



# friendship force

## HOUSTON

February  
2010

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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## President's Corner

Greetings to Friendship Force Houston!

It was so good to see so many people at our January 20th General Meeting at the Tracy Gee Community Center! What a turn-out! The meeting room was practically bursting at its seams! And the potluck lunch was delicious as always. The presentation on Saudi Arabia and Qatar by Linda Doolittle was excellent! So glad so many of you were there!

There will be no February General Meeting because of our domestic out-bound exchange to California later this month; however, we did have a wonderful evening this past Saturday, February 13th, at the second dinner of our new International Dining Program. Thirty-five of our members met at the Blue Nile Restaurant in Houston and enjoyed a very delicious Ethiopian dinner. There were several guests who joined us including Carolyn Lanier's mother and also the former American Ambassador to Ethiopia, who came as a friend of Doug Markham. Rita Campbell planned the evening and did an excellent job. Our next evening of International Dining will be on Saturday, March 13th at 5:30 PM at the Goode Company Barbeque Restaurant. The address and map can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. I, as well as several others from our club, will not be there as we will be on our club's out-bound exchange to California, but hopefully the rest of you will attend this dinner. The Goode Company always serves the very best Texas barbeque.

Our March General Meeting will be held at the Tracy Gee Community Center on Saturday, March 27th, at 11AM, during which time we will hold a big celebration of World Friendship Day! Not only will we be enjoying a delicious lunch catered by Niko Niko's Greek Restaurant at the Tracy Gee Community Center, but we will also be wearing native costumes from the countries we have visited. If you do not have an actual costume, perhaps you could wear jewelry, a shirt, blouse, jacket, or hat from a country you have visited. We will all have an opportunity to describe what we are wearing and tell where it is from, and perhaps tell the most interesting experience we have had while in that country. FFHouston will be carrying most of the expenses for our lunch, so all we ask of you is to pay \$5.00 per person for this delicious Greek meal. The program will be most interesting as our

members who traveled to Japan on our last international out-bound exchange will show us their pictures and tell us about their experiences while in Japan last November. I'm sure you'll want to attend---and bring a guest or two if you'd like as we celebrate our friendships from around the world! This promises to be one of our best meetings, and once again, I'm looking forward to seeing you! Our calling committee, consisting of Katie Payne, Shirley Hooks, and Sidney Formanek, will be calling you to take your reservations.

As a last word, I would like to welcome Dr. Maria Rocha to the FFHouston Board of Directors. Maria has accepted the position as Chairman of the International Dining Program since Rita Campbell is no longer able to serve in this capacity. We thank Rita for her excellence in getting our program started and we wish her the very best in all her endeavors. We do hope she'll be able to join us for some of our other activities.

See you on March 27th!!! And don't forget International Dining Night on March 13th!

In friendship,

*Priscilla Bruyere*

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## Membership News

By Elizabeth Spooner, Membership Chair

Good News!! We are growing! We just published the new 2010 membership list given out at the January meeting and already it is out of date because in January, we had one late renewal (Luella Strong) and four brand new members: Robin Colen, Pat Higgins, Don Morgan, and Jean Porter. (In fact, two of our new members, Elizabeth Jackson and Jean Porter, are joining us on the California exchange.) This brings us up to 58 members. A revised list will be published in the next month or two.

At our luncheon on January 30<sup>th</sup> at Tracy Gee, we had 34 members (including those mentioned above) and three guests. I expect some of our prospects to become additional members this spring.

If you attended our lunch, you will remember that we were filled to capacity. Because of this, we ask that you respond to your telephone committee caller (Katie Payne, Sid Formanek, or Shirley Hooks) with a yes or no about future events. In January, our committee only received 25 yes replies and 37 actually showed up. So, as you can see, an accurate count is becoming more and more necessary so we can secure a large enough room. Thanks for your cooperation.

