



# friendship force

CENTRAL  
NORTH CAROLINA

## Fast Facts ~ November 2012

*Recently three FFCNC members travelled with other FF clubs. Two different countries on different continents made for two very different experiences. Here are their stories.*

### A Brazilian Odyssey

FFCNC member Tim Prout recently enjoyed a three homestay exchange to Brazil organized by the Western North Carolina club. The itinerary included two nights in Rio de Janeiro, a six night homestay in Belo Horizonte, a six night homestay in Blumenau, a three night homestay in Cascavel, and the final night at Iguassu Falls. Each experience was varied and unique. Plane flights connected each segment—there is a network of roads of varying quality in Brazil—and Tim admired the business-like and efficient service on TAM, the national airline booked for the longer flights. It is interesting to note that there are no national railroads so everything is shipped by truck.



*A Rio de Janeiro Beach*

In Belo Horizonte, Tim's host lived in a 4<sup>th</sup> floor urban condo. Known as a mining and industrial center, the grit and graffiti were abundant in this typical industrial city. Day bus trips kept Tim busy—though he might have liked more time to poke around Belo Horizonte. Nonetheless, he



*Tim poses with three Blumenau Oktoberfest Queens.*

did visit the weekly outdoor market and flower market. Destinations included a mining museum in the historic town of Ouro Preto and INHOTIM, a park with indoor and outdoor botanical gardens and contemporary artwork.

On to Blumenau, a more pristine city settled by Germans. Tim's suburban host there owns a factory that manufactures commercial ovens—which the group toured, along with enjoying Oktoberfest activities.

In Cascavel, a newer town in the midst of rice fields, his host Italian/Brazilian family owns a commodities brokerage. The grocery shopping experience impressed Tim: there were as

many as 15 checkout lanes, all staffed by a cashier (who sits down to work) and a bagger. There were no self-checkout lanes! Grocery stores always had abundant staff and frequently parking underneath the store.

Everywhere, there was beautiful scenery—beginning with Rio, which Tim describes as “stunning”. He observes that the Iguassu Falls, often compared to Niagara Falls, are truly “magnificent” and cover a much larger area. While Brazilians speak Portuguese, Tim had no problem communicating (albeit sometimes in “Spanglish”.) Needless to say, he did not go hungry. There were many dinners with all the FF clubs.

This exchange offered a variety of experiences which showcased both the tourist attractions of Brazil and life in three very different cities. And it afforded Tim the usual FFI opportunity to make many friends—among his North Carolina traveling companions and as well as his hosts in Brazil.

## Morocco

*Judy Greene and Karla Shanahan traveled to Morocco on October 2 – 15. At the time of their departure, the US and other Western embassies and consulates in North Africa and elsewhere were experiencing demonstrations; some of which were violent. There had been a demonstration in Casablanca, as well - their destination city. Upon their return they were happy to report that they saw none of this and were welcomed with incredible hospitality everywhere.*

The movie Casablanca did it for Karla Shanahan. When she saw it for the first time as a teenager, she was fascinated. Morocco promised something mystical and exotic, so she decided that one day she would go and see for herself. And she did!

In October Karla and fellow FFCNC'er, Judy Greene, traveled with FF Dayton, Ohio to FF Azrou, Morocco, a developing club. In the industrial, economic capital of Casablanca, they explored the world's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest mosque and tallest minaret. Welcoming them at lunch, exchange director, Lotfi Lamrani, opened with, “Thank you for trusting us enough to make this trip!” Their trust was well deserved as they set off on a National bus tour with an amazing guide, Ali Alami and his staff. Lotfi joined them at



*Karla rides the lead camel*

various stops along the way as they traveled south to Marrakesh (where the entrepreneurial spirit is evident in the souks<sup>1</sup>), to the Berber<sup>2</sup> village of Ghanem, then on to Ouarzazate, the Hollywood of Morocco, where many movies needing medieval towns, adobe walls or desert dunes are filmed (e.g., *Lawrence of Arabia*). East from Erfoud they traveled an hour by 4 x 4 to

the Western Sahara where they rode a camel into the dunes at sunset—Karla “drove” the lead camel!

Everywhere this beautiful country revealed its diversity of people, cultures, music, art, food, herbs, fossils and landscapes: forests of olive, date, carob, walnut and citrus trees; rolling hills and fertile river valleys, the barren Atlas Mountains with stark red rocks grazed by goats and sheep; snow-capped peaks and ski villages built by the French and Swiss; and the Western Sahara. From museums, mosques and palaces decorated with intricate carvings and colorful mosaic tiles, they learned about Islam, meanings of numbers and colors in spirituality, culture, food, clothing, adobe construction and much more.



