

FLORIDA SUNCOAST NEWS FEBRUARY-MARCH 2009

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FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The woman at the other end of the incoming phone call asked if I was Nancy Warner. Hearing an accent and thinking it might be some type of solicitation call I responded, with just a touch of edge in my voice, "Yes. Who's calling please?" To my surprise and delight, the caller identified herself as the president of Friendship Force of Rio Grande del Sol in southern Brazil, and that she was in St. Petersburg. Vera Frantz, a college professor, was here with a group of students for an ESL (English as Second Language) program, being held on the Eckerd College campus. She was being home hosted, and her host, Pam, had never heard of Friendship Force. A few days and a few phone calls later, Mac and Gaby Mackenzie, Ann Scott (who has been on an exchange to Recife, Brazil), Robert Lehner and I met Vera and Pam at Courtside Grill restaurant during happy hour. We all had an enjoyable time. Pam said in an email to me the next day, "What a pleasure to meet everyone. It felt like we were already old friends." And Vera followed with an email of her own, "Thank you very much for your kindness in meeting Pam and I yesterday. We both had such a wonderful time. It was really nice of you to travel from your places to meet us. Thanks to the marvelous idea of the

President Nancy Warner addressing the Holiday Party

Friendship Force, I had the chance to meet new lovely friends and so did Pam. Please, come and visit us in Santo Ângelo we will be waiting for you." Of course, I gave literature about our club to Pam, as prepared by Sandy, our membership chair. She has since joined our club.

Vera also shared with me that she has been

the club president for 11 years and the exchange director for most of the exchanges. She'd like a break! The members answer her call for help when asked, but no one wants to lead. One of my worries about our club is that a small core of people does most of the work. I, personally, find it awkward to ask outright for help, even though I have been

told that people are "waiting to be asked." I have been successful lately in that new member Bill Lee has agreed to perform the audit for 2008 financial transactions and long-time member Don Johnston has agreed to chair a small committee to establish policy on the financial aspects of exchanges. Thanks to you both! Our biggest need now is for exchange directors ("ED"), and exchange committee members. I thank our district representative, Ramona McGee, for being our speaker on the topic of Exchange Directing at the January meeting. FFI has put together an extensive manual, available in pdf format, on directing an outbound exchange. That is where one of our needs is now, an ED for outbound to Lower Columbia, in the state of Washington in July. Additionally, we need an inbound exchange director for the home stay before the Festival at Sea event this coming December. So as not to repeat the details, see the articles in the Exchanges section of this newsletter. Please contact me if you are interested in helping at (727) 791-8703.

In friendship,

Nancy

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Mac Mackenzie, Vera Frantz, Gaby Mackenzie, Nancy Warner, Pam Shofner, Ann Scott, and Bob Lehner.

OUR FRIENDSHIP FORCE

Our Mission

To promote global understanding across the

barriers that separate people

Our Values

Mutual Respect Cultural Diversity Cultural
Exploration Service

Our Vision

Each individual will make a contribution to
global goodwill. The Friendship Force world-
wide network of clubs and individuals will
overcome differences among people and
nations. By connecting the world, one friend
at a time, we will create a world of friends that
becomes a world of peace.

OUR BOARD

Elected Officers

President: Nancy Warner
1st V.P. Programs: Robert Lehner
2nd V.P. Membership: Sandy Gourdine
3rd V.P. At Large: Roy Swanson
Secretary: Ann Scott
Treasurer: Millie Jones
Serving on our board for 2009 is our past-
President Vivian Grimm.