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## Recap on January's presentation: Qatar & Saudi Arabia

We all enjoyed the presentation by Linda Doolittle about her "once-in-a lifetime" trip to Qatar and Saudi Arabia. She was selected from a group of over 43 teachers who applied for this program and was one of twelve chosen to represent Houston-area teachers. Her slides and great information were appreciated by all of us. We had a full house for her talk, and we also enjoyed a wonderful potluck luncheon, as we often do. We DO have some good cooks in our midst. Thank you, Linda, for an educational and entertaining presentation.

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## Recap on Southwest Regional Conference

by Priscilla Bruyere

On February 5th, Erma Fennema, Betty Spooner, Dolores Rieger, Mary Lee Lanik-Lear and I drove to McAllen, Texas to attend the Southwest Regional Conference which encompassed FF clubs from Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico, Louisiana, and Texas. The conference was hosted by the Rio Grande Valley Club at the Casa Real Hotel in McAllen. There were approximately 71 FF members in attendance, including the President of Friendship Force International, Dr. George Brown. We had a wonderful time at the conference and had an opportunity to learn about the activities of the various clubs and to exchange ideas. Dr. Brown addressed the group twice and then held a question-and-answer session. Dr. Brown explained the financial workings of FFI and exactly how our dues and exchange fees are put to use. This was of great interest to us all, and we discovered just how extensive FFI's outreach is. Some of the funds are being spent for the development of new clubs and for clubs in financial distress. Scholarships and financial assistance are being provided by FFI's Legacy Fund so that club leaders in financially distressed countries can go on exchanges that otherwise would be impossible. And new kinds of exchanges are being developed, such as eco-exchanges and themed exchanges, which include activities for people who are interested in hiking, gardening, perfecting language skills, and participating in sports activities, just as an example. There are also teaching exchanges and humanitarian exchanges, as well as discovery exchanges in Italy, Morocco, and Guatemala. Dr. Brown also stated that FFI headquarters in Atlanta strives to keep operating expenses at a minimum while maintaining a small staff and low overhead.

Dr. Brown addressed the importance of screening those who would like to travel as FFI ambassadors before each exchange takes place in order to assure a good mix of ambassadors who will be an asset to each particular club and region. He stated that it is good for clubs to be open to the acceptance of other clubs who would like to join them on out-bound exchanges.



FF Houston SW Conference attendees with FF International President  
Mary Lee Lanik-Lear, Priscilla Bruyere, George Brown, Dolores Rieger, Elizabeth Spooner and Erma Fennema

Dr. Brown was invited to come to Houston sometime in 2010 to address and meet our membership and he graciously accepted our invitation. I will be contacting him soon to arrange a date.

And by the way, all the clubs seem to concur that the best way to expand club membership is by personal invitation.

So as you see, the Southwest Regional Conference was very much worthwhile and we all felt that we learned a lot. It was also just great getting together with those we had met at previous conferences as well as those who were new to us. And Friendship Force Rio Grande Valley certainly did roll out the red carpet to all of us and treated us like royalty! We join together in thanking them for a job well done!

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## 2010 Inbound Exchange from Newcastle, Australia

Our Houston club is set to host 21 Ambassadors from Newcastle, Australia, beginning on October 3<sup>rd</sup> for one week. Please plan to participate in some way while our guests are here. We will be needing volunteers to home host, day host, perhaps dinner host, and we want everyone to come to the

Welcome and Farewell Dinners. As time approaches, Linda Doolittle, our Exchange Director, will be asking for your help and will be setting up planning sessions. As exchanges are the heart of Friendship Force, please plan to participate as much as you can.

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## 2010 Outbound Exchange to California

Nine of our Houston members will be leaving for our 4-city California Exchange later this month. Because of this, there will be no general meeting for February. We can anticipate learning about the domestic exchanges to Kern County, Santa Barbara, Orange County and San Diego later in the year. We wish them a successful and fun-filled trip and the opportunity to meet more wonderful FFI members and to make new friendships. Plus they have the opportunity to visit those from the Kern County club who were Ambassadors in our homes just a short time ago.

