



friendship force
NORTHERN COLORADO



Sue Cummins, Editor

2020

April-June

Estes Park, Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland, Windsor and Surrounding Areas

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Watch your emails
to learn about
a possible virtual
meeting/program



FROM OUR PRESIDENT



“**Resilience**” is the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties, the ability of an object to spring back into shape. It’s toughness and elasticity, knowing how to cope with setbacks, or barriers, or limited resources. “Springy” is a synonym of “resilient,” as is “rebounding.”

Our challenge for the rest of 2020 is to rebound from the strictures caused by COVID-19. Our 12 ambassadors to New Zealand and Australia are home and safe. Thank goodness! Perhaps by Friday, June

12th, we’ll be able to gather and follow the arc of their heroic story, and to vote for our 2021 FFNC officers.

Meanwhile, we’ll forego in-person gatherings through May. The Board is considering virtual meeting technology.

We’ll celebrate World Friendship Day together this summer. For 2021 we look forward to an outbound journey to Raleigh, NC, and inbound ambassadors from Bristol, UK, and New Jersey. Still in the works is a “Grasslands to Glacier” aka “High Plains to High Alpine” global inbound journey in September 2021. Hopefully, the Australia/NZ journey will find a new time.

Be resilient. Spring forward. Enjoy being home. Cull your travel books for a book sale and exchange later this year. Sort your erstwhile souvenirs for a silent auction this Fall.

Just in: We regret that our friends from Ontario have decided not to travel this year, but we look forward to hosting them at another time. Because we are resilient.

Ken Weaver



LIVING AND WORKING IN SAUDI ARABIA
PRESENTED BY JIM & SANDY COOPER
FEBRUARY MEETING



We were captivated listening to the first-hand experiences of Jim and Sandy Cooper as they shared stories of their years living and working in Saudi Arabia from 1998-2007. Jim was employed as a professor at a Saudi University, located near the east coast beside the huge Aramco Oil complex. The professors, student body, and staff were all males, and the schools of study—Business, Engineering and Science—were all related to the oil industry. Jim was surprised to learn that among his international and local students, the Saudi men had a very difficult time with his essay exams, be-

cause prior to that their mode of learning and testing had been rote memorization and regurgitation rather than thinking, reasoning and making comparisons. He told us that Saudi Arabia was basically an “entertainment free” country, and beyond work and shopping, people made their own entertainment by gathering with friends, although they were somewhat restricted from moving freely among the various compounds.

Sandy shared personal accounts of the extremely guarded and restrictive life of women in Saudi Arabia. As an American, she wasn’t forced to cover her head as the locals were, but she was shouted at and harassed by local religious police when she was out shopping with her head bare. She said she made many friends of a variety of nationalities, and she usually felt safe because there were so many police around. She related that women were not allowed to drive, were forced to ride on “women only” busses, had to be accompanied by men to most places, and generally spent a huge percentage of their time shopping or gathering with other of women at coffee shops. All of the shops closed for the five call-to-prayer times during the day, so they had to time their shopping excursions around that schedule. Sandy told us she finally did transition to wearing an abaya just so she wouldn’t stand out while in public. Local Saudi women covered every inch of their skin, including wearing a cloth over their faces, so no skin would show. She relayed horrifying accounts of frequent public beheadings that were intended to send a message to others who might break the strict religious laws. These factors plus the extreme limitations and strict cultural norms for women led to her feeling very confined and agitated. Her pent up frustrations evoked visceral emotions, and she knew it was time for them to come back to the USA, where she said she feels incredibly thankful every day for our freedoms and privileges.

Marcia Ross



Oops! We didn't quite make it!

