



# friendship force

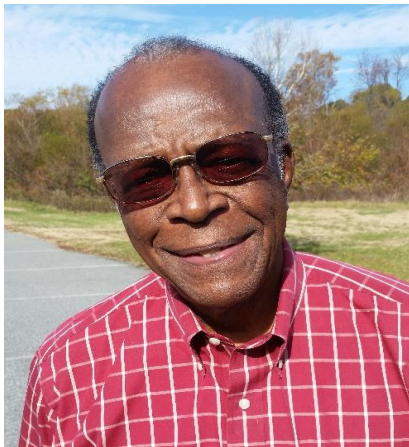
CENTRAL  
NORTH CAROLINA

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

## Focus on Friendship ~ February 2015

### 2015 Upcoming Events

February 15, 2015	Cultural Workshop on Russia
February 22, 2015	North Korea with Tamara Michael
March 5, 2015	FFCNC Board Meeting
March 22, 2015	UNCSA Symphony Orchestra, Russian Fireworks
May 1-9, 2015	Kosovo Open World Delegation
June 9 – 26, 2015	Out-bound to Moscow, Russia
October 2015	In-Bound from Cleveland County, United Kingdom



### Meet Our New President, Leroy Stokes

Leroy was born in Taylorsville, North Carolina, and raised in Columbus, Ohio. He is married to Valerie Stokes who previously owned LeVals Boutique, a women's apparel shop, in downtown Greensboro. They have three children, Leroy Junior, Maurice and Tracy (deceased), and eight grandchildren. They attend Destiny Christian Center where Leroy Junior, Pastor Lee Stokes, is their pastor. Leroy retired from Lucent Technologies June 30, 2000, after 35 years' service as their Manager of Material Planning and Management. He became Vice President of Corporate and Continuing Education at Guilford Technical Community College, GTCC, in January of 2001. In that position, he had overall responsibility for all non-credit programs and overall responsibility for the High Point and Greensboro Campuses. He retired from the college in August, 2013. Leroy earned a bachelor's degree in Production from Ohio State University, Master of Business Administration from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and an Associate's Degree in Accounting from Guilford Technical Community College. Leroy is currently Executive Administrator of Destiny Christian Center. He is often referred to as "Dad" by many of the members of the church because of his relationship to Pastor Lee Stokes. His second son, Maurice, is Director of Media for the church. Leroy has overall responsibility for the non-ministry operations of the church.

### **FFCNC Officers for 2015-2017**

President, Leroy Stokes, 336-887-2947  
 Secretary, Ophelia Jones, 336-449-6521  
 Treasurer, Tim Prout, 336-918-7931  
 Membership Chair, Judy Greene, 336-768-1732  
 Activities Chair, Dian Nussbaum, 336-288-3520  
 Communications Chair, Barbara North, 336-643-0985

### **RUSSIAN HISTORY – FEBRUARY 15**



All members and their guests interested in learning a little about Russian history are invited to the lecture given by Jeff Jones PhD, on Sunday, February 15, 2015 from 2:30 to 4 PM at the chapel of Main Street United Methodist Church. A few light refreshments will be served. The church is located at 306 S. Main St, Kernersville, NC 27284. Friendship Force Central North Carolina The speaker, **Jeff Jones**, PhD is a native North Carolinian and is currently an Associate Professor in Russian/Soviet and world history at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. His book, *Everyday Life and the 'Reconstruction' of Soviet Russia During and After the Great Patriotic War, 1943-1948*, was published in November 2008.

### **NORTH KOREA TRAVELS – FEBRUARY 22**

Enjoy an afternoon with **Tamara Michael** as she shares her experiences and insights traveling in North Korea. Join us in the chapel at Main St. United Methodist Church, 306 S. Main St. in Kernersville, on Sunday, February 22nd, 2-4 PM. Light refreshments will be served. We suggest using the parking lot in the back of the church which is closer to the chapel. Please RSVP to **Dian Nussbaum** by February 20<sup>th</sup> at [iamdians@gmail.com](mailto:iamdians@gmail.com) or 336-288-3520.



