

Sister Cities in Salisbury

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR SISTER CITIES IN SALISBURY, MD

OUR THREE SISTER CITIES



Tartu, Estonia



Salinas, Ecuador



Salisbury, England

What is Sister Cities International?

A sister city, state and country relationships are a broad-based, long-term partnership between two communities in two countries. A relationship is officially recognized after the highest elected or appointed official from both communities sign off on an agreement to become sister cities. Each Sister City organization is independent from each other and focus on their community which

includes municipal, business, trade, educational, and cultural exchanges and projects with their sister city. A city may have any number of sister cities. In addition to volunteers, sister city organizations can include nonprofits, municipal governments, the private sector, and civic organizations.

With the new problems of COVID-19, different opportunities were able to shine through, one of these being webinars. Sister Cities International had scheduled webinars on various topics from talks on US-Mexico trade amid COVID-19 to the Resiliency of Cities. More on webinars can be found starting on page 6.



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PHONE INTERVIEW WITH MS. MENDY NITSCH

Mendy works in the Office of International Investment and Trade (OIIT) for the Maryland Department of Commerce.

She concurrently supports the Maryland sister states program in Maryland's Office of the Secretary of State. I would also like to point out Mendy's colleague, Katie Jannotta, Assistant Director for International Programs, OIIT, Maryland Dept. of Commerce.

Q: What is the difference between a Sister City and a Sister State?

A: It is the same concept, at the state or regional level. Other than that it follows, if not all, most of the same rules and regulations, theories, objections and missions.

Q: Which Sister State for Maryland has been the most impactful for you?

A: Kanagawa, Japan is really special to me, I lived there and taught English for a few years before knowing about Sister States. I was there from 2000-2002 and taught English to adults in a community center, outside of the capital of Kanagawa. My friend had the position before and encouraged me to do so.

Q: How has COVID-19 affected your work?

A: I was so impressed with the support that the Sister States have given each other, in the worst of the pandemic. Medical supplies were donated through many Sister States. We have all made.

an effort to continue to engage on the zoom calls, plan ahead on many different levels. There is future planning going on, PPE donations such as masks. In fact, we even have a virtual Sister State agreement being signed by Governor Hogan at the French Embassy in DC.

Q: How would someone get involved with Sister States or Cities?

A: The best way to get involved is to reach out to the organizations themselves. Most of them have presidents and chair members. Find out what they're working on and use the websites to assist yourself. Take advantage of ground involvement and communication/inquiring to get in and talk with the boards and committees.

CELEBRATING OUR SISTER, SALISBURY, UK

Salisbury Cathedral Anniversary Celebration Rescheduled

By: Gerry Wood, Cathedral Celebration Committee chair

2020 is an important year in Salisbury England, our Sister City. Salisbury Cathedral will celebrate its 800th Anniversary and we will be celebrating this monumental milestone with them here in Salisbury, Maryland. Since the three days of celebrations planned for May 2020 were “rained out” by Covid-19, they have been rescheduled for May 25, 26, and 27 of 2022. The pandemic has made planning very uncertain.

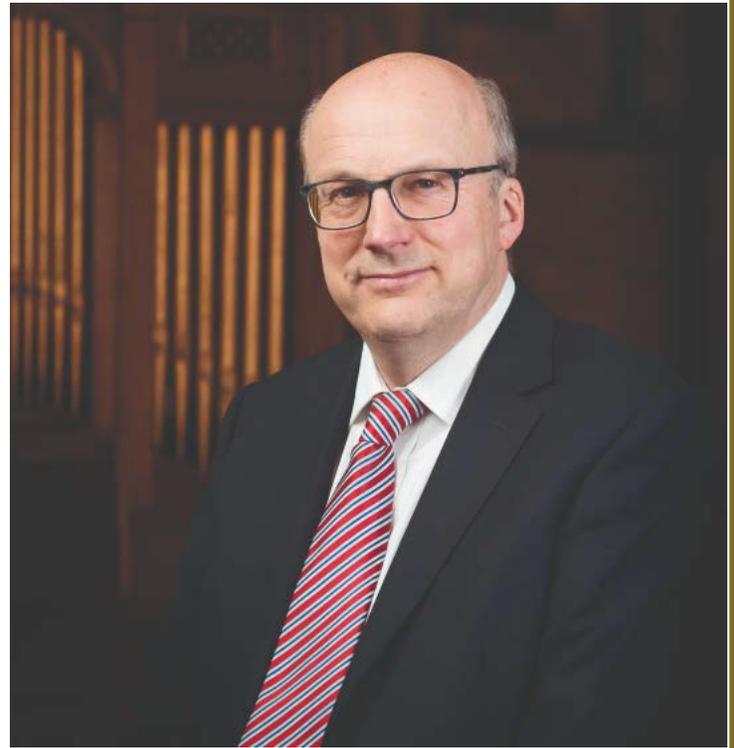
The special guest will be David Halls, Director of Music for the Cathedral. As one of the preeminent cathedrals in Britain, Salisbury is noted for its magnificent music, especially its children’s choirs, both one of girls and one of the boys. Mr. Halls has composed an original choir anthem for our celebration, and its world premiere by a community choir will be part of the local presentations. Since Mr. Halls is a noted and internationally acclaimed organist, an organ recital is planned on the 3,051-pipe Casavant organ in Asbury United Methodist Church. The local chapter of the American Guild of Organists will sponsor a High Tea for members and guests to meet Mr. Halls and to listen to a lecture about musical traditions in the Cathedral. In addition to musical events, attention has been given to presentations for Salisbury’s seniors, children, and civic leaders.

