



friendship force
NORTHERN COLORADO



Sue Cummins—Editor & Publisher

June
2014

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

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Next Meeting
7:00 p.m.
June 13, 2014
News from Regional Conference

First Christian Church
2000 N Lincoln Ave.
Loveland, CO

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,



As you read this, a boatload of FFNC members, myself included, are cruising through the picturesque fiords of Norway and Sweden! Come to the September meeting to learn about our experiences.

As we announced at the May meeting, our incoming exchange from Brazil just didn't work out. Debby Jones and I talked with FFI president Joy DiBenedetto at the Regional Conference, and she told us that better communication in the exchange process is on her agenda. You'll hear more about Joy's goals as we report on the Regional Conference at the June meeting.

The June meeting is important for all of you to attend. It is our annual election of officers. The slate of officers proposed by our nominating committee for 2015 is President--Gary Cummins, Vice-President/President-elect--Nita Kopylay; Secretary--Paula Weaver; and Treasurer--Duane Sharp. **We do not have a meeting in July** or August, but in August we have our annual picnic with our neighboring FF club, Cheyenne, on Sunday afternoon August 24th, 12:30 to 4 in Cheyenne. They will have ambassadors from Western North Carolina attending.

One of our goals for 2014 is to encourage more social interaction among our members outside of club meetings. Betty Jean's "Someone's Coming to Dinner" groups last year helped raise money for the Legacy Fund, and many of us enjoyed them. So along those lines, I've appointed a new Standing Committee for Small Group Connections, which will be headed by Rona Baer. Thanks to Nancy Brigden for initial recruitment. Details will follow, so get ready to socialize!

Alice Gibson will be the exchange director for the Peru exchange in 2015. Watch for sign-up sheets at the June meeting; we'll hear more details soon. We still need an ED for the 2015 incoming Napier, NZ exchange. The NZ club will also be visiting Lincoln, NE and Des Moines, IA. We are aiming for August, and Des Moines is hoping to host them during the renowned Iowa State Fair, August 13-24. Lots to look forward to!

Marilyn Garner

JUNE 13TH PRESENTATION: WHAT WE LEARNED AT THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE

We'll be viewing a slide show about FFI put together by a Nebraska club member. FFI President Joy DeBenedetto used this to lead us through a bit of the past, the present, and what she sees as the future of our organization at the recent Regional Conference in Salt Lake City.

And there is much more information you'll want to hear from those who attended—we learned

from various experts (including Cindy Paulson and Betty Jean DeMersseman from our club).

Come learn what those who attended learned about promotion and publicity, photography, packing and travel tips, recruitment, mentoring new members, and keeping new members engaged.

Our Garden Is Waiting for Us June 7th

Come One, Come All! **Save the date: June 7th**

Families, couples, and singles are all welcome, and encouraged to come to our gardening morning at **Benson Park in Loveland**. As you long-time members know, but perhaps the new ones don't, our club sponsors a garden at the Sculpture Park, at **31st and Beech**, on the east side. (Our space is across the street north of Loveland High School, east of Aspen Drive.) The sculpture is "They Are Waiting."

Once annually, the High Plains Arts Council provides a little light sustenance for all the gardeners, and requests that we come tend our garden. This year, we will be spreading mulch and putting in a few new plants, as always. There will be a little weeding and trimming, too. You may **come as early as 8:30**, to take advantage of the cool morning air. After our work is done, it is fun to walk around the sculpture park to see the other new flowers.

Bring a little hand spade, gloves, a sturdy-tined rake, maybe a kneeling pad, and look forward to spending time with your fellow Friendship Force members! If you do not have garden tools, we will

be able to give you a job anyway. (Water and other drinks are provided.) Should you have questions, please call Nancy Brigden at 352-3829, or Cinda Clark at 669-5426.

