



THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF GREATER ATLANTA NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER • OCTOBER • 2013

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



G'day, FFGA Mates!

The kangaroos, the koalas, the lorikeets and the Aussies gave our twelve ambassadors a warm and hearty welcome to Sydney and the Gold Coast during our latest outbound exchange! We met so many wonderful people and had so many wonderful experiences that we can talk your ears off, if you give us a chance. But I'll give you a brief recap of the exchange in an article which appears later in this newsletter, and you can run for cover if you see me coming!

Our outbound exchanges this year have been fantastic, and soon we will have the opportunity to show the ambassadors from Kiev, in the Ukraine, our great Southern hospitality and many of the interesting things to see and do in the Atlanta area. Ken McKinney has planned a great program, and you are all invited to participate whenever you can, even if you are not hosting. More on that later in the newsletter as well!

On Saturday, September 21, several FFGA members and a potential new member (way to go, John and Glenda!) met at IHOP for breakfast and then proceeded to the JapanFest at the Gwinnett Center. We had a great time socializing and soaking up Japanese food and culture. We will visit the monastery in Conyers in November and continue our exploration of various spiritual centers, as we have with the mosque in Atlanta, the Hindu temple in Lilburn, and the Buddhist center in Decatur. Many of you have participated in these cultural experiences, which are designed to show us more about our world, without suitcases and passports. These have also been great opportunities for us to get to know each other better and deepen our bonds of friendship.

I strongly encourage each of you to attend the Annual Meeting on October 6 at Mimi's Cafe. The future of the club depends on the decisions we make regarding the officers for 2014 and our choice of outbound destinations for 2015. We need everyone's input, support and participation in all of our activities to ensure the continuing success of the club. There are so many ways that you can help the Board and the Exchange Directors plan and carry out activities, so don't hesitate to volunteer! Come to Mimi's and enjoy great food and great fellowship, and make sure your voice is heard!

As always, if you have any suggestions, questions or concerns about the club, please feel free to contact me. If you want to attend an activity, but hesitate to drive, call me and I will try to arrange transportation for you. We really want to see you! Telephone: (404) 351-5352 / E-mail: madamew@hotmail.com

In Friendship,
Cynthia Williams
President

PLEASE DO NOT FORGET



The Annual Business Meeting of the Friendship Force of Greater Atlanta will be held on Sunday, the 6th of October at Mimi's Café located at 1221 Ashford Crossing in North Atlanta near Perimeter Mall. A social period will commence at 2:00 PM, and a luncheon will be served at 2:30 PM followed by the business meeting at approximately 3:30 PM, or as soon as possible thereafter. Members are not required to attend the social or the luncheon, but are highly encouraged to attend the business meeting. Club officers for 2014 will be elected, and destinations for the year 2015 will be selected during this occasion. Final details regarding incoming exchange expenses will be explained, voting for the selection of club officers must be accomplished, and selection of the countries the club would like to visit during outbound exchanges in 2015 will take place. Please see FFGA Newsflash 13-10, which was sent to your inbox on September 20th for more details concerning the Annual Membership Meeting. In the event that you no longer have that Newsflash on your computer, the attachment referring to the meeting is attached separately.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU



This month we introduce you to Marilyn and Jerome Bailey. These talented members of the Southwest Atlanta Branch of FFGA were inspired to join Friendship Force just last year by our club secretary, Mrs. Beverly McCray. Both are well-traveled internationally and are very active in community affairs. We look forward to enjoying their presence during future exchanges and at club social functions. This year they will celebrate 30 blessed years of marriage.



