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JUMELAGE

Another way of seeing



Jumelage members and their friends pose atop the Chateau de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. COURTESY PHOTO

Sister city program fosters friendships

By **Evan MacDonald**
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Judie Muggia, the president of the Winchester Jumelage, didn't consult anyone before deciding the town should have a sister city.

It was the spring of 1989, during her time as chairman of the Board of Selectmen, when she received a fax at Town Hall from someone explaining that Saint-Germain-en-Laye, a community located just outside Paris, was looking for a sister city. Right away, she knew it was something worth exploring.

"They were looking for a sister city," Muggia said. "I didn't even discuss it. I just responded that we were very, very interested."

Twenty-two years later, more than 700 individuals have traveled back and forth between the two cities, including government officials, private citizens and interns.

Next week, Winchester will be hosting an official delegation, including Mayor

Emmanuel Lamy, for the first time. John McConnell, Jumelage's vice president, said each of the delegates would be staying in a Jumelage member's home during the visit. They arrive on Saturday, March 10, and leave on Tuesday, March 13. The group will officially be recognized at the Board of Selectmen meeting on March 12 at 6:30 p.m.

During the visit, the Saint-Germain delegation will tour some of Winchester's local facilities and other area places of interest. The group will take tour of the Department of Public Works' water treatment facility and the Griffin Museum, see the Fire Department's new ambulances and visit Town Hall. The delegates will also be taken to historic downtown Salem, the French consulate in Boston, the Museum of Fine Arts, and Harvard University, among other stops. Selectman Roger Berman, a Jumelage member, said he's looking forward to the visit because the town will



Saint-Germain-en-Laye, Winchester's sister city, is an affluent bedroom community located just outside Paris. A delegation from the town will be visiting Winchester March 10 through March 13. COURTESY PHOTO

have the opportunity to show how everything is run in Winchester. In the past, Saint-Germain has taken several ideas from Winchester, such as the town's recycling program.

"We do so many things well in this town," Berman said. "I'm proudful to show that this is what a well-run town looks like."

Saint-Germain-en-Laye

Saint-Germain is a city located about 12 miles west of the center of Paris. It has an area of approximately 18.6 square miles and a population of just more than 43,000, making it about twice as populated as Winchester.

The community is most famous for its Chateau de Saint-Germain-en-Laye,

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which was built in 1348 and was the birthplace of King Louis XIV. The chateau has been home to a number of monarchs and also served as Napoleon Bonaparte's cavalry officer training school in the 19th century. Today, the chateau is home to France's Museum of National Antiquities.

McConnell, who described himself as a Francophile, said he was impressed the first time he visited Saint-Germain.

"When I got there for the first time, I just sort of fell in love with it," he said. "It's a very charming little city."

Muggia has visited once or twice a year since 1989. The first time she went, she brought a medal with the Winchester town seal on it and a photograph of Town Hall. But when she emerged from the train station and saw the chateau for the first time, she was slightly humbled.

"Town Hall was right across the street from this huge 16th Century castle where Louis XIV was born," she said. "So I decided not to show them the picture of our Town Hall."

Once she got to know Saint-Germain, Muggia realized the two communities had a lot in common. For starters, both are affluent bedroom communities located just outside major cities. Both municipalities are connected to those larger cities by a railway—Saint-Germain is the last stop on Line A of the Reseau Express Regional (RER), which is an integrated commuter rail and underground train system.

Both Winchester and Saint-Germain also include large forest areas. The National Forest of Saint-Germain-en-Laye covers approximately 19 square miles in the town and its surrounding communities. Winchester has the Fells, of course.

Muggia said both communities also value education, culture, reading and travel.

"There are just so many connections," she said. "It's great to partner with a sister city you have so much in common with."

Cultural exchange

McConnell said the primary benefit of the towns' relationship is making friendships and sharing ideas. In fact, "Jumelage" translates roughly to "the act of twinning," he said.

"It's all about meeting new people and forming relationships," McConnell said.

