



THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF GREATER ATLANTA NEWSLETTER



JANUARY • FEBRUARY • 2014

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Happy New Year to all! Mary and I had the pleasure of attending a truly great Friendship Force International World Conference in New Orleans the week before Thanksgiving. The atmosphere was electric. The attendees (700 strong) and from all over the world, sensed the excitement of new possibilities for the 35-year-old organization. Brand-new leadership under the guidance of Joy DiBenedetto and her energetic team presented fresh ideas for revitalizing our organization. From development of new models for exchanges which allow for working people to participate to using social media to attract new members, this conference was crackling with fresh ideas.

In a metro area of over 5 million people our local organization has a membership of about 150 people. Many members actively participate in exchanges. Many members no longer travel with us but continue to participate on a social level. Regardless of status, there are jobs to be done for both groups. Home hosting, dinner events, and driving are among the many jobs which can be filled by anyone.

I have a challenge for you. My challenge is for each active member to recruit at least one new potential member for our club during this year. We offer a unique travel experience unlike any other tour or individual travel experience one might have. We get to experience a culture "from the inside." This Friendship Force difference is our greatest selling point. Each of you can identify people who like to travel in our churches or in other organizations they might belong to. Invite them to one of our monthly activities so they can become acquainted with our members and our unique brand of travel.

For my part, I am the Director for the incoming exchange from Costa Rica April 5-11. I am looking for dinner hosts, home hosts, driving help and other support; please contact me if you can help. Fluency in Spanish is not required.

In summary, let us continue the wide participation achieved by our past President, Cynthia Williams, during her tenure. Let us also make 2014 another year for continued growth in membership for our organization. With your enthusiastic help, we can make it happen.

In friendship,
Harvey Brickley
President, FFGA
mbrickley@bellsouth.net

YOUR 2014 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



President: Harvey Brickley first learned about the Friendship Force from a local talk radio station in late 1976. That led him and his wife Mary into hosting a couple from Newcastle Upon Tyne, England in July, 1977 and a reciprocal visit to England in June, 1978. Extended foreign travel was limited in the ensuing years, so it was 1993 before they traveled again with the Friendship Force. That trip included a homestay in Saint Petersburg, Russia and a hotel stay in Moscow. Shortly thereafter he formed his own outplacement consultancy firm, and travel became a lesser priority. A decade later planning for retirement brought their thoughts back to Friendship Force. Since returning, Harvey has had two two-year stints on the club's Board of Directors as newsletter editor. He has also been the outbound Exchange Director for trips to New Zealand (2010), Costa Rica (2011), and Cornwall, England (2012). In 2006 he was inbound ED for a group from England. In April he will be the host ED for ambassadors arriving from Costa Rica.

The Brickleys moved to Atlanta after their marriage in 1965. Today their two children and four grandchildren all live in metro Atlanta. Harvey's other interests include Civil War history, playing tennis and basketball and collecting stamps.



VICE PRESIDENT: Eunice Luke is a retired attorney and was employed for 34 years with the Regional Attorney's Office, U. S. Dept. of Agriculture in Atlanta. She has practiced law all over the Southeast, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Her first Friendship Force trip was to Tbilisi, in the Republic of Georgia in 1990. She joined FFGA shortly after that and has since been on Friendship Force trips to Slovakia; Wales; Mexico; Isle of Wight; Hay River, Northwest Territories, Canada; Costa Rica; Moscow, Russia; Germany; Cyprus and South Africa. She has also hosted incoming exchanges from Slovakia, Ukraine and Newcastle, UK.

Ms. Luke enjoys the theater, music and reading. Her volunteer time is spent with the Georgia Aquarium and the USO. She is looking forward to serving yet another year as a member of the Friendship Force of Greater Atlanta Board of Directors.



SECRETARY: Dr. Beverly McCray and her husband Lester have been members of the Friendship Force of Greater Atlanta since 2006. She is once again wearing two hats while continuing to serve as Secretary for the Board of Directors of our club and as the Representative for the Southwest Atlanta Branch of FFGA. Dr. McCray is employed with the Coweta County School System as an Education/Reading Specialist. However, she is planning to retire after having served as a longtime educator, administrator and Registered Nurse for over 35 years. She has been active within the club, assisting with the out-bound exchange to Brazil, serving as a day host and as a member of the Board of Directors. Dr. McCray is also actively involved in her church, school & community activities. She values friendships and relishes the time spent with her husband, three adult daughters, four grandchildren and other family members. She is looking forward to participating in future outbound exchanges and hosting more inbound exchanges, as she will have more opportunity to do so in retirement.

