



friendship force

HOUSTON

May
2009

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

Explore • Understand • Serve®

President's Corner

Greetings to all members of FF Houston,

We're going to have a really interesting meeting this month as guest speaker Susan Borches speaks to us about her organization called the Houston Greeters Association. The mission of her organization fits well with ours. I think you'll enjoy hearing about it and possibly even working for it in the future. I think you'll also enjoy a catered Mexican lunch prepared by Ninfa's, and this time lunch is on us! No need for you to pay! So, come, enjoy the program and fellowship, and the delicious Mexican food.

Our plans for our next out-bound exchange to Japan are coming along nicely. While some of us will be touring 2 weeks, some more of us will be touring 3 weeks as we join FF Connecticut on their exchange to Kumamoto before our exchange begins in Tokyo.

Houston will be hosting Australians in 2010! If you would like to be the Exchange Director for this in-bound exchange, just let me know. I'm sure the Aussies are a great crowd and that we'll enjoy hosting them very much.

And we may also be hosting the FF Spring Hill, Florida Club in 2010! A time has not yet been established because we are both waiting to hear about international exchange time schedules, but they very much would like to come to Houston. Once we find out when the international exchanges will take place, we'll be able to schedule Spring Hill's visit.

Between May 17th and 20th, our FFH Board of Directors will be entertaining some young Chinese diplomats during their visit to Houston. This will not be a Friendship Force exchange, but we will be doing some day- and dinner-hosting while they are here. They had heard about our club and wanted to become acquainted with us! We must have a good reputation! I'll let you know how this went at our general meeting on May 30th.

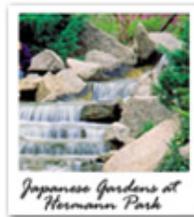
Be sure to give your luncheon reservations to Katie, Sid, or Shirley when they call you. And be sure to attend our meeting on the 30th!

Looking forward to seeing all of you again!

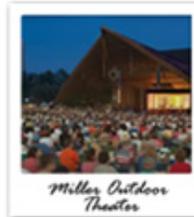
In friendship,

Priscilla Bruyere

May Event: Houston Greeters



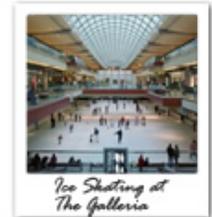
Japanese Gardens at Hermann Park



Miller Outdoor Theater



Art Car Parade



Ice Skating at The Galleria

On Saturday, May 30th, we will meet at 11:00am at Tracy Gee Community Center. Our guest speaker will be Susan Borches of the Houston Greeters Association (www.houstongreeters.org). The Houston Greeters mission is to enrich visitors' experiences by connecting them one-on-one with volunteer Greeters who share their knowledge of, and passion for, the Houston region. This helps enhance Houston's image and contributes to cross-cultural understanding – a goal shared by Friendship Force. Our very own Bernice Beckerman is a member. Susan is the CEO and founder of Houston Greeters, so you'll hear it right from the top!

Our lunch will be catered by Ninfa's and our club is picking up the tab! Wear your most festive Mexican costume to help get in the mood. To ensure we have enough food, we need a head count by Wed, May 27th, so when you get a call from the Telephone Committee, let them know if you are planning to attend and if you plan on bringing any guests.

By the way, the Telephone Committee has recently been re-organized. Shirley Hooks has agreed to be the new chair person and Katie Payne & Sidney Formanek are members. So you will be hearing from one of these ladies in the future.

Member Highlight

Doug Markham is an attorney in private practice in Houston, with background in civil trial law, including medical malpractice defense and constitutional claims relating to gerrymander of legislative districts. His passion is travel, and he is active in several international exchange organizations. Thus far he has traveled to about 85 nations, some of which have consolidated or divided since his visits. He is the local president and a national board member of Hostelling International which develops and licenses hostels, now open for budget travelers of all ages, and which also teaches travel programs to girl scouts and adults. He is a former local leader of U. S. Servas, a member of Hospitality Club, and an early member of couchsurfing.com, all of which welcome homestays by visitors. He is a longtime volunteer for the Institute for International Education, which provides dinner hospitality for State Department-sponsored international visitors and a welcome program for Rice University's international graduate students. He is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Chicago Law School, and is a homeowner and election judge in Timbergrove Manor just west of the Heights.

