



Springfield, Missouri

Springfield Sister Cities Association

Upcoming

February
JRB Band in Tlaquepaque

March
Annual Membership Mtg.
Kite Festival
SE Rotary Trip to Mexico

April
Paco Padilla in Springfield
ArtsFiesta!

May
Drury Students in Mexico
Evangel Baseball in Mexico

Full Listing of SSCA Events on Page 5 →

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The Garbonzos Invade

Mexico will Never be the Same

By Brad Bodenhausen and Araceli Hanks
Co-Chairs of Tlaquepaque Committee

We weren't quite sure Tlaquepaque was ready for The Garbonzos.

Springfield music fans have loved The Garbonzos for years, entertained by the band's "hillbilly polka" music, crazy costumes and unpredictable antics. But when accordion player **Chris Slatinsky** showed up in a pink tutu for The Garbonzos on-stage performance at Tlaquepaque's Jardin Hidalgo, we wondered if the machismo culture of Mexico could handle such an affront.

As it turned out, Mexico was more than ready. Slatinsky's graceful maneu-



Garbonzo member Chris Slatinsky shows the citizens of Mexico his accordion moves.

vers in his tutu and mandolin player **Michael "Supe" Granda's** Superman in flight imitation won over the crowd of more than 500 new fans. The highlight

Garbonzos in Mexico cont' page 6 →

Fall Festival 'Lemonade'

Making the Best of a Challenge

By Cindy Jobe

Remember the news headlines in April and May of last year? The stories about the H1N1 virus seemed to be non-stop. Unfortunately that virus, and the same heightened fear, made its way to Japan and our sister city of Isesaki.

Several visits were scheduled for 2009, including a men's softball exchange and a high school student delegation visit, as well as our own **JRB Band**



Performers from Osuwa Taiko Group traveling to Isesaki to perform at their summer Festival. However, the H1N1

Japanese Fall Festival cont' page 7 →

Isesaki Report - JFF Wrap-Up

ISESAKI COMMITTEE – 2009

By Carolyn Gerdes & Mika Logan
Co-Chairs of Isesaki Committee

The relationship between Isesaki and Springfield is now approaching 24 years and in that time we have had a very cordial and exciting exchanges. It has now been three years since an official delegation from Springfield has visited Isesaki, and the committee feels that we need to make a personal effort to nurture this relationship.

Isesaki now has a new Mayor and unfortunately no personal visits were made last year due to the “Swine Flu” scare. For this reason, the Isesaki Committee has budgeted to send a small delegation to Japan to show their new city leadership that this relationship is very important to us.

Cherry Blossom Kite Festival

The committee is also recommending that we expand the Cherry Blossom Kite Festival this year in two ways. First, the committee and board have agreed to have a rain date. This will require an additional commitment on the part of volunteers, but not the budget. Secondly, we are going to invite all other entities that exist in the Nathanael Greene Park to have a presence during the Festival. These include the **Master Gardeners, The Friends of the Garden, The Botanical Society, Ozark Greenways** and the **Gray Campbell Farmstead**.

Fallfest Performers

As we know, all other events with Isesaki were cancelled this past year, except for the Japanese Fall Festival. We decided to continue with the festival and provide performers from the United States. We were fortunate to obtain two women who perform in Florida at Epcot Center. Kuniko Yamamoto, the story teller performed on the stage and in schools throughout the district, for which she was reimbursed by the schools.

Miyuki Sugimori, the “candy lady” performed in the park and was able to sell her creations to observers. Therefore, both performers were able to augment the fee we paid them. We were able to hire them for far below their normal fees and yet they have informed us they would like to come back next year. We



Traditional Japanese Storyteller Kuniko Yamamoto used masks, props and her expressive character to captivate crowds throughout the weekend.

also hired the Taiko Drummers from St. Louis, who were excellent, and negotiated a lower fee than they usually command. In addition, a top spinner came from St. Louis on Sunday and performed for reimbursement of gas and lunch.

