



Friendship Force New Mexico Newsletter

February

2015

FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS JOHN AND ANNE HEARD

First, let us say how pleased and honored we are to have been elected your club presidents for 2015. It is our goal to make this year enjoyable and meaningful for you, the members of Friendship Force New Mexico. We had this position once before, back in 2013. At the time we were relatively inexperienced. We have learned a lot in the interim and hope to do much better this time around.

We also have a dynamite Board to work with us, including our new Vice President, Lenore Pardee, who is already making strong contributions and has agreed to be our Exchange Director for our 2016 outgoing visit to Lima and Tarapoto, Peru. Lenore is a former Peace Corps Volunteer in Peru in the mid-60s and bilingual in Spanish. Judith Mead, our President last year, who did such a fabulous job getting us officially organized and recognized, will stay on in an advisory capacity and as an excellent parliamentarian will keep us out of trouble. She has already lined up our next luncheon speaker, Duane Hughes, who will speak on New Mexico's nuclear history, including the Manhattan Project.

Martha and David Meister will stay on as Co-Treasurers and continue their excellent stewardship of our finances, keeping us solvent and growing. Our Vice-President last year, Berta Wagstaff, has agreed to stay on as Committee Chair for Membership Development, a function we sorely need. She has a special facility both for exchange management as well as special events such as our participation in the Chinese New Year Luncheon on February 22. Cheryl Lehmborg, our Webmaster and Secretary will continue her excellent work and focus on strengthening our website as a means of communication and promoting the club in our community, key for member recruitment. Evelyn Thole will continue her role as our membership Chairperson. She does a remarkable job keeping us all straight. Finally, we are privileged to retain Peggy Birmingham as our historian. She was one of the originally founding members of our club back in 1979.

As for us, John is the communicator in the written word and Anne is the verbal one who does most of the calling. As a former social worker, mediator and executive officer, she is an expert in building social relationships and negotiation. John is also Field Rep. for the Southwest Region of Friendship Force International (FFI), and as such has early access to much of what is going on at the international level.

Our fervant hope this year is to build a more active club with more interesting and rewarding exchanges and activities. This is very much in line with the Strategic Plan just developed by FFI based on world-wide feedback on member preferences. An executive summary of this plan was

recently forwarded to all members by email. We believe you will find it interesting and intriguing. The international program has so much to offer, like the Global Themed Exchange to Jamaica described below. Please have a look at the latest World of Friends Catalogue - http://catalog.thefriendshipforce.org/index.php/catalog/all_list/ available through the FFI Website. There is something for almost everyone. John tried to cover many of the possibilities at the January luncheon. These include:

- a. Themed exchanges – every subject imaginable. We could do ballooning in New Mexico, or the environment, or indigenous culture, music and dance, or food or a film festival. One of the clubs in the SW Region will do a Quilting exchange this year. We are in the early stages of planning one on New Mexico's Pueblo Culture for 2017, which Lenore Pardee will investigate.
- b. Humanitarian: Like the Jamaica Exchange described below - youth, nutrition, shelter, water, education and many other possibilities.
- c. Professional: Former Soviet Bloc Country professionals come to learn from our institutions and practices in a wide variety of fields. This is funded by Library of Congress. Small groups come with paid facilitators and interpreters.
- d. Cruises: This is a great way to get to know new friends from all over the world in one shot – also the FFI staff. FFI Program Manager, Laura Romero, is working to set up interesting learning cruises all over the world. Jim and Doris Maxwell did one through the Panama Canal last year and loved it. Another is scheduled in March for the Dalmatian coast and Greece.
- e. NextGen : This is a new FFI initiative dedicated to revitalizing the program with more interesting and active exchanges. Originally designed to attract those under 50, thanks to strong feedback from members, it has now been revised to focus on state of mind instead of age. The point is to be imaginative, flexible and focus on fun new activities, non-traditional, but relaxed and active. The idea is to attract all ages and interests with rewarding inter-generational programs and in the process learn something new.

