



friendship force  
HOUSTON

September  
2014

A World Of Friends Is A World Of Peace.  
A Non-Profit Organization Promoting Peace through Citizen Exchanges

*Explore • Understand • Serve®*

#### WHAT IS FRIENDSHIP FORCE INTERNATIONAL?

The Friendship Force is a non-profit organization sponsoring **people-to-people** exchanges between people in over fifty nations of the world. It brings people together through home stay exchanges – creating unforgettable experiences that build lasting bonds of friendship.

As an Ambassador you share lifestyles in a private home in other countries for a week. In return, you may home host people from that nation or other nations to share your lifestyle. The ever-widening Friendship Force global network represents a powerful and growing force that can overcome differences between people and nations.

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## Presidents' Corner

Hello Friends,

These are exciting times for Friendship Force Houston! This month we are hosting a fun exchange with Gold Coast, Australia and conducting elections as well as offering an interesting program at our meeting.

We have so many wonderful things lined up for the rest of this year as well as working on plans for 2015 and 2016. Be sure to get your votes in for possible 2016 Exchanges (details follow). We want to send our requests as soon as FFI is ready for them.

We must remind you that this is your club. If you have wishes, ideas or complaints we want to hear them. Your input is vital and to that end we will be seeking your assistance more and more. The more involved you become the more you will get out of your membership. We would like to encourage anyone in the club to consider being our Membership Chairman and joining us on the Executive Board. We need to grow the Houston club and this position is KEY. You would get lots of support, we promise.

We are really looking forward to entertaining our Australian ambassadors and visiting with y'all at the activities.

See you soon!

In Friendship,  
Don & Sid Formanek

P. S. If you have never visited [www.friendshipforce.org](http://www.friendshipforce.org) it is a great way to learn more about our mission: *"To promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people"*.

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## September Inbound Exchange from Australia

Please see details in the calendar on the last two pages. We hope you will participate and meet our Australian Ambassadors.

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## August Meeting

After our usual wonderful potluck luncheon, we introduced our guests Joan and Warren Dale, who were guests of Betty Spooner's,, and Henrietta Bolton, a friend of Josie Duffy's, who joined that day. (Joy apologizes, as she forgot to take a single picture.)

Then Art Blevins showed slides and told us about his first trip abroad which his daughter arranged for him. He had a 9-hour layover in Paris, where he had a personal tour guide to show him the city. Then he spent a week in Venice in two fabulous hotels and really got to experience the excitement of the city of canals. He did a wonderful job of explaining and sharing his favorite experiences with us and was so entertaining in the process. We all enjoyed his presentation and got to see many of the books and pamphlets he brought back, as well as his Murano glass pieces and a wonderful photo book his daughter made for him after his return.

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## FF Houston to host 2015 SW Regional Conference

Our club will be hosting the next annual meeting of the FFI Southwest Regional Conference and we will need your help. Art Blevins has agreed to Chair this function and has already set the date (March 27 – 29, 2015) and the place (South Shore Harbor Resort and Marina). Please put this on your calendar, as we will not only be needing every able-bodied person to help organize but also want all of you to attend if possible. The registration will begin on Friday, 3/27; meetings on Sat., 3/28, followed by a dinner cruise on Clear Lake; with wrap-up and departure on Sunday, 3/29. Here is a link to SSH's video promo:

<http://vfmii.com/exc/aspquery?command=invoke&ipid=1066235&ids=95865>

And a link to the cruise boat company: <http://www.majesticventures.com/>

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## Exchange Selection for 2016

This is the time of year when our club has the opportunity to select our favorite cities for our first three choices of outbound destinations for 2016. This means that each of us gets to request our favorite FF destinations and then our club turns in the most requested from our group. FFI works diligently to match all clubs with one of their choices of city or at least within the country requested. If you weren't able to attend the August meeting but would like to travel with our Houston club in 2016, please email Don (locogear@gmail.com) with your first five choices in order of rank.

From the list of countries where FFI has clubs, we have deleted those which our club visited in the last few years. Two columns were added: one showing a percentage figure (\*) and the other for you to list, in order, your first five choices. \*The percentage figures represent the number of weeks available for hosting in that country divided by the number of requests for that country. The lower the percentage, the less likely we will be chosen for an exchange. The higher the percentage, the more likely we would be chosen in the selection process.

For example, if our club chose to visit Burundi, our chance would be 100% that we would get selected for an inbound exchange because, even though they offer only one week of hosting, they had no requests for an inbound exchange last year, so it is very likely that we would get our choice. However, if our choice was Belgium, we would not be likely to get our request because they offer only 6 weeks of hosting and have had 30 requests, so 24 of the requests would not be matched.