Marilynn Bailey is the Assistant Director for the Atlanta Public Schools Honor Chorus. She serves as Lead/Master Teacher in the Fine and Performing Arts Department of The Atlanta Public Schools where she has presented several workshops. She serves as the Piano Chairman for the Georgia Music Educators Association (GMEA) and works with the Metropolitan Opera in New York City to expose students and the community to opera. She has sung with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus and ASO Chamber Chorus under the direction of Maestro Robert Shaw. Mrs. Bailey has also performed with Cab Calloway in *Porgy and Bess* at Symphony Hall. She has successfully completed the requirements to teach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and is now endorsed to

teach in the "Gifted and Talented" areas, as well. Presently she serves as the Music Specialist at Deerwood Academy where she manages the African Drummers, Guitar, Keyboard, Bells, African Dancers, Boys Chorale, African-American Quiz Bowl, Signers (Sign Language) and Theater Troupe. At Deerwood, she serves on the IB/ILT (International Baccalaureate/Instructional Leadership Team), Technology Committee, Challenge Team for the Gifted, and serves as an advocate for ESOL students. Mrs. Bailey serves as the teacher representative on the School Council Board. She is a graduate student at Grand Canyon University majoring in Technology and Education

Jerome Bailey may be found sharing his many talents at The World of Coca-Cola, the Georgian Terrace, The Apparel Mart, The Polo Club, Georgia Aquarium and many exclusive hotels as a Culinary Artist. Jerome sincerely enjoys employing his skills at food preparation and has been the specialty chef for the faculty of the Virginia Public Schools system. Mr. Bailey now serves as a Wellness Coach at the YMCA and has been the decorator for the "Y" for several holiday seasons. Jerome has served as the Neighborhood Watch Captain for 2 years, during which he brought in many community professionals to share vital safety and general residential security information. Mr. Bailey also spearheaded many major community events that brought the neighborhood together. He is a graduate of Morris Brown College and performed many major operatic roles at the collegiate level, including as the tenor soloist in the *Messiah*. He has since sung with the Georgia Opera Company and Regina Opera in Brooklyn, New York. He has performed with many organizations and churches in New York, Virginia and Georgia. He is a graduate of Johnson & Wales University and a native of Atlanta.





A MESSAGE FROM FRIENDSHIP FORCE INTERNATIONAL



Joy DiBenedetto: President/CEO, FFI - Dated: Mon 8/26/13 12:07 PM.

Dear Friendship Force friends across the world,

Hello! It is truly an honor and privilege to write to all of you, the amazingly dedicated members of Friendship Force around the globe. I want to thank you for having me here, and I'd like to express my sincere gratitude to the Board of Directors for electing me to the position of CEO for such a respected and important organization.



I promise to work as hard as I can to fulfill the mission and vision which all of you have endeavored to achieve over so many years - waging peace and friendship worldwide. The effort which has been undertaken over the last 36 years by FF members has been nothing short of awe inspiring; and we will stand on the strength of these noble accomplishments as we make our way into a bright and productive future together.

I've now been here with the amazing team at FFI headquarters for about a month, learning the Friendship Force ways and all about the incredible work of our entire organization. So many of you have already welcomed me with kind words and generous gestures, and I am overwhelmed by your thoughtfulness even as I am just getting to know you. I hope that over the next year we each have the chance to meet, either in person, on an exchange, or at a Friendship Force meeting somewhere in the world. Also, I would love to connect with you on social media!

Many of you may know that my background is in media, and that I have also spent time as a social worker, a humanitarian press officer, and as a travel agent - with many side activities along the way. My interests are wide, deep, and definitely global. But I have always worked to achieve the "we" in all my pursuits: in what unites us as a world family, not what divides us.

This is why I believe so very much in the mission of Friendship Force and in the important legacy we are all building for ourselves, our families, our friends and indeed for the future good of the world. I want us to go out and make friendships where we've never been before, and in ways we've never even dreamed.

It's an exciting time to be involved with FFI! And I hope our cooperative work will be as forward-thinking and dynamic as possible, with the sharing of innovative ideas at the core of our efforts. Preparing ourselves and our members for the next stage of our history will take every one of us working together to be successful.

As I've been saying to the team here, I have so many ideas for our future myself, but I am well aware that the strength and vitality of FFI rests with the thousands of FF leaders who shape the future of our organization through their own initiatives and efforts every day. Over time, we will build what is to come from here collaboratively and collectively.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or to any of the fantastic members of our staff in the US, Germany and Japan should you have suggestions, questions, or if we can be of help to you in any way.