In other areas, FFI is setting up:

- Partnerships – like Road Scholars (formerly Elder Hostel), Sister Cities, and Homestay.com. We could enhance our own program this way and share opportunities with cross membership. In 2012 we travelled to Chihuahua on a Sister Cities exchange with Linda and Li Louie and David Hsi, who belong to both clubs.
- Online Memberships: This will allow us to bring people in from other parts of the State like Santa Fe, Las Cruces and Farmington.
- Technology and Training programs for Board Officers, EDs, Ambassadors, Hosts, Communicators – Facebook, websites, twitter, etc.

The possibilities for us here in New Mexico are exciting and only limited by our own time and energy. We want to develop a Strategic Plan based on member participation including goals, vision, values, and a road map to the future. In addition we want to:

- Develop a more organized program through training and delegation with active roles for many more members and committee chairs.
- Offer more interesting programs including themed exchanges such as the one on the Pueblo Culture that we are investigating.
- Provide for more diversity in non-exchange activity – ethnic dinners, picnics, cultural events, volunteer activities.
- Form Partnerships – Sister Cities, the Albuquerque Committee for International Visitors (ACIV) and perhaps other organizations.
- Recruit new members – especially from the boomer generation with new ideas and energy, but also more old folks like us (we are in our mid-seventies – the “pre-boomer” generation) and even some of the younger folks who have the time and inclination for inter-generational exchanges.
- Develop satellite groups such as in Las Cruces, where we already have two new member families and in Santa Fe.

Enough from us for now. But you get the idea. All this will take time and probably not reach complete fruition until next year or the year after, but we will do our best. We will also do our best to keep you informed of the many new opportunities offered by FFI and our own club. We ask only that you participate to the best of your ability. If you can't travel, you can probably home host. If you can't do either, you can be a day host or otherwise contribute to events in one way or another, like cooking or calling. We welcome suggestions and new ideas from all of you.

RECENT EXCHANGES

Outgoing Exchange to Sarasota Florida – November 2015 – Judith Mead, Exchange Director



The Albuquerque Ambassadors arrived in Sarasota at different times, but all connections were made with no problem. The Welcome Lunch was held the day after arrival at an excellent restaurant on the beach in Venice, Florida. The Sarasota Club has members from Sarasota and several nearby towns.

There were several activities available for the group in the afternoon including the Chalk Festival in Venice and the Drum Circle that was held in the evening on Nokomis Beach.

The next day was spent at the John and Mable Ringling Museum Complex. This included a tour of the Ca'd'Zan, the home of John and Mable Ringling. Other activities were the Circus Museums, the Art Center and walking around the beautiful grounds. This was a wonderful place

to see and visit and everyone enjoyed this opportunity. Again there were different opportunities for the afternoon and evening.



The Mote Aquarium was the destination the next morning. This was an excellent opportunity to see the local sea life and appreciate the research that is going on at the center. For those who had never been up close with a manatee the opportunity was provided by the center. That afternoon we took the Le Barge Boat sunset cruise on Sarasota Bay. On board was a bar (well patronized) and musicians which provided music for listening and dancing. We had some Ambassadors who did their part to get everyone up and dancing. This was a fun activity which all enjoyed and the sunset was lovely.

On Saturday there was some time in the morning for those who wanted to go to the Farmer's Market before meeting at Selby Gardens for a tour. The gardens were beautiful and the orchid house was outstanding. The afternoon was free for various activities. These included a visit to the new National Cemetery, Patriots Plaza, the DeSoto Monument with an excellent film documenting the landing and exploration of DeSoto's Party through the southeastern US and the new Rowing Facility which is being built to become not an international venue. That evening small dinner parties were held in several homes for the Ambassadors and hosts.

The Farewell Luncheon was at Rosebuds with a special cake for Homer Dale who was celebrating a birthday. He was serenaded by our own Darlene Komula.

