



DENVER SISTER CITIES INTERNATIONAL

OCTOBER • NOVEMBER • DECEMBER 2010

KUNMING, CHINA

POPULATION: 6,800,000

MAYOR: Zhang Zulin

SPOKEN LANGUAGES: Kunming (dialect)

SISTER CITIES: Denver, USA

FORMALIZATION: 1980, Denver's 8th

Sister City.

Did you know: Because of its year-round temperate climate, Kunming is nicknamed the "City of Eternal Spring."



Denver Sister Cities International promotes peace through mutual respect, understanding and cooperation with cultural, educational and economic endeavors.

Denver Sister Cities International
2480 West 26th Avenue, Suite 20B
Denver, Colorado 80211

303-832-1336 Fax 303-832-2173
info@denversistercities.org
www.denversistercities.org



John Yee— Serving the Famous Flying Tigers

by Maria Arapakis

Born in 1921, John Yee's childhood was spent in Zhaotong, a town near our Sister City and provincial capital Kunming, China. Yee spent much of his life after the war here in America changing lives through education. But his service some 70 years ago in the famous Flying Tigers of China in World War II touched lives in an equally powerful way.

As a 20-year-old interpreter for the AVG (a group of volunteer American pilots), Yee knew firsthand the legendary "Ol' Leatherface," Claire L. Chennault, commander of the Flying Tigers, and even served as his interpreter in some critical situations.

Chennault introduced "pursuit flying," a flying strategy widely rejected by the military brass of the day because the prevailing mode of bombing being promoted back then was defensive warfare: wait in place, then take out the enemy's planes as they were attacking.

Understanding the serious weaknesses of the Chinese air force (limited capacity and outdated planes), Chennault devised an extraordinarily successful plan for using heavy, slow-flying, WWI P-40s against crack Japanese zeros. Chenault's Flying Tiger pilots were taught to:

- 1) Never engage in "dogfights"
- 2) Fly high and make steep dives to attack
- 3) Always fly in pairs as a way to increase firepower.

Chenault's leadership and "pursuit" policies produced a success rate that has never been matched or exceeded: 14 victorious missions for every 15 missions flown. Put another way, they destroyed nearly 300 enemy aircrafts while losing only 14 pilots in combat.



John Yee

Yee's parents were doctors who, as a result of British missionaries in the area, converted to Christianity. While still in elementary school, John went to live with the family of missionaries to learn English. As a young man he recalls that planes were such a rarity in China, on the occasions when a "big noise" in the sky was heard, his entire class would head outdoors to see the amazing sight of a plane flying in the air.

Friendship Dinner

Who: Biannual Friendship Dinner honoring John Yee

What: Silent Auction and Dinner

When: 7 p.m. dinner September 16, 2010

Where: Wings over the Rockies Air & Space Museum, 7711 E. Academy Blvd., Denver, CO 80230.

Come tour the Museum and visit our Silent Auction starting at 5:00 pm

John Yee will be recognized for his lifelong commitment to building links between the East and West. He facilitated the sister city relationship between Denver and Kunming.

continued on next page

Letter from the President

Gayle Stallings and I just returned from the Sister Cities International Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We are returning with our pockets full of information about what other cities are doing and how we can be better leaders. I enjoyed meeting the D.C.-based Sister Cities International team with who we constantly communicate through emails when writing for grants. You know we are part of a very large and important global community/organization that has impressive credentials. This was evident in seeing the many international attendees. There was also a strong presence of young people at the conference with lots of activity for them.

The Friendship Dinner is upon us – on September 16th – and a tour of the museum is included in your ticket price. So come early if you want to sit in the cockpit and touch things. The event is promising to be memorable and you can get more information about the program on our Web site as well as purchasing your tickets on line.

I am looking for some special people to help me with the planning and implementing programs targeted for Middle and High School youths. Do you have more you want to give to young people? Leave a legacy of inspiring youths? Call me and let's get started.

This is our last newsletter for the year so it is important to get on the weekly Envoy email list to insure that you do not miss anything. If you're not into the internet, feel free to call Pat in the office for updates. One of the many and most important benefits of membership to the Denver Sister Cities is that you are family, and we're only a phone call away.

I'll see you soon.