FFNOCO Journey #20023, featuring home stays in Whangarei, New Zealand, and Casterton, Australia, was carefully planned and anticipated by Cathie McCallum and LaDonna Palm, Ambassador Co-ordinators, and by the club presidents and Host Coordinators in both countries. Twelve FF women from five states paid their fees, made their plane reservations, acquired visas and up-to-date passports, corresponded with their home hosts, and packed host gifts and appropriate clothes. Two started their travels February 18, and six on March 6, with pre-trips before arranging to meet at the Auckland airport Sunday, March 15, to fly to Whangarei to meet our home hosts at an early afternoon reception. Four left Fort Collins Thursday, March 12, and via flights from Denver to Los Angeles to Auckland, arrived at the Auckland airport early Saturday morning, March 14. After storing bags in the Airport Gateway Hotel lobby, they spent a few hours walking around downtown Auckland and even got to watch a St. Patrick's Day parade!

Just the evening before, the Casterton FF club executive board met and decided to cancel the second leg of our journey "due to the rapid and multiplying effects of the coronavirus within Australia in the previous 24 to 48 hours." When Whangarei heard of that decision, they decided it was wise to cancel our visit there, too. Whangarei FF held their Sunday reception without us and the mayor attended in her ceremonial chains and robes.

With a flurry of emails and text messages, we all managed to arrive at the Auckland airport Sunday morning and find last-minute flights back to the US. New Zealand was closing its borders Sunday night! Cathie, Jan, Barb, and Carol spent one night in a hotel and two nights sitting up in coach seats while crossing the Pacific Ocean.

I am often asked why we didn't cancel before March 12 or 14. Eight ambassadors were already in New Zealand, and the restrictions were not severe, even in most of our states. The most important fact is that we all managed to leave New Zealand before we could have been placed on a 14-day self-quarantine! FFI and both host clubs have generously agreed to repay our fees, and LaDonna is working diligently to arrange for refunds or no-fee cancellations.

Thanks to Kimberly Fraser, FF Regional Support Manager for Australia and New Zealand, and Allison Lindsey, Senior Regional Support Manager for the US and Canada, for their support.

Cathie McCallum

Not pictured: Patti Stickler, JoEllen Polzien, Sue Urbatsch, Karen Elliott, Scheela Morgan, Cathie McCallum



Jan Rozman

Carol Fulkrod

Barb Turnbull



Susan Mathre

Nita Kopyay

LaDonna Palm



From FFI President Jeremi Snook

Dear Ken,

The impact of COVID-19 on Friendship Force clubs and headquarters is undeniable. As an organization whose existence depends on members participating in Journeys, our income has very nearly been erased.

Furloughing staff, reducing hours, eliminating all expenses, and suspending our projects will help us continue without Journey revenue for a few more months, but it falls woefully short to see us through this pandemic.

In a massive effort to coordinate efforts between your Board of Directors, Field Representatives, club leaders and others, a fundraising initiative will be launching in your region soon.

A full report on the impact, including Journey cancellations, our financial position, and answers to all your questions, is a part of this effort.

In the days to come, you may hear from your regional leaders about ways in which you can support FFI through this difficult time, and I thank you in advance for taking the time to consider them. As always, but especially now, stay safe, stay sane, and if there is anything our staff, Board, or I can do for you, please don't hesitate to reach out.

In friendship,
Jeremi Snook

Letter Notifying Us of the Cancellation of Our Inbound from Stratford and St. Marys, Canada

Hello Marilyn,

I hope you, your family and friends are staying safe and healthy during these unprecedented times.

Our Club executive (board) met early this afternoon, via video conference, and the decision was made that all 2020 inbound and outbound journeys would either be cancelled or at least postponed until next year. Therefore, unfortunately, we will not be travelling to Wichita, KS and N. Colorado in September, 2020.

