



Sister Cities News

Barbados Signs Visa Waiver Agreement with China



Late last year the government of Barbados approved a reciprocal visa agreement with the People's Republic of China. Minister of Foreign Affairs and

Trade, Maxine Mc Clean, announced the agreement during a ceremonial signing of the protocol for the Provision of Military Aid Gratis to Barbados in December.

Mc Clean was quoted as saying, "In 2017 we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Barbados and the People's Republic of China and of continuous support by Barbados of the One-China Policy. One distinct characteristic of the relations between Barbados and the People's Republic of China, especially within recent years, is that they have remained engaging and productive."

Mc Clean gave some examples of areas of cooperation such as the arrival of a Chinese medical team in Barbados to assist with the provision of medical care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and the Sixth Round of Consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of some Caribbean countries and China's Foreign Ministry, which took place last winter.

In the culture and education arena, the University of the West Indies Cavehill campus now has a Confucius Institute and includes a certification program in Chinese, which as of 2016 met the qualifications of the Caribbean Examinations Council.

A Century Later the Labour Party Remains a Voice in Local Politics



The Guardian newspaper sent a reporter to the districts that voted overwhelmingly in favor of Brexit. Doncaster was the first stop of seven towns

referred to as "Brexit land."

The article published last month led off with some historical trivia about the birth of the Labour Party. The Party was official in 1906 but it began with Thomas R Steels a railway signalman with the Great Northern Railroad who moved to Doncaster in 1891. Steels along with Jimmy Holmes felt that labor needed to be represented in the House of Commons and worked in earnest with unions, socialist and working class organizations to build a movement that eventually led to the creation of the Labour Party.

Doncaster is one of 36 districts in England with an elected Mayor and Council. Locals interviewed for the Guardian article included Labour Councillors. Some expressed the viewpoint that the elderly who are more likely to vote have different attitudes about many things, especially the impact of immigrants and the economy. Another blamed the media for distorting the issues around jobs and immigration policies. Both issues influenced the results in the metropolitan borough of Doncaster which has three MP's all of which represent the Labour Party. Doncaster voted 69% in favor of Brexit.

The MP for the Don Valley, Carolina Flint, voted in December to 'trigger Article 50,' the UK's formal notice of its intent to leave the EU though interestingly enough she voted to remain last year. She states on her blog, "Free movement as we know it will end. The UK will put some rules in place to manage migration. We need fair rules, not an end to immigration. Both sides will need to compromise."

Across the pond in Wilmington last month the Sister Cities Association hosted a panel discussion on the Brexit referendum for the public, including British citizens living in the area. The panelists included Jim McLaughlin, Andrew Terrell and Dr. Paul Townend.

Jim is currently CEO of Axiall Ltd. and a regular contributor to the Business Connections Live online television channel and participated via Skype from London. Jim provided a good overview of what drove the campaign with data demonstrating that age, educational attainment and economic status more than location were the underpinnings of the desire to leave.

Andrew was recently appointed to the role of Consul for Government and Prosperity which is under the United Kingdom's Consulate General office based in Atlanta. He runs the United Kingdom's new trade office in North Carolina which is one of three new trade offices across the US. Andrew referred to the outcome as a democratic deficit meaning rural citizens wanted Westminster to set policy that affect their well-being and future prospects, not Brussels.

Paul is currently Vice Chancellor and Dean of Undergraduate Studies at the University of North Carolina in Wilmington received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Paul's research interests are focus on the junctures between popular culture and politics, the development of Irish nationalism and social movements. Paul was able to present a historical perspective on the origins of forming a union following WWII and looked at the parallels between the recent US elections and what happened in the UK.

Photo credit: Visit Doncaster.com

San Pedro Loses a Beloved Member of the Community



San Pedranos mourned the loss of a beloved member of their community. Jose "Felix" Ayuso was put to rest in February. Felix believed in giving back to the community serving as President of the San Pedro

Aids Commission and inspiring others to get involved. Felix traveled to the US in 2007 with former Mayor Paz for the signing of the twinning agreement with Wilmington and was a frequent contributor to the Sister Cities newsletter. He was very talented and his energy was contagious, as was his smile. In addition to working for local government and the media, he most recently owned a hair salon in town.

Wilmington sends its condolences to his family and friends for their loss.

Photo credit: Belize7News

SCI Annual Conference at the Beach in 2017



Sister Cities International will hold its Annual Conference July 13-15 in Virginia Beach, VA. There will also be a US/Russia Mayor's Summit held two days ahead of the conference.