Fallfest Children’s Parade

The festival began with the traditional parade of school children on Friday evening. Approximately 250 **Springfield Public School** children participated. The childrens' area was also well attended and **Carrol Lund** took charge of this activity. A challenge for the future will be to find a replacement of Carrol, as she will retire soon and will no longer continue with the Sister City activity she has developed over the years.

Fallfest Revenue Generators

SSCA always relies on the souvenir tent to be both a source of entertainment at the event, but to also be a revenue generator for us. Purchasing the items for the tent was another one of the many things that was affected by the H1N1 virus, so we would like to thank Isesaki for stepping in and helping us this year. We look forward to purchasing the items ourselves for 2010.

The Tea Ceremony was somewhat limited because we did not have our Isesaki friends to assist. We held

Isesaki Report - Japanese Fall Fest Wrap-Up Continued

the ceremony on Saturday and Sunday and **Yuiko Mizumoto Scott** performed the ceremony each time. She had the help of one individual, but we would like to offer this popular event to more people. To do this, we need to find individuals who are qualified to perform the ceremony. Do you want to help?

The Festival was attended by more than 9,000 people and broke a record for gate revenue. The entire festival required approximately **180 volunteers**. Many of them volunteered the entire three days. The weather certainly contributed to a very successful event.

2009 Japanese Fallfest Revenue & Expenses

Gate	Revenue: \$24,177	
Tent	Revenue: \$8,942	Expense: \$425.78
Performers	Revenue: N/A	Expense: \$6,950
Park Board Donation		Expense: \$13,873

Proceeds for Future Programming: \$9,800

As a committee, we are very happy with the results of this year and feel that we have greatly contributed to the financial stability of our organization. Our wrap-up meetings have resulted in the following recommendations for next year's festival, which require the support and participation of the board.

Recommendations for 2010

- Have a buying trip to purchase merchandise for the souvenir tent and ask vendors at the festival to sign a non-compete agreement.
- Have Sister Cities table prominently located at all events to publicize events and who we are.
- Assist in obtaining sponsors to bring in additional performers.
- Locate an individual to carry on with the children's area.
- The committee is reviewing many other improvements, such as a more attractive program, better signage and maps of the park

and various other improvements to make the festival run smoothly and be even more profitable. Many of these will also require additional expenditures.

- The committee has also endorsed the Missouri State University initiative for a student exchange, including both of our sister cities. Discussion is ongoing.



(Above & Below) Discovering and enjoying those hidden spaces in the Garden.



Children participated in learning taiko from the Osuwa Taiko Drummers from St. Louis.

ArtsFiesta! - ArtsFREEZEesta!

Coldest Mexican Celebration To-Date

By Cindy Jobe



One of the biggest highlights for SSCA each year is to bring ArtsFiesta! to our local community. It has traditionally been scheduled for the Friday prior to ArtsFest on Walnut Street. And 2009 was not to be any different. Oh well, enter H1N1.

Think about last April and what was happening in the national spotlight. Our government was advising citizens not to travel to-and-from Mexico because of concerns about the flu. SSCA and the Tlaquepaque Committee felt we had to acknowledge that, and therefore postponed our ArtsFiesta! event. The question then was how long to delay it? We felt we needed to wait to reschedule until both national governments were saying it was okay to travel.

So, ArtsFiesta! made the transition to OctoberFiesta! We are so thankful to Tlaquepaque for honoring their commitment to send the performers. This included the very amazing Mariachi Femenil Nuevo Tecalitlan and their special guest Felipe Villalobos. And I do mean amazing! Wow, could these girls play.

They bravely entertained us, in 40 degree temperatures during the event. The strings on their instruments became fragile, and I think their lips must have been sticking to the trumpets, it was so cold. But, in the true spirit of ArtsFiesta! and our relationship with Tlaquepaque, we all had a wonderful time, and we still consider the event a success.

