



friendship force

CENTRAL
NORTH CAROLINA

Our mission is to promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people.

Focus on Friendship ~ November 2014

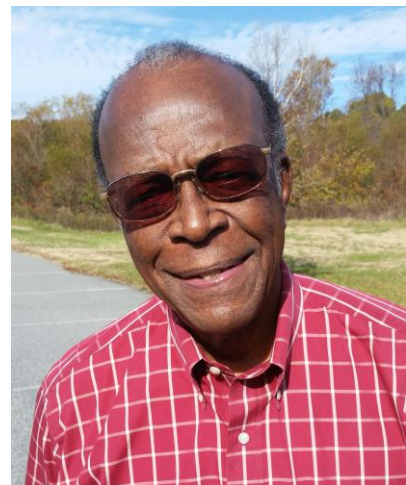
2014 Annual Meeting

On Halloween Eve, Thursday, October 30, 2014, members of FFCNC and their guests gathered in the fellowship hall of Main Street United Methodist Church, Kernersville, NC for our annual meeting. The tables were decorated in a fall theme with orange plastic tablecloths and potted pansies surrounded by fall leaves at the base. The evening began with a time of fellowship with punch and appetizers. After an introduction of visitors and new members and an invocation by Jane Cauthen, those in attendance enjoyed a delicious potluck feast. A slide show about Ungheni, Moldova, which had been presented by the mayor of the town to the FFCNC Moldova ambassadors, was shown during this time.

The business portion of the meeting began with a summary discussion led by Carol Andresen of the proposed changes to the bylaws. These changes were previously sent to all members for their review and were unanimously accepted by the members in attendance. The revised bylaws will be posted on our website in the near future.

Next Peter Peiffer shared with those present a communique from Jack Mullen, Chair of the FFI Board of Directors, which was recently sent to club presidents. This letter summarized FFI's findings from the survey which was conducted earlier this year and discussed the board's work developing a strategic plan for FFI for 2015 – 2018. More information regarding the strategic plan follows this article.

Before the 2015 slate of officers was presented, Barbara North, President, recognized the efforts of those members who served in 2014 as officers, members of the board, committee chairs and their members. After eight years as Communications Chair, it was announced that Martha Brown is stepping down from this role. In honor of her service to FFCNC, Barbara announced the club will donate \$100 to the FFI Legacy Fund. Ophelia Jones, current Secretary, and Tim Prout, current Treasurer, were presented as the slate of officers for 2015/16 and were unanimously elected. The current Vice-President, Leroy Stokes, will automatically succeed to the Presidency for the next two years. No Vice-Presidential candidate was announced at this time, though efforts will continue to recruit an FFCNC member to fill this role. Judy Greene will remain as Membership Chair and Dian Nussbaum has agreed to be our new Activities Chair.



New FFCNC President, Leroy Stokes

The Moldova Mentoring Exchange from August 27 to September 3, 2014 was very successful as reported by Jim and Barbara North, Nancy and Peter Peiffer, Doris and Ray Kiszely, Martha Brown, and Jane and Ralph Cauthen, all of whom served as ambassadors along with Barton and Evelyn Parks, Steve and Susan Tindall of FF Pikes Peak, and Derek Brown of Pittsburgh, Martha Brown's son. Mariana Turcan, Creative Development Association Executive Director and host exchange director for this mentoring exchange, recently sent an email which highlights the success of the exchange. She wrote, "Back at CDA we are still remembering you all – our positive and full of energy ambassadors of peace and intercultural dialogue. We got more people interested in the Friendship Force program and will soon have a meeting planning the creation of the organization. We gained so much during your visit – learned a lot about the program, but also about how our community/society can be part of this special program."

Special attention and care was provided to our ambassadors as everyone experienced various Moldovan lifestyles living with their host families. Some of the host families included young children and this facilitated meaningful interactions with them and attendance at some of their school activities.

This was our club's first mentoring experience. The overall impression our ambassadors gained was that they made good contacts with many potential chapter members, leaving them well introduced to the issues involved in starting a FF club, and with many clear resources to help them as they proceed with the goal of creating two Friendship Force clubs in Moldova – one in the capital of Chisinau and one in Ungheni, the sister city of Winston-Salem. Barton Parks, exchange director, and all the ambassadors were thanked for their success.

