



friendship force

HOUSTON

July
2009

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

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President's Corner

Greetings to All Members of Friendship Force Houston!

I was so happy to hear that our June meeting went so well! I only wish I could have been there. However, our July meeting also promises to be interesting as our speaker will be Ms. Tina Halcomb who is the Education Director of the Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce. This will be another potluck luncheon, so please bring a dish to share, whether it be meat, veggies, or dessert. We all are good cooks, and none of us has ever been dissatisfied with any of our concoctions, so bring whatever you like.

As you know, I am recovering from a broken right leg; therefore, once again, I will be unable to attend our meeting. I am undergoing home physical therapy, and while I am making good progress, I am still not able to leave the house. I will see my surgeon on August 14th and am hoping that at that time his x-ray will show that my bones have healed and that I'll be able to gradually get back into walking, first on a walker and then with a cane. At present, I'm working on bending my knee. The exercises are painful, but working through the pain will bring good results. I am looking forward to attending our meeting in August.

Enjoy our July meeting! Learning about US dealings with the Arabs is so important at this time in our society, so be sure to attend. And for those of you who are planning on traveling to Japan in November, we will be getting an update on the progress being made on the travel arrangements. While I won't be seeing you all this month, I definitely plan on seeing you in August! Until then, have a good time!

Looking forward to seeing all of you again!

In friendship,

Priscilla Bruzere

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.

July Event



The Bilateral US-Arab Chamber of Commerce (BUSACC) is the premier member based organization that serves as a liaison between prominent government and private trade development agencies, associations and academic institutions in the US and MENA region. Through their Commercial Diplomacy Programs they

advocate trade between the US and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Arab countries. They strive to provide their members with the most current information on the region through three components. First, the Speaker Series brings influential leaders to discuss an overview of regional issues. Second, their Roundtable Discussions provide exclusive opportunities for focused dialogue with top decision makers in business and government. And third, their Commercial Briefings provide US government expertise on emerging markets and dynamic trade policies.

BUSACC prides itself in the assistance it provides to its members seeking exposure in the MENA region. Their members lead trade missions of private business and government officials to the region as well as host foreign delegations in the US to enhance the visibility of US business abroad. BUSACC events are anticipated worldwide; sponsorship of such receptions, forums and conferences provides a great avenue for business to market to an audience with interests in the Arab world.

Please bring your favorite dish to our potluck luncheon, whether it is a casserole, salad, side dish, or dessert. And our Telephone Committee comprised of Shirley Hooks (chairman), Katie Payne and Sidney Formanek will be contacting you soon to verify your attendance.

Contact Us

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www.thefriendshipforce.org

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www.friendshipforcehoustontx.com (under construction)

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Recap on June meeting



For those of you who missed our June meeting, you missed a real treat! Those of us in attendance learned about the do's and don't's of Japanese etiquette, and we learned some typical phrases (see below) that we need to learn before we go. Our speaker, Rhonda Jackson, is a long-time friend of Joy Huntington's (in fact, a former student) who is a Speech Pathologist for the Dept. of Defense (American schools) and has been stationed in Misawa, Japan for the last 13 years.

Ms. Jackson strives to assimilate herself into the culture wherever she lives and has chosen to live off the base and takes many courses in various aspects of Japanese culture. She told us what to expect in the way of dining etiquette, shopping etiquette, and even the art of "toileting", especially for women! She is one vivacious, interesting and interested lady. She loves learning about other cultures and shares her enthusiasm. We enjoyed her presentation and her photographs.

Useful Phrases

Ohiyo Gazaimasu (Good Morning)

Konichiwa (Hello after 11:00 AM)

Konbanwa (Hello after 6:00 PM)

Sumemasen (Excuse Me – for attention)

Gomend Nasai (Excuse Me - for accidents)

Tole-wa Kudasai (Where is the toilet please?)

Onegaishimasu (Asking Permission)

Watashi-wa Rhonda (Introducing yourself)

Sayonara / Mata Ashita / Ja-Ne (Goodbye / See ya)

Oyasumenasai (Have a good night)

Gochesosumadeshita (I enjoyed the delicious meal.)

Domo (Thanks) / Domo Arigato (Thank You)

Domo Arigato Gazamasu (The most sincere form of appreciation)

2009 Outbound Exchange to Japan

by Outbound Exchange Director, Joy Huntington



In our visit to Okinawa, we will be sure to see the beautiful Shuri Castle. Its history is below.



After six years of planning and hard work, Shuri Castle reopened to the public in November of 1992. The "new" castle sweeps you back in time to the days of feudal warlords, emperors and warriors. Each building was painstakingly reconstructed to look as close to the original as possible. Although the original castle site was much larger, the land available for today's Shuri Castle gives you a good idea of what life was like many hundreds of years ago.

Shuri Castle is believed to have been built by King Satto at the end of the 14th century. The original Shuri Castle stood on a hill (130 meters above sea level) called Shuri Tonokura in Naha. This was the largest castle in Okinawa and measured 400 meters long from east to west, 270 meters long from north to south and 46,167 square kilometers in area. The castle was the headquarters of the Sho dynasty for 450 years -- from 1492 (when three kingdoms were unified on Okinawa) through 1879. Commodore Matthew Perry signed the Treaty of Peace and Amity at Shuri Castle in 1854.

Shuri Castle was designated a national treasure of Japan in 1928, then was totally destroyed during WWII. In 1950 the University of the Ryukyus was built on the site and used by them for 32 years until they relocated to a new site in south central Okinawa in 1982. The site was then designated Shuri District of National Okinawa Memorial Park, and the castle was restored and reopened to the public in November of 1992.

