

Newsletter - A Post Covid Celebration

10 08 2023

Friendship Force Central North Carolina – FFCNC.org Friendship Force International FFI.org

Our FFCNC is now recognized as one of the most active and effective clubs in the country.

Members of Friendship Force International, our local club FFCNC, school children and many in society were impacted by travel limitations imposed by covid. FFCNC restarted Travel activity in April 2022

The goal of this newsletter first is to review highlight of all activities since covid downtime. Another goal is to relate and commend the extensive work by organizers of Club functions.

Travel and function rarely go exactly as planned. We also should be aware of our skill at wack-a-mole style adaptability of organizers to make matters move along smoothly.

Club Social Gatherings for all: Get to as many as you can!!!

Party in Park in Kernersville early 2022

Welcome Party on arrival of Ukrainian Delegate Fall 2022

Barbecue dinner on departure of Ukrainians -UUFWS Church



Saint Patrick's Celebration Potluck for All - Note Ralph Cauthen being very serious about 'Potluck'
Barbecue Sat afternoon Welcome for arrival March 17

Arrival of Kyrgyzstanis for Rule of law

Thursday dinner prior to Departure of Kyrgyzstanis
Parties for Ambassadors from New Mexico

See typical party invite at right left
 Look for more in future!
 We are a Friendly Group!

Traditional Exchange Travel: Inbound and Outbound



<u>Dates</u>	<u>Num</u>
<u>er of Participants</u>	
<u>In/Out bound</u>	
<u>Leader/Organizer</u>	
Northern Colorado	
April 2022	7
Inbound	
Judy Greene	

**Cincinnati
Outbound**

**May 2022 6
Charles John, Ray Kiszley**



**Great Red Brick meeting Hall for the people One of
ninety unique wall murals throughout Cincinnati
downtown area**

**India/Nepal
Outbound**

**March-April 2023 9
Martha Brown, Charles John**

Can you imagine a better tour?? FFCNC at it best!!!



**New Mexico
Inbound**

**June 2023
Roger Poplin**

5

**Lethbridge Canada
Outbound**

Summer 2023



**Activities for : Congressional Office for International
Leadership (COIL) / Open World**

Ukraine

Theme: Emergency Medicine

**Oct 2022 Five Delegates and Facilitator
Donald Woodward, Ray Kiszely**

**Moldova Students sponsored by ALEX (American
Leadership Experience – U.S. State Dept.) High School
Study Visit**

**Nov 2022 Seven High School Students and
Facilitator Ralph Cauthen, Alex**

In the fall of 2022, FFCNC hosted eight 19 year-old Moldova young adults participating in the ALEX Program (American Leadership Experience). Inter-cultural learning took place with the eight homes hosting the participants. A small planning committee chose Volunteerism, Peer Interaction, and the 25 year history of cooperation between the state of North Carolina and the country of Moldova. Selection of host families was handled by another Friendship Force member. Contact with certain delegates is continuing, almost a year later.

The attached Appendix of the Final Program for Alex shows the detail of contacts made and how the themes were carried out from Sat 11 12 2022 to 11 20 2023

Kyrgyzstan Theme: The Rule of Law & the US Judicial System

**May 2023 Five Delegates and Facilitator
Ray Kiszely,**

From May 12 to May 20 four judges and a Prosecutor participated in a program to acquaint the group with procedures related to Rule of law in North Carolina and the USA. The group visited a Court in Progress, a Jail , and Wake Forest Law School with a talk by the Dean and others.

Photo from Courthouse – ‘Rule of Law’ - Delegates and Participants for COIL visit from Kyrgyzstanis.

Speaking for All: I had a terrific time home hosting Chyngyz Tezekbaev a.k.a. ‘Chuck’ at left of the group along with one other Judge. Chuck was a prosecutor who claimed that our jails were like five star hotels compared to the where they held their bad guys. He spoke Kyrgyz, Turkish Russian, and English – so we got along fine. I lucked out. All the guests immediately asked for the password to the home internet so they could call home using WhatsApp. His spouse and four kids waved to me. I called later to introduce my kids. Chuck was a judo fitness guy who became my personal

trainer and demanded I do morning exercise routine as he did. He drove a Lexus SUV, loved driving my 20 year-old Lexus LS classic big car, and complained that our stores had the same Chinese stuff that theirs did. He pressured me to come to his country so he could, as still a nomad, teach me to ride horses. My kids said absolutely not. During a few hours of freetime I invited then all to come to my house, provided some good wine, and encouraged them to hit balls in the pool room. The group had themselves a great party and laughed it up like a group of teenage mall rats. Sandra Gramley and I sat in the kitchen with our wine.