Committees and Appointed Positions

Calling: Beverly Swanson
Hospitality: Bob Lehner, Monika Boerger
Historian: Pat McQuaide
Membership Directory: Brenda & Jim Miller
Publicity: Denise Seeber
Newsletter: Jackie Kline
Website/Communications: Jean Keir-Choong
Domestic Exchange Coordinator:
Carol Heichel
International Exchange Coordinator:
Nancy Warner
Sunshine: Vacant

**PROGRAMS FOR
FEBRUARY AND MARCH**

Saturday, Feb 21, 1:00-3:00 pm, Luncheon
meeting, Mirage Restaurant – 2284 Gulf to Bay Blvd
(Rt 60), Clearwater for Persian-Greek-Mediterranean

cuisine. The restaurant is on the north side of Gulf to Bay, less than a mile west of Rt. 19. If you get to the intersection with Belcher Road you have gone too far. It's a white building with blue roof. Price of all-you-can-eat buffet with iced tea, tax, and tip is \$15.

Pay in advance by mailing check made payable to Friendship Force Florida Suncoast to:

Bob Lehner, FF Programs

2440 World Pkwy #40

Clearwater, FL 33763

Deadline for receipt of check is February 17.

Saturday, Mar 21, 3:00 pm, Club meeting.

Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd - 10891

102nd Avenue - Seminole (park behind the church).

We will distribute updated Membership Directories to members who ever purchased them and Name Badges with the new FF logo to all members who paid their 2009 dues by Jan 30.

Program: Mr. John Heinz will speak about life in the town of Sukhothia, Thailand, a town seven hours journey north of Bangkok, and about his experiences of marrying into a Thai family.

Saturday, April 18, Luncheon meeting at a Restaurant TBD.

Note: the Programs chair tried to find a Brazilian restaurant but the phone number was disconnected! If you have any suggestions, please call Bob at 791-8703.

Saturday, May 16, 3:00 pm unless reported otherwise, Club meeting. Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd. This is our annual meeting where we elect new officers for the year beginning September 1. It's also possible we may have a vote for an amendment to our bylaws. (If this is the case, the information will be sent out with appropriate advance notice.) There's a possibility we may begin a little earlier to accommodate the full program. Program: Rev. Abhi Janamanchi will speak on "Incredible India" plus there will be a presentation of traditional Indian dance by a young girl. This is a special program not to be missed

Saturday, June 20, Annual Picnic. Save the date for an afternoon picnic, this year at John S. Taylor Park in

Largo. We have reserved a lake-front pavilion. More details in future newsletters.

**Sandy Gourdine,
Membership Chairman**

New Member Orientation Feb. 21

We have started an orientation program for new members. Our first one is scheduled immediately after the luncheon program on Saturday, Feb. 21 and will be held at the Gourdine's home located a mile from the restaurant.

Members who have joined in recent months have been invited – but any member is invited who wants to learn more about how to travel with Friendship Force, what happens when we get incoming exchanges, how our club operates, and more. It's a good opportunity for new members to meet other new members and to get "connected" with our club.

We will be hosting these orientation programs three or four times a year. If you plan to attend, please call Sandy or Terry Gourdine at 443-5950. Our home is at 1101 Wellington Drive in Clearwater.

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EXCHANGES

2010 Exchange Assignments from FFI

Friendship Force International has just announced our travel and hosting assignments for 2010. We will join with East Central Florida for outgoing to Mispah, South Africa in March. East Central Florida will provide the ED (Exchange Director) and we will provide an Assistant ED. For incoming we have Sydney, Australia in May. The Sydney club will also be going to Greater Atlanta, Georgia and Montgomery, Alabama. The next step is to tell FFI, by March 16, if we accept these assignments. The Board will discuss this at the next Board meeting, March 3. As always, any club member may attend the Board meeting. Please send any comments to

info@friendshipforcefloridasuncoast.org and they will be dispersed to Board members.

Our Visitors are Arriving from Lower Columbia on March 28

Sixteen ambassadors (seven couples and two single ladies) from Lower Columbia club of Washington will arrive the evening of March 28 and depart the morning of April 2. The ED (exchange director) is Nancy Warner and the exchange treasurer is Mac Mackenzie. Program planning is in progress. Please call Nancy if you would like to help plan, host, or day host, at 791-8703.

