



friendship force  
NORTHERN COLORADO

# FRIENDSHIP FLYER



Ed Brigden—Editor & Publisher

February  
2013

Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland, Windsor and Surrounding Areas

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## FROM OUR PRESIDENT



At the core of Friendship Force, the home-hosted exchange experience provides an amazing opportunity to see the world through a new lens, and to forge many new and special friendships. I have been fortunate these last few months to experience meaningful exchanges in Brazil, Japan and Costa Rica. During all three home stays, I felt very fortunate to meet such positive, interesting and generous people. Having now just returned from a wonderful exchange and tour in Costa Rica, I've been reflecting on the special highlights of this latest excursion. Our exchange was another great reminder of the amazing relationships and bonds that can form over the course of just one week while being home hosted by another club. We experienced a glimpse into the culture, food, major industries, history, scenery and flora & fauna of the area, and we were treated to a very warm reception by our Turrialba hosts. Whether they lived in large or small homes, drove a car or not, or spoke only Spanish or fluent English, they were hospitable, fun and friendly. We came away with the realization that they are a club that prides itself in their culture and history and that they are interested to learn about people from other cultures and countries as well. We observed that they have strong family ties, and are a very close-knit community. Throughout our stay we enjoyed many tasty local dishes which usually included a variety of wonderful fresh fruits, juices and vegetables plus rice & beans, and either beef, fish or chicken.

In addition to the new friendships formed with our Costa Rica hosts, our 26-member FFNC and FF Denver group enjoyed spending time and adventures together both during the exchange and during our 10-day tour around the country. We'll look forward to sharing more about our experiences at the April meeting.

Thank you to Marilyn Garner, Dennis Miller, Ed Jakubauskas and everyone else who helped with the January FFNC meeting in our absence. Ed's program sounded very interesting! We will conduct the installation of our 2013 officers at the next meeting on February 8<sup>th</sup>.

*Marcia Ross*

*Next Meeting*  
**February 8, 2013**  
**7:00 PM**

**Brazil**  
**Exchange Review**

**First Christian  
Church**  
**2000 N Lincoln Ave.**  
**Loveland, CO**

## UPCOMING EXCHANGES

### MYANMAR

FEBRUARY 16—MARCH 1

Outbound

This Exchange to Myanmar, formerly Burma, will be a global non-homestay to provide aid and to assess for a new FF club. FFNC had an outbound Discovery Exchange to Myanmar in 2006.

This year we have 21 ambassadors, including 2 MDs. The medical docs will treat patients and train medical personnel in the Yangon area. Other Ambassadors will collect items for the Diplomat School.

Our goal is to work toward Friendship Force

Club formation and home hosting when the government allows. Therefore, all ambassadors will encourage aid recipients and others to create and join a Friendship Force club in the Yangon area.

We hope that this Discovery program can project the value and importance of FFI.

**EXCHANGE DIRECTOR**

Dot Cada 667-7548  
dotcada@yahoo.com

### HARRISBURG, PA

MAY 1—8

Outbound

The Harrisburg exchange still has openings for Ambassadors. Let us introduce you to the capital of Pennsylvania, which is located between the Blue Mountain Range and Gettysburg. It is in the midst of Amish country, the Appalachian Trail, close to Lancaster and also Hershey -

which is the chocolate capital of the USA.

Please consider joining us for a special week in Pennsylvania.

**EXCHANGE DIRECTOR**

Kay Thomas 278-9054  
KThomasLvnd@comcast.net

## FEBRUARY 8 MEETING—BRAZIL EXCHANGES

FFNC Ambassadors will report and share their wonderful and exciting experiences from our September, 2012 Exchanges to Sao Jose do Rio Preto and Curitiba, Brazil. We shall share some stories, hitting the high points of what we saw, whom we met and the lasting friendships that we made.

We shall also review our five-day extension to Iguassu Falls and Rio de Janeiro.

*Judy Flatley*

"I am in awe of the whole experience—the people, sites, food, everything...Our hosts were very fun-loving! ...This trip went way beyond my expectations" as a first-time Ambassador.

*Rona Baer*



## JANUARY 11 MEETING - SYRIA...A FAILED STATE

Our speaker, Ed Jakubauskas, became interested in how nations evolve and change, and how democracy succeeds or fails. What are the factors? Culture, leadership, rule of law, compromise, education, economy? Why is Costa Rica doing well, but North Korea is a disaster?

Syria is in an ancient region formerly called Mesopotamia. It was once part of the Roman Empire, then taken over by Arabs. Finally in 1453 the Turkish Ottomans occupied to spread their power over the Balkans and Northern Africa. In WWI the Turks sided with Germany so after the war (1918) they lost territory to France and Great Britain who divided the Middle East between them ignoring natural ethnic areas. Syria was under French Mandate and was first set up as a Hashemite Kingdom, like Jordan and some other areas. Lebanon was set up as a nation from this area to include Beirut.

