

TSC UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, September 16th
Board Meeting 7 pm
Harrison Middleton
University

Making A World Of
Difference, Thursday,
October 10th TCA

International Education
Forum Friday, October
11th 9 am TBA

Oktoberfest Fri-Sun
October 11-13
Tempe Town Lake

HACKETT HOUSE HAPPENINGS

Hackett House Reopens
Monday, September 9th
for 28th season

Hackett House 125th
Birthday Celebration
September 18th 5-8pm



A Memorable Journey to Macedonia

by Violetta (Bekteh) Armour

Call it Serendipity or fate but whatever it is, sometimes life has a way of coming full circle in a wonderful way. My recent trip to Macedonia and search for my ancestors was successful thanks to many chance encounters and to helpful people along the way. And Tempe Sister Cities played a big role in it all.

I guess my story really begins over 90 years ago. My paternal grandparents, Spiro and Vaska Bektesh with their three sons, Peter, Dimitre and Milan (my father) immigrated to America from Prilep, Macedonia in 1921. They settled in Gary, Indiana, where a large Bulgarian/Macedonian community was forming due to the work opportunities with US Steel. It was a wonderful way to grow up as this community continued to practice their Macedonian traditions and religious beliefs. And of course their delicious cuisine! I have wonderful memories of that time. One vivid memory was my mother showing me a photo of an elegant home that had my maiden name carved in the front facing, saying it was our "family" home. I've carried that photo with me for many years through many moves and each time I saw it, I said, "Someday I'm going to Macedonia to find that house."

One of the other Macedonian families who also settled in Gary, Indiana, were the Choncoffs. Although Mary Choncoff was older than me, we did become acquainted at the many dances, weddings and picnics that brought all the Macedonians together and our fathers were friends.

In 1991 my husband and I moved to Phoenix but when I returned to Gary for my mother's funeral in 1994, a mutual friend told me that Mary Choncoff lived in Tempe. I got in touch and was able to experience some of the wonderful events she hosted and co-coordinated for the Macedonian community in Arizona. Sadly, she passed shortly after that and I regretted that I did not have more time with this amazing lady.

Fast forward to 2013. I meet Monica Araneta through a mutual friend playing Mahjong. It was only by chance that I mentioned that my husband and I were traveling to Macedonia this summer and I was so surprised to hear that she had been there the previous year through the Tempe Sister City program of Tempe and Skopje. She also introduced me to Dobrin and Tina Nedelkov who travel to Prilep each year to visit their family.

I told Monica of my search for the "house" and thought perhaps they could tell me how and where to begin. Thanks to modern technology, I emailed the photo to Monica who forwarded it to Dobrin and to my amazement, they replied that they knew exactly where the house was in Prilep--"next to the high school by the river". I couldn't believe my good fortune. I was finally going to see my ancestors' home.

My husband and I met with Dobrin and Tina who were so kind to give us a detailed map of the city and the location of the house. Shortly after, they sent me an article that had just appeared in the Macedonian paper showing the home restored under the project of the Ministry of Culture for restoration and conservation of the more significant facades in urban cores. The current owner and resident was Trajce Bektesh. (my maiden name) Tina phoned her mother in Prilep who called the current residents and told them "relatives from America" were hoping to meet them on our visit.

Tempe Teachers Invited To Apply for Educator Exchange

Applications are available for this year's 2013-14 Professional Educator Exchange Program. This is an opportunity to explore the educational systems of another country's schools, to travel, to learn about another culture, and to connect with fellow educators in different parts of the world.

Selected applicants will live with a host teacher in their sister city for approximately three weeks in summer 2014, learning about the schools and culture. Participants will, in turn, host a sister city guest teacher. Educator exchange cities include Skopje, Macedonia; Regensburg, Germany; Lower Hutt, New Zealand; Trollhattan, Sweden; and Beaulieu-sur-Mer, France.

Applications are due by 3 pm, October 30, and are available online beginning September 1, at www.tempesistercities.org. Applicants must be US citizens, teach full-time at an accredited school in Tempe, have at least three years teaching experience, and must continue employment with their current Tempe school or district for the 2014-15 school year.