The local dancers from **Grupo Latino Americano** and **Grupo Libertad** kept warm by kicking up their heels all night with traditional regional dances from Mexico. We extend our sincere appreciation to those members for sharing their dedication and talents.

SSCA would like to thank the **sponsors and volunteers** who worked so hard to help assure the success of the event, and to **Founders Park staff**. Again, it takes a big team to pull this off, and your support is very appreciated.

We ask the performing delegation from Tlaquepaque to come a few days early so we can take them to local schools and universities to perform. This helps us promote our event, and also allows us to continue with our mission of providing unique cultural

experiences to the people of this community. This band did such a great job with the kids. You could tell when the kids came into the auditoriums they did not know what to expect, but it took less than a full song to put smiles on their faces and for them to start clapping their hands and stomping their feet.

Much of this was because of the personality and skills of the members of Mariachi Femenil Nuevo Tecalitlan. They were very vivacious, to the point it was contagious! So, thanks again to this group and to Tlaquepaque for sending them.

We hope to be back on schedule for Artsfest weekend in 2010. We will keep our members posted.



Mark Your Calendars

*Tentative

February/March

*Feb. 24 - JRB Band to perform in Tlaquepaque

March 5 - 6:30 p.m., Annual Membership Celebration, Springfield Doubletree Hotel

March 27- Cherry Blossom Kite Festival (rain date March 28)

Feb./March - Southeast Rotary trip to Tlaquepaque - Date TBA

April

*April 30 - ArtsFiesta! tentatively scheduled

May/June

May 22 - June 12 - Drury University Student Learning trip

May 23 - 30 - Evangel University Baseball Team travels to Tlaquepaque

*June - potential Isesaki softball team exchange

*June - SSCA participation at annual Tlaquepaque Sister Cities Summit

August

August 6 & 7 - Group of Springfield performers travel to Isesaki City Summer Festival

September

September 10 - 12 - Japanese Fall Festival at Nathanael Greene Park (volunteers and host families needed)

Sept. 15 - Oct. 15 - Tlaquepaque Committee to play a greater role in support of local Hispanic Heritage Month activities

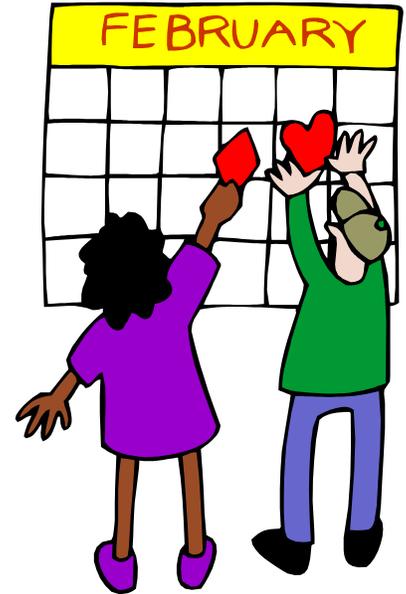
*September - Citizens group from Springfield travels to Tlaquepaque. *Sign up now!*

October

*October - Citizens group from Springfield travels to Japan. *Sign up now!*

In 2010

- Planning year to lay groundwork for a future high school student exchange, to include English language study at Missouri State University and visits of other local universities.
- Planning year to investigate possibility of a "Sister School" exchange beginning in 2011 with Isesaki.



WE NEED YOU!

SSCA Board of Directors
meetings are held at 5:15 p.m., the second Tuesday of each month at Chesterfield Family Center, 2511 W. Republic Road.

Isesaki Committee
meets at 5:30 p.m., the first Monday of each month, locations vary.

Membership Committee
meets at 3 p.m., the first Monday of each month at Park Board Main Offices, 1923 N. Weller.

Tlaquepaque Committee
meets at 5:30 p.m., the first Wednesday of each month, locations vary.

Why We Fly In March



Some of the more sane people in our community ask why we would want to have an outdoor event in March.