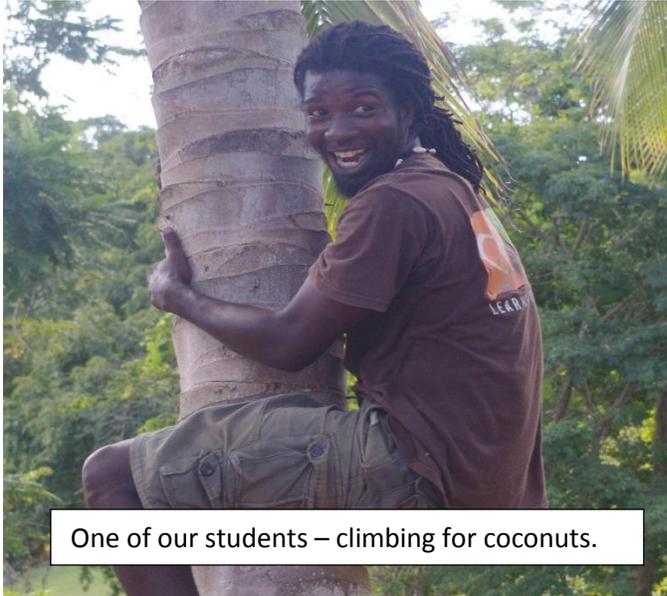
The next day we visited Myakka State Park with an airboat ride to view the birds and the alligators that were numerous around the lake and in the channel. The boat "Captain" was very knowledgeable about the flora and fauna. There were hiking trails and scenic drives for bird watching. This was also a good day to see the sand sculptures which had been made on Siesta Key. Prizes were awarded for these sculptures which were really amazing.

The Ambassadors left on Tuesday. Our Hosts were wonderful and a good time was had by all.

Global Themed Humanitarian Exchange to Jamaica – John and Anne Heard

John and Anne left on this one-week exchange on November 2 and flew to beautiful Montego Bay in Jamaica. John was also Co-ED together with Friendship Force International (FFI) program manager Mary Mwambay. The exchange was planned and carried out by FFI partner organization the One Love Learning Foundation. The Ambassadors stayed at the legendary island home of Oscar Hammerstein, subsequently converted into a first class hotel and retreat known as the Hammerstein Highland House, now owned and run by Brenda Isaac, Director of

the One Love Foundation, which runs humanitarian projects in Montego Bay and Cape Town, South Africa.



One of our students – climbing for coconuts.

The Ambassadors came from various places including New Mexico, Texas, Canada, Hawaii, Oklahoma and California. It was a very congenial group, all dedicated to providing meaningful help to One Love's work with Jamaican Youth. Our principal mission was to assist young people in the program with the construction of a seedling nursery and a bathroom for the kids working on the project. The Foundation works with college age Jamaican youth in the production and marketing of a wide variety of herbs, in very short supply in Jamaica, which are sold to the exclusive Round Hill Hotel and Villas in Montego Bay (one of the top 10 resort spas in the

Caribbean), the proceeds of which are then used to defray expenses of the youth at local university level agricultural schools in agronomy and related sciences. As part of the program and to generate enthusiasm and passionate participation, all kids in the program must learn drumming and create their own drums in the traditional Jamaican way. We were treated to marvelous demonstrations of their ability on this score. It was a real treat to work with these committed young people who treated us with great appreciation and affection.