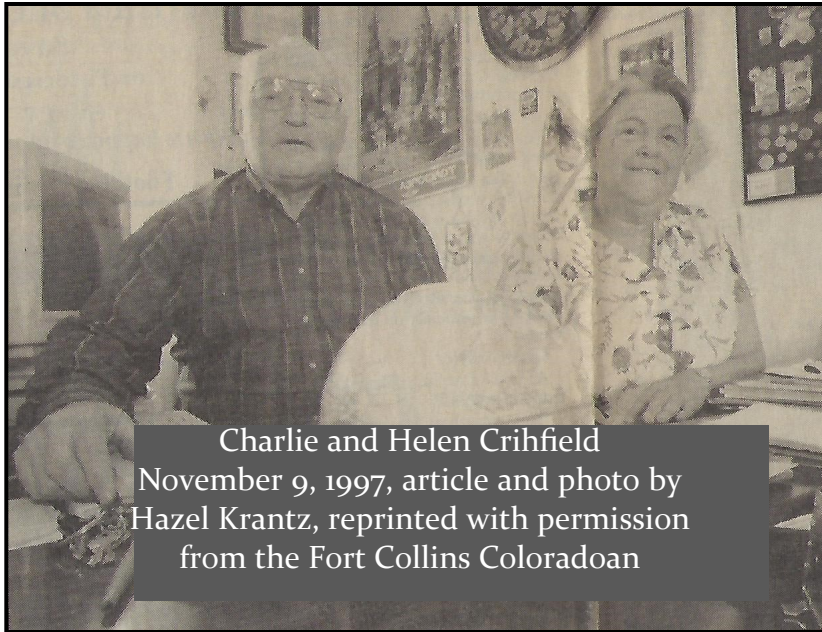
Our area has not been in lock down but all Canadians have been asked to stay at home as much as possible in the hopes that the COVID-19 virus will be brought under control. That has been the situation for over 2 weeks now with all large gatherings, ie. theatres, restaurants, etc. being closed.

While I am hopeful that the virus will be under control well before September, I am more than happy to act on the side of safety for our ambassadors and hosts rather than proceed and put anyone at risk.

I am very sorry to be delivering this news and hope that it can be considered a postponement rather than a cancellation. I know that you have already had at least one planning meeting and we want you to know how much we appreciate your invitation, information you have provided and the work you have put into the Journey so far.

I hope all is well with you and wish you good health.

Warm regards,
Linda Weitzel



Charlie and Helen Crihfield
November 9, 1997, article and photo by
Hazel Krantz, reprinted with permission
from the Fort Collins Coloradoan

Couple Find Friendship Full of Surprises, Rewards

“Well, we’ll be going down to the airport this afternoon to pick up the Mexicans,” says Charlie.

“We’re having a single woman and three children,” adds Helen, relaxing in one of the comfortable overstuffed chairs that seem to symbolize the Crihfield home. “Then a young German fellow is coming to spend some time with us. He’ll be here at the same time as the Mexicans. That ought to be interesting.”

The phone rings. It’s someone from the Friendship Force, the organization that sends local “ambassadors” to live with people in other countries and arranges for “incoming ambassadors” to lodge with Northern Colorado families.

“The brunch will be in the shelter near Lake Loveland. Tell them to look for the big Mexican flag.”

“The forecast is for very cold,” I remark.

“We know. We’ll just move to Cinda’s basement.”

Five extra people, a doomed brunch in a park. Nothing bothers Helen Crihfield. She and Charlie have been hosting Friendship Force visitors since 1990 in the five-bedroom house they share with their son, his wife and child, and a black lab named Reba. With three sons and a daughter of their own plus six grandchildren, the house always has room to squeeze in one more. A child’s rocker in front of the fireplace signals kids are welcome.

The Crihfield’s association with people of other countries actually goes way back to the time when Charlie, in the Air Force, was posted in Germany. Rather than live at the post in an enclosed “American world,” Charlie and Helen elected to live in the small village for four years, participating in German life and visiting with their neighbors.

Before becoming involved with Friendship Force, Helen was active in the People to People program. While preparing to take a group of teenagers to Russia in 1990, she was attracted to news of a Friendship Force meeting about a visit to Russia. (Incidentally, not all Friendship Force visits are fun...during days of severe shortages in Russia, the Force brought needed medicines and other supplies. A group recently went to Bosnia.)