Flora DuPree, President

303-587-8588 or flora@floradupree.com

Please Mark Your 2010 Calendars

October 2: Potenza Amore di Bocce tournament

October 6: Book Club meeting

Contact Chennai Committee for details of an upcoming Ghandi Event

Please call or email the City Chairs to find out dates of their Committee meetings and watch the Monday E-Blasts. Call our office if you do not receive the E-Blasts.

Join Our Book Club

What: *A Tale of Love and Darkness* by Amos Oz

When: Discussion January 19

Location: To be determined

Summary: An extraordinary memoir of Amos Oz, "A Tale of Love and Darkness" chronicles 120 years of history of Oz's family. It is an engrossing family saga as well as a self-portrait of one of Israel's most important authors — a man who witnessed the birth of Israel and has lived through its turbulent history.

Contact: rlconn2@gmail.com

John Yee, continued from cover

As a 16-year-old, Yee headed to Hong Kong with a scholarship to attend Stephan's College. But by 1939, Japanese aggression had escalated and John, then 18, returned to his home province.

Two years later, in early 1941, Yee and friends had a terrifying experience of war as they sat in living room of the Yee home on the outskirts of Kunming. As he wrote in a 2006 article for the Flying Tiger's quarterly publication, *Jingbao Journal*:

"Suddenly machine gun fire from enemy planes shot across our garden. ...We dashed toward a small building nearby. Then came the terrible sound of bombs exploding...I could feel and hear my heart pounding as hard as it could, fully expecting a bomb would hit near me at any second."

After the attack, Yee found a dead body face down in the yard, the body of a young girl near his front door, the body of a woman under a nearby hedge, and yet another girl about 7 years old not far from the rest. Only later did everyone learn that these individuals were a family of peasants who lived outside the Yee compound walls. The family's home had scored a direct hit and somehow all their bodies had catapulted over the wall into the Yee's yard.

That summer Yee signed up for his service as a translator. He recalls later that same year in early December, when word of the deadly Pearl Harbor strike reached China, everyone "jumped for joy" – not because of the attack, of course, but because now they would have much needed allied forces fighting by their side.

Denver Sister Cities extends a thank you and acknowledgement of John Yee's contribution to the allies' WWII victory in the Pacific theater.

Join the Global Conversation
Become of a member of Denver Sister
Cities. Register online at
www.denversistercities.org or call
303-832-1336.

Axum, Ethiopia (Sister City since 1995)

Mayor Hagos of Axum, Ethiopia, met with Denver's Mayor John Hickenlooper in June, and, with the mayors, the committee attended a dedication to honor the cities' friendship as well as the new improvements at Axum Park. Mayor Hagos also met with several Axum committee members and other community members



Denver's Mayor John Hickenlooper meet with Mayor Hagos of Axum, Ethiopia in June.

at an event hosted by the Axum Alumni Association. The mayor was well received.

The Metropolitan State College of Denver will ship a container of books to the newly established Axum University and, because they have extra room in the container, will take items for the committee to Axum as well. Donated items include science textbooks for the University, school supplies for Hawelti Elementary School and two pumps and accessories for use in sanitation work by the City of Axum. *Axum Chair: Pat Tucci at 303-279-5504 or ptucci@sprintmail.com*

Brest, France (Sister City since 1948)

The Brest committee had another exquisite wine tasting in July thanks to the kind hospitality of Dr. Michael and Katy Ament, who opened their lovely home with a stunning patio. Many thanks also to all of the committee members who worked hard to produce a gourmet feast. Proceeds will go toward our budding high school student exchange program. Plans are continuing, with a group of students arriving from Brest this Fall and Denver area students heading to Brest in Spring. Please join us in our efforts in this program and as we plan many more special events. *Brest Chair: Ari Lourie at 303-478-8684 or arilourie@aol.com*

Chennai, India (Sister City since 1984)

The first annual City of Chennai Park picnic was held in August at the small, charming park on South Quebec and Iowa Streets in collaboration with our Axum sister city.

On October 9th, our annual Gandhi Memorial event at Cleo Parker Robinson's theater will commemorate the great Indian leader's contributions to India's independence and to the concepts of non-violence in achieving peaceful conflict resolution. Please joins us for an inspirational speaker and refreshments. The event is free and open to the public.