In Syria, local family ties, religions, cities and regions are very important. The ethnic groups are Kurds, Arabs, Circassians, Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians. The religious groups are the Sunnis, Shia, Alawites, Christians, and Druze. The political groups are the Baath party (Arab nationalists), and Muslim Brotherhood.

The Sunnis dominated the economy and the Alawites dominated the military. There were power struggles and the losers were killed or went into exile.

Within the Alawites, General Hafez Assad was a cunning, ruthless officer in the Air Force, and emerged as the dictator in 1971. His son, Bashar, was a student of ophthalmology in London when his older brother (Bassel) died in an auto accident in 1994. When Bashar became president in 2000, people who hoped for change under his rule were disappointed.

The conflict in the Middle East commonly known as the "Arab Spring" has been simmering for a long time, but was set off by a fruit peddler in Tunisia who set himself on fire after a conflict with a government official over a business license. In Syria, two teen-agers wrote anti-Assad graffiti on a wall at school. Their torture and death by the Secret Service brought protests. Some demonstrators were killed and more protests have led to Civil War. All sorts of groups are involved in the Civil War including al-Qaida.

Saudi Arabia and Turkey support the rebels—the U.S. has missile bases in Turkey. Iran and Hezbollah support the government. Russia supports the government because they have a naval base in Syria. China also supports the government.

Thousands have been killed in Syria, but Assad refuses to resign. Unrest continues—as it has for centuries.

*Marian Sparks*

## OFFICERS FOR 2013

Officers will be inducted at the February 8 meeting. Normally, new officers are inducted at the January meeting. However, most were out of town for the January meeting.

**President**      **Marcia Ross**  
**Vice President** **Marilyn Garner**  
**Secretary**     **Paulette Weaver**  
**Treasurer**     **Alice Gibson**

## JOIN FF DENVER TO CANADA

**Join FF Denver in June for 12 days of great adventures by great lakes in two countries!**

**Buffalo, NY and Niagara-on-the-Lake**—3 days

**Toronto, Canada**—2 days

**North Bay, Ontario**—7-day Exchange with  
FF North Bay

June 18—30 Cost is \$1120 land only.

Contact Anita Smith: 619-894-9464

Anita.smith22@gmail.com

# COSTA RICA



“The Costa Rica Exchange was another great reminder of the amazing relationships and bonds that can form over the course of just one week while being home hosted by another club. We experienced a glimpse into the culture, food, major industries, history, scenery and flora & fauna of the area, and we were treated to a very warm reception by our Turrialba hosts. Whether they lived in large or small homes, drove a car or not, spoke only Spanish or fluent English, they were hospitable, fun and friendly.

They are a club that prides itself in their culture and history and they are interested to learn about people from other cultures and countries as well.

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*Marcia Ross*



## COSTA RICA (CONTINUED)



## FFI WORLD CONFERENCE—NEW ORLEANS

If you receive email from FFI, you probably saw the recent notice that registration is now open for the World Conference from November 23-25 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Details about registration, extra events and hotel rooms are available on the website.

We are anticipating that a number of FFNC members will attend this conference, and if you are interested, I urge you to go ahead and **get your reservations made** so you won't miss this fun opportunity. Although we can talk in general terms about when people will travel, we will likely not do group plane reservations. If you're planning to attend, you will need to complete your own registration, find your own roommate (if going as a single), and book your own rooms and flights. During the conference there will be several opportunities for us to gather at group events and meals.

At an earlier FF meeting, 6-8 of you indicated that you would be willing to **home host conference attendees after the conference to share with them your traditional Thanksgiving holiday**. These homestays would begin late Monday the 25<sup>th</sup>, or sometime Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup> (depending on travel plans), and last until the Friday or Saturday after Thanksgiving. Pallie Savoie, from FFI, needs specific contact infor-

mation from those of you who are willing to host so she can do the matching. **Please contact me immediately if you are willing to provide a home-host spot, and let me know how many guests you can accommodate.**

We can't know for sure if guests will come to Northern Colorado, but we need to be able to advertise how many spots we have available. Most of the post conference ambassadors will be from other countries, although Pallie said there are some U.S. FF members who also want to participate in this opportunity. Hosts will be responsible to provide transportation to/from DIA, and make any other plans for the 4-day homestay. This is not a regular exchange where the club arranges activities, meals or group gatherings. You do not have to attend the conference to participate as a home host, but you would be able to attend schedule-wise if you wanted to. Again, if you're willing to participate as a home host, please contact Marcia A.S.A.P. at 377-0512 or [mross377@msn.com](mailto:mross377@msn.com). For those of you who are willing/able to participate, thank you in advance. This should be a fun opportunity, and a great chance to show off our warm Colorado hospitality!