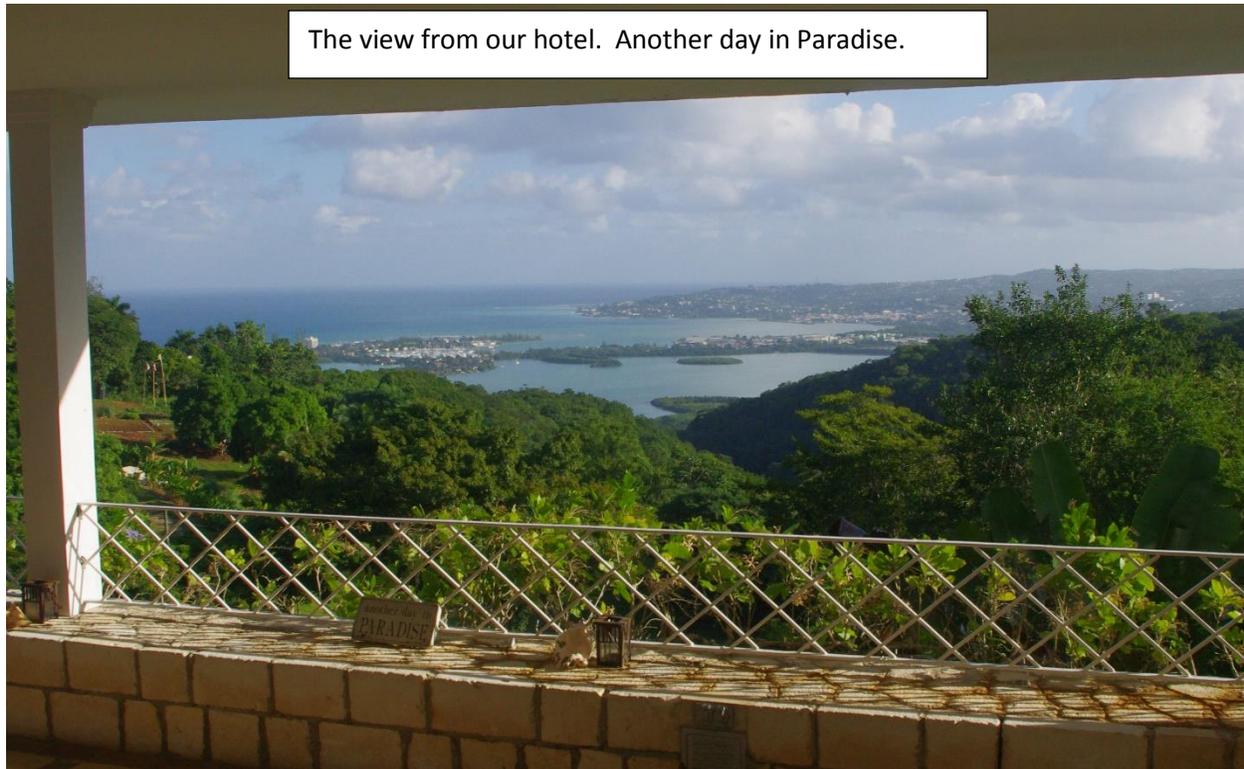
We also took time to visit local schools for young children at the pre-school and kindergarten



Construction of Seedling Nursery

level, bringing gifts and materials for teachers and children alike. It was a heartwarming experience. Finally, we did some touring of local attractions, visited a fascinating traditional Jamaican village and were treated to a farewell show of drumming and dancing put on by the students which was of Broadway quality.

In conclusion, it was an amazing and wonderful experience. There will be two exchanges to Jamaica this year, also with FFI and the One Love Foundation. They have yet to be announced, but will likely occur in the June/July period.



UPCOMING EVENTS AND EXCHANGES

Saturday, February 14: Monthly Friendship Force Luncheon at the Hotel Elegante. The speaker will be Duane Hughes on New Mexico Nuclear History.

Saturday, March 14: Monthly Friendship Force Luncheon at the Hotel Elegante. The speaker will be Angel Cervantes on the Spanish Cast System.

April 22-29, 2015 – Incoming Exchange from Hay River, Northwest Territories, Canada: Tom Seamon is the Exchange Director. He already has a fascinating agenda highlighted by a visit to the Gathering of Nations POW WOW at the PIT that week.

March 27-29, 2015. Houston Conference for Southwest Clubs: This is one you should consider attending. The venue is fantastic and the program is really interesting, including strong Friendship Force International presentations and a tour of the Johnson Space Flight Center.

August 28-31, 2015. Friendship Force International World Conference in Vancouver: Anne and John will attend. We urge all of you to consider this. Beyond a fascinating program, there are a host of homestay possibilities available before and after the conference in surrounding clubs and territories.

Note that we may have one additional incoming exchange in the September-November period, but we are not sure of this yet.

March, 2016, Austin Conference for Southwest Clubs.

June 2016. Outgoing Exchange to Tarapoto and Lima Peru: Lenore Pardee is the Exchange Director. Tarapoto visited us in 2012. They are a wonderful group of people living in a beautiful place between the jungle and the Andes. Lima, of course, is a truly fascinating city with an amazing history and is full of magnificent art and culture. Lima is also the jumping off point for tours of Machu Picchu and Cuzco.

September 2016. Incoming Exchange from Melbourne, Australia. We visited these folks in 2010. They are likewise a wonderful group of people. We do well with the Australians, like the Blue Mountain group we had last year.

Spring and fall 2016. Reciprocal outgoing and income exchanges with the Napa-Sonoma Club. Dates remain to be worked out. This is sure to be popular.

Fall 2016. World Conference in Morocco. We understand this is to be in Marrakesh, an amazing opportunity.

That's it, folks. We'll see you at the next luncheon.