Tamara Michael, who recently joined FFCNC, resides in Winston Salem NC and volunteers at the North Carolina School of the Arts and other community organizations after a 30+ year career with the U.S. Postal Service. She received a B.A. in art history and enjoys adventure travel to places like North Korea, Iran, and Pakistan. Tamara doesn't mind traveling alone; she always meets someone interesting during the trips. Inspired by her travels with two guys she met while trekking in the Himalayas, Tamara wrote, *The Suitcase Wife*, a fictional story about their adventures together.

### **TWENTY-FIVE AMBASSADORS TO RUSSIA**



#### **It's a Full House!**

FFCNC's outbound exchange to Moscow will consist of a full group of twenty-five ambassadors – the largest outbound exchange in FFCNC history. This is largely due to following the guidance of FFI to advertise our exchange early in the FFI exchange catalog. As a result over fifty inquiries were received! The group will consist of thirteen FFCNC

members: the North's, Cauthen's, Kiszely's, Lundee Amos, Danny Crump, Karla Shanahan, Karlyn Shanklyn, Barbara Guess, Tomoko Thornburg (one of our new members), and exchange director, Martha Brown. In addition to our members, the group will be joined by twelve ambassadors from Michigan; Indiana; Florida; Texas; Hamilton, Ontario; Salvador, Brazil; and Brasilia, Brazil. Many thanks go to **Carol Andresen** who spent countless hours emailing and phone calling various FF club presidents and references in order to vet our out-of-state ambassadors. Our new travel companions will bring a range of interests and backgrounds to our group including three who have traveled to Russia before and speak some Russian.

In the next few months there will be several cultural events planned for the ambassadors; however, *all members are welcome!* **Peter Peiffer** is coordinating the first event on February 15 which will be a presentation by Dr. Jeff Jones, professor of history at UNCG, who will give us a brief history of Russia and touch on related subjects such as the government and economy. See the detailed information above.

On March 22, same time and place as the history presentation, we will have a presentation on Russian culture. **Carol Andresen** is busily pulling together a program of several speakers to talk about Russian literature, music, art, and religion. Watch for a second email invitation for this event in the coming weeks.

On March 19, the UNC School of the Arts Symphony Orchestra is performing "Russian Fireworks" at the Stevens Center in Winston-Salem. This will be a program of Russian music culminating in Shostakovich's 5<sup>th</sup> symphony. **Karla Shanahan** will be coordinating dinner and performance reservations. So mark this date on your calendars for a night out on the town and look for details coming soon.

We hope to see many of you at these three cultural events as we prepare our ambassadors for their summer adventure.

**From Martha Brown**

## Open World Program with Kosovo Delegates

**From Ray Kiszely**

**Friday, May 1 through Saturday, May 9, 2015:** These are the dates that Friendship Force of Central North Carolina will be hosting a group of 5 Delegates and 2 Facilitators from the tiny landlocked Nation of Kosovo. At one time part of the former Yugoslav Republic, and the scene of much bloodshed during the post-Soviet era Balkan wars, Kosovo still struggles with securing recognition from its neighbors.

Our Kosovo Delegates will be here for an Agro-Business program to explore North Carolina's agricultural resources and to learn first-hand about our private sector led economic development of small and large businesses in agriculture.

We are in need of additional home hosts as well as day hosts and drivers for some of the professional meetings. Please contact **Judy Greene** at 336-768-1732 or e-mail her at [green111184@bellsouth.net](mailto:green111184@bellsouth.net) if you would like to assist. Further details will follow at a later date.



## OTHER EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES



### The 38<sup>th</sup> World Conference

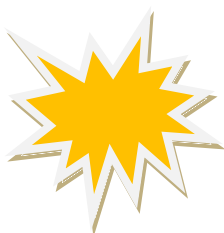


Registration is now open for FFI's 38<sup>th</sup> World Conference to be held in Vancouver, Canada, in August 2015. What better place to stage a conference with the theme "Building Bridges" than Vancouver – a city which boasts over 22 bridges and tunnels linking it to the Lower Mainland of British Columbia!