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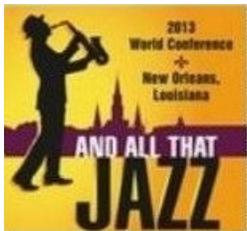


TREASURER: Bonnie Evans and her husband Joe reside in the Smoke Rise area of Stone Mountain. Mrs. Evans excelled in mathematics while growing up in Hauppauge, NY. She later graduated from Waynesburg University in Pennsylvania with a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Mathematics. She taught third grade for three years in Jacksonville, Florida, and ninth-grade algebra and general mathematics in Corpus Christi, Texas. Moving on from her career as a teacher, Mrs. Evans was a branch sales manager with Household Finance Corporation for 21 years. While there she was awarded Premier Performer status and received several Public Service Awards in addition. She took early retirement from HFC in 1996 and was recruited to work at Tucker Federal Bank to assist in the formation of their wholesale mortgage department. In 2001 she worked for Bank of America as a mortgage loan processor and as an Assistant Vice President in Residential Mortgage Sales. Mrs. Evans is also a Deacon at the Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Stone Mountain.

In the summer of 2008 Bonnie and Joe retired and then joined the Friendship Force in December. The Evans' have hosted guest families many times, but it was not until May of last year on an outbound exchange to Peru that they enjoyed traveling with FFGA. They continue to celebrate their retirements with world travel both independently and as club members.

Mrs. Evans is an avid caregiver of her husband Joe, who has been fighting two blood cancers since 2008. She has become acutely aware of the devastating effects of a variety of cancers and has been inspired to volunteer both time and effort working with organizations dedicated to eradicating these afflictions.

36TH WORLD CONFERENCE OF FRIENDSHIP FORCE INTERNATIONAL ❀❀❀



On the 22nd of November, in New Orleans, Louisiana, a small but dedicated group of FFI staff, assisted by a phalanx of helpers from the sponsoring Baton Rouge club, manned the registration tables for the 2013 World Conference of Friendship Force International. In the ensuing hours over 700 FF members from 33 nations would claim their credentials, be given a sturdy souvenir travel bag and purchase commemorative "T" shirts in the lobby and ballroom of the Astor Crown Plaza hotel. Many of the visitors then took advantage of the city tours being offered or just strolled throughout the renowned "French Quarter" enjoying the sights and cuisine this fabulous city has to offer.

The official start of the 36th World Conference began the following day with the opening ceremony, at which introductions of the FFI Board of Directors and the headquarters staff of FFI were made. In addition the delegations from each participating country were recognized and awards presented for outstanding performance by individuals and clubs which excelled in furthering the mission of the Friendship Force.

For most attendees, this was their first opportunity to view and hear our new President, Joy DiBenedetto. She briefly related her background, which is strong in the field of modern communications technology, and pointed out to the audience how effective internet technologies can be in furthering a club's ability to increase its membership. Some examples cited were: *Facebook, LinkedIn and Meet Up.*

There are many concerns facing Friendship Force clubs that are common worldwide. Paramount among them is decreasing membership due to an aging population. Another is the tight economic situation in many countries throughout the world that affects both the expense of travel and the ability to get time off from employment to do it. During this conference almost 30 workshops took place over a two-day

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period that addressed these concerns and a few others not mentioned here. These were presented by both members of the FFI staff and by various U.S. club member teams. A few of the interesting tidbits of information that were disseminated at the "Ask Us Anything" workshop, presented by the FFI Board of Directors and President Joy DiBenedetto were: Roughly 18,000 people are traveling with the Friendship Force each year; FFI has received a grant from Google for \$10,000 worth of free advertising, and there is now a link to FFI on the "Traveling with Rick Steves" website. They have recorded 565 click-throughs to the website in October. There is insufficient space in this newsletter to tell about all of the workshops and activities. Please visit the FFI website at www.thefriendshipforce.org and look for the logo shown above. Click on Photos and Presentations, which will take you to the official page for the 2013 World Conference. Once there you may view both photos and videos of events that took place and also the slides and presentations seen in the workshops.