Ray Kiszely gave a brief report on the inbound exchange from the UK scheduled for October 2015. Martha Brown, ED for the Russia outbound exchange next June, provided a detailed summary of the exchange which includes a week of home hosting in Moscow and a week touring the "Golden Ring" and St. Petersburg. Initial deposits and applications for Russia for club members are due by January 3, 2015.

Members were reminded that membership renewal notices would be sent out the first week in November. All members should have received them by the time this newsletter is received. If not, please contact Judy Greene.

FFCNC's annual exchange requests were recently submitted to Atlanta. Our board has requested Costa Rica, Chile, China, or the Republic of Georgia as our 2016 outbound destination. The results of this annual matching process will be received in late winter/early spring of 2015.

Ann Finch, Chair of the Annual Meeting Committee, and her committee members, Karla Shanahan, Valerie Stokes, Molly North, Bonnie Cook, Carol Cochrane, and Sandy Bundgaard, were recognized for their efforts organizing and setting up the annual meeting.

The closing included applause thanking Barbara North, President for the past two years, for all of her good work and dedication to that role.

FFI's Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2018

The following are excerpts from Jack Mullen's (Chair of FFI Board of Directors) October 8, 2014 letter to FF club presidents and leadership:

Your FFI Board of Directors met recently to review the state of our organization and to take the necessary actions to ensure its growth and sustainability. They were a busy and productive three days which



focused on key findings of the recent survey, discussion of the Strategic Plan for 2015-2018, and policies to put in place addressing concerns we have about the sustainability of FFI.....

As a first step, I would like to share with you some of the trends that we consider significant for the orientation and sustainability of FFI. Together with your input from the survey, these trends will make clear to you why we will be placing much emphasis in the strategic plan on revitalizing Friendship Force and why we need to manage our organization in a businesslike manner. Let me be clear: FFI's financial stability is not at risk, however the aging of our network and the decline in hosting capacity are undermining our growth while demand for new programs and for new ways of doing things is changing our organization. What we want to ensure is that you and your membership have a say in what we become and how we get there.

Lack of growth of ambassador travel

.....total ambassador participation has remained flat over the course of the 2012-2014 Expansion Plan.....Member and club attrition due to aging, lower hosting capacity by new clubs, the recent cancellation by the operator of the popular Enrichment Voyage cruise, and declining interest in club-to-club exchanges....are all contributing to undermine our growth efforts.....

..... club-to-club exchange participation is declining. Interestingly, 83% of the 2014 Survey respondents have indicated that they love the home hosting component of exchanges. What we have seen in recent years is a gradual shift from club-to-club exchanges to special exchanges, including thematic exchanges, many of which comprise home hosting. One conclusion we can draw from this combined data is that club members are showing a growing interest in programs that offer more learning, more meaning, new destinations and new FF experiences..... For this reason, the Strategic Plan will address many ways to enrich our exchanges in order to boost interest in exchange participation.

Under-subscribed exchanges over the same three-year period

.....roughly half of our exchanges in recent years have had 15 ambassadors or less...The reasons for this trend are manifold but two patterns stand out: hosting capacity is shrinking in high-demand destinations, notably in Europe; and participation in exchanges is too often restricted to club members only, resulting in under-subscribed exchanges. The latter pattern is unsustainable. This was never the intention for Friendship Force founders. For them, the world was invited to join in.

Taken together, the trends depicted above show that a higher ratio of ambassadors is needed to sustain our rich and growing portfolio of exchanges. For these reasons, the Strategic Plan has been developed to increase demand for exchanges through program enrichment as well as to address the imbalance of hosting capacity and hosting surplus in key regions of the world. A third step is essential: opening our hearts and minds to new ideas and opening up our exchanges to members of other clubs, prospective members from our own communities and, for the longer term, to younger participants.

This is where this communication comes in. We first wanted you to understand the challenge we face in setting FFI on a sustainable course.....We want to ensure that you, as stakeholders, club members and client-participants in exchanges, agree with the vision we set for the organization we love.