The entire group became super serous when listening to a talk by the Dean of the Wake Forest Law School.

Ray Kiszely and Roger Poplin are near the end at the right.



**Want to know what is going on
with your friendship force (FFCNC) club?**

Go to our website: ffcnc.org

- Click on resources
- There are several options: click on minutes if you want to know what your board is doing
- Click on membership directory (password: wearefriends) to get contact information of our members

Membership Report and Procedures –

There are 29 of our members who have not yet signed up as National member on the FFI.ORG Website. If you are not yet signed up you may receive a reminder. Go to the website, create an account, add required contact information, and submit. FFI.org requires in to be a local club member like FFCNC, so that Eleanor, our local membership manager can confirm validity of the submission. Tasks are really easy!!!

Dues are again only \$35 this year, as noted by Eleanor Stoller. Dues are collected by our Treasurer Marta Rhodes. Dues are a super bargain!!!

Membership Procedures have been streamlined to reduce work -- Eleanor Stoller and Donald Woodward have reorganized work on Membership, Communications, and the FFCNC.org website. Eleanor maintains a spreadsheet with member names, and contact Information, adds new members, and updates. The date of change for each new or legacy member is included in the file. She then forwards updated information to DJW who updates a mailing list FFCNC Group using Google Contacts. To avoid confusion the name of the updated spreadsheet file includes the current date. The file is also forwarded to the person who maintains

and update information on the website. Our treasurer Marta Rhodes is also informed. It should be very easy for a future member to learn tasks. Volunteers to help are highly prized!!!

Travel Moments to both Remember (or Forget) -- 'Adventure of the Delayed Travel Bags and Taxi to the Wrong Airport'

The five Delegates and Facilitator from Kyrgyzstan travelled from Bishkek, to Ankara, to Frankfurt and then to Dulles in DC USA. -- but five bags did not arrive!!! The unfortunate group spent several days wearing the same clothes and without personal items in DC during meetings sponsored by the US State Department. The group headed in Friday to an airport in DC with assistance by a young intern working for the US State Department. Unfortunately, they were taken to Dulles and not Reagan and so missed their flight in the afternoon. The FF greeters returned to home from the airport to home. The three males from Kyrgyzstan arrived near midnight. Since there was not enough standby seats. The three females elected to stay in DC for the night and arrive in GSO airport the next afternoon.

The next morning included emergency trips to COSTCO and Target to obtain basics for civilized life – and to introduce use of home washing machines.

The second group of three females finally arrived in middle of the party. Each visitor spoke the group to be introduced aims and explain their profession. The party went well!!

Four bags arrived on Monday to the home of the FF host (C. Maness) for the Facilitator (designated trouble shooter for the group). It required added effort to distribute bags to host houses.

Unfortunately, one bag was still missing. In the initial confusion the Facilitator failed to note in the email notices she received that one bag was not recorded. and so no immediate action was taken to report. After two days with no report of ‘Delayed Bag’ the tag number was placed in an elite ‘super lost category’ – that required a trip to the airport. After describing our problem to several clerks we discovered who the supervisor was with authority to search where to find it – Bishkek? Ankara? Frankfurt? Dulles? GSO? A delivery van? A second trip to the GSO airport was required due some to misinformation. We learned that international airports have separate databases of tags

on lost bags. Only a few senior staff members can search through all the database to find the location of the bag, and forward to a desired address. We filed a missing bag claim and discovered there was a critical 'Reference Number' on the email received that Baggage people for UAL uses to access all comment and notes on all interactions related to the incident.

The missing bag arrived two days after Chuck, the Prosecutor, returned to Kyrgyzstan. A simple resolution would have been to reject delivery of the bag and have United Airlines send it back to Bishkek. But no! Chuck said the bag mainly contain gifts to be distributed to some presenters and hosts. Once the bag was opened it could not be returned via the baggage system. UAL insisted that FEDEX (\$782 on my credit card!!) be used to return it to the owner in Bishkek. Fortunately, supplemental funds from Open World were found to cover the cost.

