

Newsletter - A Post Covid Celebration – Update 12 01 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 whack-a-mole style adaptability of organizers to make matters move along smoothly.

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

1 - Party in Park in Kernersville early 2022

2 - Welcome Party on arrival of Ukrainian Delegate Fall 2022

3 - Barbecue dinner on departure of Ukrainians -UUFWS Church



4 - Saint Patrick's Celebration Potluck for All - Note Ralph Cauthen getting very serious about his 'Potluck'.

5 - Barbecue Sat afternoon Welcome for arrival March 17
Arrival of Kyrgyzstanis for program on 'Rule of Law'.

6 - Thursday dinner prior to Departure of Kyrgyzstanis

7 - Parties for Ambassadors from New Mexico

8 - Gathering at Woody Clinard's home Nov 2023

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



Traditional Exchange Travel: Inbound and Outbound

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Number of Participants</u>	<u>In/Out bound</u>	<u>Leader/Organizer</u>
1 - Northern Colorado	April 2022 7	Inbound	Judy Greene
Home Hosts: Ray & Doris Kiszely, Ralph & Jane Cauthen, Peter & Nancy Peiffer, Roger & Nan Poplin, Lucy Kaplan			
Small Group Dinners: Ray & Doris Kiszely, Ralph & Jane Cauthen, Marcia Rhodes, Mary Davis, Judy Greene, Lea Williams, Natalyn Williams, Marta Rhodes, Sandra Gramley, Myra Bonner, Marilyn Baird, Donna Torreyson, Julie O'Neal, Peter & Nancy Peiffer, Karla Shanaha			

Other Hosting: Pat Morgan & Don Ethington, Lea Williams, Natalyn Williams, Pam Kahl, Lucy Kaplan

2 - Cincinnati May 2022

6

Outbound

Charles John, Ray Kiszely



Ambassadors: Ray & Doris Kiszely, Charles John & Marylin Moniquette-John, Woody Clinard, Donald Woodward

3 - India/Nepal March-April 2023

9

Outbound

Martha Brown,

Charles John



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

See Final Report Appendix

4 - New Mexico June 2023 5 Inbound Roger Poplin

Home Hosts: Ralph & Jane Cauthen, Roger & Nan Poplin, Barbara & Jim North, Laura Graham & Ed Benson, Tomoko Thornburg

Small Group Dinners & Transportation Hosting: Alan Burke & Phyllis Sutphin, Mary Davis, Margaret Foley, Roger & Nan Poplin, Karla Shanahan, Judy Greene, Eleanor & Mike Stoller, Ty Fox, Laura Graham & Ed Benson, Ralph & Jane Cauthen, Tomoko Thornburg

Other Hosting (Social & Planning): Lucy Kaplan, Barbara North, Tom Prout, Mary Davis, Marta Rhodes, Ralph Cauthen)

5 - Lethbridge Canada Summer 2023 Outbound



Ambassadors: S: Sandra & Bill Gramley, Judy Greene, Charles John & Marilyn Moniquette-JohnRay & Doris Kiszely, Jim & Barbara North, Peter & Nancy Peiffer, Roger & Nan Poplin, Marta Rhodes, Lundee Amos

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

1 - Ukraine Oct 2022 Theme: Emergency Medicine

Five Delegates and Facilitator Program Organization: Donald Woodward and Ray Kiszely

Ukraine Hosts: Woody Clinard, Judy Greene, Roger & Nan Poplin, Karla Shanahan, Donna Torreyson, Caroline Maness, Julie O'Neal (alternative) Note - Caroline Maness hosted dinner

2 - 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 nineteen-year-old Moldova young adults participating in the ALEX Program (American Leadership Experience). Inter-cultural learning took place within the eight homes hosting the participants.

A small planning committee chose as themes - 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 organized by a Friendship Force Club member.

Contact with certain delegates is continuing almost a year later.

Moldova (ALEX) Hosts

Elaine Brune & Roger Bardsley, Vance Arnold, Jim & Barbara North, Lyn McCoy, Margaret Foley, Patty & Jeff Kullmamn, Martha Brown, Julie O'Neal

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.