In this spirit, we would like you to discuss with your membership three questions As we need to finalize our plans for implementation in January 2015, we are asking that you submit the form by November 14th. This would allow your CEO and your Board to get back to you in early

December with a finalized Strategic Plan and a complementary set of policies, both designed to set FFI on a sustainable course.

On behalf of your CEO and your Board, I thank you for your willingness to tackle this challenge with us. We will value your response, your vision and your passion.

*Most sincerely,
Jack Mullen
Chair FFI Board of Directors*

At our annual meeting, after providing the background of this letter, Peter Peiffer, presented the three questions being asked of all FF members by the FFI board. Again, in an effort to be brief, the three questions are summarized as follows:

Fill-the-Seat-Policy: *Exchanges that remain under-filled 100 days before departure must be posted on the FFI catalog.*

Online Members: *Providing an e-membership (electronic membership) for people not located near a club or clusters of people interested in FFI but unable to launch a club due to their small number.*

Domestic and European Inter-Club Exchanges: *User fees are the most equitable way of supporting the FFI network and administration in which case domestic and EU inter-club exchanges should carry their share of this overhead, irrespective of the matching process..*

After providing background information related to these three issues and some discussion, Peter distributed ballots and all members present were provided the opportunity to vote for or against these proposed policies. A tally of the results following our annual meeting resulted in affirmative responses for all three measures. Peter will be sending FFCNC's results to FFI in Atlanta.

Update on Outbound Exchange to Russia



Martha Brown, exchange director for our 2015 outbound exchange to Russia, reports that planning for the exchange is now complete and recruiting efforts are in full swing.

Dates for this exchange have changed slightly as a result of a group reservation for flights that was made with Lufthansa. The departure date of June 9 and arrival in Moscow on June 10 remains the same. Those flying on the group reservation will depart St. Petersburg on June

25 as originally planned, but rather than departing on an early morning flight that day and spending a long day flying home, the group will fly in the afternoon from St. Petersburg to Munich, Germany, spend the night there, then fly on to Charlotte on June 26. These flights offered competitive pricing and it is hoped will make an easier transition returning home. Transportation will be provided between the Triad and the Charlotte airport.

An informational meeting was held on October 11 which was attended by thirteen FFCNC members and two guests. This exchange has also been advertised in FFI's exchange catalog and the resulting exposure has generated many inquiries from around the US and even the world!

The Moscow FF club has recommended we limit the size of our group to 25 and Martha anticipates that we will be able to recruit 20 – 25 ambassadors for this exchange. Ambassador applications are being accepted now - in fact, several have already been received from FFCNC members and members from other clubs as well. Priority will be given to FFCNC members up to Jan. 3rd, the deadline for payment of the deposit. After that date, applications from non-FFCNC members will be processed.

A schedule of key dates has been developed which includes two orientation meetings in the spring and attendance at a UNCSA symphony in March of Russian music.

If you would like to know more about this exchange, please contact Martha at 946-0105 or brownfamily@triad.rr.com. She now has a great deal of detailed information she can share with those who are interested. Though the absolute deadline to apply as an ambassador is January 3, with the holidays coming up, Martha recommends that interested members submit their ambassador applications before Thanksgiving.

Upcoming exchange opportunities

Several possible exchange opportunities for 2015 are under consideration.

Ray Kiszely, co-exchange director with Doris, is in contact with his counterpart in the FF Cleveland County, UK club. They are in the process of discussing the dates for this visit which will be coordinated with a second home stay in the US. This inbound exchange will likely occur in October of 2015.

It has been difficult to schedule dates for a domestic exchange to FF Pikes Peak in Colorado due to their busy schedule. Nonetheless, FF Pikes Peak and FFCNC are committed to this exchange. When the 2016 exchange matchings are announced after the New Year, the two clubs will review their schedules and select a date for this visit in 2015 or 2016, whichever works best for both clubs.



The Greensboro Rotary club will host a medical exchange funded by Open World to bring nurses from Moldova in 2015 to be trained in palliative care/oncology and gerontology. FFCNC is in discussion with representatives of this club and we hope to be able to assist with their program, perhaps providing day hosting.