Mr. Halls is very interested in meeting as many people as possible here in his Sister City and hopes to discuss further ways in which our two communities can connect. He is married and has 5 children, most grown and (until Covid!) living on their own away from home. Among his hobbies are trying area brewpubs for locally crafted beers, ales, and wines.



David Halls

Our connection with Salisbury England began many years ago when the Lord Mayor of Salisbury attended the Bicentennial of the founding of Salisbury, Maryland in 1932. The Nabb Center at Salisbury University has recently run film footage of the events from those days. Since that time, there have been many occasions in which the 2 cities have exchanged both celebratory delegations and goodwill. We are looking forward to renewing this tradition as soon as we can safely do so.



For further information about Salisbury Cathedral, David Halls and the Celebration events, visit the Salisbury Sister Cities website, saliburysistercities.org.

Salisbury, UK Cathedral



Fun Fact

In 2006 we hosted an 8-person delegation from Salisbury, England.

A LOOK INTO THE MAYOR'S OFFICE INTERN, GLORIA ATAMEKLO

By: Cullen Wagner

Gloria Atameklo is currently serving as an intern for the Mayor's Office in Salisbury. She has joined monthly zoom calls and communicated with the board members of Sister Cities.

Gloria visited Germany twice between 2017-2018. Staying in Lower Saxony, she was in Steinfield specifically. She recalls the culture being very appreciative of time away from work, whether it was hanging out with friends, going out in nature and even festivals. On Sundays, most of the shops would be closed in order to promote a day of relaxation.

The majority of people speak English. They learn it in their youth in school but not everyone shared their skills with Gloria. She was able to talk to them in English and listen to German to communicate. Although this posed a barrier, Gloria stated that she was able to use familiar words or hand gestures to enhance the conversations. The most memorable dish was German chicken Alfredo called Sahne sauce, cream sauce is the direct translation. The way they make the simple dish is "just so good."

Salisbury/Wicomico County began a sister cities association in 2006 and joined Sister Cities International. Subsequently, the long-lasting relationship between Salisbury, MD, and Salisbury, England was formalized through Sister Cities International. Salisbury, MD has also had a sister city relationship with Tartu, Estonia as well as Salinas, Ecuador. Additionally, Dalian, China has been a friendship city for 13 years now.

A NEW WAY TO CONNECT WITH SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL

By: Dr. George Whitehead and Cullen Magner

How do you plan an internship during a pandemic? Obviously there will be fewer in-person events. So what about virtual events? Fortunately, Sister Cities International sponsored several webinars. Many times we focus on sharing information about our sister cities at 3rd Friday and other events. In doing so, we often neglect the larger organization, Sister Cities International. What we would like to do here is share some of what we learned and how it relates to Salisbury, MD.

The structure of each of the webinars is similar. There is a panel of experts discussing a particular topic. The first one that George participated in was Resiliency and Cities. Not surprisingly COVID was a

topic of discussion. But what did surprise him was the focus on resiliency in the context of the 17 United National Sustainable Development Goals. Now he was familiar with those goals, but had not thought about in the context of Sister Cities. The overlap is that 55% of the world's population lives in cities and 2/3rds of the Strategic Development Goals target cities. Cities in turn impact the surrounding rural areas. For those who might not be familiar with these goals they include No Poverty, Zero Hunger, and Good Health, Well-Being, and Quality Education. These issues have been paramount as we have faced this pandemic.

The question, then for Salisbury and our sister

cities, is what progress are we making on the Sustainable Development Goals? Turns out a city can do a Voluntary Local Review (VLR). One panelist, Erin Bromaghim, was from the Office of the Mayor of Los Angeles. She informed us that Los Angeles was the 6th city in the world to submit a VLR to the UN. Perhaps planning a VLR is a topic of discussion as we plan for the future.