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## Contact Us

### Friendship Force International

[www.thefriendshipforce.org](http://www.thefriendshipforce.org)

### Friendship Force Houston, TX

[www.ffhoustontx.org](http://www.ffhoustontx.org)

(under construction)

### President

#### Priscilla Bruyere

281-441-4578 or 832-233-1040

[PriscillaBruyere1@yahoo.com](mailto:PriscillaBruyere1@yahoo.com)

### Vice-President & Programming

#### Ray Missman

713-529-4619

[ray@missman.org](mailto:ray@missman.org)

### Treasurer

#### Linda Marlin

713-465-9466

[marlin@comcast.net](mailto:marlin@comcast.net)

### Secretary

#### Linda Doolittle

713-465-3120

[ldoo15@aol.com](mailto:ldoo15@aol.com)

### Newsletter Editor

#### Joy Huntington

281-837-5151 or 281-380-8684

[jhuntington001@comcast.net](mailto:jhuntington001@comcast.net)

### Membership Chairman

#### Betty Spooner

281-589-7901

No email

### Past Pres & FFI Procedures Chairman

#### Ruby Reviere

281-482-2464

[rubyreviere@earthlink.net](mailto:rubyreviere@earthlink.net)

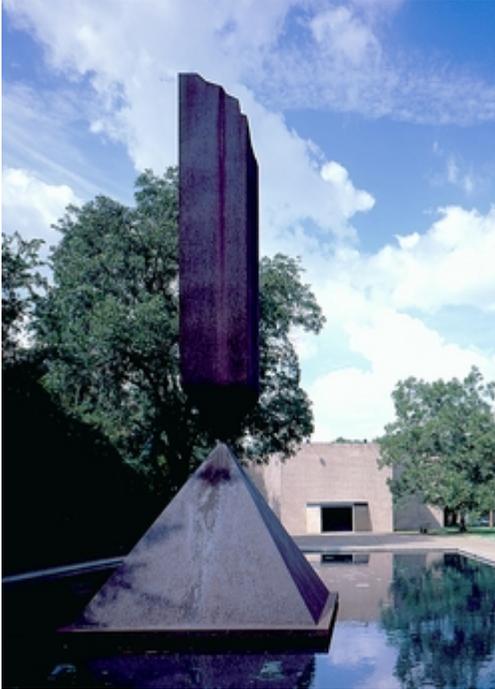
### Past Pres, Advisor & Parliamentarian

#### Dolores Rieger

713-774-3488

[drieger247@aol.com](mailto:drieger247@aol.com)

## March 11<sup>th</sup> Activity



Nelofer Pazira, Afghan-Canadian actress, author, and filmmaker, will speak on Afghanistan: Fact or Fiction.

**Venue:** Rothko Chapel  
**Phone:** 713-524-9839  
**URL:** <http://www.rothkochapel.org>  
<http://www.rothkochapel.org/Nelofer%20Pazira.htm>  
**Date:** March 11, 2010 at 7:00pm