*Marcia Ross*

## LEGACY FUND

As a reminder, we are requesting that our members donate items to be used for a special raffle in June. The proceeds will be divided 2/3 to the FFI Legacy Fund and 1/3 to our FFNC Special Projects and Activities Fund. Tickets for the raffle will be sold at the May and June meetings; \$5 each or 5 tickets for \$20. The winners will be drawn at the June meeting. Please be thinking about something you could contribute, whether it's an item you purchased on one of your

exchanges or other travels, something hand-made, or some service you could perform. You can refer back to the article in the January newsletter for more ideas.

Please contact Marcia at [mross377@msn.com](mailto:mross377@msn.com) or 377-0512 to let me know what item or items you will donate. All FFI funds will be used for expanding FF abroad. Thanks for helping out with this worthwhile endeavor.

*Marcia Ross*

## COMPANY'S COMING

**Join your Friendship Force friends for a delicious dinner at a friend's home.**

- Check the date for your availability **Saturday, February 23, 2013.**
- Decide if you want to host a dinner or be a guest.
  - ⇒ Hosts provide the main course, coffee and tea
  - ⇒ Guests provide one of the following:
    - Appetizer, salad, vegetable, soup, bread and wine
- You will be notified where to go for dinner and what to bring
- Everyone at the table will put \$ 10 into the kitty for the Legacy Fund
- Meet and greet your ( new) members and friends

This effort will be coordinated by Betty Jean DeMersseman. Come and join in the fun!

## FFI FIELD REP UPDATES

Plans are well underway for the 2013 World Conference in New Orleans. Registration will begin the last week of January. (*Reference p. 5 for additional information*).

Opening sessions of the conference will be November 22. This is also the same day for the regional meetings. Suggested arrival time for attending the regional meetings is noon on Friday.

**Northern Colorado has volunteered to be hosts for the Thanksgiving Post Conference Home Stay.** (*See reference story on p. 5*)

Clubs should be notified about the 2014 Exchanges about January 31.

All the Mountain States Clubs have registered for Charter Renewals. Yea!.

Check out the new FFI Home Page  
[www.thefriendshipforce.org](http://www.thefriendshipforce.org)

Themed Exchanges are now included in a video in the Leadership Tool Kit.

Anyone can view it on the FFI web site.

*Betty Jean DeMersseman*



## DISCOVER THE JEWELS OF CENTRAL EUROPE

### SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 8

Wow! The emailed FFI catalog listing of January 17th certainly generated a lot of interest in the exchange to Central Europe. We are at 18 paid applications in the group, aiming for 20. I am pleased that our applicants are all so engaging and well-traveled. If you have been thinking about this exchange, and meaning to apply, don't wait any longer. If you are new to our club, and just reading about this for the first time, I can

send the agenda to you. The cities we will visit are Prague, Krakow, Budapest, Bratislava, and Vienna. Our two-night homestay will be in Bratislava. Please give me a call.

**EXCHANGE DIRECTOR**  
**Cinda Clark 669-5426**  
**clarksmail@msn.com**

## BENSON GARDEN

With daylight hours increasing and some hints of possible moisture arriving, gardeners begin to think of springtime. Please hold these dates for POSSIBLE work days at our adopted gardens in Benson Sculpture Park in Loveland. Moisture levels and temperatures will guide us to give firm updates in the newsletter, on the website and also at our general meetings throughout the spring. Generally we try to schedule work days on the day following our FFNC meetings unless special events or incoming exchanges require some extra attention to our gardens.

April 13	0845	Potluck B-fast	5130 Coral Burst Cir, Loveland
	1000-noon	Spring Garden Cleanup	
April 27	1000	Cleanup date	
May 11	0830-0930	May work date	
June 4	0800-noon	All-city volunteers work day	
July 13	0800-1000	Weeding date	
July 27	0800-1000	Prep for sculpture show	
August 3	0800-1000	Prep for sculpture show	
August 31	0900-1100	Prep for Canadian exchange	
October 12	0900-1100	Last Fall work date	

## THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE EXPERIENCE

What does the Friendship Force experience mean to us? Is it getting to know our host people personally? Is it seeing the area sites through the eyes of our hosts? Is it learning more about the culture firsthand? Is it an opportunity to get answers to our variety of questions about culture, country, history and people?

The answer is **YES!**

“Hotels are a wonderful invention, but not the ideal window to the soul of a nation. They are designed to do the opposite—to keep you and the country at a comfortable distance.”

## OPEN WORLD

How is your taxpayer money used to change the image of the “ugly American”? The Library of Congress’ Young Leader Program (for which FFI and FFNC are contractees) is designed to share information on timely and applicable topics with up-and-coming leaders from former Soviet countries.

Dot Cada leads these week-long programs, the latest of which was October 26—November 3, 2012 for young leaders from Siberia.

**Dot will update us on the results from this latest October program at the February meeting.**