I look forward to sharing more with all of you soon. But for now, I'd like to challenge us to continue to be a 'force of friendship' throughout the globe. With a simple hello, a smile, or a handshake - we can indeed change the world.

With gratitude and friendship,

Joy

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THE SOCIAL SCENE



FFGA Members gathered together for brunch at an I.H.O.P. Restaurant in Suwannee last Saturday, before attending the JapanFest at the Gwinnett Performing Arts Center.

From left to right, in the front row is prospective member Bud Schooler, Eunice Luke, Sue James, and Cynthia Williams. In the next row are John and Glenda Wilhelm, Erika Vickers and Cindy Tan. Standing in the last row are Kent Vickers, Barbara Shields and Ken McKinney. Not shown are Neil and Vivian Nickelsen who arrived later. The group enjoyed the opportunity to get together socially to chat and become reacquainted prior to spending the next few hours appreciating of the culture of Japan and increasing their knowledge of that country



The Matsuriza Taiko Drummers were the highlight of the JapanFest. Using over twenty drums of various sizes they kept up fast paced hypnotic rhythms for over the course of forty-five minutes before a standing room only crowd. They often interspersed their act with humorous pratfalls that delighted the audience. The group is based in Orlando, Florida and appears at Atlanta's JapanFest every year. One seemingly odd fact is that all of the group's members are of Japanese heritage except for one. She is a native Norwegian.



Vivian and Neil Nickelsen pose with a mannequin wearing the protective costume of an ancient Japanese Samurai. The display is from Atlanta Bujinkan, a martial arts club devoted to the use of the weapons and the practices the of Samurai and Ninja defensive fighting skills.

Other interesting features of JapanFest were the displays of Ikebana (Flower Arrangement), Bonsai (Miniature Tree Forming), Archery and Martial Arts demonstrations, Traditional Music and Dancing, Kite making and the trying on of Kimonos for the ladies. There was also a bazaar featuring products from Japan, Japanese products made in Georgia and oriental craft and hobby items. The only real bummers for the day were the terrific rain and the bow wakes created by the vehicles on Interstate

EXCHANGE INFORMATION



We are shooting for Saturday, November 9th as the date to gather a group of interested FFGA members for a trip to the Monastery of the Holy Spirit in Conyers, GA. The 2,300 acre monastery is the inspirational home of Georgia's Trappist monks. The new Monastic Heritage Center – a 17,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art museum – is both interactive and educational and there is no admission fee. There is also a bonsai garden, a gift shop and a stained glass studio. At the Abbey Gift Shop, which is the largest Christian bookstore in Georgia, visitors can purchase monk-made biscotti, fruitcake, fudge and honey, all of which the monks sell in an effort to be self-sustaining and feed the local poor. Arrangements are still being finalized and more information will be published soon, hopefully by the time of the Annual Membership meeting. The Social Committee is currently negotiating for the use of a small 25 passenger bus in hopes that it may encourage more of our members to participate in FFGA events. The Social committee is trying to get volunteers willing to carpool with other members for the one hour trip to the monastery if we are unable to arrange bus transportation. If you can volunteer, please contact President Cynthia Williams by e-mail at madamew@hotmail.com, or by telephone at 404-351-5352.

FFGA to Australia - Sydney and the Gold Coast: Kangaroos, koalas and crocs! Oh my! Eight intrepid FFGA members and four ambassadors from other clubs participated in a great adventure in Australia from August 26 to September 10. Sue Mills did a fantastic job as Exchange Director for the group, which included three Janets (Holland, Martin and Prado), Barbara Cousins, Eunice Luke, Alva McRoberts and Cynthia Williams from our Atlanta club.



The first week was a reciprocal exchange with the Friendship Force of Sydney, which we had hosted in September of 2010 for a civil rights/African-American heritage themed program at their request. They spoke very warmly of their experience in Atlanta and were anxious to show us the best of Sydney's hospitality in return.