3 – Kyrgyzstan May 23 Theme: The Rule of Law & the US Judicial System Five Delegates and Facilitator Organizer: 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. Ray Kiszely and Roger Poplin are near the end at the right.



Kyrgyzstan Hosts: Caroline Maness, Vance Arnold, Roger & Nan Poplin, Don Woodward, Sandra & Bill Gramley, Marta Rhodes Note: Caroline Maness hosted dinner.

Speaking for All: I (Don Woodward) 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 (and dealt with them). He spoke Kyrgyzsh, Turkish Russian, and English – so we got along fine. I lucked out.

All the guests to my house 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 when in Austin TX. 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 twenty-year-old Lexus LS Classic Big Car, and complained that our stores had the same Chinese stuff that theirs did.

Chuck pressured me to come to his country so he could, he still being a nomad, teach me to ride horses. My kids said, ‘Absolutely not!’

During a few hours of free time, I invited all delegates to come to my house, provided them some good wine, and encouraged them to use a stick 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 enjoying the great wine.

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

The experience of hosting made my efforts for FFCNC totally worthwhile.

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 FFI.ORG website, create an account, add required contact information, and submit. FFI.org requires account holders to be a local club member like FFCNC. After you create your account Eleanor, our local membership manager needs to confirm validity of the submission. Then you can see the contents of FFI.org web page. Tasks are really very easy!!!

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

So you can know about the work we do - 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. She adds contact information for new members and does updates. The date of change for each new or legacy member is included in the file.

Eleanor forwards updated information to Communications, Donald Woodward, who updates a mailing list labeled, 'FFCNC Group', using Google Contacts. To avoid confusion over time 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 so that collected dues can be tracked.

It should be very easy for a future members and leaders to learn help with these tasks. FFCNC is creating 'SOPs' (Standard Operating Procedures) to increase efficiency as all good organizations need to do! Volunteers to help are highly prized!!!

FFCNC can improve Improve Communication with speakers of Foreign Languages:

FFCNC members have in the past described methods of communication with non-English speakers. Hand waving, using Google translate with a cell phone, asking a little kid who learn some English in school to help. That all good! But we can try harder when they come.

Translators are very useful if they can be made available: An afternoon greeting barbecue party for Delegates and Club members was supplemented by Russian speakers recruited to help acquaint the attendees. Without translators the visitors often cluster together and do not try to socialize much with FFCNC members. They need to become acquainted with each other. Each delegate from Kyrgyzstan introduced themselves with help from translators. Martha Brown did a great service by recruiting Russian speakers to help. From now on we will try to have hosts include two visitors. Hopefully one will know some English.

Goggle translate and texting on cell phones: Delegates from Ukraine were to be provided cell phones by the Open World supported Facilitator so they all could at least text each other, or use Google translate during time here. But the simm chips failed to work. Google translate can be used but is slow. Working cellphone connected by local intgernet can help everyone. We 'lost' a surgeon during a hospital visit for several hours due the inability to communicate by cell phone text. None of the visitors from Ukraine were trained in English. The official Translator was very proficient and facile during the daily training sessions but was not available other times.

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

WhatsApp is an extremely useful new free application to make both local and international calls when a cell phone is connected to the internet: The phone or computer does not need to have cellphone service since it uses the internet like the earlier abandoned Skype.

All the visitors from Kyrgyzstan had the app on their cell phones. 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. WhatsApp is convenient and now universal in use in most countries. FFCNC needs to catch up. FFCNC hosts need to have internet in their home.

I wrote Chuck an email before his arrival. He immediately had me install WhatsApp that works over internet to do a video call. He showed me around his office and the view of his street. It worked great!

How to Add Someone from Another Country on WhatsApp on Android - or iPhone? One downloads the app and enters one's normal phone number. The app does not use the cell network since it is free. To call to USA one dials *001 then area code and number. To access a nation, 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 add 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>

Members of FFCNC can now be made up to date with communication methods.

Unique Events often appear due to International travel and cultural differences. We need to share and learn from each such event:

The chance provided by FFCNC to interact with visitors from other countries and cultures sometimes provides a unique lifetime learning experience.

