



## OUR CORNER OF THE WORLD

### LOUISVILLE SISTER CITIES MONTHLY

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



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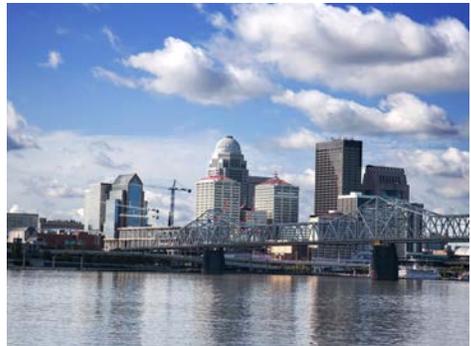
### Nov/Dec- End of Year Reflection

As we come to the end of 2021, we are grateful to all those that have supported Louisville and its Sister Cities this year. It has been a tumultuous 12 months for many of the cities, from natural disasters to gun violence in schools, to political changes. Our cities are a microcosm of their countries and the larger world we live in. Through the connections we develop with our Sister Cities, we can appreciate the diversity of our cultures while celebrating the many things that unite us.

While we all harbored some degree of hope for a return to in-person exchanges, we also knew at the start of this year how difficult that would be. Despite that, we were still able to convene several webinars with a few of our cities and stay connected via this newsletter. As we enter 2022, we are a step closer to restarting in-person exchanges with select cities, and we will be excited to report back with these opportunities as they develop.

On behalf of WAC and the Louisville Sister Cities,  
*"The year end brings no greater pleasure than the opportunity to express to you season's greetings and good wishes. May your holidays and new year be filled with joy."* – Charles Dickens

In friendship and with best wishes,  
 The World Affairs Council Team



## Louisville At-a-Glance

This month we are focusing on end of year highlights from our cities as well as sharing holiday traditions from the autumn and winter months.

In the previous editions of our newsletter, we focused on the impact of Covid on our schools and the roll out of the vaccines here and abroad. For our end of the year edition, we wanted to highlight accomplishments in our city and in our counterparts around the world.

In Kentucky there are two major points of pride for the commonwealth and for the Louisville community. First, Kentucky was among the top five states in the United States of America for refugee resettlement in the past year. Second, our state received a \$5 billion investment by the Ford Motor Company for a new plant in Hardin County.

According to a Refugee Council USA report from October, Kentucky ranked fourth in the nation for welcoming refugees. We were ranked in the top five among much bigger states like California, Texas, New York, and Michigan. Top refugee arrivals came from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine and Burma. Local organizations like Kentucky Refugee Ministries and Catholic Charities have been an active part of the resettlement and welcoming process in Louisville.

The Ford plant in Hardin County (an hour outside of Louisville) is a great economic success for the region. The \$5.8 billion, 1,500-acre campus near Interstate 65 — to be called BlueOvalSK Battery Park — is aimed at opening in 2025 and will bring 5,000 new jobs to Hardin County. The plant will create batteries for the car companies fleet of electric vehicles. According to Governor Andy Beshear, this is the single largest investment in the history of Kentucky. This project helps solidify Kentucky's leadership role in the future of the automotive manufacturing industry.



Two refugees recently resettled in Louisville, Kentucky.

### Top 5 States Welcoming Refugees



Refugee Council USA map shows Kentucky ranked #4 in country for resettlement in 2021.



A Proposed drawing of the electric battery park in Hardin County.

## Holiday Celebrations in Louisville

Winter ushers in a festive season for many and our community is no different. We want to share with you the holiday traditions and celebrations of some of our Sister Cities committee members in Louisville.



### Hanukkah: Roberta Herschberg

Long time Sister Cities supporter Roberta finished celebrating the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah on December 6th.

In her words all Jewish holidays boil down to this: "They tried to kill us. We survived. Let's eat."

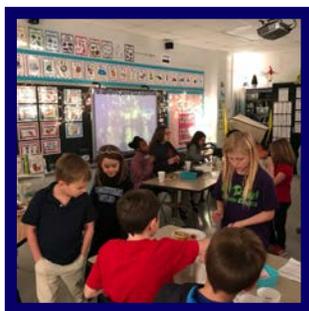
She sent in a picture of her lit menorah during the holiday.



### Kwanza & Christmas: Chief Ife Bell

Christmas and Kwanza have been a family tradition since she was a young child. To celebrate Christmas we include lots of time with family and handmade ornaments that have been collected and shared over the years.

For Kwanzaa, we each make gifts to share with each other. The pumpkins were a hand painted gift given to me by my mother. The cloth decorating the table is the traditional cloth of the Northern Region of Ghana. Faith is my favorite of the 7 symbols.