All was not just workshops and problem solving. There was also time for fun. On Saturday evening most delegates boarded one of two cruises on the Dixie Belle for a short trip up the Mississippi River while dining and listening to the live music of a Dixieland jazz band. Sunday night was the Gala Banquet, at which some attended in costume while others donned the provided masks found at each place setting. While dining on a superb meal and enjoying the background music provided by a live band, everyone also participated in lively conversation with table mates from around the world. At the conclusion of the supper everyone moved to the mezzanine and grabbed handfuls of the famous New Orleans beads, then formed up with the band on Bourbon Street for a spirited Mardi Gras Parade through the French Quarter.

The closing plenary session featured a most enjoyable performance and discussion of the music of New Orleans by Edward Peterson on saxophone and Don Vappie on banjo. They are well-known professors of music at Loyola University and the University of New Orleans and have great experience with numerous jazz bands in the Crescent City. This was followed by an invitation from the Friendship Force club of Auckland, New Zealand to come to their island nation for the 37th World Conference during the period 14 through 16 October, 2014. After a few brief closing remarks the audience linked hands and joined in singing of the Friendship Force's official song "Let There be Peace on Earth", bringing the conference to a close.



FFGA HOLIDAY PARTY ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁



On December 7th FFGA members and several of their guests arrived at The Vinings Club to join together in celebrating the holiday season. With an attendance of 74 people it was the largest turnout for any of our club's social occasions in over 10 years. As each attendee entered the dining room they were given a ticket that would later be used during a raffle for small gifts. Each lady attending received a gift of a souvenir beaded necklace, filched from the FFI World Conference's Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans.. One of the strands was unique, and at the conclusion of the raffle a one-year membership was awarded to the lady wearing it. The lucky winner was a guest of Ms. Wilma Kirchhofer, Ms. Ivory Denson.

A special guest was at our holiday party this year, FFI President and CEO of FFI, Ms. Joy DiBenedetto. She chatted amiably with the members, many of whom were highly impressed with her congeniality. The new President, Mr. Harvey Brickley, was introduced to the guests by outgoing President Ms. Cynthia Williams. Ms. Williams then presented specially-designed friendship coffee mugs to each of the members who served on the Board of Directors during her reign as the President of our club.

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Sign-up sheets and table posters were on hand giving details of the club's upcoming 2014 exchanges. Each of the Exchange Directors also presented a brief synopsis of the details known at the time about their exchanges and encouraged members to sign up early if they were interested in participating.

Our Social Chair, Ernestine Brazeal, scored an A+ with her selection of an entertainer this year when she selected Mr. Kenny Banks, who performed superbly on the grand piano throughout the afternoon. The audience also gave a rousing rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas", even though the MC for that song, Mr. Kent Vickers, lost track of the days and stopped at the eleventh day. He was quickly reminded by his friend Mr. John Wilhelm that it was the "12" Days of Christmas, and the final day was then added, to the amusement of all. Though temporarily bewildered by the unintended interruption Mr. Banks continued playing through the laughter without missing a note.



A special thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Donald Clark, who as members of The Vinings Club were able to allow us to make use of this fine facility for our holiday party. Also, thanks to the staff of the club for their excellent service and quick accommodation when a larger-than-expected crowd of members and their guests appeared for dinner. Last but not least, thanks also to outgoing Social Chair Ms. Ernestine Brazeal for arranging yet another great holiday party at this wonderful location.



WORLD FRIENDSHIP DAY

MARCH 1, 2014



The selection of March 1st for World Friendship Day is a tribute to founder Wayne Smith and acknowledges the original founding day of the Friendship Force on March 1st, 1977, when it was announced in a White House ceremony by President Carter. The first observance of World Friendship Day by Friendship Force clubs took place on March 1st, 2005. FFI encourages all of its clubs to celebrate this World Friendship Day with club events and activities that will:

- ❖ Increase public awareness for the Friendship Force.
- ❖ Provide a platform for adding new members.
- ❖ Create opportunities for real-life examples of performing the FFI mission to promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people.