In friendship,
Cinda



Kay Sheahan trimming Russian sage

MAY MEETING: MYANMAR GLOBAL DISCOVERY TRIP

Dot Cada and Patti Stickler treated us to a wonderful picture presentation of their Global Discovery Trip to Myanmar February 19th through March 5th. Upon their arrival, they were joined by other friends from England, Australia, and Canada. All of them brought aid, including donations from their clubs, and they proceeded to sort it into groups for the selected charities of the Trusted Partners and of Moe, our in-country promoter. Additional funds from our club were used to for such things as renting a larger bus to allow for the extra 20 “day hosts,” including interns from the Education Network, which consists of Trusted Partners and those who are interested in learning more about Trusted Partners. The concept of Friendship Force is strange and new to our Trusted Partners in Myanmar. The very word “force” in our name is suspect to the authorities; hence our use of the term “Trusted Partners.” The people have been warned by all forms of media to watch out for being colonized again, so repeated visits are needed to establish trust.

Tourism is slowly being promoted, and our group stayed in 4-star hotels. By national law, visitors can't stay in people's homes. Some of the ministers of Parliament have told the group they could do so in their states, but that would break the federal law, so no way will Trusted Partners will be doing that. Photos of the women and girls in their traditional neck rings are popular with the tourists, and families can earn money by posing for these photos. Women can't touch a monk. No hugging! Dot had a hard time with that. But she says most of them totally have kindred spirit ideas.

The people were very warm and welcoming! The group visited a remote village near Inle Lake, where a wonderful meal was prepared for 41 people, including village leaders. The cost for this meal was about \$75.00, and included the cost to feed the invited villagers. While dining with the men, Dot asked where the women and children were, and she was told that the women have children, and children are too noisy.



Dot Cada

Names are based on days of the week, and last names are not commonly used. There are many orphans who are cared for and educated in monasteries until their parents return to bring them back to a safe home. If they don't return, the children can be adopted by local people only while they remain in the monasteries. They are subject to being taken to official government orphanages, where at age 16 they may be used to work in the mines or for prostitution.

The people are very small, and when clothing is made, sizes are based on the smallest to the largest person in a family. Model-thin Dot bought XL or even XXL tops, rather than her usual medium size. Most girls have very short hair. The people eat a lot of fish; Patti commented that she wouldn't eat the fish after seeing the water it came from. However, the life expectancy of these people has greatly increased, from 43 in 1960 to 65 currently.

Cheryl Stevens

MAY MEETING ON MYANMAR



Mountain States Regional Conference "Crossroads of the West" Hosted by Utah Friendship Force

Sixteen of us trekked to Salt Lake City for a well planned conference. Also attending were 18 from the Utah club, 11 from Western Colorado, six from Cheyenne, and three from the Pikes Peak club.

We were treated with wonderful accommodations (a large suite) at Little America. Don't hesitate to stay there if you're passing through, or better yet, stay for a few days. It's very near the heart of the city with free rail transportation throughout the downtown. Meals there were outstanding, too, as was our bus tour of the city. Being present for the broadcast of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir was a highlight on Sunday morning; Friendship Force guests were announced right along with a Danish royal couple that was in attendance. Some of us happily remained in the city for home stays after the conference.

The keynote address was given by FFI President Joy DiBenedetto, and what follows here is a peek at the information many of us will be sharing with you at the June meeting.

Joy updated us with the latest FFI numbers; 362 clubs/communities in approximately 70 countries and now 7 continents. FFI is responsible for about 37,500 new friendships per year, across cultural, religious, and political boundaries, and she said 20 exchanges were going on as she was speaking. She informed us that 110 of our 362 clubs now have Web sites.

Our new president also addressed issues such as too many cancelled inbound exchanges, applying for the Nobel Peace Prize again, Friendship Force pen pals, promoting through OLLI and AARP, seeking grants, and NEXTGEN (not just recruiting younger members but using next-generation ideas).

Our other presenters spoke about publicity, photography, packing and travel tips, and mentoring new members and keeping them engaged. I'll

attempt to whet your appetite for the June meeting with one key bit of information from each.

Denice Wheeler (Utah club); "Promotion and Publicity": Steal ideas from other clubs.

Keith Hill (Utah club), current president of Wasatch Camera Club, "Unleash the Great Photographer within You": Most important when taking photos of people and critters is to have the subject's eyes in focus.

Becky Hale, with ILC Traveloutfitters, "Packing and Travel Tips": Bedbug Patrol and The Go Girl (potty kit).

Betty Jean DeMersseman (our club), "Recruitment" and Cindy Paulson (our club), "Mentoring New Members"; Sue Palmer, "Keeping New Members Engaged": My notes on these are combined, so I'll just include some of what I recorded: Action + Attention = Active Members. Interview new members and include information in newsletter if that's okay with them.