Good friends are a lot like bridges. They serve as a connection to life – a tie to the past, a road to the future, and a conduit through which we may live a fulfilling life in the present. It has been said that strangers are just friends waiting to happen. FF Metro Vancouver is eager to embrace new FFI friends and to showcase Canada's Pacific West Coast. Make plans to attend now.

### The Southeast Regional Conference

The Southeast Regional Conference will be held April 8-10, 2015 in Anderson, South Carolina at the Holiday Inn Express hotel. The regional conference is held every two years in a central location for members of clubs in NC, SC, GA, AL and TN, states which comprise the SE region. This is an opportunity to renew friendships and meet new friends from other clubs in our region. Attendees should arrive on Wednesday afternoon. Informative sessions will begin on Thursday morning. The conference will end on Friday morning. The cost of the conference is \$75 per person and the cost of the hotel is \$220 per room for 2 nights. Please contact the SE Regional representative, **Tom Laggy**, at [tltide@bellsouth.net](mailto:tltide@bellsouth.net) if you plan to attend.



### NEWSFLASH! MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**NOW!** The Inbound exchange for 2016 will be from the Sunshine Coast, Australia tentatively scheduled for the spring. The Outbound exchange will be to Liuzhou, China tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2016!

## What Does Friendship Force Mean to You?

*Below is an interesting article from one of the members of the Western North Carolina FF club*

### Community Connections: 'Let there be peace on Earth'

*By Renee Kumor, Columnist*

*Published: Thursday, January 15, 2015 on BlueRidgeNow.com*

On New Year's Eve I sat in a pew at Immaculate Conception celebrating the vigil of one of our Catholic holy days. (No, this is not a theology lesson ... or maybe it is?) At the closing of the Mass, the congregation sang "Let there be Peace on Earth" (by Jill Jackson Miller and Sy Miller, 1955). As we sang the words I looked up at the crucifix above the altar. Are you listening?, I asked.

This is an especially poignant song to me and many of us who are members of the Friendship Force. It's our anthem. It's the song we sing, we have sung, around the world, holding hands with our hosts in many countries or with our guests who are visiting here in the United States.

My friends from our local club have sung it in recent years in Russia, South Africa, Indonesia, New Zealand, Peru, Japan. We have hosted people who have visited Western North Carolina from Belgium, Russia, Australia, Moldova, Canada, Netherlands. Every exchange is concluded as we sing ... "Let there be peace on earth..."

Hearing those words makes me recall the places and people with whom I've shared this song. Two stand out in my mind. In Yogyakarta, my Muslim host, we sang. He shattered all my assumptions about Muslim men. He loved his wife, children for all the world to see, and sang all of John Denver's songs with me.

The other strong memory is the evening we sang in my kitchen with several Moldovans and our differences and



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"...the peace that was meant to be..."

Friendship Force is not the only organization in our community reaching around the globe. Civic clubs such as Rotary continuously sponsor exchanges to other Rotary International clubs. Their teams bring medical support and help raise funds to provide services to remote villages from Asia to South America. They teach the lesson that businessmen and women have a responsibility to help build community.

And then there is the group supporting the Sister Cities project, sharing ideas and experiences at a local leadership level. Watch the paper to see what other civic clubs do for international friendship.

"...with God as our father, brothers all are we..."

And the local churches! Weekly we read stories of local congregations sending their members to small foreign communities to reach out, supported by their beliefs and by local funds, to bring medicine and education, fostered by the Gospels, to people in need around the world.

“...let us walk with each other in perfect harmony...”

I was told by one of our Russian visitors years ago that he had been cautioned that he would find that Americans were nothing like the people represented in propaganda. We were a warm and welcoming people. We live in small towns, raise our children and value friends and family.

Which leads me to ask, will our example to the rest of the world serve peace in 2015?

“...let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.”

**May Your Valentine’s Day be PURRR---able!**



*Happy Black History Month; Happy Valentine's Day; Happy Presidents' Day; Happy Every Day!*