FFGA is planning to celebrate World Friendship Day this year by volunteering to assist MedShare in its world-wide mission. MedShare is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving healthcare and the environment through the efficient recovery and redistribution of surplus medical supplies and equipment to those most in need. They collect these items from hospitals, distributors and manufacturers, and then send them to qualified healthcare facilities in the developing world. They also provision medical missions and safety-net clinics in both the U.S. and abroad. By mid-2013 they had shipped more than 950, 40-foot-long containers of medical supplies to developing countries. Much of the re-packaging of those supplies was done by volunteers – and this is where you come in.

Volunteer: FFGA is seeking *only* 22 volunteers willing to work at the MedShare facility for a half day on Saturday the 1st of March, from 9:00 AM until noon. Regrettably the limit on the number of volunteers is due to the available space in the MedShare work areas to sort supplies and pack cartons. The location is 3240 Clifton Springs Road in Decatur. You are requested to wear your green FFGA vests or shirts, if you have one, and also to remember to wear your name badge.

We will gather after the completion of our shift for an informal social get-together and lunch at "The Marlay House" Irish Pub in Decatur at 1:00 PM. It is located at 426 West Ponce de Leon Ave. *All FFGA members and their guests are welcome to attend the luncheon, whether they have volunteered to work in the morning or not.* The luncheon will be a pay-as-you-go affair ordered from the menu.

Volunteers and those members wanting to participate in the luncheon must notify Mrs. Glenda Wilhelm by no later than Wednesday, 26 February. E-mail: jwainc7@bellsouth.net or telephone: 770-921-4333.

FUTURE EXCHANGE (Updates) ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁



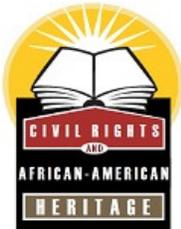
Turrialba, Costa Rica to Atlanta: When Harvey Brickley, the Incoming E.D. spoke with his counterpart from Turrialba at the FFI World Conference last November, she informed him that there are now 12 Ambassadors thus far. They will arrive from Fort Myers, Florida on 5 April and fly home on the 11th. An itinerary has yet to be agreed upon. Mr. Brickley is still taking names of those willing to serve as a host or as a day host. Also, if you are willing to provide a dinner get-together for a host family and their Costa Rican Ambassadors please contact Harvey by e-mail at: mbrickley@bellsouth.net or by phone at: 404-351-2033 to volunteer



Domestic Exchange: E.D. Joyce Mell reports that the Domestic Exchange to the Friendship Force of Eastern Washington and North Idaho, tentatively set for June 5th through 10th, 2014, can only accept 20 Ambassadors and that she currently has more than that number who have signed up as interested in going. However, as the time draws near to departure a few of those may change their mind about going. So if you are interested in traveling on this exchange, you should contact Mrs. Mell as soon as possible to place your name on the waiting list. You may contact her by telephone at: 770-232-2987 or by e-mail at: injmell@bellsouth.net. The host club has not yet designated an E.D. but will soon be working on it. No itinerary is available at this time.



Discovery exchange: Tentatively this exchange will be sometime within the first two weeks of July, 2014 and will feature 5 days of homestays with possible additional days as tourists in Johannesburg, South Africa. ED Cynthia Williams will be assisted by club members Zipa and Rose Vokhiwa, who are native Malawians. The exchange will consist of only ten people, although there are currently 1 Canadian and 17 U.S. FF members who have expressed an interest. There is no confirmed itinerary at this time.



Global Exchange: Civil Rights Exchange: E.D. Wilma Kirchhofer reports that this will be an exchange to three cities: Cincinnati, Ohio; Atlanta, Georgia and Birmingham, Alabama. FFGA's portion will be the 21st through the 27th of September with Ambassadors arriving on Megabus. No itinerary has been confirmed yet, and more details will be provided as they are developed.