### Christmas: Jacque Van Houten

Jacque's Christmas celebrations include baking and decorating cookies, making Kentucky bourbon balls and much more.

She sent in a picture of children at Eisenhower Elementary School putting on a French Christmas market celebration. You can read in the next section what the Montpellier Christmas market is like as well!



### Christmas: Dave Wiegman

On a 2010 trip to Tamale, Dr. Wiegman was gifted a ceremonial smock. He started wearing it in his Christmas celebrations a few years later.

He sent in a picture wearing it during the festive season with decorations including some items from Leeds and Mainz.

# Celebrations around the World

We share with you holiday traditions and festivities from around the world during the autumn and winter months.



## Jiujiang, China

Winter Solstice (Chinese:冬至) comes on Dec 21—the shortest day of the year, and it also marks the arrival of the coldest season in the year.

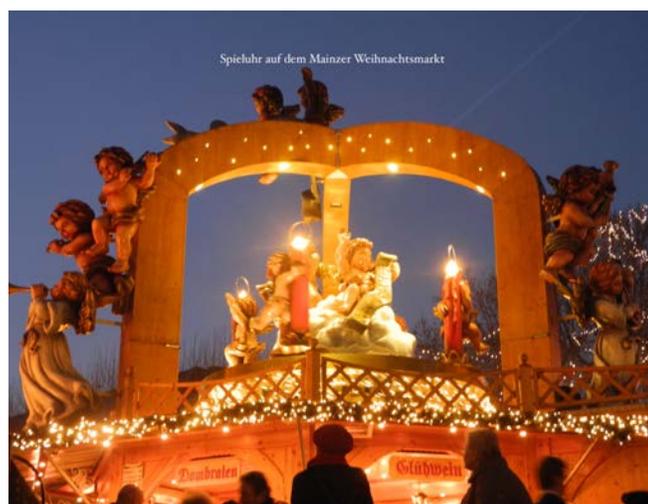
During Winter Solstice, eating dumplings, tangyuan (small dumpling ball made of glutinous rice), or home-made rice cakes is a tradition for Chinese people. This activity is pictured on the left.

There is also the Chinese Farmers' Harvest Festival Jiangxi. A series of activities were carried out were held in Jiujiang city on September 25th, 2021 to celebrate the festival. These included such things as holding exhibitions of farming culture and agricultural products, performing folk dances, holding sports event for farmers, and organizing celebration party and more.

## Mainz, Germany

Under Corona conditions, the traditional Mainz Christmas Market takes place against the backdrop of the 1000-year-old St. Martin's Cathedral and the colorful Renaissance facades of the historic market houses. Festively decorated carousels, handmade toys, Christmas bakery, mulled wine and food stalls present themselves.

The 11-meter-high, richly decorated Christmas pyramid and the 18 hand-carved angel figures making their rounds on the roof of a 9-meter-high music box are also particularly worth seeing. The Dom Café tempts visitors with a huge selection of cakes and Christmas cookies.



## Celebrations around the World Continued...



### Perm, Russia

Russia's most popular holiday is the New Year! In Russia the New Year beats Christmas in its importance. The majority of Russians celebrate the New Year's day with the rest of the world on the 1st of January.

Perm has its own festivities, concerts and other events. The streets are usually decorated with trees and lights and in all city districts beautiful Ice Towns are built from snow and ice. A common New Year's expression is "The way you spend New Year's Eve is the same way you'll spend the rest of the year". That's why it's so important that the last day of the year has to be festive. You should forgive people, pay off your debts and clean the house to start the new year happy and clean. You definitely should not sleep through the New Year as it is considered a bad omen. If you think that the celebrations will end on the 1st of January you are wrong.

The celebrations will usually last for two weeks as the Russian Christmas is celebrated on the 7th of January and the Old New Year - on the 14th of January, though on a much smaller scale. The 14th of January denotes the New Year in the old Orthodox Calendar. This day is not an official holiday but it is still widely enjoyed. For 10 days the whole country is on vacations. This year they will be from December 31 till January 9.

### Montpellier, France

From the 24th November to the 26th December the yearly gathering, "Les Hivernales", will take place in the center of Montpellier. An amazing opportunity for visitors and locals of all ages to enjoy a typical southern French Christmas Market.

For the 10th consecutive year, the City of Montpellier has decided to honor local artisans and to highlight their know-how. Visitors can taste and purchase Chocolates, gingerbread macaroons, candied fruits or candies, admire Montpellier's very typical southern nativity scene, and buy their yearly Christmas presents.



## Year in Review

We share highlights from our counterparts in four of our Sister Cities who share the exciting news and accomplishments from the past year.



### Tamale, Ghana

Sister City with Louisville since 1954.