The second webinar dealt with U.S.-Mexico trade amid the coronavirus pandemic. Cullen was able to tune in and see how Industry leaders quickly realized the impact that the pandemic would place on society as a whole. Alan Russell, CEO and co-founder of Tecma Group, which runs 50 manufacturing facilities in Mexico and the U.S.,

had this to say about the relationship between the two nations. "We share much more with Mexico than just a border. We share economy, workforce, consumer markets, and integrated supply chains. The recovery is also interdependent. Supply chains have really shown their strength. Manufacturing is bouncing back." Understanding the relationship between the two will help provide evidence for the unsuspected V-shaped recovery which has been hopeful after rock bottom levels seen in April of 2020. Now, work is back on track and running at full speed, as if the coronavirus pandemic never happened.

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The museum located in Salinas, Ecuador is known as "The Museum of the Great Peninsula."

The third webinar George participated in was **The Sister Cities Effect: Bringing Communities Together**. One of the questions to the panelist was: How has your community changed as being part of Sister Cities? Councillor Michael Thompson from Toronto answered that the impact has been tremendous. People have migrated to Toronto and transformed it. Mamiko Reeves, Assistant Vice President and Dean, International Programs at Northwood University, said that international students' lives are enriched with diverse perspectives. She also shared her experiences as a Japanese Exchange Student. In this newsletter, Gloria, Nate, and Mendy reflect on how their lives have been enriched by their travels abroad. A question to answer is: How has being part of Sister Cities changed Salisbury?

Leroy Allala and Peter Svarzbein were on all of the webinars. Who are Leroy and Peter? Leroy is the President and Chief Executive Office of Sister Cities International. Peter is a member of the El Paso City Council and Vice Chair of the Board, Sister Cities International. It was a great way to meet some of the leaders of the organization.

With the various problems caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Sister Cities International was able to relieve some pressure off of the organization, nations, states and cities by bringing the community together when it was needed most. Through this organization, medical supplies were donated amongst nations, outreach and support got to the areas which were calling and long standing connections came together to highlight the positive highlights during a crisis.

A JOURNEY THROUGH TARTU WITH NATE SANSOM

By: Nate Sansom



In January of 2020, I embarked upon a truly unforgettable experience as I traveled from Poland (where I was studying as a Boren Awards Scholar) to Tartu, to visit Salisbury's beloved Estonian Sister City. My four days in Tartu were filled with a number of meetings with city officials, great food, and unparalleled hospitality. While this brief article will not capture all of the many highlights of my brief visit, I hope it offers a glimpse into the beauty, culture, and innovative atmosphere of Tartu

Representing our Mayor's Office as Sister City Liaison, I offered a number of presentations regarding a variety of topics including our

National Folk Festival, the revitalization of our downtown through public art, and cultural events hosted by our Salisbury Arts & Entertainment District. Delving into Estonian culture, I also learned about "Tart 2024", the year when Tartu will serve as the European Capital of Culture (a great honor within the EU).



In addition to learning how the city embraces Estonian culture and the arts, I also learned about social services in Tartu and ways in which the city helps to meet the needs of its housing insecure population.

After listening to how Tartu responds to the needs of vulnerable communities within the city, I was invited to speak about Salisbury's related efforts both through Housing First as well as our experience assisting citizens through our S.W.I.F.T. program which has helped to dramatically reduce 911 calls for non-emergency medical concerns. In addition to identifying and building upon best practices, I participated in a number of roundtable meetings and discussions which focused on a vast array of topics ranging from sustainability efforts aimed at reducing Tartu's carbon footprint, to urban planning and zoning, and the development and utilization of regional airports (Tartu has its own its airport similar to SBY).

Have you even seen us share a Facebook Post from Tartu? If so, you could probably imagine they've got an amazing team at work promoting the city and showcasing all that Tartu has to offer both residents as well as tourists. Meeting with Tartu's marketing and social media team, I spoke about ways Salisbury utilizes our social media presence to maximize our digital footprint while learning of the dedicated work the team in Tartu puts into showcasing their picturesque city.

Meeting with officials at the University of Tartu, I celebrated the continued relationship between our two world-class universities, the University of Tartu, and Salisbury University. Our shared passion for educational excellence is yet another way Salisbury and Tartu are united through an

exchange of culture and knowledge. Salisbury University and the University of Tartu even partner as universities. We send students to Tartu and welcome Estonian scholars to Salisbury.



To celebrate my last evening in our beloved Estonian Sister City, I enjoyed an outstanding dinner hosted by Deputy Mayor Mihkel Lees; Ms. Kadri Lees, the Head of Tartu's Department of Public Relations; and Ms. Sirje Bork, Tartu's Head of Foreign Relations. Discussing everything from music and culture to community and civic

engagement efforts within our cities, we celebrated the shared bond of friendship that has only continued to grow between our two cities. Following dinner, I was immersed in culture and symphonic harmony while attending the "Memory 2020" concert, accompanied by Ms. Sirje Üprus of The University of Tartu.

I look forward to what the future holds for our special Sister City relationship with this amazing City. In the future, I hope to share more about the amazing things taking place in both Tartu, and around the world in our other Sister and Friendship cities as well.



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Interested in learning more?

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