



Focus on Friendship

Winter 2011

President's Message - Looking Back and Looking Ahead

2010 was a busy year for FFNCA. Even if all we had done was help to organize and host the Friendship Force International Conference here in Washington, DC, it would have been a successful year. The more than 500 people who attended the conference benefitted from our work in helping scout locations, selecting entertainment for the gala, providing items for the “goody bags” for participants, staffing the hospitality table, etc. And that does not include hosting 20 people after the conference. Many club members were involved in the conference activities, plus attending the conference. It was a great experience, for which the club received many accolades. Our overall coordinator, Barbara Macken, should be especially congratulated and thanked for all her hard work. Barbara and Tom Williams organized the post-conference hosting. Thanks again to everyone who helped with the conference and the post-conference activities.

Other club activities last year included the inbound group from Thailand, which was a surprise. We did not receive an assignment initially, since we were doing the conference, but this group wanted to come, and we accepted the request. It turned out to be a small group, but the exchange was a success, as was the outbound exchange to India. Chuck Goldfarb led that and has written an article, which appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

We enjoyed some of our regular club activities this year such as the pool party and the fall brunch and are planning those and more this year. I am looking forward to serving as president this year and appreciate the hard work Chuck has put in over the past two years.

Some of the things we have in mind for this year include building on the strength of the groups of people we have in certain areas. There are opportunities for small groups of our members to get together in, for example, the Silver Spring area and the Annapolis area for local activities of their own choosing, and get to know each other better. When we have an inbound exchange these local groups are natural focal points for small group dinners, carpools, and other sharing opportunities.

Several new members have joined in the past few months, and we plan to have an event to welcome them and give them an overview of Friendship Force—tentatively planned for early April.

We are excited to have filled our outbound exchange to Cyprus, thanks to many members wanting to visit after the inbound we had from Cyprus several years ago. And we are expecting an inbound

exchange from Hobart, Australia in June, which will be a return exchange after we visited there in October 2009, so we are very much looking forward to that.

Check your email for announcements of activities. Let us know if you have ideas. Get involved. This club will only be successful if we all participate!

In friendship,

Claire Gesalman

Winter Dinner Celebrates World Friendship Day

Join club members at Taverna Cretekou on Sunday, Feb 27, at 5:00 pm to celebrate World Friendship Day. We will have our own room, and will order off the menu with separate checks. The dinner menu can be found at http://www.tavernacretkou.com/MENU/Dinner_Menu/dinner_menu.html. The owners, Christos and Denise Papaloizou, will likely be there that night and we asked that they stop by to talk to us a little about Cyprus. Please RSVP to Barbara Macken (bmacken01@rcn.com), and include the number of guests. You are welcome to bring along friends and family.

Taverna Cretekou
818 King Street
Old Town, Alexandria, VA 22314 ■

FFNCA Ambassadors Enjoy Nashik, India Hospitality

By Chuck Goldfarb

There is no better way to learn about a society and culture than on a week-long home stay with a family, and there is no better way to experience the joys of that culture than to have that home stay take place during a holiday when the entire extended family comes together. We were lucky to have our home stay in Nashik, India coincide with the five-day Diwali festival of lights, which is celebrated in India much as we celebrate our Christmas and the New Year here in the U.S., except that they also throw in more fireworks than we have on the Fourth of July.

We knew we were in for something special when half an hour before our train arrived two of the hosts appeared on the train to welcome each of us with garlands and a beautiful cloth binder with the week's schedule – and to help us get the luggage off the train. At the train station, there were more garlands and roses and photos.

Over the next week, we explored ancient temples, a meditation center, local wineries, an international school owned by one of the hosts, a mineral museum owned by another host, and a nursing home serving 36 indigent seniors that yet another host opened up in her home. We also enjoyed a sumptuous welcome dinner and a never-to-be-forgotten farewell dinner at a farmhouse outside the city. The hosts had taken each and every Ambassador to their favorite clothes maker for a special fitting, and each of us was decked out in the finest of Indian garb – complete with turbans for the men – at the farewell.

