



friendship force

CENTRAL
NORTH CAROLINA

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

Summer ~ June 2015

2015 Upcoming Events

June 9 – 26, 2015	Out-bound to Moscow, Russia
October 1-7, 2015	In-Bound from Cleveland County, United Kingdom
October 5, 2015	Annual Membership Meeting, MSUMC, Kernersville

The Kosovar's were here!



For several months a team of FFCNC's members worked on plans for our Open World Program on Agribusiness. A delegation of four agricultural business people from Kosovo accompanied by a facilitator and assisted by an interpreter were in the Triad from May 1 through May 7. They arrived from their initial meeting in Washington DC at PTI about 9:45 a.m. on May 1st and were greeted by their Winston-Salem home hosts and other club members. Our W-S hosts cared for our delegates and facilitator and interpreter for three nights. The weekend was filled with cultural activities. A potluck dinner was enjoyed by the delegates and their Winston-Salem hosts on Friday, May 1st, at the home of Tamara Michael. A welcome party for the delegates and all club members was held at Finnigan's Wake in Winston-Salem on Sunday afternoon on May 3rd where we were introduced to Kosovo with several delegate presentations.

A full week of program activities began on Monday, May 4th, with a visit to Syngenta and Miss Jenny's Pickles and of course, a sampling of those delicious pickles. After the activities on Monday, the delegates met their Greensboro home hosts at the Carolina Field of Honor at Triad Park to begin their homestays in the Greensboro area. On Tuesday, May 5th our delegates met with Carolina Farm Credit in Brown Summit and later that day visited the offices of Rep. Alma Adams in Greensboro. Wednesday, May 6th was "Aggie land Day" with delegates visiting NC A&T campus in the morning, followed by a visit to the A&T Farm in east Greensboro for an overview of their farm operations. What fun riding around in their tractor pulled wagon! Thursday, May 7th, the delegates toured and learned local farm techniques at Wayne Troxler's Brown Summit farm.



They even squeezed in an unscheduled visit to Stonefield Cellars Winery in Stokesdale before having a delicious lunch hosted by Doris and Ray Kiszely at their home in Browns Summit. Thursday afternoon was left free for shopping and shop they did! On Friday, May 8th, the Rudd Family Farm, famous for their strawberries, was the site of their next visit. Ooh, those strawberries were so sweet and delicious! Later in the day they met with Rep. Mark Walker and then participated in a debriefing workshop led by team leaders at the Center for Creative Leadership. A busy week of activities concluded with a Farewell dinner Friday evening, May 8, at Gia's in Greensboro. Saturday, May 9th was a happy and sad day for all of us as the delegates departed PTI for home. Happy to have had the opportunity to meet and work with our new friends from Kosovo. Sad because they were leaving. Feedback from the delegates indicated that the week was a wonderful professional and cultural experience.



Pictured: Hartim Gashi, Dardane Peja, Debatik Hoxha, Kastriot Kepuska, Valmire Havolli

Thanks to all the host families, day hosts, the coEDs - Ray Kiszely and Ralph Cauthen, other members of the planning committee- Dian and Russ Nussbaum, and many others who helped make this Open World program a great success!

Check Us Out on Facebook

Thanks to Nancy Russell Central North Carolina Friendship Force is now on Facebook. We have a Facebook page to post events, pictures and trips! We hope this page will help keep us up-to-date on our experiences. It also increases our visibility so others become aware of what we have to offer. Please feel free to upload and share your pictures and comments! And, most certainly, "like us on Facebook". Even if you don't have a Facebook account, you can access our page by entering the following into your browser: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friendship-Force-of-Central-North-Carolina/1549194268693508?ref=aymt_homepage_panel

If you have any questions, please contact Nancy Russell who is our Facebook Administrator.



To Russia with Love! June 9-June 26

As you read this newsletter, twenty-five ambassadors are packing and preparing to leave on our cultural exchange to Moscow, Russia. They have been preparing for this trip for several months by attending cultural workshops, an orchestra concert, and Russian language classes. The first of two cultural orientation sessions was held on February 15th on Russian history. A second cultural orientation session on Russian literature, art, and religion was held March 22nd. Both sessions were open to the club membership and were videotaped for our out-of-town ambassadors. The IT consultant for Main Street United Methodist Church recorded the second session and posted it on YouTube. On March 19th, all club members were invited to attend dinner in Winston-Salem and to hear UNCSA's performance of "Russian Fireworks" which was excellent! In addition, a visit to the Holy Cross Orthodox Church in High Point was arranged for May 22nd. In order to help the ambassadors have a basic knowledge of the Cyrillic alphabet, Martha Brown scheduled a crash course on Russian 101 on May 23, May 30, and June 6th. It has been a busy time for the ambassadors and we look forward to reading and hearing about their experiences after they return. Safe travels everyone.