For close to a year the City of Tamale has been without a substantive Mayor.

In October 2021 the President of the Public of Ghana, His Excellency Nana Akufo Addo nominated Salifu Sule to be confirmed by the Assembly members in the Metropolis.

Hon. Salifu Sule had the endorsement of forty(40) Assembly members out of 59 Members to confirm his appointment as the new Mayor of Tamale.

Before the nomination of Salifu Sule as the Mayor, he was the Northern Regional Coordinator for the Youth Employment Agency and also the Director of Communication for the ruling party in the Northern Region.



### Perm, Russia

Sister City with Louisville since 1994.

A highlight from the year includes the photo exhibition devoted to water resources, rivers and canals vital for the cities' life. The photos show picturesque river landscapes, embankments, vessels and boats, various bridges and fountains; one can also see the scenes of leisure by the water, the beauty of rivers coated by ice or dramatic traces of high water. The exhibition reveals the similarities and differences of each city's attitude to water and water resources. Joint work of the archives is another example of the new type of cooperation between the sister-cities.

You can explore the photos by clicking on the [link here](#).



### Quito, Ecuador

Sister City with Louisville since 1962.

The Back to Downtown Project is the result of an initiative of the AEI (Alliance for Entrepreneurship and Innovation) and the citizen's interest in getting involved with the present and future of the Historic Center of Quito.

This year consisted of more planning about how to revitalize the downtown area in Quito and asking what do we want it to look like in 20 years time. The organization hope to motivate the largest number of actors in the city of Quito to join us and that together we will go back to the center.



### Mainz, Germany

Sister City with Louisville since 1994.

The highlight of the year for Mainz people, and not only for them, was the development and production of a vaccine against Covid-19 in "lightspeed" by Ugur Sahin and Özlem Türeci, the two founders of Biontech. This helped ease the course of the disease and save millions of lives around the globe.

For the city of Mainz, a second miracle happened when it became clear that the Biontech company was able to make extremely high profits and as a result will have to pay an extremely high amount of business tax. The Lord Mayor and the Finance Director of the City of Mainz are very happy about the payment of more than one billion euros in taxes. They intend to use this money in the first place to reduce the mountain of debt that Mainz has accumulated over the last 50 years.

## Pop Culture in Review

We recommend top cultural highlights from our some of our Sister City countries across different art forms.



### Film: Russia

**Chernobyl: The Abyss (Чернобыль)** is the first major Russian feature film about the aftermath of the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, when hundreds of people sacrificed their lives to clean up the site of the catastrophe, and to successfully prevent an even bigger disaster that could have turned a large part of the European continent into an uninhabitable exclusion zone. The unlikely hero of the film is Alexey, a fireman at the power station. He is accompanied by Valery, an engineer, and Boris, a military diver, on a perilous mission to drain water from a reservoir under the burning reactor. Prepared to sacrifice their own lives in order to prevent an even greater catastrophe, the three men descend into the depths of the reactor building.



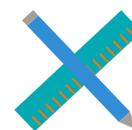
### Music: Germany

Spotify published the lists of the most streamed musicians of the year on Spotify last week. No artist was streamed more often in Germany in 2021 than **LEA**. She is a singer-songwriter and keyboardist born in Kassel, Hesse, Germany in 1992. In 2016 LEA's music career really got started: she became a backup singer for Mark Forster, one of the most successful pop artists in Germany. that same year her debut album "Vakuum" (Vacuum).



### TV: France

The hit **Call My Agent** or in French "Dix pour cent" is a comedy-drama television series found on Netflix about a group of talent agents at ASK struggling through the business. The 10% in the title references the takeaway they get from their famous clients of actors, directors, and writers. They juggle tricky situations and defend their vision of the business. While struggling to save their agency after the sudden death of its founder, the four agents take us behind the scenes of the world of celebrity, where laughter, emotion, transgression and tears constantly collide. The series became so popular globally during the pandemic that a fifth series has been commissioned and a film as well!



### Architecture: Ghana

In July 2021, the **African Futures Institute (AFI)**, headquartered in Accra, Ghana, opened. It is a new venture that aims to offer a radically different and innovative educational experience to Ghanaian, African and international students, as well as provide an important local and global platform for conversations, exhibitions and publications on architecture and related disciplines.

# In Memoriam

We remember two important individuals who made an impact to the mission of Sister Cities in Louisville and in Mainz.

## Mainz, Germany

Hermann-Hartmut Weyel the former Lord Mayor of the state capital of Mainz passed away on Sunday, November 28, 2021 at the age of 88.

As Lord Mayor of Mainz, he supported the establishment of the connection with the American twin city of Louisville in Kentucky and in 1994 signed the twinning agreement in a ceremony here in Mainz together with Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson.