In November, the founder and director of Udavum Karangal

ñ Helping Hands ñ in Chennai, Mr. Papa Vidyakaar, will be in Denver for a few days. We hope to help raise funds for his social service projects to house, educate and develop persons rejected by society.

To join or help the Chennai group please attend our potluck meetings on the third Saturday of each month. *Chennai Chair: Karin Schumacher at 303-321-1634 or email karinschu@msn.com*

Cuernavaca, Mexico (Sister City since 1983)

Cuernavaca Chair: Peter Urdiales at 303-936-4873 or mised50@comcast.net

Karmiel, Israel (Sister City since 1977)

Join the Karmiel, Israel, committee in developing a "Green Program" for it's New Year's Fund and for a presentation – as delivered recently in Karmiel – by Dr. Ellice Goldberg. *Karmiel Chair: John Berman at 303-832-7645 or jaberman.com*

Kunming, China (Sister City since 1986)

A 12-member delegation visited Kunming in late May and were warmly welcomed by Vice Mayor Ruan Feng Bin and officials of the municipal government and foreign office. We saw firsthand that our Sister City well deserves its title of Spring City by the profusion of gorgeous flowers and beautiful parks. Yet we also found a very fast growing city complete with



Members of the Denver Kunming Sister Cities Delegation and the faculty of the Kunming Foreign Language School.

numerous construction sites of impressive modern buildings, most with solar panels. Kunming is bound to be a major Chinese City for the 21st Century. Our official visits included spending time at the Kunming Foreign Language School and the Kunming School for the Deaf and Blind.

Delegation member Melanie Grant, from the Foundation Board of the Denver Center for International Studies, successfully reached an agreement with the Foreign Language School to revive a teacher-student exchange program between the two schools. *Kunming Chair: Jeanie Johnson at 303-755-9706 or jeaniebj@aol.com*



Denver Sister Cities International
2480 West 26th Avenue, Suite 20B
Denver, Colorado 80211

Non-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
Denver, CO
Permit No. 3619

CITYSCAPES *continued from page 3*

Nairobi, Kenya (Sister City since 1975)

The Nairobi Committee has been excited to partially sponsor a technical trip by a representative of Denver Waste Water to Nairobi, Kenya. In collaboration with Rotary Club of Denver Southeast, Ecotact, the University of Denver, and Nairobi Water, the trip aimed to address solutions to solid waste runoff in Kibera Slum. The Committee is excited to maintain this connection and work on future projects addressing water and sanitation in Nairobi. Additionally, the Nairobi Committee is continuing our support of Kenyan entrepreneurs through micro-credit lending. To date, we have lent \$2,025 to 35 entrepreneurs in Nairobi. For more information, please contact Ashley Ruiz at ruiz.ashley@gmail.com. *Nairobi Chair: Ashley Ruiz at 303-910-9316 or ruiz.ashley@gmail.com*

Potenza, Italy (Sister City since 1983)

Amore di Bocce. The Potenza Committee completed its first successful Bocce Tournament in September at Potenza Park at Cherry Creek Drive South and Holly. The committee hopes to teach many more the sport. Door prizes and continental breakfast were provided. *Potenza Co-Chairs: Anne Griffin at*

(720) 988-3828 or grifndeak@comcast.net and Kathy Jackson at (303)493-2120 or kathytalavera@hotmail.com

Takayama, Japan (Sister City since 1960)

Takayama Co-Chairs: Kimiko Side at 303-333-5200 or eside3990@aol.com and Brian Matsumoto at 303-916-9988 or matsi22000@yahoo.com.

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia (Sister City since 2001)

The new Denver Street in Ulaanbaatar was dedicated on June 24, 2010. It connects the US Embassy with the bridge over Selbe River. The UB- Denver Committee plans to work with the city of UB in landscaping the street and adding walkways for pedestrians and perhaps a play area for children. It is our hope to have a sign, like the one at our Denver-UB Park, made for the newly named street in UB.

Plans are in the works for 2011's Luby-Jenkins School Pairing Program visits and organizing a delegation of young professionals to visit Mongolia next fall.

For more information on monthly meetings, please contact Peg Johnston. *Ulaanbaatar's Chair: Peg Johnson at 303-698-0687 or Peg.Johnson@yahoo.com.*