



OUR CORNER OF THE WORLD

LOUISVILLE SISTER CITIES MONTHLY

Montpellier / Tamale / Quito / La Plata / Mainz / Jiujiang / Leeds / Perm / Adapazari



AT-A-GLANCE

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Staying Connected During Covid

As we start to settle into 2021, we are warmed by the many greetings from all of you around the world. We are excited to share the first issue of our monthly newsletter, which we hope will keep us all informed of the people, places and happenings in our respective corners of the world.

While the big world event last year was dominated (and continues to be) by the Covid pandemic, we believe this year the world will be preoccupied by the roll out of the Covid vaccines. In this issue, we highlight the Mainz, Germany, couple and company, Biontech, who are behind the first successful vaccine.

As we wait for a return to in-person exchanges, we hope to use this newsletter as one way to keep all of us connected with each other. Please send us your stories and ideas so we can make this newsletter informative and inspiring for you. **Thank you for your friendship!**

The World Affairs Council Team



Happenings in Louisville

This February in Louisville, as it is across the United States, we are celebrating Black History Month. The first observance began at Kent State University (Ohio) in 1970 and was later adopted nationwide in 1976 by President Gerald Ford. We wanted to share ways you can learn and celebrate alongside us in Louisville.

First, be sure to check out [these resources](#) from our partner the Louisville Free Public Library. They also include a [film series](#) which cover a range of topics and people.

Second, you can stream via Netflix the film "Once Night in Miami" directed by Academy Award winning actress Regina King. This movie tells the story of the real-life 1963 Miami meeting between Louisville's own Muhammad Ali (then known as Cassius Clay), civil rights leader Malcolm X, football star Jim Brown, and singer Sam Cooke. The film explores the lives of these prominent figures and their contrasting views of the early Civil Rights movement.



Sister Cities Lunch and Learn

Join the World Affairs Council of Kentucky and Southern Indiana in partnership with Sister City Montpellier (France), for our first Sister Cities Lunch and Learn on February 18 at Noon (U.S. Eastern Standard Time).

This is a part of a new set of programming which highlights the interconnections between Louisville and our Sister Cities through the exploration of relevant and important topics each month.

This month we're focusing on "Perspectives on Social Change". Last year's protests and riots over racial injustices represent only the latest in nationwide demonstrations against racism, white supremacy, and police violence. Civic leaders from Louisville and Montpellier will discuss these issues and more.

To register to attend please visit www.worldkentucky.org/lunchlearn

FEATURE: A Gift to the World

Mainz, Germany



Sister City with Louisville since 1994.

The first vaccine in the western world against Covid-19 has been developed in Mainz, Germany. The research couple at the helm of Biontech, Ugur Sahin and Özlem Türeci, have succeeded in bringing a vaccine to regulatory approval in the incredibly short time of just under a year. This newly developed vaccine has been in use in Germany and worldwide since the end of December.

Scientists Ugur Sahin and Özlem Türeci (pictured above) both conducted research at the University Medical Center Mainz before founding the company Biontech. Their goal was (and still is) to develop an individualized cancer therapy. But even before the global impact of the Covid pandemic became clear, they decided to develop a vaccine against this novel virus. And they successfully completed this process.



Picture: Courtesy of Mainz Sister City



Thus, within a few months, Biontech has become a world-renowned company whose ambitious plans have made it one of the world's beacons of hope. Biontech's American partner is the pharmaceutical company Pfizer. Like the whole company, Sahin and Türeci are still very much associated with the University Medical Center in Mainz, where he holds a chair in cancer research.

Incidentally, the University of Mainz was founded as early as 1477, perished in the turmoil of the Napoleonic Wars at the beginning of the 19th century, and was then re-opened in 1946 by France, the occupying power at the time.

A fun fact brought to the attention by our German Sister City counterparts notes that the street that Biontech is located on (pictured to your left) is An der Goldgrube. This roughly translates to "at the gold mine / at the gold pit". It would seem we have all hit the 'gold mine' for the hard work and scientific discoveries made by this Mainz based company.

Cultural Dispatch: Winter Wonderland



Perm, Russia

Sister City with Louisville since 1994.

February is one of the coldest months in Perm. And the snowiest, too. Thus, there is a big chance to catch a picturesque snowfall or, on the contrary, a crisp day when everything is covered with sparkling frost. As long as you are well wrapped up, Russian winter temperatures can be braved and you can enjoy viewing real ice masterpieces.