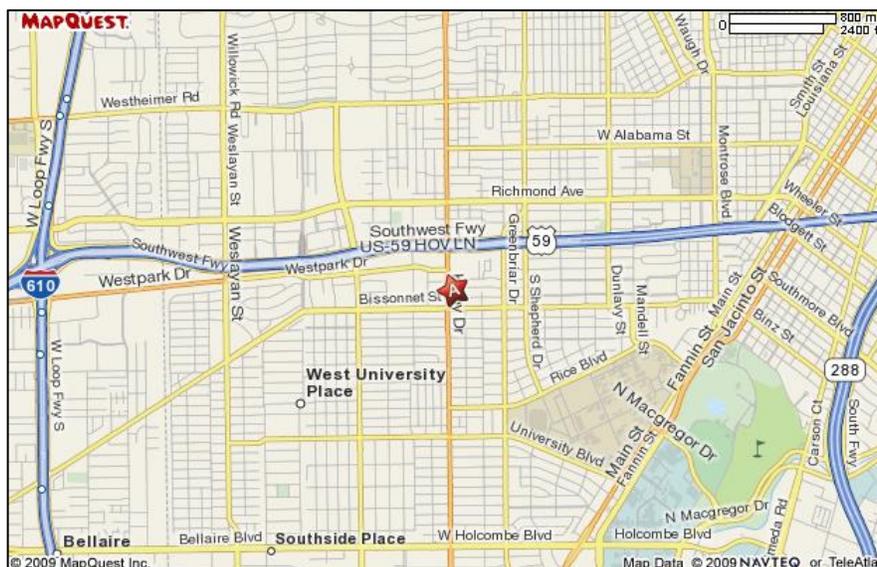
### About Nelofer Pazira

Nelofer Pazira was born in India and grew up in Kabul, Afghanistan during the Russian occupation of her country. The Paziras fled the war in 1989, when Nelofer was sixteen. After living as refugees in Pakistan for a year, the family migrated to Canada. She obtained a degree in Journalism and English Literature from Carleton University in Ottawa, and completed her MA thesis (Anthropology/Sociology and Religion) at Concordia University, Montreal. She received an honorary doctorate of laws, honoris causa, from Carleton University in 2006. In 2001, Nelofer starred in Mohsen Makhmalbaf's *Kandahar* – which was based on her story. In 2002, Nelofer co-directed the feature-length documentary film *Return to Kandahar*, winner of 2003 Gemini (Donald Brittain Award for Best Social/Political documentary). She appeared in *The Giant Buddhas* – a film about the destruction of monumental Buddha statues in Bamiyan. She directed and produced *Audition* (2008) an

experimental film about images and their impact in Afghanistan. Recently she's written and directed *Act of Dishonour* – a drama about honor killing and the plight of returning Afghans in post-Taliban Afghanistan. *A Bed of Red Flowers: In Search of My Afghanistan* is her first book. It was awarded The Drainie-Taylor Biography Prize, by Writers' Trust of Canada (2006). She has been a guest speaker at women's conferences, universities and symposiums, as well as served on a jury at the Locarno, Sao-Paulo, Montreal, and Geneva Human Rights film festivals. Since 2000, she established her own independent film company, Kandahar Films Inc.

## International Dining Night for March

Please join us for our third night of International Dining on Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup> at Goode Company Barbeque Restaurant on 5109 Kirby Drive at 5:30pm. Shall we assume that this represents Texas' cooking to most of the world? Please give your RSVP to the calling committee as space is limited.



## 2010 FF Houston Calendar

Date	Day	Activity	Location	Time
Feb 26 - Mar 18		Outbound Exchange Ruby Reviere, ED	4 clubs in California: Kern County, Santa Barbara, San Diego, Orange County	NA
Feb		<b>NO</b> General Meeting		
Mar		No Board Meeting		
Mar 11	Thu	Afghanistan Talk	Rothko Chapel	7:00 PM
Mar 13	Sat	International Dining Night	Goode Co. Barbeque, 5109 Kirby (btwn Bissonnet & Westpark), apprx. \$12	5:30 PM
Mar 27	Sat	World Friendship Day luncheon & Japan Exchange Presentation	Tracy Gee CC	11:00 AM
Apr 6	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7:00 PM
Apr 10	Sat	International Dining Night	Himalaya, 6652 SW Frwy (Hillcroft area), Pakistani	5:30 PM
Apr 24	Sat	Lunch at La Madeleine & Forbidden Gardens tour	Katy, TX	11:00 AM
May 4	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7:00 PM
May 8	Sat	International Dining Night	Bonga, 9861 Long Point, Korean, under \$20	5:30 PM
May 22	Sat	China trip presentation by Missmans & Doolittles	Tracy Gee CC	11:00 AM
Jun 1	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7:00 PM
Jun 12	Sat	International Dining Night	Dimassi's, 5160 Richmond (near Sage), Middle Eastern, under \$15	5:30 PM
Jun 26	Sat	Presentation on 200 <sup>th</sup> Anniversaries of Independence for Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Venezuela & Colombia	Tracy Gee CC	11:00 AM
Jul 6	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7:00 PM
Jul 10	Sat	International Dining Night	Pho Saigon, 2808 Milan (btwn McGowan & Tuam), Vietnamese	5:30 PM
Jul 31	Sat	General Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	11:00 AM
Aug 3	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7:00 PM
Aug 14	Sat	International Dining Night	Chuy's, 2706 Westheimer (west of Kirby), Tex-Mex under \$15	5:30 PM
Aug 28	Sat	General Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	11:00 AM
Sep 7	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7:00 PM
Sep 11	Sat	International Dining Night	Maylay Bistro, 8282 Bellaire, Malaysian, under \$15	5:30 PM