Potential new members belong to OLLI, (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute).

At the Farewell Banquet, we enjoyed the presentation of a Wayne Smith Medal to long-time Utah club member Denice Wheeler.

We appreciate all those who planned, presented, and participated in the conference, but special thanks go to the Utah club's Chairperson Nona Bressler, Moderator Kathy Howarth, and President Dana Hughes. THANK YOU!



Sue Cummins

MOUNTAIN STATES FIELD REP NEWS

Eleven Field Representatives joined Joy DiBenedetto, Kathy Thomas, and Pallie Savoie of Friendship Force International for the monthly conference call on May 15th.

The Midwest Regional Conference, "Mapping Our Future: Journey from Traditionalists to Millennials," was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, with 76 attending. The conference ended with activities around Milwaukee challenging the clubs to bring in the Next Generation of Friendship Force. The Mountain States Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah (70 attendees) also included activities that engaged club members from the region. Rave reviews about the presentations, especially the keynote address by Joy DiBenedetto, were reported by those attending. The Friday bus trip showing off this beautiful city was also mentioned by those attending. The Southeast Leadership Meeting took place in Greensboro, North Carolina, with 10 clubs represented. A storyteller from a local college encouraged members to seek out stories to enrich the experience. Albany, Oregon hosted 65 people from 10 clubs in the Pacific Northwest and Northern Rockies. A few folks from Canada also attended.

A Domestic Exchange Survey will be sent out soon by Kristen in the form of a Google spreadsheet that can be easily updated. Clubs will be asked about whether they want to travel, host, how many ambassadors, and what weeks or months clubs can host.

The latest date the Strategic Plan Survey will be sent to clubs is June 1, and the deadline for returning the survey is July 15.

Membership lists should be sent to FFI. This prevents club leaders from having to disseminate information from FFI to their club. First name, last name, and e-mail address is all that is needed.

New Health and Mobility information for those with cognitive impairments instead of just physical is now available on the Web site. Club Affiliation fees will increase to \$15 per individual and \$25 per couple, as was announced previously and sent to clubs in a communiqué.

The NextGen council, mentor group and the next-generation exchanges taking place in 2015 were discussed at all regional conferences.

Three new field Reps will join us for the June conference call and in Atlanta in August.

Travel Guard released information on new policies May 1, and a rate increase is included. The new brochure will be on the FFI Web site.

*Barbara Guilford
FF Cheyenne*

Travel Guard Kudos

We just want to tell you about our very pleasant experience with Travel Guard, the travel insurance recommended by Friendship Force.

Three days before our scheduled exchange to Central Europe was to begin, we were notified that our grandson Blake's leukemia had returned. We needed to be with him as treatment began again while his parents continued to work (and keep their health insurance). When we finally made our claim for the almost \$8000 we had spent, we experienced nothing but professionalism and kindness and concern for Blake, and everything we had spent was paid to us. Blake is finally at home again, doing quite well so far after his February bone marrow transplant. *Gary & Sue Cummins*

Inbound

Outbound

EXCHANGE CALENDAR

2
0
1
4

Home stay in St. Louis, Missouri, with stops in Kansas City and Branson
September 21-October 3
Exchange Director Alice Gibson
970-310-8848

FFI International Conference
Auckland, NZ October 14-16
Registration available online with FFI

2
0
1
5

Lima, Peru Dates TBD (July?)
Outbound
Alice Gibson, Exchange Director
970-310-8848

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania Fall
Inbound
ED Needed

Napier, New Zealand Dates TBD
Inbound
ED Needed

FFI International Conference
Vancouver, BC, Canada TBA

“Perhaps travel cannot prevent bigotry, but by demonstrating that all peoples cry, laugh, eat, worry, and die, it can introduce the idea that if we try to understand each other, we may even become friends.”

Maya Angelou

2014 OFFICERS & COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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PHOTOS FROM MOUNTAIN STATES CONFERENCE



*Joy DiBenedetto
FFI President*



*Our own Betty Jean
DeMersseman*



*Luxurious
suites at
Little America*



Our own Cindy Paulson