There are three courts inside of Shuri Castle that are separated by walls. The front court was where king coronation ceremonies were held by Chinese officials. On both sides of the front court sit two buildings. The one to the south was used for receiving official lookouts from the Satsuma clan and Japanese officials as well as for Japanese ceremonies. The building to the north was used to entertain envoys sent from China.

The main castle building is built of wood in a mixture of Ryukyuan, Japanese and Chinese styles and looks like a two-story building when it actually houses three stories. The main hall has what is called a "hip" roof made in the irimoya style with red tiles and a Chinese gable roof adorning its main entrance. Ceremonial functions held by Chinese envoys were held in the court of the main hall.

FFI Travel Opportunities

Below are descriptions of three exchanges planned for this fall that we have been asked to share with our membership. They all sound like wonderful opportunities and are less expensive than many exchanges. Please see if you or anyone you know may be interested.

EXCEPTIONAL VALUE FOR AN EXCHANGE FILLED WITH PERSONAL CONTACT IN UKRAINE AND EASTERN POLAND SEPT. 23-OCT. 8, 2009

Visit an area steeped in history. Enjoy one week homestay with our FF friends in Kyiv. Stay at an estate in Knoxville's Sister City of Chelm, Poland as guests of a local Doctor. Travel south in Poland to the Old Town of Zamosc (the Jewel of Polish Renaissance). Travel through the Bieszczady Mountain region of thick forests and high open meadows where old wooden Orthodox churches beautify the landscape. Stay in the former Habsburg city of Lviv where personnel from the local university show us their city.

Often called the bread basket of Europe for its abundant natural resources, Ukraine has endured centuries of different foreign rulers and has emerged a nationalistic, proud country with its own Ukrainian identity. While guests of the FF club of Kyiv, we will visit St. Sophia's Cathedral with its Byzantine Mosaics; the impressive cluster of gold-domed churches at Monastery Kievo-Pecherska Lavra; and more. Kyiv is known as the cradle of Slavic civilization. Members of the FF club of Kyiv are known for their hospitality and their welcoming of Americans to their city. The beautiful city of Lviv is known for its Italianate buildings, Austrian-style cafes, its underground, and the impressively Gothic Lychakivske Cemetery.

This exchange combines tourism heavily laden with people contact. We will travel by train and chartered bus. Most airlines fly into Kyiv, and ambassadors make their own travel arrangements; frequent flyer tickets are permitted. Airfares to Kyiv are a good value right now. Arrive in Kyiv Sept. 24th to begin the homestay; depart Oct. 8th from Kyiv. No Visa required for entry into Ukraine and Poland. Land cost estimated under \$1000. This promises to be one of the best values for an exchange this year.

For more information contact Joanne Schuetz at 865-521-9937 or a_schuetz@msn.com.

"ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY" ECO-EXCHANGE TO COSTA RICA November 3-16, 2009

Exchange fee - \$1500 (land only)
Vicki Vance, ED
vcvance@aol.com 225-275-3816

Are you interested in learning about one of the world's most diverse ecosystems and the research being done to protect it? If so, come experience the incredible beauty of Costa Rica beginning with a 5 night homestay in the southeastern town of Turrialba. Surrounded by volcanoes and valleys, our FF hosts will introduce us to area attractions such as coffee and macadamia nut plantations, waterfalls, tropical plants and birds.

We then move to EARTH University (Escuela de Agricultura de la Region Tropical Humeda) where we will spend 3 days touring the 8200 acre campus while learning about sustainable agricultural practices in the tropics and projects such as developing less chemically dependent bananas. We may assist with volunteer projects and will stay at the university hotel in Guacimo. We will visit their private nature reserve, recycling projects, help make banana paper, visit their dairy and botanical garden.

Next our adventure takes us down the eastern Caribbean coast for a 3-night stay at the environmental award winning Selva Bananito Eco-Lodge, located at the foot of Muchilla Mountain. Here we will have some fun and soft adventure such as horseback riding, hiking in the rainforest, tree climbing, birdwatching or zipline/canopy tour. This lodge puts the E in eco-friendly with solar powered hot water, cabins made from scraps of recycled wood, composting and treatment of gray wastewater. Lighting is candle or kerosene lanterns only - no electricity here!

This exchange is geared towards the active ambassador who is interested in environmental issues, nature, agriculture and wildlife. Good mobility is a must. This exchange is open to all ambassadors world wide.

DISCOVER ALBANIA – DEVELOPMENT EXCHANGE September 6–September 17, 2009

Brian Ridenour, from the Lincoln, Nebraska club, is leading an exchange to Albania this September which is a bargain at \$1185, plus air! The really cool thing is that his daughter, Alyssa, is in the Peace Corps there, and has been sending interesting updates about her experiences. Each one has been fascinating. Included is the link to their most recent newsletter where you can check out Page 7 for her article.

<http://www.friendshipforcelincoln.org/Passport/OnlinePassport409.pdf>

Brian has been with the Friendship Force since the early 80's serving as club president as well as ED and has helped form many connections to Tajikistan. He continues to visit that country and shows us that long-established friendships made through FFI can continue for years. Eastern Europe is so fascinating in that it is still "the Europe of our dreams", unspoiled by commercialism. Brian's phone number is (402) 488-4500.

2009 FF Houston Calendar

Ray Missman, our VP, is in charge of programming and would be happy to have your suggestions for next year.

Houston FFI 2009 Calendar				
Date	Day	Activity	Location	Time
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 Sum Palace	11:00am
October 6	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	7:00pm
October 24	Sat	Dale Hamilton of UH's international student program	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	11:00am
November 4	Wed	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	7:00pm
Nov. 4-28		Outbound Exchange, Joy Huntington, ED	five cities in Japan	
December 1	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee Comm. Ctr.	7:00pm
December 5	Sat	Holiday Party @ Carolyn Lanier's son's ranch	Address & Directions later	12:00noon