Sep 25	Sat	Presentation of FFH's Exchange to Australia in 2002 & slate of officers	Tracy Gee CC	11:00 AM
Oct 3 - 9	Sun - Sat	Inbound Exchange, Linda Doolittle, ED	from Newcastle, Australia	NA
Oct 8	Fri	Farewell Dinner	TBD	5:30 PM
Oct 16-18	Sat - Mon	International Conference	Washington DC	NA
Oct 30	Sat	General Meeting & election of officers	Tracy Gee CC	11:00 AM
Nov 2	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7:00 PM
Nov 13	Sat	International Dining Night	Cadillac Bar, 1802 Shepherd (so. of I-10), Mexican, under \$25	5:30 PM
Nov 20	Sat	Holiday Party	To be determined (suggestions welcome)	11:00 AM
Dec 7	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7:00 PM
Dec 11	Sat	International Dining Night	Kenneally's Irish Pub, 2111 S. Shepherd, hamburgers & pizza, under \$12	5:30 PM
Dec 18	Sat	General Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	11:00 AM

## "World of Friends" Catalog



### DID YOU KNOW....

... that the exchanges in this monthly catalog are designed specifically to introduce brand new travelers to the Friendship Force way of seeing the world? Check out all 32 exchanges in this month's issue by [clicking here](#): --- And be sure to share the catalog with a friend by using the "Send to a Friend" feature in the top right corner!

 [Click here to view the new WORLD OF FRIENDS catalog](#)

 [Click here to download a text only PDF of the catalog](#)



## JOIN FRIENDS FROM AROUND THE WORLD AT THE FFI WORLD CONFERENCE

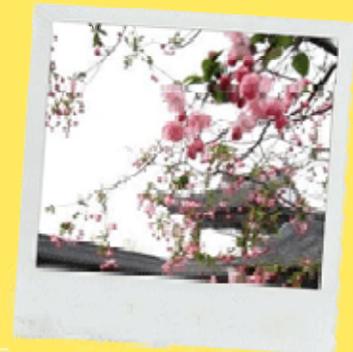
October 16 - 18th

Find out what's happening with Friendship Force International and your Friendship Force colleagues from around the world during our three-day conference in one of the world's most exciting cities! Washington, D.C., the U.S. capital, is a great town to explore with world-class museums, restaurants and historic sites. ([click here to register](#))

## CRUISE THE YANGTZE RIVER...

April 2010

... and walk the Great Wall of China in this unique opportunity to visit three extraordinary cities: Nanjing, Shanghai and Beijing. ([view exchange](#))



## SATURATE YOUR SENSES ...

September 2010

... in a marinade of East and West. The cities of Khiva, Tashkent and Samarkand offer some of the most exotic sights, best shopping and warmest hospitality in the Near East! ([view exchange](#))



## MAGNIFICENT ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE...

September 2010

...and a boat ride on the glorious Caspian Sea are two features in this journey to Azerbaijan, as guests of the Friendship Force of Baku. ([view exchange](#))