For more information visit www.tempesistercities.org or e-mail Linda Parrish at lparrishaz@gmail.com.

MACEDONIA!

Notes from Janice Wagner's Blog, summer 2013

Upon her arrival in Skopja on June 24, Janice was whisked away from the airport by her hosts, the Jovanovski Family, to their home where she relaxed with coffee on the balcony terrace off her room overlooking the treetops of the neighborhood. Soon the smells from the kitchen drew her downstairs to join Tanja and Tony with their teenaged son Marko at dinner, which was followed by a walk through the neighborhood.

The next day Janice explored the city with Toni and a friend, discovering historic and modern sites and learning about the history and culture of the region. They tramped the walking/riding trail alongside the River Vardar that winds through Skopje. She was impressed and amazed at the natural beauty of the region as well as the architecture of the many churches and cathedrals, whether rustic or majestic, and the surprising contrast of old monuments next to new construction. That evening Janice accompanied Tanja and her family to a relative's wedding where the celebrants were treated to delicious food and danced to an eclectic selection of music from American 70's songs to folk. And Tanja knew the words and sang along to everyone.

School visits were numerous and varied, beginning with one to the high school where Tanja teaches economics. A student told Janice that Tanja is a "magnificent teacher," and Janice agrees, seeing first hand that Tanja is a "dynamic teacher with passion and love for her students and her subject." An interesting note here is that students do not pass to classes, but teachers are the ones making the classroom changes.

Another memorable school visit was one to a primary school where Janice spent time with well-behaved students in a first grade class and participated in singing and English lessons in several grade three classes where the students were proud to show their English work. She left the primary school feeling satisfied with the confirmed opinion that "kids are kids no matter where they are."

This is but a tiny sample of what one will learn from reading Janice's blog entitled "From Macedonia with Love." There are descriptions of visits to many historic sites, bazaars, restaurants, and schools and anecdotes about people and impressions. Janice even was able to enjoy a short holiday in Greece during her stay. Go to Janice's blog for a real treat and travelogue. Oh, yes, you'll want to start saying Macedonia with a "hard c" (think macaroni).

macedoniajanice.blogspot.com/2013/05/tour-of-macedonia.html



October 11-13

Friday: 5 pm to Midnight

Saturday: 10 am to Midnight

Sunday: 10 am to 6 pm

<http://www.tempeoktoberfest.com> for

volunteering opportunities including The Frank

Kush Das Foot Race Sat. am

NEW PRESIDENT FOR MALI

AS REPORTED FROM THE UN NEWS CENTRE

The successful conduct of the presidential election in Mali represents a “major step toward the restoration of democratic governance and constitutional order,” the Security Council said today, urging the international community to continue its support to promote peace in the country.

In a statement to the press, the members of the Council commended the Malian people “for their peaceful participation in the electoral process” and the transitional authorities for the preparation, organization and management of the elections.

The provisional results were announced yesterday, declaring Ibrahim Boubacar Keita the winner. The elections are seen as an important step on the path to recovery for Mali. Since early 2012, the country has witnessed a military coup d'état, renewed fighting between Government forces and Tuareg rebels, and the seizure of its northern territory by radical Islamists.



YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Tempe Sister Cities Youth Group takes pride in announcing two community service projects they will be involved in at the onset of the 2013-14 school year. They will be collecting hygiene products to pass along to the Tempe Union High School Teen Resource Center in August. This resource center is housed at Compadre High School. This resource is not a luxury, but rather a necessity for Tempe High Schools to support the number of teenagers who are in need of hygiene products, clothing, socks, shoes, underwear, backpacks, jewelry, purses, hats, coats, etc. The resource center is in the process of expanding to a second location due to the level of need. The YOUTH GROUP invites ALL TSC members to participate and donate to this cause. You may give hygiene items to one of the TSC Board Members to bring to our monthly meetings or you may directly contact Beth Lang, Tempe Sister Cities Youth Group Coordinator using the information posted below. Beth will see that your items get picked up from you by one of the youth delegates this summer. Items to be collected include: toothpaste, deodorant, mouthwash, tampons and sanitary products, toothbrushes, bars of soap, dental floss, shampoo, hair conditioner, hair spray, body lotion, etc. Travel size samples will suffice.