Our goal here is to expand the Newsletter to chronicle such episodes. These make FFCNC participation unique and worthwhile.

Travel Moments to Cherish the Memory (or desire to Forget) – 'Adventure of the Lost/Delayed Travel Bags and Taxi to the Wrong Airport'.

Many of us, who are experienced travelers, carry on to the airplane a bag fitting into the overhead compartment. Essential items must be kept near in case the checked bag is lost. But what can go wrong? - if you have never left your country before on an airplane?

The five Delegates and a Facilitator, hired by the US State Department, travelled from Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan, to Ankara, to Frankfurt and then safely arrived at Dulles Airport in DC USA. However, the six bags, containing everything needed - did not arrive.

Bags were reported missing at the airport desk by the Facilitator who held the tags for bags. The unfortunate group then spent several days wearing the same clothes in DC during orientation meetings sponsored by the US State Department. We should warn future visitors to carry one what they need for a few days.

On Friday the group headed airport to Greensboro in DC guided by a young intern working for the US State Department. Unfortunately, he took them to Dulles and not Reagan Airport and so they missed they missed their flight to Greensboro. The Greeting Group from FFCNC waiting at GSO returned home, but needed to return again near midnight when three male travelers arrived by available standby seats.

(Alert – my son once drove mostly to Dulles Airport once before sharp-eyed me found that his actual flight left from Reagan Airport – can happen in DC!).

To deal with absence of bags the next morning, emergency trips to COSTCO. Target, etc. dealt with need for clothing etc. – and to introduce use of home washing machines.

The second group of three females finally arrived in middle of the planned afternoon barbecue lunch in a park in Greensboro. It required a third trip to the airport to pick them up.

Unfortunately, one bag was still missing when the rest arrived on Monday in Greensboro. That very large bag was special since it mostly contained gifts carefully acquired to be given to presenters and hosts. It had to be found before the Delegates returned.

The Facilitator failed to notice in her email that one bag tag number was not recorded by the clerk at the lost bag desk. She did not know that she should have reported the error immediately.

After two days with no report of 'Delayed Bag', a computer search of the tag number assumed incorrectly that the bag arrived normally. After two days a new lost bag number is entered in a database specific for the airport where it was lost. After describing our problem to local clerks, we discovered that only a higher-level agent had access to the remote databases. We did not know where to search – Bishkek? Ankara? Frankfurt? Dulles? GSO? A delivery van? A second trip to the GSO airport was required to talk directly with the agent with credentials to search. We did then file a proper late report of missing bag. We also discovered there was a critical 'Reference Number' on the original email received. Baggage Handlers of United use that number to access all comment and notes related to the incident of loss. Due to misinformation a third trip to airport was required.

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 the bag had to be opened to retrieve gifts to be distributed to

presenters and hosts. Once the bag was opened, the rules are that it could not be returned to Bishkek via the baggage system. FEDEX was used to return bag and personal belongings it to Chuck in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Fortunately, supplemental funds from Open World were found to cover the cost.

In the future we perhaps can use email and WhatsApp by phone to advise incoming guests on how to best avoid trouble during travel.

So what was so precious in the bag to be worth such trouble? One item was my very own ceremonial horse whip with leather case – gifted to me by Chuck, the living modern highly educated nomad. Priceless! My cat, Tyler, was puzzled why I would bring the smell of a deer paw into my house!



(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 delegate immediately expressed a wish to 'go shopping' during 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! Hosts found themselves being used as a taxi service – just to shop.

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 was a Dick's five minutes away and he stocked up with sports equipment. He appeared happy that he could safely return home with gifts for his family.

If I had known, I would have sat him at my laptop to find gifts and push the 'Buy' button when he found something on Amazon. A box likely would arrive next day at my door. I should have explained that shopping in malls has seriously declined due to the rise of Amazon. Some of us don't shop much in stores these days.

A picture emerged that gift giving and receiving was a mandatory part of travel and visiting for those in the culture of Kyrgyzstan.

Respectfully,

Donald Woodward FFCNC Communications