THE SOCIAL SCENE ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁ ❁



You have received an invitation to join with friends and guests of the Friendship Force of Greater Atlanta in celebration of Valentine's Day. The fete will be just a bit early this year due to prior commitments of the fine restaurant arranged for by our Social Chair Glenda Wilhelm. She has procured group seating for us at the Café Intermezzo at 6:00 p.m. on the evening of Wednesday, the 12th of February. The café is located at 4505 Ashford-Dunwoody Road, in Dunwoody. The menu will be a choice of three special entrees: A Chicken Florentine Crepe, Italian Gnocchi en Sauce, or Spicy Tortellini Alfredo, all served with a house salad and tea or a fountain beverage, OR you may order a larger entrée salad accompanied by a choice of soup and tea or a fountain beverage. Tax and gratuity are included in the \$20.50 per person price. The Café Intermezzo is known for wonderful desserts and fine wines, which of course, are not included in this special price. To view the menu and for directions please click on the following link: <http://www.cafeintermezzo.com/>.

Payment must be made in the form of a personal check made payable to FFGA in the amount of \$20.50 per person. Checks should be mailed to the club's Social Chair at the following address to be received not later than Monday, the 10th of February.

Mrs. Glenda Wilhelm
6051 Millstone Run
Stone Mountain, GA 30087



Faith 'n Begorra! We're hopin ye'll jine us in preparin fer dear ole Saint Paddie's Day. As you may have read, some of us will have worked up a hearty appetite by packing cartons at MedShare on the morning of March first, World Friendship Day. So we have decided to get a wee bit of practice at bending an elbow in honor of the revered Saint. Aye! We know it will still be 17 days early, but we needed an excuse to get together, one and all. Best of all ye needn't have packed a box to jine us.

So won't you please meet us at "The Marlay House", located at 426 West Ponce de Leon Ave. in Decatur, at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday March the 1st? The Marlay is a fine Irish Pub and you might swear that you have stepped upon the Auld Sod when you enter the hearth. In addition to a wide variety of fine Irish ales and beers, they also serve great Irish and American fare. It is pay as you go and you will be ordering from their fabulous brunch menu. Even so Our Social Maven, Glenda Wilhelm would appreciate it if you would give her a call (770-921-4333) or an e-mail at: jwainc7@bellsouth.net if you plan on attending, so that she can make sure the leprechauns are behaving. Please do so by the 26th of February. For directions and the menu please click on this link: <http://www.marlayhouse.com>.

ODDS & ENDS * * * * *



Minutes of the FFGA Board of Directors meetings: To review the FFGA Board of Directors minutes from the January 2014 board meeting held on January the 5th, please depress and hold down the "Ctrl" key on your keyboard while clicking on the following link: <http://sdrv.ms/KfXhO\OG>. If the links do not open the minutes for you, copy the link individually into the address bar of your internet browser. Please allow time for the link to open.



New Memberships: The Friendship Force of Greater Atlanta is pleased to welcome the following new members to our club and is looking forward to having them join us during future social activities and on exchanges yet to come.

Candace Jones, who resides in Avondale Estates near Decatur, GA
Mary Ogden, who resides in Odum, GA, which is in South Georgia between Baxley & Jessup.



Just a reminder: Dues for the 2014 membership year are now overdue if you have not yet renewed your membership. They are still a bargain at \$25 for an individual and \$33 for a family membership (two or more people at the same address). Members joining after 1 July in any year are still considered as members for the remainder of that year and the following year. You may remit your dues by mailing your personal check, made payable to FFGA, to the club's Membership Chair:

Mrs. Anne Earle / 715 Clairemont Avenue / Decatur, GA 30030

Please do so soon so that the club directory for 2014 may be distributed by the end of January.



Request for Hosting Assistance: We have a request from a Mr. Joseph Swinnen of the Leuven, Belgium FF Club. He and his wife, Gilly Nelissen, a retired teaching nurse, and an FF friend now living in Cincinnati, Ohio, retired Dr. Fawzy Mansour. They are traveling in the U.S.A. and will be visiting Savannah with a few days in Atlanta in route. Dr. Mansour is a former gynecologist, who earned his doctorate at Emory University.

They will be in Atlanta from May 1st through May 4th or 5th and would like to stay with other Friendship Force members if possible. They all have hosted many FF members and have traveled with FF Leuven on many exchanges and with Servas International, an organization similar to FFI. Any assistance would be greatly appreciated. They reside at Kortebergstraat 43 / 3212 Pellenberg, Belgium / their e-mail is: josswinnen@scarlet.be Telephone 11-32-16-461553. Please e-mail Kent Vickers at kvickga@hotmail.com if you would like to host these folks. They will pay their own expenses and can provide references.