Why? As part of our continuing partnership with the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, SSCA hosts the Cherry Blossom Kite Festival the last weekend in March every year to

celebrate the season's opening of the Mizumoto Japanese Stroll Garden. This is a great family event, and helps SSCA get our year started.

This year's event is scheduled for Saturday, March 27, so mark your calendar and get your kite out of storage!



Cherry Blossom Kite Festival

Come fly your kite

Celebrate Season Opening of Our Garden

Bring your Kite
Build a Kite with us!

Kite Art Design Awarding Ceremony
at noon

Saturday, March 27 (Rain date Sunday March 28)

11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Mizumoto Japanese Stroll Garden
2400 South Scenic Avenue, Springfield

Admission: Free
for more info: 417-864-1341
cjobe@springfieldmo.gov



Garbonzos in Mexico cont' from page 1

of the performance, however, was the clash of cultures that took place when The Garbonzos joined the 10-member Mariachi Femenil Nuevo Tecalitlan on stage to close the evening of music after numerous calls for "otra" resulted in the encore.

Calling the entire experience "surreal," members of The Garbonzos said they were pleased with the positive response they received in Mexico. In addition to Slatinsky and Granda, the band included John Ehlers on washboard and Tim White playing guitar.

The Garbonzos were busy during their brief stay in Tlaquepaque. They performed four "on-stage" concerts even though it proved very difficult to keep the roving band on stage. They also played countless impromptu shows at the shops, restaurants and hotels of Tlaquepaque.

As the band walked to its first performance, playing their unique instruments along the way, they at-



tracted much attention that quickly turned into a parade following them through the center of Tlaquepaque. The Garbonzos also aroused curiosity as they entertained students at the CAI San Pedrito children's center, teaching them how to play the child-sized washboards the band donated to the school.

The Garbonzos are veterans of Sister City music exchanges, having represented Springfield in Ise-saki, Japan in 2005. In October, Springfield hosted Mariachi Femenil Nuevo Tecalitlan as they promoted Mexican culture through music by performing at elementary schools, universities and the community-wide ArtsFiesta! celebration.

Chris Slatinsky's pink tutu was said to have made a reappearance at some point during the all-female mariachi's visit.

→ Japanese Fall Festival cont' from page 1

virus put a stop to everything. The national government of Japan issued travel warnings. And of course, when the national government issues warnings, the local city governments must oblige.

The result? Isesaki cancelled all scheduled visits to and from Springfield. This is the first time in our 24-year relationship we have been faced with such a challenge. The student exchange alone has gone uninterrupted for 21 consecutive years. And this was the first time in the history of our Japanese Fall Festival that they did not send a performing delegation to be our headliner. Wow!

So, we rely on the old adage that if you are given lemons, the best thing you can do is make lemonade. The Isesaki Committee voted to use the funds that we had dedicated to hosting our delegation (taking them to events, sight seeing, gifts, syonara party, transportation) and applying it to recruiting special entertainment for our 14th Annual Japanese Fall Festival. We were confident we could make this one of the best events yet.

We hired two performers from Orlando, Fla., both regulars at Disney's Epcot Center. First was Kuniko



Yamamoto, an amazing traditional Japanese story teller. To use the words "story teller" doesn't begin to describe what she does. Imagine masks, costumes and illusions along with stories that keep children on the edge of their seats. We also had Mayuki, the "Candy Lady!" Folks, we are talking about first class entertain-



Thank You!

Carrol Lund for your continued dedication in leading 12 student delegations to Isesaki, and in organizing and hosting 11 similar groups who visited Springfield. Carrol, you are a jewel, and we are forever indebted to you.

ment, a true artist. She has appeared on national television shows like "Rosie O'Donnell." Right before your eyes, she turns a small lump of taffy into a beautiful swan, or dragon, or just about anything else you can imagine. She even did "portraits."

We also had the wonderful, heart-pounding Osuwa Taiko Group from St. Louis. They are always a big draw, and they keep the crowd so entertained with their drum beating and acrobatics.

