joslaine Austin

Kisumu: Bill Modica

Lijiang: Rebecca Chang & Mei Li Foy

Opole: Dr. Kristina Bulas-Slowikowski

Pskov: Dr. Patricia Sagasti Suppes

St-Lô: Siobhan Scro, Peggy Wells & Ann Hackworth

Wonju: Brian Counihan

Contact us at: roanokevalleysistercities@gmail.com



Annual Membership - Roanoke Valley Sister Cities New ☐ Renewal ☐ July 1, 20____ - June 30, 20____

Cities: ☐ Wonju ☐ Kisumu ☐ Pskov ☐ Florianópolis ☐ Opole ☐ Lijiang ☐ St-Lô

Student: \$10 - one city ____ # cities x \$10 = ____

Individual \$15 - one city ____ # cities x \$15 = ____

Family \$30 - one city ____ # cities x \$30 = ____

Example: 7 cities x \$15 = \$105

Other Levels: Patron ☐ \$50 | Benefactor ☐ \$100 | Diplomat ☐ \$250 | Consul ☐ \$500 | Ambassador ☐ \$1,000

Specify for: ☐ RVSCI Corporate \$ ____ &/or for: ☐ City or Cities checked above: \$ ____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ ____ Check # ____ Date ____

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

Tel (home) _____ Cell _____

Email _____

Make check payable to **Roanoke Valley Sister Cities** | Mail to **RVSCI – P.O. Box 136 – Roanoke, VA 24002**

All gifts/donations are tax deductible to the extent provided by law. RVSCI is a 501c3 – Fed ID #51-0246592

www.rvsci.us | Like us on Facebook!

Roanoke Valley Sister Cities
P.O. Box 136
Roanoke, VA 24002

ROANOKE VALLEY



SISTER CITIES