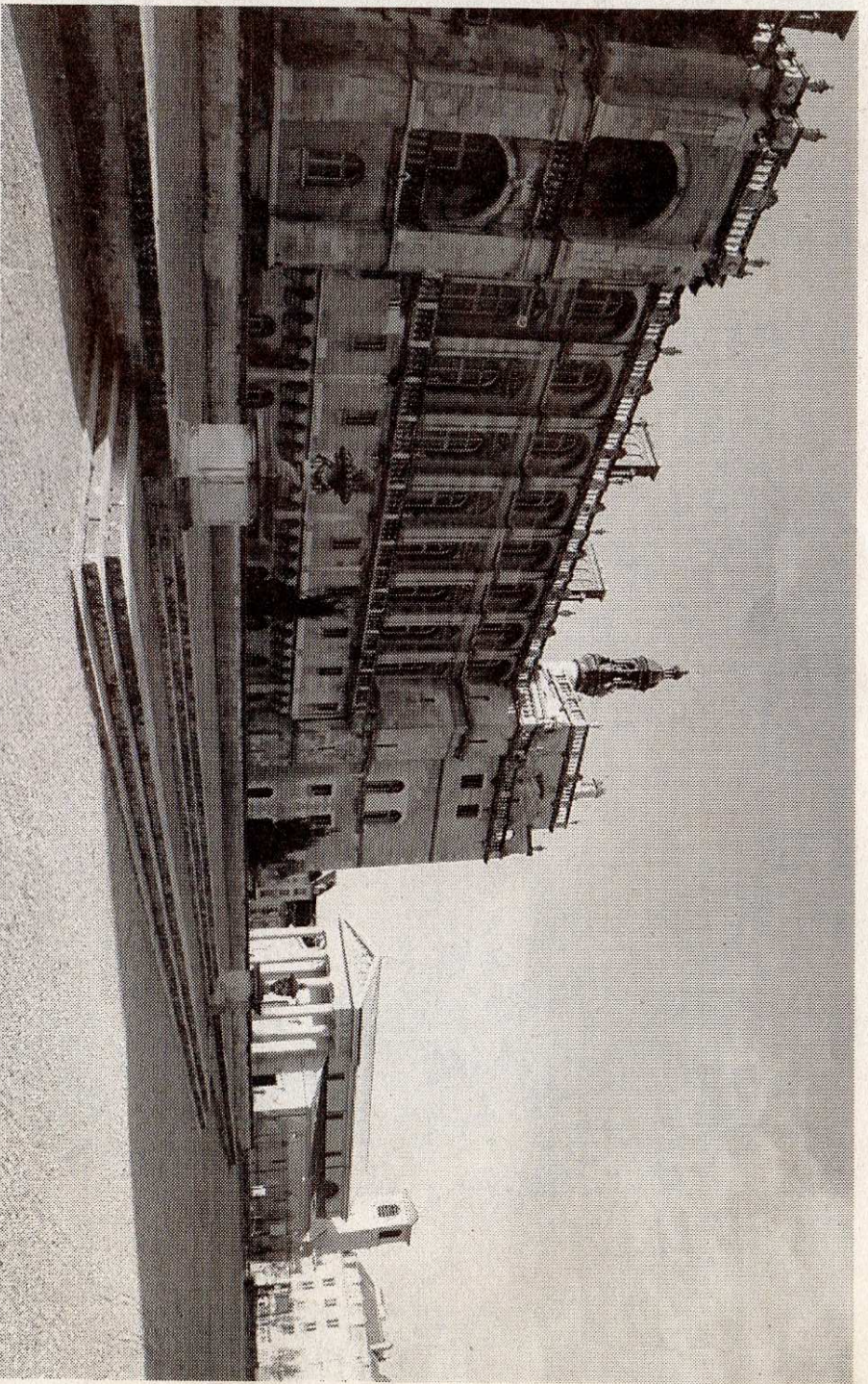
Jumelage members from Winchester visit Saint-Germain every other year, and vice-versa. Those visits aren't always contained to the two towns, though. The groups visit other places of interest in each country, such as Washington, D.C. and Paris.

In the summer, the cities also exchange several interns for about three weeks each year. Muggia said the larger number of interns come from France to Winchester, though. Higher education is practically free in France, meaning students there are free to travel in the summer when American students often work.

The relationship also allows the town to exchange books with the French Cultural Center in Boston for display at the Winchester Public Library. Muggia said that every three months, the town sends about 100 books back-and-forth. Winchester also displays copies of Saint-Germain's local newspaper at the library on a regular basis.

Muggia said the best aspect of the Jumelage for her personally, though, is making friendships with people she normally wouldn't have the chance to meet.

"The people connections are wonderful," she said. "It helps you get a view of their country on a whole different level."



The Chateau de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, which was built in 1348, was home to a number of monarchs and was the birthplace of King Louis XIV. COURTESY PHOTO



Jumelage members Terry and Annette Lannigan pose with actors dressed in costumes outside the Chateau de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. COURTESY PHOTO

Saint-Germain at a glance

FOUNDED 1020
POPULATION 2009 43,207
AREA 18.64 square miles
POSTAL CODE 78100
MAYOR Emmanuel Lamy
Source: Official Saint-Germain-en-Laye website

Join Jumelage Winchester

INDIVIDUAL \$30
FAMILY \$60
PATRON \$100
Winchester/St.-Germain
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