The **2017 Youth Leadership Summit for students ages 14-18** is accepting applications now. High school students or clubs interested in learning about citizen diplomacy, international affairs and fostering peace are invited to the summit. Attendees will participate in a UN style seminar facilitated by the US Diplomacy Center. The students will also engage in a community service project during their stay. Lodging will be available at Virginia Wesleyan College and chaperones are assigned throughout their stay. The cost with lodging for 3 days is \$600 or \$350 without lodging. For more information, contact SCAW – membership@scawilmington.org

Sister City Association Holds Annual Meeting on March 23

Interim President Tony Ventimiglia opened the meeting and welcomed members and guests. SCAW board member, Charles Blanton delivered the nominations report. Before presenting the official slate he acknowledged two individuals who served in a leadership role for the association and had to leave the board late in 2016. First was Fenton Maxwell who most recently served as president and contributed many hours to the organization over the past 3 years. Fenton was extremely helpful in SCAW's efforts to produce short films on our sister cities to remain timely in the digital age we are living in. We are grateful for his contributions to sister cities and the broader community during his time in Wilmington and wish him the very best in his new situation. Shanhong Luo served as corporate secretary for the past two years and played an important role in coordinating events with the Office of International Programs at the University. We wish her well and thank her for her service to the community.

The two new nominees to fill unexpired terms included Peggy Rosoff and Michael Jenkins. Peggy has been active in the community for some time and played a

major role in organizing a Jewish Film Festival in the region. She received her degree from Boston University and worked in LA in television and special events before coming to Wilmington. Michael received his BA in Asian Studies from UNC-Chapel Hill and a Masters in History from UNCW. He currently serves as CEO and Editor in Chief of Babel Productions, a media company based in Wilmington.

George Schell who currently serves on the board and has been vice-president for the past two years was presented for a 3-year term. Officers will be elected at the regular June board meeting.

The slate was approved. Following the regular business, board member Kerry Toone was introduced and served as moderator for the special program and panel discussion on the 2016 Brexit referendum. The video of the program is available for viewing from the City website – www.wilmingtonnc.gov and go to the GTV8 link. From the side menu click “Top Hits & Recent Additions” and select Brexit program. You may to download and install Microsoft Silverlight to play the video.

Sister City Commission

Harriet Smith’s term ended in 2017 and she was recognized for her contributions, especially for her efforts with the 2016 Young Artists Showcase, at the March 27 meeting. Harriet was replaced as a community representative by Derrick Miller. Dr. Miller teaches advanced courses in Fairy Tales, German immigrants and culture in the US, and German enlightenment. Also new to the Commission is Thomas Massey representing Cape Fear Community College. Thomas is the International Center Coordinator at CFCC and is a native of the UK who came to the US on a student visa many years ago before adopting Wilmington as his new home.

Citizen to Citizen Diplomacy Honor Roll

SCAW attempts to involve as many people and institutions as possible to achieve its mission in Wilmington and the international community. We want to recognize the individuals and groups that have made a contribution in the past calendar quarter through their active participation or support of a Sister City program activity.

Tony Ventimiglia
Marilyn Cantarella
Maria Goudiss
Tracy Corle

Scott Czechlewski
Chad Fan
Kerry Toone
Dylan Lee

Jim Mc Loughlin
Paul Townend
Charles Blanton
Szechuan 132

Andrew Terrell
Jon Harney
Melanie Tremaglio

Upcoming Events

April 18 (Tue) Join city leaders for a farewell reception for the 2016-17 UNCW international students at City Hall from 5:30 - 6:30 PM. Following the reception students will choose between a guided tour of the historic downtown or attending the City Council meeting. This is a ‘**member only**’ event.

July 13-16 (Wed-Sat) The **SCI Annual Conference** will be held in Virginia Beach, VA. Early bird rates at the conference hotel (Double Tree by Hilton) are available until 6/19. July 13-14 is the preconference summit with Russia/US Mayors. Pre-registration required at www.sister-cities.org

April 18 Join Mayor Saffo, City & County elected officials for a farewell reception at City Hall to formally congratulate the 2016-17 international students upon their completion of studies at the University of North Carolina and Wilmington. The reception will be from 5:30 – 6:30 PM after which you can join the students for the Council meeting in the upstairs Chambers or a walking tour of the Historic District in Downtown.*
Members only event

May 9-12 Join a delegation to San Pedro to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the twinning of our two cities. Anyone interested should contact SCAW by email – membership@scawilmington.org season.

June 2-9 Finn Masters World Championship will be held at the Barbados Yacht Club in 2017. Each year the Masters, the Grand Masters, the Grand Grand Masters and the Legends of the Finn class sail a World Championship called the Finn World Masters. It is an event with a large number of participants and sails according to tradition at outstanding locations – this year it will be held in our sister city in BARBADOS.