Recap on April Event: Japan Talk & Lunch



The Japan-America Society of Houston

Bridging the Cultures of Japan and America Through Education



To help prepare for our outgoing exchange this year to Tokyo, our April 25th meeting featured Carl Rosa from the Japan America Society of Houston (www.jashouston.org). He spoke on "Fascinating Facts of Japan", then had to run off to rejoin the Japan Festival which was being held in Hermann Park this same weekend.

Mr. Rosa made a number of comparisons to help us appreciate how big Tokyo was in relation to Houston. You may have heard about the subway system; he showed us the video of the rush-hour crowds and how the 'pushers' help get everyone inside the subway cars. But have you heard about

the proposed (dreamed of?) city within a city – 750,000 people living their lives in a giant pyramid 6500 ft high, a fully contained city within itself. Or the vending machines – over 200 categories of items are dispensed, including ordering a compact car!

The talk was held at Kubo's Sushi Bar & Grill in Rice Village (www.kubos-sushi.com). Our lunch was in Bento boxes, with teriyaki chicken, vegetable tempura, seaweed salad along with lots of other morsels, followed by green tea ice cream. All delicious!!

Betty Spooner was the event organizer and we thank her for a great meeting!

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.

FFH Historical Tidbit

Dolores Rieger is sharing a portion of an article by Jessie Jennings from the May 2009 issue of Science of Mind about Cinco de Mayo, which is a great way to get us in the mood for our Mexican dinner on May 30th.



Cinco de Mayo, commemorating a Mexican military victory in the 1860's, has become a celebration of Mexican-American ancestry and culture, first in California and now in Houston, Texas. If this is a special day in your world, Salud! For those not of Mexican lineage, it's an opportunity to relish how we can all be one and many at the same time. Mexico, like the U.S., is a republic of states, with each state having its own character and personality. The whole wouldn't be the same without any of its parts, nor would any of the parts effectively stand alone. The same is true of people in general. We're all cut from the same cloth, yet the colors and textures of each of us are unique. We each have a family from which we came, and a certain ethnic heritage, as well as special patterns and preferences discovered along the way, which in our own style we sing, dance and otherwise portray to the world. Everybody's particular celebration of life is everybody else's to enjoy, draw from, and add to. Thus, oneness does not demand uniformity. With practice, we can begin to appreciate Oneness and Individuality, which helps produce understanding and tolerance, which brings peace to our world. So as we say in the Friendship Force, "A World of Friends is a World of Peace."

Contact us

Friendship Force International

www.thefriendshipforce.org

Friendship Force Houston, TX

www.friendshipforcehoustontx.com (under construction)
info@friendshipforcehoustontx.com