*Judy collects water at the community well.*

Their first home stay was with Mohammed and his family in the Berber Cultural Center, a B & B he developed to generate family income and help preserve the village culture. Here they made their own lunch Berber style. After the tea<sup>3</sup> making class, one group made traditional bread, carrying it on their heads to the community oven for baking in the hot coals. Karla’s group prepared several traditional *tagines*<sup>4</sup> of chicken, lamb and vegetables, while Judy accompanied the donkey and its handler to the community well to draw water. Before dinner they gathered in the courtyard for a traditional Moroccan tea-making contest where the winners used the right amount of sugar (LOTS) and each went home with a teapot and bragging rights! After dinner they were treated to traditional Berber music featuring metal castanets, clapping and stringed instruments.

Azrou was the location of the home hosting portion of the exchange. They were welcomed warmly with great kindness and hospitality that rivaled any here in the South so that it was a joy to make new friends!

Both mornings they were awakened by the 1st (of 5) daily call to prayer at 4:30 AM. Immersing themselves in family life, they visited an elementary school; the adventurous among them experienced a traditional hammam (public bath & exfoliation), a henna ceremony; and a Women’s Co-op where a caffeine-free coffee-like drink is made from stone-ground date pits and generates income for the village women.

Their day in the medina of Fes, “the soul of Morocco”, was another highlight of the trip. The medina is inside a medieval walled city, which today is the largest and oldest working settlement in the world—a UNESCO World Heritage site. With over 9,700 streets and a million people living, working and worshipping within the city walls, this maze of narrow streets are crowded with working artisans, food, spice and merchandise vendors, residents, shoppers, tourists and donkeys--the only way to transport goods within the Medina (a medieval version of UPS). If someone calls, “Ballack! Ballack!” get out of the way or you may be trampled by a donkey carrying a very large load of merchandise! There are fresh food markets, an abundance of

spices, a tannery, ceramic factory, textile weaving...Judy says, “You have to experience it—the smells, colors and sounds are incredible! And all the time you pray that you do not get lost!”

The last night in Casablanca they dined at Rick's Café. Karla recalled the movie while they dined, thinking of Ingrid Bergman, Humphrey Bogart and those famous lines: “*Play it again, Sam,*” “*Here’s looking at you kid,*” and, “*We’ll always have Paris.*”

By the way, the movie *Casablanca* was filmed in 1942, entirely in Hollywood. It is wonderful to have this movie...and now *Judy and Karla will always have their wonderful memories of Morocco*-- this beautiful country and its warm loving and generous people.

*Footnotes:*

<sup>1</sup>Souks are open-air markets.

<sup>2</sup>Berbers are the native peoples of several tribes.

<sup>3</sup>Tea: The national welcome drink of Morocco is a very sweet mint tea and in the Berber villages the welcome drink is milk with dates.

<sup>4</sup>The national dish of Morocco is a *tagine*. *Tagine* is BOTH a noun—a clay pot with a cone-shaped lid used for slow cooking over hot coals--AND an adjective describing the style or contents of the stew--vegetables and/or chicken, beef or lamb. A tagine is usually served in a large platter atop a bed of couscous. Tagines may be eaten with the hands or with a spoon with fresh fruit for dessert. This is a traditional family meal served to special guests and every Friday after prayers.

## **Australia – Firm Dates Announced**

Judy Greene and Ray Kiszely, exchange directors for our 2013 out-bound exchange to the Gold Coast of Australia, have made great progress planning this trip. Dates are now firm. Those travelling will be responsible for their own flight reservations, allowing ambassadors to arrive early or stay longer to visit other destinations if they choose. Therefore, the start date for this exchange is July 10 in Brisbane. Given the duration of travel and the need to cross the International Date Line, this means one must depart North Carolina no later than July 8.

The first few days will be spent in Brisbane to allow time to recuperate. Judy and Ray are contacting the Australian ED’s to learn what activities they are planning for our group, then Judy and Ray will plan a few activities in the Brisbane area, being careful not to duplicate other plans.

On Sunday, July 14 the group will travel north to Bundaberg where we will be hosted until Saturday, July 20 when the group will head south to visit the Friendship Force Sunshine Coast until Friday, July 26. At the conclusion of the home stay experiences, ambassadors will return to the US or travel to other destinations of their own choosing.

Currently approximately fifteen FFCNC members have indicated a desire to participate in this exchange. The size of our group is limited to *approximately* twenty members; the exact number is dependent on the final mix of singles and doubles traveling. So if you are interested in joining the group it is important to let Judy or Ray know as soon as possible. You may contact Judy at 768-1732 or [green111184@bellsouth.net](mailto:green111184@bellsouth.net) or Ray at 580-3253 or [RayKiszely@hotmail.com](mailto:RayKiszely@hotmail.com)



Cost for airfare is estimated at \$2100+ and cost for the exchange itself is estimated at \$2500 – \$3000 per person.

## **Annual Meeting**

Round tables made festive with fall flowers greeted the nearly 50 FFCNC members and guests who attended the annual meeting October 25<sup>th</sup>. After enjoying Val Stokes “famous” citrus punch, everyone savored the potluck meal of many dishes—yum!