Festival at Sea starting with a Homestay, December 1-13

FFI has arranged for a one week cruise out of Tampa which they are calling "Festival At Sea." The 50 or so ambassadors could come from anywhere in the world. Preceding the cruise, both our club and the Southwest Florida club have agreed to provide home hosting for five nights for ten to fifteen ambassadors. The ED (exchange director) for the entire package will be Mary Alice Rothweiler from the Eastern Washington – Northern Idaho club. Our club too will need to provide an ED to coordinate with Mary Alice. Please contact Nancy Warner at 791-8703 or if you are interested in being the ED. Of course, we are invited to join in on the cruise for a cost reduction of \$225.

Festival at Sea – Caribbean

Dec

ember 1-13, 2009

Cost: \$1,300/per person Double occupancy, balcony cabin; \$1,150/per person Double occupancy, outside cabin

Contact: Mary Alice Rothweiler, HYPERLINK

["mailto:maroth31@comcast.net"](mailto:maroth31@comcast.net)

maroth31@comcast.net, (509) 443-1476

Join us for a fun-filled festival on the high seas with friends from all around the world! The trip will begin in Florida with a 5 nights homestay with our friends from the FF of Southwest Florida and the FF of Florida Suncoast. On December 6, our hosts will transport us to the port in Tampa to go on board to

the Carnival Legend for a 7 nights cruise to the exotic islands of Grand Cayman, Cozumel, Belize and Roatan. An initial deposit of \$250 is required along with your application and a copy of your passport.

Help Wanted

Help Wanted: Need friendly, outgoing person to organize our exchange to the state of Washington in July. Most of the organizational work will be done for you by the hosting club.

Job Description: You publicize and sign ambassadors up for the trip, collect and review their applications, and create a list of the pertinent information to transmit to the hosting club for the assignment of hosts. Experienced exchange directors are ready to guide and assist you. An exchange treasurer will handle the money for you. Compared to organizing an incoming exchange, this is a "piece of cake"!

Compensation: You will make a priceless contribution to the vitality of our club, have a marvelous experience on the "other" coast, and win the gratitude and admiration of our membership.

Come to Washington for a Change!

The **OTHER** Washington beckons! If you would like a pleasant **CHANGE** of scene this summer, plan to join our outgoing domestic exchange from July 16–22, 2009 to the state of Washington. We will be guests of the Lower Columbia (Woodland, WA) club, the same friendly folks who will be visiting us in March of this year.

We will fly into the Portland, Oregon airport and be picked up by our hosts. Attractions of the area include the Mt. St. Helens national volcanic site and the Columbia River Gorge. The cost of this 6 night exchange will be approximately \$125 to \$150 per person plus airfare. No single supplement applies to the exchange! And, as is customary, you will treat your host to dinner one night.

Many attractive options are available for extending the trip and may be discussed and chosen by trip participants. Excellent, inexpensive train transportation is available to Seattle, a charming city famous for the Pike St. Market, the Boeing Aircraft factory and Museum of Flight, Chinatown and much more.

Ferries can whisk you to Vancouver, or to quaint Victoria on Vancouver Island. You don't even need a passport for these excursions. Mt. Rainier and the Olympic Peninsula are also popular destinations. Lastly, Seattle is the perfect place to embark on a cruise or flight to Alaska.

These websites are good for more information about the area:

HYPERLINK

<http://www.ClipperVacations.com>

www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries/

Membership Application - Join or Renew for 2009

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

CellPhone _____

Email _____

Dues \$20 Single; \$35 Family

\$ _____

Plastic name tag for new members: \$10 each \$ _____

(Our club's Newsletter is included with your dues.)

Optional:

Club Handbook & Photo Membership Directory \$10 \$ _____

Total:

\$ _____

Make check payable to Friendship Force of Florida Suncoast

Mail or give to Sandy Gourdine, 1101 Wellington Drive, Clearwater FL 33764 ♪