The first Russian language class

NORTH KOREA TRAVELS with Tamara Michael

A FRIENDSHIP FORCE AFTERNOON OUT ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 22

Our main purpose as members of Friendship Force is to change the way we see the world as we experience travel with a purpose and become a force for international goodwill. Tamara Michael, who shared her experiences traveling in North Korea during our gathering on February 22nd, certainly proved to be an example of appreciating another country's culture. It was also our impression that on that visit she was a force for international goodwill.

Tamara, who is a member of our club, lives in Winston-Salem and volunteers at the University School of the Arts and other community organizations. Adventure travel continues to be a real enjoyment that has included visits to North Korea, Iran, and Pakistan. She is on a country-visited number quest.

Some of her shared observations and experiences in North Korea two years ago included: children are taught English; Soccer and Taekwondo are their main sports; they trust their government; attended the spectacular Mass games with 100,000 participants marching in straight lines and manipulating flash card to honor North



Korea's history with Kim Il-Sung as its leader; in addition to growing their own wheat and rice they supplement their food supply from China and several other countries; a lovely subway decorated in elaborate mosaics and marble; a Pyongyang hotel, the Ryugyong, with 3,000 rooms and 105 levels (built 20 years ago but never opened for guests); a tour guide's rank is based on years of experience; groups of men playing cards and riding bicycles along the river; dress (worn by the female guides at the monuments) has not changed since the 1950's; and it seems easier to live in the city than in the countryside.

We also had the opportunity to meet and hear from Mikhail "Mike" Yefimkin, a Russian journalist based in Greensboro with the News & Record. He was here as part of the US-Russia Media Professionals Exchange Program sponsored by the International Center for Journalism in Washington. Ray Kiszely provided the invitation since a group will be visiting there in June.

In Russia Mike is based in Smolensk, a very old city on the western border, and works for the regional supplement of a very famous Russian newspaper, called Arguments and Facts, that covers political as well as social issues all over Russia. In his February 20, 2015 News & Record article he wrote: "While running, it was very surprising to me when total strangers waved hands at me from passing cars, other runners and passers-by came up to say hello, and even dogs only took a sniff instead of biting."

Thanks to Dian Nussbaum, Activities Chair, and her committee for arranging this most interesting Afternoon Out.

The Southeast Regional Conference

The Southeast Regional Conference was held April 8-10, 2015 in Anderson, South Carolina and was hosted by the FF Lake Hartwell Club. There were about 35 in attendance including four members of our club: Ray Kiszely, Judy Greene, Barbara North, and Jennie Ray. President and CEO, Joy Di Benedetto, (left in photo below) and FFI Staff Education Project Manager, Allison Lindsey (right in photo below), from the Atlanta office participated in the program.



Joy talked about the new Strategic Plan that includes eight initiatives to set FFI on a sustainable course for the next and future generations:

- **Enrich Friendship Force Exchanges** - revitalize exchanges through diversity, through a variety of humanitarian components, through learning opportunities, and through more flexibility in fee structure and programming.
- **Maximize Exchange Participation and Hosting Capacity** – many exchanges are not full; capacity for hosting is unused or under-filled in AU, NZ, and the USA. 41% of the hosting requests are to Europe but EU clubs have lost hosting capacity. Beginning in April of 2015, undersubscribed exchanges will be posted on the FFI online exchange catalog 100 days before departure. Beginning in January 2016, a new e-membership component and a new vetting process will launch; study groups will be formed to deal with the issues of declining Europe hosting capacity, establishing footholds in challenging/emerging destinations; and making use of surplus hosting capacity in the USA and the Pacific region.
- **NextGen is for Everyone** – it is not about age; it is a state of mind. Develop NextGen exchanges for active people who seek more

involvement, more adventure and more freedom. Target active, exciting FF participants as well as soon-to-be retirees and younger generations. NextGen exchanges are flexible, participate in volunteer work, short in length, provide opportunity to know the locals/culture, and affordable in cost.