Emphasizing the great diversity of Sydney's population, our welcome dinner was held at a Korean restaurant in the Mandarin Center, a multi-purpose building which includes a movie theater and a bowling alley, as well as offices, shopping and a private club. We spent several days touring historical and cultural sites in Sydney, as well as many of the area's beautiful beaches. A few members of the group attended a performance at the famous Sydney Opera House. A train trip to the Blue Mountains showed us that New South Wales has it all---urban life, beaches and beautiful mountains---all easily accessible by a superb public transportation system! Sydney is also a very walkable city with a very busy and attractive downtown area.

On September 3, we flew from Sydney to the Gold Coast (south of Brisbane), where we were enthusiastically greeted by our hosts. Viv Caulfield, a Gold Coast club member and FFI Board Member, had given us a preview of our activities during a visit to Atlanta last spring, so we were expecting a fun and varied program, and we were not disappointed!

The second day of our exchange, we were given a tour and a delicious lunch at the Carlton United Brewery facilities (where Foster's beer is made). That evening, we all donned Aussie stockman (cowboy) hats for the amazing Outback Spectacular Show. If you ever get to the Gold Coast area, do not miss this show!!! It features horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, cars, music and a lot more in a multi-media presentation that you won't forget! The next day we had a very successful whale-watching outing, and many of our Pacific mammalian friends showed up to flap their fins and tails in greeting to us. A tour of the Mount Tamborine Botanical Gardens and a day-long visit to the Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary gave the ambassadors an opportunity to learn more about the flora and fauna of Australia, as our hosts were very willing and able to share their knowledge with us. On our last full day, the American ambassadors participated in a Gold Coast club tradition of planting a tree in the Friendship Force section of a local botanical garden, followed by a farewell BBQ lunch on the beach.

Many thanks to Sue Mills and our Aussie EDs for planning an exchange program that made it all worth the long trip! And special thanks to the Aussies for arranging two weeks of chamber-of-commerce weather for us!

PLEASE SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR SOME OF THE PHOTOS TAKEN DURING OUR EXCHANGE.



FFGA's Alva McRoberts & E.D. Sue Mills pose with their Sydney Hosts at dinner.



Janet(s) Holland & Prado enjoy a libation with Sydney Host Alice-Anne Bagster.



Prez. Cynthia Willams knows even young Joeys like a good back rub.



Alva McRoberts ponders "Do I Eat crocs with butter or ketchup.



FFGA in their Stockman (Cowboy) hats at the Outback Spectacular Show (Rodeo) away out East in Goldcoast.



Bet you did not know our Prez is so Ooh-La-La in her swimwear.



Combined Hosts and Ambassadors gather for a photo-op with city council members.



Eunice Luke makes a vain attempt to blow out her birthday cake candles.



Ambassadors Robbie Thornton from NJ & Barbara Cousins look out for whales.



Kiev, Ukraine to Atlanta: Exchange Director Ken McKinney reminds us that the incoming exchange from Kiev, Ukraine is fast approaching and that it time for the club to begin getting ready to host our eleven visitors. (Due to problems attaining visas and to cancellations the group has been downsized from the original sixteen Ambassadors.) It would be appreciated if you would take a bit of time to become familiar with the history and culture of Kiev; the eighth largest city in Europe. You may select a link by holding down the control key while clicking on the link.

<http://www.kievukraine.info/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiev>

<http://www.bing.com/news/search?q=kiev%2c+ukraine&qpvt=kiev%2c+ukraine&FORM=EWRE>

The group will be visiting CNN, The Georgia Aquarium, The World of Coca-Cola, the Peachtree Westin observation deck and having supper at Pitty Pat's Porch restaurant on Thursday the 24th of October. On Friday they will visit Etowah Indian Mounds and the Booth Western Art Museum in Cartersville. Saturday will entail a visit to the King Center, the memorial and boyhood home. Sunday afternoon they will tour the Atlanta Botanical Gardens. Monday the group will visit Stone Mountain Park before having a private farewell dinner at the home of John and Glenda Wilhelm. Any FFGA member is welcome to participate with the Ukrainians and their hosts, when they are attending the public venues, at their own expense.



