



friendship force

CENTRAL
NORTH CAROLINA

Focus on Friendship ~ December 2010

New Zealand Outbound Exchange

On October 26th FFCNC ambassadors traveled to New Zealand. Among them were Ophelia and Robert Jones. Below are some of Ophelia's impressions from this exchange.

Kia Ora! My visit to New Zealand will be by far the most memorable adventure of my life time. The natural scenery of the landscape was beautiful and the people were so warm and inviting.

Our hosts on the North Island, Laurie and Diane, were kind, friendly and gracious. Their home overlooks the Auckland hills and harbor, and at night - how beautiful! OMG! The Friendship Force of Auckland North Shore was very accommodating. On the North Island we traveled to the famous Rotorua known for its geothermal activity including geysers and hot mud pools. Other activities included the beaches, the Sky Tower and shopping.



The group pauses for a photo on the walk up to the Franz Josef Glacier.

Our second home stay was in Dunedin on the South Island and it was even better than Auckland! Can you believe that? Our hostess was a widow who was also a world traveler. She was gracious, kind and very knowledgeable about the Maori culture, the indigenous Polynesian people who arrived on these islands sometime before the year 1300. Her husband, who was part Maori, was educated in the Maori ways and followed their customs. Their son has taken up his father's mission to take care of Maori lands and teach Maori youth the Maori ways.



Ophelia gives a "thumbs up" after her helicopter ride to the glacier.

The best trip pleasers for me were sky gliding off the top of the mountain overlooking Queenstown and the helicopter ride to the Franz Josef Glacier. These were #1 and #2 on my bucket list and I have now checked them off the list! The Te Anau glow worm caves were remarkable also.

Since our hosts' homes on the South Island were located in two separate cities in the Otago Region, our Friendship Force hosts pulled together a fantastic

outing for everyone. All the ambassadors and hosts from the cities of Dunedin and Alexandra met for an overnight stay in Wedderburn at "The Lodge and Cottage," a way station for the Otago Central Rail Trail. They came with bikes and helmets and games! They wined, dined and entertained us royally. Some ambassadors rode the 8.7 miles on the Otago Central Rail Trail. We were all outside to cheer them on.

One of the positive experiences of the Friendship Force exchanges are the home visits and friendships of the residents of the country that you visit. I am certain that our hosts will be life long friends. Our ambassadors from FFCNC were the Norths, Cauthens, Finches, Kiszelys, Parks, Anne Bigelow, and Robert and I. The thirteen of us from the Triad were joined by eight ambassadors from other Friendship Force clubs around the US. This made a group of wonderful travel companions and excellent ambassadors and I believe everyone had a great time! I am sure the Pohutukawa trees are blooming their famous ruby red flowers all over the North Island. I can see them now!

Ophelia Jones

Do you know what "Kia Ora" means? "Hello" in Maori.

Did you know that the famous New Zealand Kauri tree takes 1000 years to reach full size?

What do you think is a "kissing gate?" It's a gate used on farms in New Zealand. It is designed to allow adults to pass through, but when opened sheep and other farm animals cannot go through. Neither can children.

Did you know that the Auckland Sky Tower at 1,076 feet is the tallest free standing structure in the Southern Hemisphere?

January LEO

Let's Eat Out in January and hear more about the New Zealand exchange! Jan. 15th, 11:30 at Taste of Thai in Greensboro is the time and place of our first 2011 meeting. Come hear and see more about this exciting trip as the exchange director and assistant director, Barbara North and Ophelia Jones (respectively), share stories and photos with us. An invitation will be forthcoming with RSVP details; in the meantime, find your new 2011 calendar and mark the date!

Azerbaijanis in the Triad

The post international conference home hosting was not an exchange in the usual sense. The administrative details were a bit rough...but we all grew culturally as visitors—some from half a world away—visited FFCNC October 18—22.

We should thank hosts Marilyn Baird, Judy Greene, Martha and Dale Brown, Kit Ravenel and Carol and Fred Andresen for opening their homes on short notice to 9 guests from Baku. In addition, Pat Michal hosted a Canadian and Nancy and Peter Peiffer had a couple from Colorado stay with them. Day hosting and transportation assistance were also provided by Jim North, Paul Meis and Donna Lambeth; Ann and Charlie Finch and Evelyn and Barton Parks each hosted an evening meal for some of our guests. And Pam Kahl guided their Old Salem tour.