Helen’s original trip to the Ukraine blossomed into unexpected dividends. One of the girls on the trip developed an earache. The doctor who treated her was intrigued; he’d never met an American. His young daughter was learning English, and he asked if she could correspond with them.

Continued on page 6



(reprinted Carihfield article continued)

Several years later, Helen made another trip, this time to Moscow. The doctor, his wife and the little girl, Anna, now 15, journeyed down from their village to meet Helen. Ann was invited to come to the United States, where she attended Poudre High School for a year. Now a college student in the Ukraine, she keeps her American family posted on her progress.

“As the Friendship Force teaches, we’ve always believed in the motto that A World of Friends Is a World at Peace,” says Charlie. “We’ve hosted people from Israel, Hungary, Ukraine, Australia, Austria, Germany, Costa Rica, and now, Mexico.”

They’ve never had a bad experience with guests, perhaps because Friendship Force screens both guests and hosts and matches them.

“You have to give people space,” Helen says. “Don’t be at them all the time.”

“You never know what turns them on,” chuckles Charlie. “We brought the Costa Ricans to Estes Park to admire the Rockies, and they were most impressed by a hospital thrift shop. Filled 10 bags of stuff to bring to their large family. The Germans couldn’t get over the sprinkling system in the fields of Weld County. The Australians were fascinated by the Monfort feed lots near Greeley. One man only wanted to go to Hobby Lobby; he was into crafts. So, it’s just people being themselves. Sometimes we have some laughs over language misunderstandings, but generally we just enjoy the visitors.”

In addition to Friendship Force activities, Charlie works part-time as a security guard at Teledyne, and Helen drives the Senior Center bus.

They don’t spend much time getting tied into knots about things. Everything will work out, and they’ll have a lot of fun. Maybe they’ll help world peace, maybe not. But there are a lot of interesting people out there in the world, just waiting to become friends.

As Ken Weaver has already notified us, this week we received the sad news that Helen Carihfield, stalwart longstanding member of the Friendship Force of Northern Colorado, died March 25th.

Helen was President of our club in 2003. The prior year, 2002, four journeys were canceled due to the 9/11 attacks and subsequent outbreak of the SARS virus in the Orient. Yet in 2003, the Friendship Force of Northern Colorado led journeys to Cuba, Latvia, New Zealand, and Sarasota, Florida. Helen, and Charlie, our president in 1996, brought us wit and charm. Helen later became our esteemed chapter historian for more than a decade...Thank you, Helen, in perpetuity.

Helen will be laid to rest next to Charlie at Fort Logan Cemetery in Denver.

Please contact Ken Weaver, Sue Cummins, or Cinda Clark if you’d like to know the address of the Carihfield’s son to send your condolences. It was in Ken’s earlier communication to you.



In Northern Colorado

Outbound

JOURNEYS & EVENTS

2020 OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS



Colorado Let's Eat Out

CLEO

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**CLEOS and Game Nights
will resume
after social distancing
is no longer required**

**August
Join Cheyenne Club members
for picnic in Cheyenne
if possible**

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**Hoped-for
Reschedule of
Outbound Journey to
Australia & New Zealand**

**Inbound Journeys
from Bristol, United Kingdom
and from New Jersey**

**Outbound Journey
to Raleigh North Carolina**

**September
Global Inbound Journey
"Grasslands to Glacier"
or
"High Plains to High Alpine"**



Please tell us by email a story about your Friendship Force experiences that has been most memorable to you. Some ideas?

Funny

Crazy

Touching

Educational

Sad

Aha! Revelatory

Language

Scary

Animals

Scenery

Uncomfortable

Please contribute at least one story that has stuck with you about your experiences, your hosts, your ambassadors... Don't use names if you think you might embarrass someone, and don't write it down if you don't want it published.

We hope to share our individual experiences in a virtual meeting during this time of social-distancing, and also to get another article about Friendship Force published in our local papers. Really good photos would be good, too.

Please email your stories to Ken Weaver at ffnocopresident@gmail.com

Questions? Call Sue Cummins at 682-2266 or Ken at 381-3611