



friendship force

CENTRAL
NORTH CAROLINA

Fast Facts ~ October 2011

And They Danced All Night.....



Our Peruvian guests and FFCNC hosts posed in front of the covered bridge at Old Salem as they begin their tour. This rustic covered bridge crosses the road from the visitors center to the historic town of Salem. Although built in 1998, the look of the bridge is colonial with large beams and natural unpainted timbers. This visit gave FFCNC members a chance to stroll through our own history and allowed our ambassadors the opportunity to compare their colonial period in Lima, Peru with that of Colonial North Carolina. An unexpected treat came when we met a Spanish speaking young man dressed in colonial period attire working as a tour guide. This gave our visitors an interesting insight to the village and the young man a chance to try his Spanish speaking skills. We found

our way to a little ice cream shop in one of the restored buildings where we had our dessert prior to lunch at the Old Salem Inn. Doris Kiszely celebrated her birthday with a surprise cake ablaze with candles, a chorus of "Happy Birthday", and a finale of the Peruvian version sung by our guests!

Be sure to check out our photo album at <http://www.ffcnc.org/Exchanges.html> to learn more about the events of this week. Many thanks go to Judy Greene and Doris Kiszely who contributed the photographs.

Experiences of a “Probie” Exchange Director

Given the opportunity, most volunteer organizations will allow you to assume some responsibility for a project. Friendship Force is no exception. I was given the opportunity to assist a very experienced former officer in our club to be his assistant Exchange Director for an inbound exchange of a dozen Ambassadors from Peru. It was a great experience, filled with learning opportunities and challenges.

Of our twelve visitors about half spoke some English and most of those have visited the United States previously. Most of the visitors were fully retired from professions such as teacher, accountant, administrator, attorney, law enforcement officers. Two married couples, all the rest were single, ten women and two men.

Our group activities included a wine tasting and luncheon at Stonefield Cellars in Stokesdale, a tour of Historic Old Salem, and a real contrast with a visit to SECCA Contemporary Art Gallery in Winston-Salem. We took our ambassadors to see the Titanic Exhibition at the Science Center in Greensboro as well as a guided tour of the Guilford Court House Revolutionary Battle Field. Our visitors also toured the International Civil Rights Museum and the Greensboro Historic Museum. Needless to say, we had a number of wonderful dinner parties provided by our members, and the farewell party was exceptional.

It included live music and our ambassadors entertained us with a traditional Peruvian dance including very colorful costumes.



Ray Kiszely (center) poses with his Peruvian guests, Gabriela and Hector, at Centennial Gardens in Greensboro.

What did I learn with this experience? Several things. Sometimes less is more! We may have actually over planned some activities and tired out our guests at times. Interpreters and guides on tours that speak our visitors' language can make a big difference in the quality of the tour. We were able to use hand held devices for Spanish at the Titanic Exhibit and we had an interpreter for the Civil Rights Museum as well as a Spanish speaking tour guide provided to us by the US Park Service at the Battlefield tour.

Lastly, getting more club members directly involved as committee members with specific responsibilities will lessen the burden of an Exchange Director significantly.

I'm looking forward to my next assignment as an assistant ED. We have just begun working on another inbound exchange for September 2012 with a group of ambassadors from Northern Ireland. We will not need interpreters for this group, but we will plan to work hard to make it a memorable visit to central North Carolina next year.

Ray Kiszely

Meet Pat Blakenship

One cold Sunday evening in January 1994 Sallie and Pat Blankenship read an article tucked in the back of the Winston-Salem newspaper announcing that a group of local people, under the auspices of the North Carolina Center for International Understanding, was organizing a trip to

Hungary and inviting people who may be interested in going on this trip to a meeting in late January.

Thus, in June 1994 Sallie and Pat were with the CIU group in Eger, a town of 65,000 inhabitants located a two-hour-drive northeast of Budapest near the Slovakian border. For one week they lived with the family Kovacs in a small, one-bedroom flat located on the 9th floor of one of those Russian-built project buildings that you see throughout the countries of the former Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe. Their hosts were a young couple, Erzsebet and Istvan who, in order to accommodate Pat and Sallie, had sent their two small children out to the countryside to stay with relatives; Erzsebet and Istvan slept on the floor of the sitting room of their flat so that Sallie and Pat would have a bed to sleep in. On their final night in Eger, Pat and Istvan were out on the little balcony of Istvan's flat, discussing how the world was changing now that the Russians had departed Hungary. Istvan observed in his broken English . . . "We may be poor, but we are now free." Pat says he will remember those words forever; the sincere thoughts of a humble Hungarian man who, for the first time in his life, was experiencing freedom as we in America know freedom . . . and many Americans quite often take their freedom for granted.