Common threads among the visitors were teaching—especially English as a second language—and speaking Russian. The group visited the Doris Henderson School for Newcomers in Greensboro and the Russian language department at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem. There was a lot of shopping...and some tasty group lunches at the Old Salem Tavern, Libby Hill Seafood, and Don Juan's Mexican Restaurant. Many of you met the group at our Annual Meeting—it was serendipity to have that scheduled during their visit!

Holiday Party Ignites Spirit

Donna and Tom Lambeth graciously hosted over 50 Friendship Force supporters at their home December 2nd. About half of the partiers were FFCNC members—who each brought edible fare—and half were “lapsed” members primarily from Winston-Salem. Donna hoped to show that Friendship Force in our community is “alive and active”—and as germane as ever. President Marcia Meis gave a greeting, followed by Donna who introduced several former members and shared a few anecdotes from earlier times. A pervasive warm spirit made the party an ideal introduction to the holiday season. Thanks to Donna and Tom for their generosity!!

Meet John Wilhelm, Our New Regional Rep

Our liaison to FFI in Atlanta changed with FFCNC's shift from the MidAtlantic Region to the SouthEast Region. A number of us met John and his wife, Glenda, as they joined us for Donna and Tom Lambeth's holiday party in Winston-Salem December 2nd. The Wilhelms were hosted overnight by Nancy & Peter Peiffer—and we had a chance to talk with John at some length over breakfast on the 3rd.

John Wilhelm, SouthEast Regional Representative, feels that membership recruitment—and activation—are the biggest problems facing Friendship Force chapters in our Region today. He believes that assigning the ED and setting dates and prices early are important to the success of an exchange. He is sensitive to FFI's concern that domestic exchanges are exhausting chapter leadership resources. John would like to develop broad friendships across the region and see the SouthEast chapters meet to tackle such issues as:

- who leads when two chapters share an exchange?
- what financial benefits should ED's expect?

The Wilhelms live in Stone Mountain, Georgia, and have been members of the Greater Atlanta chapter for eleven years. John has served a two year term as president. He and Glenda have traveled with FFI to Brazil, Japan and Russia...and hosted ambassadors from probably ten more countries. He maintains that both inbound and outbound exchanges offer cross-cultural learning of equal value. Tennis is a favorite pastime...and John's a huge U of MI fan.

The SouthEast Region includes 19 chapters in six states: North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Alabama and Georgia. John is currently fleshing out plans for the **SouthEast Region's regional conference April 1-3, 2011, in Black Mountain, NC**. He asked that FFCNC members "save the date" and plan to attend this biennial opportunity to learn "nuts and bolts" about chapter leadership. Details will be available soon.

WFDD On-air Solicitation

FFCNC was asked to help radio station WFDD's on-air holiday solicitation—as we had last spring—but we were unable to mount a team with such short notice at this busy time of year. However, we promised to try to help again in 2011. It is wonderful publicity (the team is credited during that broadcast) and a fun community participation activity. Stay tuned....literally!

Membership Renewal

If you have not already turned in your 2011 membership dues, please do so now. Annual dues, due now, are \$25 for a single membership and \$30 for a family membership. Please write your check payable to FFCNC and mail it to Marvin Scherl, Membership Chair; 6740 Germanton Rd.; Germanton, NC 27019.



2011 FFCNC Board

Please welcome Peter Peiffer to the FFCNC board as President-elect. Peter will join Marcia Meis, President, Ray Kiszely, Vice-President and Membership Chair, and Judy Greene, Treasurer.

2011 Calendar Highlights

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| Jan. 15 | Let's Eat Out; Taste of Thai; Greensboro; 11:30 |
| Sept. 17 – 22 | Pre-exchange extension to NYC, Saratoga, and Montreal |

Sept. 22 - 29

Outbound Exchange to Ottawa, Canada

Oct.

Inbound Exchange from Lima, Peru