- **Leadership Development** – add field reps where most needed; create task forces on various topics; offer frequent and accessible training from FFI and add a one-day component of leadership development to regional and national meetings.
- **Branding and Marketing** – A new promotional video is available on YouTube at https://youtu.be/5h_cwLSJSmc; include clubs in local community projects and events to raise awareness.
- **Leverage Modern Technology** – use more social media, i.e., Facebook; build a new information database with improved functions for member services; develop a global online community platform and website.
- **Partnerships** – increase program variety and participation through partnerships with like-minded organizations that share complementary missions; with revenue generating partners including hospitality suppliers and travel operators, which will benefit FFI and its members. Skyteam, Homestay.com, Servas, Osher Life Learning Institute, Road Scholar, and Education First are just a few being explored.
- **Enhance and Secure Revenue Streams** – explore potential for funding through grants, formulate an endowment plan, continue yearly application for Open World grants; introduce a digital fundraising platform.

Judy and Bill Wilkes of the FF Western North Carolina (WNC) club gave a lively presentation on Open World and its benefits. Open World began in 1999 and has had 23,000 participants. The WNC club has hosted 17 Open World exchanges to date from the countries of Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, the Republic of Georgia, and Kosovo. Exchanges usually include 5 delegates, one facilitator, and one interpreter. Programming requires at least 32 hours on a themed topic and must include meetings with federal and civic leaders. Grant guidelines are available online and a new host workbook was updated in 2015.

Ellen Gragg, President, FF Shelby, NC, gave a presentation on how to pack bags for traveling. During the afternoon panel discussion, Joy mentioned that FFI has \$10,000 from Google for club advertising. Monies are available by applying for Internet advertising. Travel Guard insurance was discussed extensively. This insurance is only available to US and Canada ambassadors. The insurance is no longer discounted to FFI members but FFI does get a commission on the insurance purchased by its members. An annual insurance policy is also available for those who travel frequently during the year. Since most clubs do not have the room or capacity to store gifts that visiting clubs might give them, other ideas for club giving included money for a peace pole, a tree to be planted with a plaque, scholarship fund, local school, or a donation to

a charity of the host club's choosing. FFI is currently negotiating with Skyteam for member discounts on travel arrangements. FFI has also reapplied for a travel license which should take about a year.

Tom Laggy, Southeastern Field Rep, discussed how their club had a successful event to recruit members. Recruitment of new members is a common problem for all clubs. Each of their club members gave a committee two names of prospective members. These people were invited to attend a presentation that included food, conversation, and presentations by several members. The club then followed up with the prospective members. Their success rate with this approach was approximately 10%.

Friendship Force Crosses Cultural Barriers

The following excerpts are from a letter shared by Leroy and Valerie Stokes from the 2007 exchange ambassador from Japan whom they hosted. The letter was written for a local Japanese newspaper shortly after the exchange and was translated by Tomoko Thornburg. Even though the exchange was several years ago, memories of the exchange still linger for everyone.

My delightful stay in America by Haruhisa Yamada

I had the most unexpectedly wonderful experience ever in America. In North Carolina, my host family, Leroy and Val, took me into their home as if I was one of their family.



Their hospitality was so friendly, kind, and warm. Especially, whenever we would go out to shop or dinner, Val took my hand and she walked cheerfully; like it was so much fun to have me. They asked me what I liked to eat and fixed delicious seafood dishes for me. I did not know that American food was so good.

The second night of my stay, Leroy asked me "Did you bring a tuxedo?" I came to understand that there would be a big gala for black people. I thought it would be impossible for me to fit in at such a party so I declined Leroy's offer to go. (At one of the group activities, Haruhisa met Tomoko Thornburg who explained to him the gala was to honor the four A&T students and was a fund raiser and that he should "be a delegate from Japan" at the evening event.)

Tomoko was right! On that night I had the most exciting and memorable party that I have ever attended. After the eye popping party was over and we came home, Leroy, Val and I toasted for our friendship. On that night, Leroy and I took oath of the eternal brotherhood! By that time, I forgot how apprehensive I was before I met Leroy and Val. I had the notion that people in the East are aloof. On top of that, poor me, I was not familiar with black folks at all. As long as I live, I will never forget the precious memories with Leroy and Val.

Friendship Force makes a difference in our lives and in the lives of others!

What's New at FFI?

- **Joy Di Benedetto Resigns as CEO of FFI effective October 2015**
- Additional FFI Staff changes announced
- New catalog entry forms
- New charters
- Full list of 2015-2016 FFI exchange programs
- Developing FFI cruise programs
- Pioneer Exchanges
- Homestay.com Partnership
- New 100 Day Fill the Seat Policy

Check out the FFI website at www.friendshipforce.org for additional information.

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