Turrialba, Costa Rica to Atlanta: The "Ticos" of Turrialba are paying us a reciprocal visit in April of 2014. FFGA had a great exchange with them during January 2011 and it is now time to showcase our renowned Southern Hospitality in response to the kindness they displayed to us during our visit to their country. Although it is still seven months away, it is not too early to begin planning for this inbound exchange. The Ticos would like a two week exchange with the first week taking place in Fort Myers, Florida and a second week in Atlanta. Mr. Harvey Brickley was the E.D. in 2011 and has volunteered to be the E.D. for this exchange. He is already coordinating with both of his counterpart E.D.s to confirm a set of exact dates in April for our exchange to take place. Every effort is being made to insure that the exchange does not extend into the Easter holidays. Most of the "Ticos", as Costa Ricans like to refer to themselves, speak excellent English, so communication should not be a problem for the hosts. Mr. Brickley is already taking names of those willing to host or 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: We have a Domestic Exchange to the Friendship Force of Eastern Washington and North Idaho in the planning for late May or early June, 2014. Joyce Mell has volunteered to be the Exchange Director for this adventure and is currently working out the details with our host club's E.D. Typically domestic exchanges are conducted over a period of five nights. Host program fees are negotiated between both clubs' exchange directors. A \$50 Ambassador fee is required to be submitted to FFI prior to the exchange. Transportation may be either independent or group travel to the host destination. Since the Domestic Exchanges are so short, most Ambassadors either precede or follow the exchange with independent travel in the area. The Northwestern area of the United States certainly has much to offer and this exchange is likely to fill early on. The host club states that they can normally host 20 people at a time. Since the last Newsletter there have been 16 FFGA members who have expressed an interest in participating. Therefore, if you are also interested you should contact Mrs. Mell as soon as possible to be considered. You may contact her by telephone at: 770-232-2987 or by e-mail at: injmell@bellsouth.net.



Major exchange fee policy change:

A proposal was made by Mrs. Anne Earle to the FFGA Board of Directors to provide extra funding for inbound exchanges. A vote was taken and passed authorizing an amount, not to exceed \$500.00 of FFGA Treasury funds, to be used for subsidizing each incoming exchange as deemed desirable by the Incoming Exchange Director. A request by the Exchange Director for the use of any amount of these funds must be coordinated with the club's President and approved by the FFGA Board of Directors prior to the exchange. Any unused portion must be returned to the FFGA Treasury at the conclusion of the exchange. A written report of all exchange income and expenses must be presented to the club Treasurer within one month of the conclusion of the exchange.

ODDS & ENDS



Minutes of the FFGA Board of Directors meetings: To review the FFGA Board of Directors minutes from the board meetings held in August and September please depress and hold down the Ctrl key on your keyboard while clicking on the following links: For August <http://sdrv.ms/182qWI9> and <http://sdrv.ms/15y7T5A> for September. If the links do not open the minutes for you, copy the links individually into the address bar of your internet browser. Please allow time for the link to open.



Just a reminder: Dues for the 2014 membership year are accepted from the 1st of October through the 31st of December and 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 considered as members for the remainder of that year and the following year. You may remit your dues by check or cash at the Annual General Membership Meeting at Mimi's Café on October 6th, or you may mail a check payable to FFGA to the club's Treasurer Mrs. Lynda Anderson / 251 Wilton Drive / Decatur, GA 30030



Request for Assistance: We have an out-of-the-ordinary request from a Mrs. Bobbie Jones of the FF Club in Lake Hartwell...it involves post-Conference hosting but not on the dates of the official hosting. It would take place from Saturday, November 30 to Tuesday, December 3. Please see an extract of the e-mail she has sent to President Williams, below: *

* NOTE: If after reading you feel you can assist, please contact President Williams by telephone: 404-351-5352.