But the best time was the time spent with our host families, who made each of us feel like a brother or sister or uncle or cousin. Bo and I got to know our host's seven brothers and the 13 nieces and

nephews who frequently gathered in our host's yard for games. Bo played badminton with our host's 11-year old son, who also showed us how to ignite 10,000 firecrackers tied together. And the hospitality continued even after we had departed Nashik. When our host learned that the next stop on our itinerary was Aurangabad, where one of his brothers lives, he arranged for the brother to host a dinner for all 16 Ambassadors on the great lawn of a hotel. A truly magical evening.

Did I say that our hosts showed us the splendor and subtlety of Indian cuisine? Oh, yes, they did, and perhaps the only downside of the exchange was that both Bo and I gained some pounds. ■

Club Member Email Addresses to FFI

FFNCA will send the email addresses of our current club members to FFI. That way you will receive time-sensitive information directly from FFI, such as invitations to join other club's exchanges, announcements of global exchanges and conferences, and the FFI online magazine.

Tell us by February 13th if you DO NOT want us to send FFI your email address by sending an email to the club email address which is ffnca@yahoo.com. We suggest that you receive the FFI emails: if you change your mind, there is an "opt-out" option on each FFI email: clicking on that will remove you from the FFI email list. It will not remove you from the FFNCA email list. Please note that FFI has a long standing policy not to pass on email addresses to any other organization or to use them for other than the stated purpose of providing current membership information on Friendship Force exchanges and activities. ■

Regional Conference March 25-27 in Charlottesville

The FFI of Central Virginia is the host of the Mid Atlantic/Northeast Region Conference on March 25-27, 2011 at the Holiday Inn & Conference Center in Charlottesville, VA. Principal Speaker will be Mr. George Brown, President, Friendship Force International. Cost to attend the conference is \$197.00 which includes 2 nights' accommodations, double occupancy, two breakfasts, one lunch and two dinners, including taxes and gratuities. Live entertainment is a feature of Saturday night. There is an optional four-day home stay following the conference, which was open to the first 40 registrants. To attend the conference contact Bob Schwagerl at bobadeeva@centurylink.net. ■

2011 Exchanges

The outbound Cyprus exchange is full and taking place from Tuesday, April 26th until Tuesday, May 3rd, 2011. There are optional extensions that some participants have arranged with the group's tour operator.

The inbound exchange from Hobart, Tasmania is scheduled for Tuesday, May 31st until Tuesday, June 7th, 2011. FFNCA members had a wonderful time when they visited this club in 2009. Join in the fun of welcoming the Hobart group to the DC area. We will need a variety of volunteers to make this exchange a success. Contact Peg Neustadt, ED, at m.l.neustadt@comcast.net or 703-723-0942 if you would like to lend a hand. We will need home hosts, day hosts, party help, and help doing a number of small but important tasks before and during the exchange. ■

2011 Calendar

January 9 – Board Meeting
February 27 – Winter Dinner to celebrate World Friendship Day (see article)
March 1 - World Friendship Day 2011
March 13 – Board Meeting
March 25-27 – Regional Conference in Charlottesville, VA
April 9 – New Member Welcome Event (TBD)
April 26 – May 3 – Outbound Exchange to Cyprus
May 8 – Board Meeting
May 31-June 7 – Inbound Exchange with Hobart, Tasmania
July 10 – Board Meeting
September 11 – Board Meeting
November 13 – Board Meeting

Membership Renewal

FFNCA memberships run from January 1 to December 31. If you have not renewed for 2011, please complete the form sent with the newsletter. Mail it along with a check payable to FFNCA for \$25 (single) or \$32 (family) to the address on the form. ■

FFI and FFNCA Information

Friendship Force International (FFI) website: <http://www.thefriendshipforce.org>

Friendship Force National Capital Area (FFNCA) web site <http://www.ffnca.org>

Contact FFNCA by email: ffnca@yahoo.com

FFNCA Email group: ffnca-members@yahoogroups.com (do not send email to this address unless you want to send a message to the entire FFNCA group)

FFNCA Telephone: 202-898-9502 (message line)