Country	Clubs	Weeks for hosting	Requests	Hosting capacity	%	Your choice
Albania	2	1	7	15	14	
Argentina	1	1	15	18	7	
Austria	2	2	16	15	13	
Azerbaijan	1	2	5	20	40	
Belarus	1	2	2	15	100	
Belgium	4	6	30	18	2	
Burundi	1	1	0	18	100	
Canada	22	39	70	20	56	
Chile	3	4	18	15	22	
China (Partner)	1	2	6	20	33	
Colombia	2	3	17	20	17	
Costa Rica	6	10	36	18	28	
Cyprus	1	1	11	20	9	
Egypt	1	2	0	20	100	
England	13	20	61	16	33	
Estonia	1	1	12	15	8	
France	4	5	31	21	16	
Georgia	1	2	5	20	40	
Germany	16	21	42	18	50	
Guadeloupe	1	2	4	20	50	
Hungary	3	3	18	17	17	
India	1	2	2	20	100	
Indonesia	7	6	20	20	30	
Israel	1	1	9	18	11	
Kenya	1	2	2	20	100	
Korea	1	1	11	20	9	
Latvia	1	1	8	17	13	
Malaysia	1	1	7	10	14	
Mexico	6	13	15	22	86	
Mongolia	1	1	3	10	33	
Morocco (Partner)	1	2	5	20	40	
Nepal	1	1	2	22	50	
Netherlands	3	5	30	16	17	
New Caledonia	1	2	3	15	67	
Northern Ireland	1	2	14	18	14	

Norway	1	2	25	20	8
Romania	2	2	12	13	17
Russia	11	12	19	20	63
Slovakia	1	1	8	20	13
South Africa	3	5	32	20	16
Sweden	1	1	17	17	6
Switzerland	1	1	22	18	5
Taiwan	4	5	10	17	50
Tanzania	1	1	3	18	33
Thailand	3	4	16	22	25
Turkey	7	10	39	17	26
Uganda	2	2	0	18	100
Ukraine	3	1	6	20	17
United States- Hawaii	2	2	18	18	6
United States- Mainland	89	129	59	20	100
Uzbekistan	1	0	3	0	
Vietnam (Partner)	1	2	8	22	25
Wales	1	1	9	15	11

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## Dues Increase for 2015

Because FFI Atlanta is increasing the amount we pay them for our annual member dues effective January 2015, we are having to pass this increase on to our FFH members. Therefore, dues for an individual will be going up from \$30 to \$35 and for a family from \$45 to \$55 (basically \$5 per person).

At the request of several potential members, the Board has agreed to pro-rate the dues for those joining later in the year as follows: Single \$3/mo; Family \$5/mo. We will begin collecting dues for 2015 in October to be turned into Atlanta in late December.

And the Board feels the need to charge an additional \$5 per year for those wishing to receive "hard copy" newsletters to cover the cost of postage.

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## Election of Officers for 2015

We will be presenting our proposed slate of officers for 2015 at our September meeting and voting at our October meeting. After many phone calls, the slate looks like this:

Co-Presidents: Don and Sidney Formanek

Vice President: Jean Porter

Secretary: Linda Marlin

Treasurer: Art Blevins

In committee chair rolls, Joy will continue to handle the Newsletter and Website, and we will now be looking for a Membership Chairman and also a "tech savvy" person to handle our Facebook and MeetUp sites. We appreciate any suggestions and/or volunteers and will accept nominations for any of these positions from the floor.

## Invitation to Visit Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Having hosted the club from Cedar Rapids a few years ago, we have been invited to come visit them next year. More information and photos about their area will be forthcoming from their Exchange Director, Diane Kraal. If you are interested in participating, please contact Don or Sid Formanek. If we have enough interest, we will need an Exchange Director to begin organizing our group.

## Exchange Opportunity to Azerbaijan and Georgia

FF Dallas has invited us to join them in an almost-month-long outbound exchange to Baku and Tbilisi May 11<sup>th</sup> - June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015. If you are interested, please contact the Exchange Director, Zia Shamsy, at 2500 Sierra Lane, Plano TX 75075, cell 214-403-4299, home 972-867-2076 or via email at [zia\\_shamsy@yahoo.com](mailto:zia_shamsy@yahoo.com). Itinerary and application are available online at [www.friendshipforcedallas.org](http://www.friendshipforcedallas.org).