It was a dreaded 'learning experience'!!! Visitors from others country may rarely travel, and so they did not know to try to travel light with most needs contained in an airplane compatible carry-on. Washing machines can be found. I have not checked a bag in years. In the future we perhaps can use email and WhatsApp by phone to advise incoming guests on how to void trouble during travel.

Our FFCNC Club now has improved expertise in guiding travel and finding lost bags!!!!

We pride ourselves in being flexible and adapting when visitors arrive.

I think we did well and passed our ‘Wack-a-Mole Trouble Test’!!

My son’s single bag did not arrive a few years ago on way to a family Safari in Kenya. His ever-caring mom’s head exploded as she called Ethiopian Airways trying to complain. That what moms do at my place!!

Report on a ‘Transcultural Event’ ‘Shopping Addiction’ of the Kyrgyzstanis –

The Delegates were to arrive on a Friday afternoon and start the formal program on Monday. Most expressed a wish to ‘go shopping’ with any spare time throughout the week. There two trips to Tanger Outlets, several hours spent at the Friendly Center in Greensboro, and several requests to go to specialty stores during the week – some at unrealistic late hours!

Chuck, my guest often returned empty handed and complained, 'The Chinese stuff in your stores is the same as the Chinese stuff in our stores!!'. At 8:45 Pm on the last day he requested, with some desperation, to find him a Dick' Sports Store. Luckily there a was Dick's five minutes away and he filled up with sports equipment. He appeared happy that he could safely return home.

A picture emerged that gift giving and receiving was mandatory part of travel and visiting with those from Kyrgyzstan.

If I had known, I would have sat him at my laptop and had him push a button when he found something on Amazon – and let a box arrive next day at my door. We don't shop much these days.

Learning Events - 'How FFCNC Will Improve Communication'.

An afternoon greeting barbecue party for Delegates and Club members was supplemented by Russian speaking translators recruited to help acquaint the attendees. Each on introduced themselves with help EaMartha Brown did a great service by recruiting Russian speakers to translate

The visitors from Ukraine were not trained in English. The official Translator was very proficient and facile during the daily training sessions, but was not available other times. Delegates were to be provided cell phones by the Open World supported Facilitator so they all could at least text each other during their time here. But the simm chips failed to work. Google translate can be used to create text between English and Ukraine or Russian. We 'lost' a surgeon during a hospital visit for several hours due the inability to communicate by cell phone text.

**We realized it would help to have Russian speakers to help translate.
By the time for the Kyrgyzstan visit we arranged to have at some Russian translators on hand whenever possible to assist with communication, and tried to never leave visitors out of sight.**

We learned the value of WhatsApp to free call future visitors from other countries without using cell service

The visit of Open World Delegates from Kyrgyzstan introduced us to the use of WhatsApp.com as an

international cell phone tools. During the pandemic we became behind the times! Each time a Kyrgyzstan delegate entered a home they asked for password to the local internet. Once connected they made a phone calling to home to check on the kids or whoever needed to be called. Zoom could work but WhatAPP is far more convenient and now universal..

I wrote Chuck an email and he quickly had me install WhatAPP that works over internet to do a video call. He showed me round his office and his scene on the street. Worked great!!.

How to Add Someone from Another Country on WhatsApp on Android - or iPhone

It is almost like a using a typical cell phone number. To call to USA one dials *001 then area code and number. To access other countries one starts with the correct international code *xxx (followed the number).

Download the App 'WhatsApp' to your phone, then follow instruction at this site. The link below helps dd a phone number from another country.

<https://www.wikihow.com/Add-Someone-from-Another-Country-on-WhatsApp-on-Android#:~:text=In%20the%20phone%20number%20blank,of%20the%20person's%20phone%20number.&text=For%20example%2C%20a%20UK%20phone,something%20like%20this%3A%20%2B447981555555.>

We are now tuned in like other international people.

Look for another email soon with a set of Final Reports for each of the inbound and Outbound reports.

Sincerely,

**Donald Woodward Communications
FFCNC**