Mrs. Jones E-Mail

Hello Cynthia,

It's Bobbie Jones here; I am a former FFI employee and currently a member and past-president of the Lake Hartwell group of Friendship Force and I have an out-of-the-ordinary request. It involves Post-Conference hosting but not on the dates of the official hosting.

I have contacted FFI about this matter and then thought I'd contact you directly to see if this hosting would work for any of your club members. It would take place from **Saturday, November 30 - Tuesday, December 3.**

My husband and I have 4 Indonesians, plus a couple and their 14-year-old daughter from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, coming to our home for Post-Conference hosting, Nov. 26th - Dec. 30th. After being with us for 4 nights here in Anderson, SC, they all plan to come to Atlanta, for a 3-night stay before flying out on Tuesday, December 3. The 4 Indonesians have host homes in Atlanta because of previous contacts. The Malaysians do not.

The Malaysian couple and their daughter are very new to FF. The couple is assisting Arifin Mochtar of Indonesia to develop FF in Malaysia. The group has done some hosting and has now established a club. I know this family would be delighted to experience FF here in the States! Do you think you might have any member(s) who would agree to host them for 3 nights, from Saturday, 30 Nov to Tuesday, 3 Dec? My husband and I will be bringing the group to Atlanta on Saturday, the 30th. Information about the Malaysians can be found below. Please feel free to email me at: jameshones@earthlink.net, or by phone at (864-332-0604) if you have any questions.

Thank you for considering this and if there is someone else, to whom I should address this request, please let me know.

With many thanks and in friendship,
Bobbie Jones

Mr. Umar's Background

Hi Bobbie ...

My name is Umar, I am (73), my wife Ayu (50) and my daughter Deena (14) would like to introduce ourselves as FF Kuala Lumpur Malaysia and we are Muslim.

I am retired now. I was self-employed over the last 10 years. My wife was a lecturer at one of universities in Malaysia in the Business Dept. but she is now replacing me to run our small furniture business. We custom make high end solid furniture in Kuala Lumpur.

Our club, FF Kuala Lumpur, has just set up last year and we still have a lot of work to do to increase the club's membership. This year we received two groups inbound in Kuala Lumpur, Oita, Japan and Belgium. I am the vice president and my wife Ayu is the secretary.

(Update: they are currently in the process of obtaining their visas to travel to the US.)



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

DeLain and Gerald Climmons, who reside in Hiram, GA.

Barbara Cousins, who resides in Cartersville, GA.

Susan Rawls, who resides in the Vinings area of Atlanta, GA.

IN MEMORY OF



A memorial service was held at the Smoke Rise Baptist Church in Stone Mountain on August 10th, 2013 to celebrate the life of Mrs. Lillian D. Cantrell, a very long time member of the Friendship Force of Greater Atlanta. She was a past president of our club during the years of 2000 and 2001 and remained immersed in its activities until ill health took its toll and she could no longer actively participate. Mrs. Cantrell was very highly respected by all who knew her and was considered by most to be the epitome of Southern grace and charm.

Mrs. Cantrell was an educator for over 45 years and retired from her last position as the principal of the Henderson Mill Elementary School. So well regarded was she that the street that school resides upon is named for her - Lillian Cantrell Lane. Upon retiring she did not put the field of education behind her but instead co-founded the Professional Association of Georgia Educators (PAGE). She was also a strong believer in staying fit and played tennis well into her 80's. Lillian Cantrell will be sorely missed by not only FFGA but by her constant companion and dear friend Norman Askew, who was also a long time club member.

Lillian sincerely loved children, particularly those who were afflicted with disease and/ or deformities. Should any of our members care to make a donation in memory of Lillian D. Cantrell, she would have been very pleased if it were to be made to The Children's Tumor Foundation, 95 Pine St., 16th Floor, New York, NY 10005-1703.

_____ T H E E N D _____

In Friendship,
 Kent G. Vickers
 Newsletter Editor