Since 1994, Pat (along with Sallie when she was alive; Sallie died in 2006) has returned to Hungary five times and he stays in contact with the family Kovacs as well as with other Hungarian nationals he has met over the years. He once helped a Hungarian friend, Attila Szepesi, develop a business plan for a small inn in Eger.

Although Sallie and Pat had traveled to Europe on previous occasions (their son has lived in several countries on three continents over the course of his career), the trip to Hungary was their first "home stay" experience and was the launching of a new adventure for them. Subsequent Friendship Force-CIU trips were to Denmark, Norway and England. They have enjoyed hosting inbound guests from Hungary, the former East Germany, and England and Pat plans to host guests from Berlin when they come to the Triad area in 2012. Pat served several terms as Treasurer and a member of the board of directors of the Winston-Salem chapter of Friendship Force and CIU, and was a co-organizer of a Friendship Force trip to Bratislava, Slovakia in 1997.

Sallie and Pat were married 42 years. Sallie taught in the Forsyth County public schools for many years and Pat retired in 1999 as a Senior Vice President of Wachovia Bank after a 32 year career. Pat points out that he worked for "the original Wachovia Bank that was founded in the 1800s by a fine group of Moravian gentlemen", and that he did not work for the bank that was a part of First Union and went broke prior to being acquired by Wells Fargo. Their daughter, Beth, lives in Greensboro with her husband and children and is a registered nurse at High Point Regional Hospital. Their son, Shields, a former U.S. Army infantry officer, works for the United Nations and is based in sub-Saharan Africa.

Cascavel, A New City

*Here are some tid-bits about our 2012 outbound exchange destination: Cascavel, Brazil.
Come to FFCNC's Annual Meeting 10/27 and learn more!*

Cascavel was established in 1928...but almost all its growth has occurred since 1950 as part of the "new frontier" of Brazil. Today's population is about 300,000. Cascavel is the center of field crops grown within the state of Parana—the top Brazilian state in edible bean, corn, wheat, oat, barley and second in soy bean production. Parana is also first in poultry production. Cascavel

is famous for the Coopavel Rural Show which draws thousands each April—think our annual Farm Progress Show in the Mid West.

Parana is roughly the size of South Dakota and ranks 8th in income within Brazil at \$5,400 per capita—about the same as Turkey's. The largest segment of Parana's 10 million population is involved in agriculture. However new auto plants are changing the economic base.

Parana stretches from Brazil's western border with Paraguay and Argentina to the Atlantic Ocean. A railroad to the coast from Cascavel has enabled the rapid growth of agricultural exports—particularly to China. Cascavel is about 80 miles from both Paraguay and Argentina...and from the world-famous Iguazu Falls (whose airport services Cascavel.)

September temperatures in Cascavel average between 55 and 75 degrees (F)...but the variation can be dramatic: +95 or mid-30s are possible! Frosts have occurred in September even though Cascavel is on the edge of the tropics. Humidity is generally high. There are no mountain ranges; it is generally a rolling terrain.

Brazil, with a population of approximately 200 million, is enjoying a period of rapid economic growth. Among developing countries, it is the "B" in BRIC – Brazil, Russia, India and China. The growth is in both commodities and manufactured products.

Annual Meeting: October 27th in Kernersville

It's time again for our traditional fall potluck—including election of officers for next year AND an informational program about our outbound exchange in September 2012 to Cascavel, Brazil. In addition to video highlights and Brazilian artifacts, we will hear from Dr. Jonathan Tudge, a UNCG professor who lives between Brazil and Greensboro. Dr. Tudge's wife is a native of Brazil, and he has taught there and conducted cross-cultural research.

Plan to bring your best casserole to share...and ***let Marcia Meis know (336-724-9540 or pmeis@triad.rr.com) if you will attend.*** (There is no deadline to RSVP; however, having a reliable headcount really helps with the planning! So, please, don't forget to RSVP either way.) Bring friends and/or prospective FFCNC members (also let Marcia know this!) Gathering time is 6:00 with the potluck meal, speaker and brief meeting to follow. You should have received a snail-mail invitation (with 2012 dues notice - please remit) including directions to Main Street United Methodist Church, the location of our meeting.

See you there!!



Reach Out to Kit

As you know, Kit Ravenel has moved to Tennessee. Her new address is: 7820 Walking Horse Circle; Germantown, Tn 38138. Do send her a card!

Coming in our November Newsletter

Be sure to watch for our November newsletter in which you will find a complete report and photos from our outbound exchange to Ottawa.

2011 Calendar Highlights

October 27	FFCNC Annual Meeting, 6:00 PM gathering, MSUMC Kernersville
November 3	Board Meeting, 11:45 AM MSUMC Kernersville
December	FFCNC Holiday Party – home of Donna Lambeth

2012 Calendar Highlights

May 28 – June 1	Inbound Exchange from Berlin, Germany
September	Inbound Exchange from Causeway Coast, UK
September	Outbound Exchange to Cascavel, Brazil