Four times a year members of the youth group clean out their closets and donate clothing, shoes, purses, and other items to this center. The last donation was at the onset of summer. The next clothing drive will be collected and delivered in November.

In addition - during the month of September, the Youth Group will be filling a need for men and women's underwear and socks to the Tumbleweed Center for Youth Development. It is the hope that all TSC members will want to participate in this clothing drive as well. This center is housed at 17 E 7th Street in downtown Tempe. It provides meals and shelter for individuals aged 12-25. It also provides other services such as counseling, job seeking assistance, computer usage, etc. Please purchase socks and underwear with these ages and sizes in mind for both males and females. Contact Beth Lang blang3bysea@me.com with the same information from above in order to participate and have your donations collected by members of the youth group! You may also pass them onto a Board Member who can bring them to Beth during the monthly board meetings.

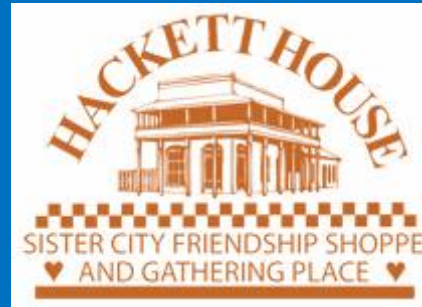
The Youth Group is grateful for their travel experiences this summer and on behalf of 32 delegates, many thanks for your support in the exchange program. They extend a sincere invitation and desire to have you join in these community service efforts.

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The first week of June we knocked on their door and Trajce Bektesh and his wife, Donka embraced us with open arms. As we discussed our family stories, the pieces fell into place and we learned that Trajce's father, Peter, and my grandfather Spiro were first cousins. They came to America at the turn of the century to "earn their fortune". We believe they worked on the transcontinental railroad. When they returned to Macedonia, Peter invested in property consisting of hotels and retail shops and built this beautiful home. My grandfather took his "fortune" and brought his family to America.

Our new-found ancestors insisted we spend the night and we shared several meals and stories. They were the most gracious hosts to five people they had never met. (We were traveling with Bulgarian friends from Chicago—another serendipity story I'll save for another time).

This was a wonderful trip to Macedonia and it makes my heart sing when I think of the fortuitous events and kind people who helped me reach my destination: Mary Choncoff for being a member of Sister Cities which in turn led to meeting Monica and then Dobrin and Tina. How rewarding to think that the friendship of my father and Mary's father has come full circle. This was not only a journey of many miles but of many generations who value their heritage. I am so proud to be a Macedonian...a rich culture of loving, ambitious and hospitable people.



Hackett House Celebrates 125th Birthday

Wednesday, September 18, 2013 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM
 Mayor Mitchell will speak at 6:45pm. Catering by Special Moments. Cooking Demonstration. Cash Bar. This is a Free Event!

Mark K's
Tempe Dodge, Chrysler, Jeep, Ram New
and Used Car Dealership 7975 S Autoplex
Loop Tempe AZ 85284
866.546.4155

We would like to welcome new Tempe Sister Cities members for this month.
 Jean Martorana Individual, Paulo Alzaga Ambassador, Janet & Bill Frazier Life, Patrick & Bretta Kelly Friend, Jacqueline De La Houssave & Paul Mitchell Family, Ryan David Winkle Ambassador

TEMPE SISTER CITIES MEMBERSHIP FORM

become a member today!

You can join online at <http://www.tempesistercities.org/become-a-member/>

Or use this convenient form with your check payable to **Tempe Sister Cities Corporation** and send to Tempe Sister Cities, 95 W 4th St., Tempe, AZ 85281

Please choose a category:

\$25 Ambassador/Student

\$35 Individual/Family

\$50 Friend of Tempe Sister Cities

\$200 Corporate Membership

\$400 Lifetime Membership

Names _____ Year First Joined _____

Address _____ City _____ State/Province _____ Country _____ Zip/Postal Code _____

Home/Work Phone _____ Cell Phone (name) _____ Email _____

_____ Cell Phone (name) _____ Email _____