In the downtown of Perm, on the city esplanade, the work of sculptors - participants of the Russian Cup in Snow and Ice Sculpture are on show to the public from mid-January until 15 February. The theme for this year's event was Elusive Beauty, which gave maximum freedom of expression for sculptors. It is important to note that the Russian Cup in Snow and Ice Sculpture is a very prestigious competition held in Perm every other year and supported by the Russian Ministry of Culture.



Picture: Courtesy of Perm Sister City



Picture: Courtesy of Perm Sister City

Usually it attracts snow and ice sculptors from across the world – several years ago Perm welcomed ice carvers from Louisville! This year, thirty participants from fourteen cities in Russia and Belarus came to Perm to take part in the competition. Working in teams of two, competition participants created fifteen sculptures. The teams had five days to complete the task chipping away at their sub-zero canvas. One hundred cubic meters of natural ice from the pond water had been sourced for the competition, and cut into blocks 40 cm thick for the participants to work on. Blocks of ice were transformed into something special here in Perm.

Perm residents are quite proud of their winter activities: the scale of them in February is definitely impressive – the more, the merrier! On holidays and weekends people go cross-country skiing, sledding in parks and forests, skating on skating rinks that appear all around during the winter, play snowballs, build snow fortresses, make snowmen and snow women and visit exhibitions of snow and ice sculptures in parks all over the city (in all city districts).

On the Horizon



Juijang, China

Sister City with Louisville since 2004.

Chinese Lunar New Year

In Louisville's Sister City of Juijang and Friendship City, Chengdu, celebrations are underway for the Lunar New Year. The Spring Festival will be Feb. 12 2021 according to the Chinese lunar calendar.

It celebrates the beginning of a New Year in the traditional Chinese Calendar. It also symbolizes the end of winter. Traditional celebrations include the lighting of lanterns and gather with family for a reunion dinner. 2021 is the Year of the Ox.



Picture: Santiago Arcos/Reuters



Tamale, Ghana

Sister City with Louisville since 1979.

Art Retrospective

This month continues the noted exhibition in Tamale, Ghana of a landmark retrospective of artist, dramatist, and educator Agyeman Ossei (Dota). In "Akutia: Blindfolding the Sun and the Poetics of Peace" the artist explores his lifework to its earliest days in the 1980s and much more.

This exhibit is produced by the Savannah Center for Contemporary Art (SCCA) Tamale. Visit [the virtual exhibition and find out more](#) about the art world of Tamale and Ghana.



Picture: Courtesy of Chengdu Friendship City



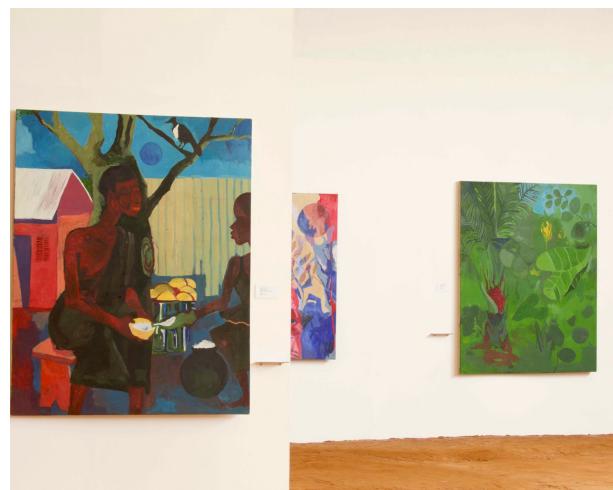
Quito, Ecuador

Sister City with Louisville since 1962.

Presidential Elections

Ecuadorians are headed to a run-off Presidential election following a vote February 7 in which no candidate got an outright victory.

This means that the next election will be on April 11th. Economist Andres Azuz will be one of the candidates up for President while the second place position is currently too close to call and headed for a recount.



Picture: Elolo Bosoka via SCCA website

WAC Team

Our work at the World Affairs Council is facilitated and supported by a group of passionate individuals that believe in the power of global exchange, dialogue and learning. They comprise of capable professionals at the staff level, supported by a strong and active board of directors and committee members who are community leaders and seasoned professionals.

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