We were thrilled this year to have a top-spinner from St. Louis, the local JRB Band, local artists and musicians, tea ceremony, Bon Odori dance, martial arts, koto, and so much more. The children's hands-on area hosted by local high school kids is an important part of our event each year. The souvenir tent is such a hit, and a nice fundraiser for SSCA.



This year, we added a few seminars, where folks could learn about things like traditional Japanese indigo dye-dying, origami, ikebana (flower arranging), and bonsai. We hope to grow this area next year to include even more learning opportunities.

A special thanks to the hundreds of children who participated in our opening night parade. Wow! It just keeps getting bigger and bigger. The kids danced their way to the stage, wearing their headbands, led by Hiromi and her friends. Parents, grandparents and friends lined the walks as they entered.

Remember, SSCA shares the gate revenue with the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, to help further develop the Mizumoto Japanese Stroll Garden. We could not do this event if not for the efforts of Park staff. They continue to be our biggest supporters.

Mark your calendar for September 10-12 of this year for the 15th Annual Japanese Fall Festival. We need volunteers for the event, and host families for our visiting performers.

Thanks to the many who donated their efforts to make this last festival a success. It requires much time and skill, and we count on all of you to make it work.

More Isesaki Committee & Japanese Fall Festival News on Pages 2 & 3 →

A Message From Past-President Osis

Peace in 2010

By 2009-2010 President
Dianne Elizabeth Osis



Dear SSCA Members
and Friends—

“Peace Through
People,” the core pur-
pose of the Sister Cities
movement throughout
the world, unifies our
efforts during every
month of the year. But

our mission as volunteers and supporters of
Springfield Sister Cities Association was
particularly meaningful during this past
holiday season and as we now enter 2010.

Life can get frantic at times as we race
to make the most of our work weeks. Take
a moment when the pace gets especially
feverish to count your blessings. My list
includes our Sister Cities family and
friends. Because of your tireless work for
SSCA, we have an expanded family spread
out around the globe.

Some of the best, and certainly the most
memorable, moments of 2009 have cen-
tered around visits with our extended fami-
lies in Japan and Mexico. Who can forget
the lively sounds of Mariachi Feminil as
they sang for us during the bitter chill of
our October ArtsFiesta? Who could ever
forget the generosity and loving concern of

the citizens of Isesaki in the wake of
Springfield’s devastating ice storms?

Among the most cherished memo-
ries of my life are the tears of a young
student from Tlaquepaque who cried
what seemed like a river of tears when
she departed after only a week’s visit.
I’ll always remember, too, her warm
embrace when we greeted each other again
in September, this time in Mexico.

Despite the lapse of time, the differ-
ences in our languages and customs, the
distance of thousands of miles, and the
whirl of activities around us, we have
closeness of our Sister Cities’ family to
warm us in this winter’s cold and, in fact,
all year around.

I’m grateful, too, for the good friends
that we have made right here in the Spring-
field area because of our SSCA efforts.
Our shared goal has brought us close to-
gether.

When there is news every day of the
horror of war and the violence that can
erupt from misunderstandings about differ-
ent cultures, we have the hope that our
work can make a difference.

As a member of Springfield Sister Cit-
ies Association, you are changing the
world.

Peace and Love,
Dianne Elizabeth Osis,
2009 SSCA President



Springfield, Missouri

2010 SSCA Board of Directors

John Price, President

Dianne Elizabeth Osis,
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Bob Jones, Vice President

Carolyn Gerdes, Secretary

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Sandra Lowther

Juan Meraz

Russ Rubert

Michael Thomas

Kelvin Pamperien

Bob Stephens

Dennis Whaley

In Memoriam

Springfield Sister Cities Association lost a friend a supporter this
past year with the passing of Mr. Lloyd Young.

Lloyd was a past-president and one of the founders
of our organization.

Our thoughts and prayers continue to go out to Lloyd’s family.