FFI in Atlanta has approached FFCNC with several upcoming Open World programs we could possibly host in 2015. The programs cover a range of themes and the delegates are from a variety of countries. These options are being discussed by the board. In order to commit to one of these programs, FFCNC must identify an exchange director and other members willing to work on a committee which will plan the program, find host families, etc. If you would have an interest in being involved in an Open World program contact Barbara North (woodnotes2004@yahoo.com or 643-0985) or Leroy Stokes (lstokes1@northstate.net or 887-2947.) FFCNC has hosted four Open World delegations and those involved, be it as exchange directors, committee members, or host families, have enthusiastically reported that their involvement with these impressive delegates was a wonderful experience.

There is also discussion of a possible outbound domestic exchange to FF Northern Ohio in 2015 or 2016.

As you can see, there are many exchanges on our horizon. Watch for more news about all of these in coming newsletters and please consider how you may be able to assist with or participate in one or more of these exchanges.

Welcome Wagon

Please welcome our newest member:

Cheryl Katz's interests are arts, crafts, and painting. She is a kindergarten teacher at Sherwood Forest Elementary School in Winston-Salem. She has two sons – Ray, 28, who lives in LA and works in graphic arts and Eric, 26, who is a 3rd year medical student at ECU Brody School of Medicine. Cheryl is a longtime friend of Karla Shanahan and is looking forward to many positive experiences with FFCNC.



2015 Membership Dues

As in past years, our annual membership renewal and dues will be due by Dec. 31. Unlike in past years, this year you should have received your dues notice by email unless you previously requested to receive FFCNC communications through the US postal service. If you have not received your dues notice, be certain to contact Judy Greene (jgreene@udel.edu or 768-1732.)

Also, your FFCNC board recently approved an increase in dues, the first increase since FFCNC was formed in 2007. This increase will cover the 2015 increase in charter fees paid to FFI as well as help support FFCNC activities. Membership dues for 2015 will remain at \$25 for a single membership and will increase to \$35 for a family membership (which includes all non-adult children.)

Time for the Second Act

I remember a night in 2006 during the week between Christmas and New Year's. I was chilling (as my daughter would say) on the sofa when the phone rang and I found myself talking with a certain Carol Andresen whom I had never met nor heard of before. As I politely listened to the purpose for her call I soon learned that she was to be the first president of FFCNC. Being a prior Citizens for International Understanding member who had moved from Greensboro to Winston-Salem seven years earlier, I had only a casual awareness of this merger of CIU and FF Winston-Salem, the result of a couple of letters that had arrived in our mail. Carol asked me to be the Communications Chair of FFCNC for 2007 and explained that basically my duty would be to act as the "gatekeeper" of the club's email communications. This did not sound terribly hard or time consuming. I knew how to send email; so I agreed. As we were hanging up the phone, Carol added, "Oh, and maybe send out a couple of newsletters during the year." Well, OK. I guess I can do that, too.

As I look back at our archives I see that in 2007 we published three newsletters. Little did I know then, how this job would grow! In 2008, with help from others, we published ten newsletters. We built a website. Once the website was built we took more and more advantage of it as we realized it was the perfect place to store club documents for easy access. Photo albums were added for almost every inbound and outbound exchange the club was involved

with. Invitations became more creative. And coming soon in 2015, FFCNC will have its own Facebook page.

Eight years is a long time for anyone in any club to hold the same position. In my case it was easy to do for many reasons. First, there were always other FFCNC members ready to pitch in and help. Second, as a board member, it was fun and rewarding to sit on the front row and observe as our club grew and matured. But most importantly, FFCNC members have been positive and complimentary, making my efforts always seem worthwhile.

Now it is time to pass the baton. As you know, I am serving as the exchange director for our 2015 outbound exchange to Moscow – another project which is very exciting to me. Plus, it is time for new ideas and visions. As I sign off on this, my last FFCNC newsletter, I want to thank the club for their thoughtful gift of a donation in my name to FF's Legacy Fund and I want to thank all of you (there are too many to name) who have helped me over the years.

Now, come join me on a great trip to Russia!

Martha Brown

2015 Calendar Highlights

June 9 – 26, 2015
October 2015

Out-bound to Moscow, Russia
In-Bound from Cleveland County, United Kingdom