Following dinner several points of business were addressed. Our newest members attending were introduced—as were a number of founding members—and visitors were welcomed. Peter Peiffer read the slate of officers for 2013 which was elected by acclaim. As Barbara North will serve two years as President, we did not choose a President-Elect. Barbara then introduced appointees to the Board and briefly described their functions.

Ray Kiszely spoke briefly about plans for the 2013 outbound exchange to Australia—which will include homestays in both Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. Interested members should contact him or co-ED, Judy Greene, for developing details.

Peter asked three members who recently traveled via exchanges organized by other FFI clubs – Tim Prout to Brazil and Judy Greene and Karla Shanahan to Morocco – to report briefly. (Read more about these exchanges above.)

Barbara North recognized Peter’s second term as President and thanked him on behalf of the club with a donation made in his honor to the FFI Global Expansion Fundraising Campaign. FFI is seeking to raise \$275,000 to establish new clubs in every region of the world. This is a fitting honorarium for Peter who played a large role planning the Open World program for the Moldovan guests. Moldova is one of the countries that does not currently have a FF club and our Moldovan visitors would like to start one.

At the conclusion of the business items, our attention was turned to the program planned for the evening. Peter introduced Melody Bullock, assistant director of pediatrics and pediatric intensive care for Cone Health, who spoke and showed slides describing her medical mission to Moldova—the poorest nation in Europe and a former Soviet republic. Melody became involved in the NC Moldova State Partnership Program by accompanying local dentists and Rotarians who have been volunteering in Moldova for more than ten years. A cancer survivor herself, she saw widespread cancer problems in Moldova related to the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear facility accident. Melody will make her third trip to Moldova in March to both deliver additional supplies and do further training to implant chemotherapy IV lines.

As FFCNC recently hosted an Open World delegation from Moldova, Melody’s photos and comments were of great interest. The meeting adjourned with everyone appreciating an evening of international awareness—from Brazil to Morocco to Moldova.

## **Newsflash!**

FFCNC has been contacted by FFI in Atlanta with a request to host an in-bound exchange in November of 2013. After a visit in the Triad the club, Haliburton Highlands from Ontario, Canada, will be traveling on to the FF International Conference in New Orleans. More

information will be forthcoming. If you would be interested in serving as an exchange director, please contact Barbara North at 643-0985 or [woodnotes2004@yahoo.com](mailto:woodnotes2004@yahoo.com).

## 2013 Board Announced

Please welcome Sandy Bundgaard and Nancy Russell, two new members who will be serving on our board, and when you have a chance, please let all the board members know how many their efforts are appreciated.

President	Barbara North
Past-President	Peter Peiffer
Vice-President & Membership Chair	Marvin Scherl
Secretary	Ophelia Jones
Treasurer	Judy Greene
Activities Chair	Val Stokes & Karla Shanahan
Publicity Chair	Sandy Bundgaard
Communications Chair	Martha Brown
Membership Records	Marvin & Linda Scherl
Exchange Directors:	
In-Bound Berlin '12	Marcia Meiss & Judy Greene
Out-Bound Australia Sunshine Coast '13	Judy Greene & Ray Kiszely
In-Bound Haliburton Highlands, Canada '13	to be announced
Member-at-Large	Donna Lambeth
Member-at-Large	Nancy Russell

## Reminders



It's time to remit our membership dues for 2013. If you have not already done so, please respond to the request mailed to members. If this has been misplaced, no problem, please write a check to **FFCNC** for \$25 for single members and \$30 for families. Mail this to Marvin Scherl at 6740 Germanton Rd.; Germanton, NC 27019. Marvin can be reached with questions at 336-969-5923 or [marvin-linda-scherl@triad.rr.com](mailto:marvin-linda-scherl@triad.rr.com).

Orders for FFCNC nametags can be placed with Judy Greene (336-768-1732). Mail checks payable to **FFCNC** in the amount of \$9.50 per badge to: Judy Greene, 155 Old Plantation Court, Winston-Salem, NC 27104. Include a slip of paper with your name **PRINTED** as you wish it to appear on the badge. Badges will be ordered when Judy has 10 or more names.



## 2013 Calendar Highlights

January 10	Board Meeting; 11:45 AM MSUMC; Kernersville
January 19	Holiday Social, 6 PM; at home of Val and Leroy Stokes
March 7	Board Meeting; 11:45 AM MSUMC; Kernersville
May 2	Board Meeting; 11:45 AM MSUMC; Kernersville
July 11	Board Meeting; 11:45 AM MSUMC; Kernersville

July 10 – 26  
September 5  
November 7  
November

Out-bound exchange to Sunshine Coast of Australia  
Board Meeting; 11:45 AM MSUMC; Kernersville  
Board Meeting; 11:45 AM MSUMC; Kernersville  
In-bound exchange from Haliburton Highlands, Canada