Residents of Mainz fondly remember the annual events of "Art in the City" or the Christmas caroling with German and American school children.

Even after his term of office, Mr. Weyel was committed to the relations with the sister city Louisville as a member of the Friendship Circle.

*This memorial was written by Franz-Josef Wertmann, President of the Mainz-Louisville Friendship Circle.*

To learn more about the history of the partnership former Lord Mayor Weyel helped establish by [listening to this Louisville Public Media feature](#) on Mainz from September of 2021.



The late Hermann-Hartmut Weyel.



Beautiful scenery from Mainz.



## In Memoriam continued...

We remember two important individuals who made an impact to the mission of Sister Cities in Louisville and in Mainz.

### Louisville, KY

The City of Louisville has always been recognized and respected internationally for our diversity, our openness and friendliness, and for the respect and hospitality we show people from other countries and cultures who choose to live in our city and who come to visit. Unfortunately, our city has recently lost an extraordinary individual who embodied that spirit, and who helped build Louisville's stellar international reputation by enriching and celebrating our city's diversity and multiculturalism over the last 50 years – Dell Courtney.

I first met the indomitable Dell Courtney in 1994, when we joined a team to help Louisville and Sister Cities of Louisville host that year's Sister Cities International Conference. I was directing the first of three annual MasterCard International Sister Cities Youth Soccer Cups. Dell was choreographing and directing an International Crafts Fair on Main Street downtown that, with sponsorship help from UPS, flew in and showcased crafts from Sister Cities around the world. I discovered then that Dell was not only the renowned and revered creator and "godmother" of Louisville's award-winning Cultural Heritage Weekends in the 1970s, but also an invaluable volunteer for Sister Cities of Louisville in its efforts, since the mid-1950s, to create educational and exchange opportunities between the citizens of Louisville and other cities around the world.

Dell shared her time and extraordinary talents with Sister Cities of Louisville for five decades, as a board member, interim director, and priceless volunteer. Over those years, she and her devoted husband and partner in everything, Fred Courtney, graciously and generously hosted countless international visitors from Louisville's Sister Cities and other places around the world in their home, as well.



The late Dell Courtney.

Dell was a brilliant organizational strategist, fundraiser, and event planner; a keen problem-solver and consensus-builder; and a creative architect of many of Louisville's landmark events and celebrations. Every international organization in town, as well as many charitable organizations, can credit the hard work, wisdom, and warmth of Dell Courtney with the expansion and success of their own programs.

Dell Courtney lived her life with global vision and a deep commitment to enriching and celebrating Louisville's diversity and multiculturalism. Her passion for all things international and deep love for people from around the world inspired all of us who were fortunate enough to know Dell and to work with her on her many projects.

Although, as they say, a "mighty oak has fallen" in Louisville's international community, the seeds Dell Courtney planted so deeply in our community and in our hearts will continue to bloom and grow for many years to come.

*This memorial was written in loving memory by friend and fellow Sister Cities supporter Carol Butler, Former President, Mayor's Liaison, and Board Member, Sister Cities of Louisville, Inc.*

## News from WAC



### Louisville, Kentucky

We wanted to share some exciting updates from the World Affairs Council. We have two new additions to our team. We introduce them below.

Meet **Milira Tillman** our new **Global Education Coordinator**! Milira is a world-traveling Louisville native, who is passionate about international education. She completed her B.A. in French and Psychology at the University of Kentucky before pursuing a M.A. in International Education Management at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.

She considers France to be a second home after her experiences traveling, studying and working abroad in Paris, the Bordeaux region and many smaller French cities.

Meet **Liz Congleton** our new **Marketing and Communications Coordinator**. Liz is passionate about the role of language in framing intercultural communication and lifelong learning.

Her international experience includes study in Viña del Mar, Chile and San Remo, Italy and working in schools in Gimpo, South Korea and Ústí nad Labem, Czechia. She holds a B.A. with a double major in Foreign Language and International Studies and Political Science.

We are looking forward to seeing the impact Liz and Milira will create for the World Affairs Council. Welcome to the team!



Milira Tillman



Liz Congleton



Xiao Yin, Andi, and Lydia (the rest of the team!)

## 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.

### WAC Staff



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Bennett Knox, Jefferson Memorial Forest  
Brian Easley, Druther's  
Dr. Dave Wiegman  
Dr. Gloria Murray, Indiana University  
Southeast  
Jacque Van Houten  
Jan Grayson, WAC Chair of Board of Directors  
Roberta Hershberg  
Dr. Renee Campbell, University of Kentucky  
Mike Tracy, University of Louisville  
Tom Dumsdorf, University of Louisville  
Wendy Yoder, University of Louisville

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