President**Priscilla Bruyere**

281-441-4578 or 832-445-5315
PriscillaBruyere1@yahoo.com

Vice-President & Programming**Ray Missman**

713-529-4619
ray@missman.org

Treasurer**Divya Matai**

832-549-8497
divyamatai@yahoo.com

Secretary**Linda Doolittle**

713-465-3120
ldoo15@aol.com

Newsletter Editor & Outbound Exchange Director**Joy Huntington**

281-837-5151 or 281-380-8684
jhuntington001@comcast.net

Membership Chairman**Betty Spooner**

281-589-7901

Publicity Chairman**Genevieve Pike**

281-970-6751
geneviepike@sbcglobal.net

Past Pres & FFI Procedures Chairman**Ruby Reviere**

281-482-2464
rbyreviere@earthlink.net

Past Pres, Advisor & Parliamentarian**Dolores Rieger**

713-774-3488
drieger247@aol.com

2009 Outbound Exchange to Japan

by Outbound Exchange Director, Joy Huntington



Our trip to Japan which started out as one week to Tokyo has turned into quite a wonderful vacation. Initially, our exchange to Tokyo was scheduled for this past April, but we decided to ask if we could change the dates to coincide with FFI's International Conference in Okinawa being held in November. Our hosts in Tokyo agreed to the date change and we then had two destinations. Some months back, we were asked by our international office in Atlanta to accept a small group from Connecticut to join our Tokyo exchange. Unknown to us was the fact that they had an exchange opportunity in Kumamoto, a coastal town on the southern tip of Japan, to which we were subsequently invited. Then in planning our dates for both exchanges, we have decided to add a short visit to Kyoto (located between the two cities) which is the former home of the Japanese emperors before Tokyo and is famous for its beautiful geishas. Another surprise opportunity presented itself when we were registering for the International Conference. One of the homestays offered after the Conference is to Hiroshima, so because we are registering so early, we believe that all of our group will get to visit Hiroshima as well. So what started out as a one-week visit to one city has now become five cities and 22 days!!! Oh, the joys of retirement and having the time to travel!!! (I, however, don't have that much time, so I'm just going to enjoy planning the activities and travel in the cities that I won't get to experience first hand. Some of us still have to work!)

If you are interested in joining us, *we still have space*. Just drop Joy a note via email at jhuntington001@comcast.net or call 281-837-5151. This is quite an opportunity to see Japan for three weeks and only have to stay in a hotel five nights. The rest of the time, we will be living with our various Japanese hosts and experiencing their everyday lives -- up close and personal. That's the Friendship Force way to see the world and to make wonderful friends and to bring understanding and peace to the world.



Golden Pavilion - Kyoto

2009 FF Houston Calendar

So you can see what we've done and what we'll be doing, the dates for all our 2009 meetings are noted below, including our Board Meetings, to which everyone is invited. Noted in **blue** is our Inbound Exchange and in **red** is our Outbound Exchange. Please note that we need a few remaining programming ideas (**tbd**), so your suggestions are welcomed. Ray Missman, our VP, is in charge of programming and would be happy to have your thoughts on this.

Houston FFI 2009 Calendar				
Date	Day	Activity	Location	Time
January 31	Sat	Asian Art Exhibit and lunch	Museum of Fine Arts & Nippon restaurant	11:00am 1:00pm
February 6 - 8	Fri - Sun	SW Regional Conf.	Dallas, TX	5:00pm
February 28	Sat	World Friendship Day and international potluck	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	11:30am
March 25-April 1	Wed - Wed	Inbound Exchange, PJ Missman, ED	from Kern County, Calif.	
April 25	Sat	Japan-America Society guest speaker & lunch	Kubo's Restaurant	2:00pm
May 30	Sat	Meet the Houston "Greeters" with lunch catered by Ninfa's	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	11:00am
June 2	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	7:00pm
June 27	Sat	"Don't be the Ugly American in Japan" --- potluck lunch	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	11:00am
July 7	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	7:00pm
July 25	Sat	Speaker from Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	11:00am
August 4	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	7:00pm
August 29	Sat	"Packing for Int'l. Travel" by Continental Airlines	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	11:00am
September 1	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	7:00pm
September 26	Sat	Lunch	Chinese Dim Sung Palace	11:00am
October 6	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	7:00pm
October 24	Sat	Forbidden Gardens & La Madeleine restaurant OR Terra Cotta Warriors exhibit at HMNS		TBD
November 4	Wed	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	7:00pm
Nov. 6 - 28		Outbound Exchange, Joy Huntington, ED	five cities in Japan	
December 1	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	7:00pm
December 12	Sat	Holiday Party and/or Activity	TBD	TBD

TBD = to be determined (your ideas are appreciated)