## Contact Us

**Friendship Force International**  
[www.thefriendshipforce.org](http://www.thefriendshipforce.org)

**Friendship Force Houston, TX**  
[www.ffhoustontx.org](http://www.ffhoustontx.org)

**Facebook Account**  
[Friendship Force of Greater Houston](https://www.facebook.com/FriendshipForceofGreaterHouston)

**Meet Up.com**  
[Friendshipforce1981@gmail.com](https://www.meetup.com/Friendshipforce1981@gmail.com)

**Co-Presidents**  
**Don & Sidney Formanek**  
281-821-9876  
Don – [locogearred@gmail.com](mailto:locogearred@gmail.com)  
Sid – [sidcaver@yahoo.com](mailto:sidcaver@yahoo.com)

**Vice-President**  
**Marjo Ave Lallemand**  
713-669-1972  
[winmar39@hotmail.com](mailto:winmar39@hotmail.com)

**Treasurer**  
**Art Blevins**  
713-203-7466  
[acblevins1@comcast.net](mailto:acblevins1@comcast.net)

**Secretary**  
**Linda Marlin**  
713-465-9466  
[marlinl@comcast.net](mailto:marlinl@comcast.net)

**Membership Chairman**  
**Jean Porter**  
281-240-0352  
[jp@nporter.com](mailto:jp@nporter.com)

**Newsletter Editor & Webmaster**  
**Joy Huntington**  
281-380-8684  
[jhuntington001@gmail.com](mailto:jhuntington001@gmail.com)

## FF Houston 2014 Calendar

Date	Day	Activity	Location	Time
Sept 13	Sat	Arrival of Inbound Exchange from Gold Coast, Australia (Linda Marlin, ED) Evening free	Hobby Airport	5 PM
Sep 14	Sun	Welcome Brunch	Joy Huntington's home in AM 208 Caldwell St., Baytown	11 AM
		San Jacinto Monument/Battleship Texas  BBQ Dinner	Art Blevins' home in PM 3449 Pine Ln., Deer Park	5 PM
Sep 15	Mon	NASA Picnic Lunch Dinner	Clear Lake, NASA Rd 1 Picnic lunch at Space Center Ruby Reviere's home 521 Fairdale St., Friendswood	9:30 AM 12N 5 PM

Sep 16	Tue	Free Day / Hosts' Choice:		
Sep 17	Wed	Galveston Tour Lunch at Marios's Italian Restaurant Galveston Tour (cont.) Evening free (Kemah an option)	Meet at Visitors' Center	10 AM
Sep 18	Thu	Museum of Fine Arts Lunch at Café Express Museum of Natural Science Light Dinner  Musical Comedy (Victor/Victoria)	Ave Lallemand's, 2238 Goldsmith Rd., Rice Village Hobby Center, Bagby St.	10 AM  5 PM 7:30 PM
Sep 19	Fri	Downtown Segway Tour Lunch at food court Downtown Tunnels & City Hall/Visitors' Ctr Farewell Dinner	Meet at "new" library Your choice  Baba Yega's, 2607 Grant St.	10AM-1PM 1-2 PM 2-4 PM 5:30 PM
Sep 20	Sat	Ambassadors' Departure	Hobby Airport	12 N
Sep 20	Sat	Board to meet w/ convention planner	South Shore Harbor	12:30 PM
Sep 27	Sat	Potluck luncheon followed by presentations by Marjo Ave Lallemand and Jean Porter of each of their recent trips to Europe	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Oct 1	Wed	Board Meeting	Luby's at 1414 Waugh Dr.	6 PM
Oct 11	Sat	Andalucia Tapas Restaurant (Spanish) Flamenco dancers perform	1204 Caroline, downtown	6 PM 8 PM
Oct 25	Sat	Presentation of Ruby Reviere's "Round the World Tour with potluck luncheon	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Nov 5	Wed	Board Meeting	Luby's at 1414 Waugh Dr.	6 PM
Nov 8	Sat	Mia Bella Trattoria (Italian)	1204 Caroline, downtown	6 PM
Nov 22	Sat	General Meeting (suggestions welcome)	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Dec 3	Wed	Board Meeting	Luby's at 1414 Waugh Dr.	6 PM
Dec 13	Sat	Holiday Party and White Elephant gift exchange	Home of Margie Jeffords Friendswood	TBD

\* Tracy Gee Community Center, 3599 Westcenter Blvd., one block inside Beltway 8 off Richmond

## FF Houston 2015 Calendar

Date	Day	Activity	Location	Time
Mar 27-29	Fri - Sun	Southwest Regional Conference in Houston (we will be needing volunteers to help)	South Shore Harbor Resort	All day
May		Inbound Exchange from San Francisco, CA		
TBD		Possible Outbound to Cedar Rapids, Iowa		
Late Oct. or early Nov.		Inbound Global Exchange before or after Houston's International Quilt Festival	Quilt Festival is at George R. Brown Convention Center Oct. 30 – Nov 2	