



friendship force

H O U S T O N

January
2011

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

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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.

President's Corner

I wonder how many places have we FFH members been since our last meeting? PJ and I went to California over the holidays, Marjo and Hans went to Calgary, and Joy went to Egypt. Where else? You wouldn't be in this club if you didn't like to travel, so where would you like to go? Where would you go if you didn't have a budget? Well, it's fun to think about . . . In the mean time, we're developing plans for our 2011 activities, including our outbound exchange to Brazil, our inbound exchange from New Zealand, and even our inbound domestic exchange from Iowa in early 2012.

Please join me in welcoming our new Board members: Marjo Ave Lallemand (VP), Jacquie Mabey (Secretary) and Jean Porter (Membership). I'll continue as President and Linda Marlin as Treasurer.

You can make this club better – here are some of the ways you can help: (1) have an idea for one of our programs? Let us know! (2) we really need some help in several specific areas – setting up before the meetings, helping plan & coordinate the inbound and outbound exchanges; (3) spreading the word to others that might be interested in our club and the ideals it represents. Let's start the New Year right by helping out!!

See "WANTED" below for some near-term needs . . . *Can you help?*

In Friendship,

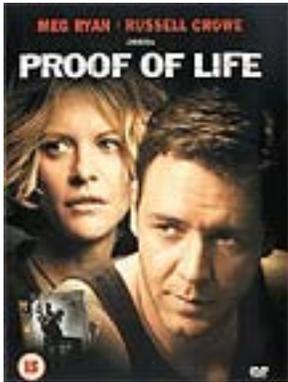
Ray Missman

WANTED

- ★ EXCHANGE DIRECTOR for outbound exchange to Brazil, last 2 weeks of June, 2011 (more details below)
- ★ EXCHANGE DIRECTOR for inbound exchange from West Waikaito, New Zealand, October 2011
- ★ SOCIAL COMMITTEE chair: coordinates setting up our meeting room prior to meetings (always lots of help from others).

January Program: SPECIAL PRESENTATION

by Ray Missman and Maria Rocha



Do you remember the 2000 movie entitled "Proof of Life" with Meg Ryan, Russell Crowe and David Morse? Here's the scenario:

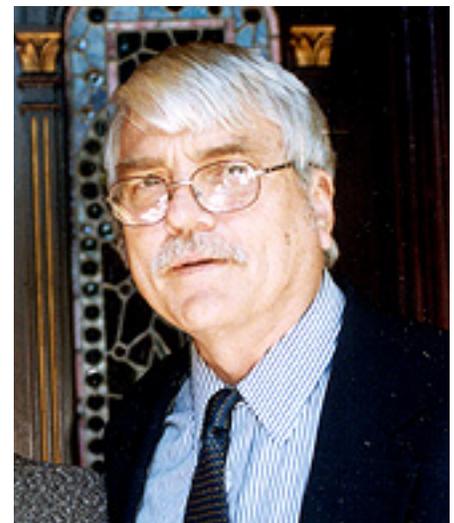
"Running late for work that morning, Tom Hargrove, communications head for CIAT, an international agricultural research and development center based in Cali, Colombia, is mildly annoyed when he drives into a roadblock... manned by soldiers in fatigues. The soldiers will see his international license plates... and wave him through.... But Hargrove soon learns he was dreadfully mistaken. This roadblock is being run by FARC--Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia, or the 'Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia'-- Communist guerrillas who believe they have just captured a valuable American hostage."

[quoted from Long March to Freedom: The True Story of a Colombian Kidnapping, by Thomas R. Hargrove, Texas A&M University Press, 2009]

Thus begins the ordeal which inspired the motion picture and was featured on 60 Minutes, 20/20, The Discovery Channel, BBC, and Vanity Fair.

Here is your opportunity to hear the story from the person on whose real life experience this movie was based. His name is Dr. Thomas Hargrove, and he will be our speaker for January. He was kidnapped on Sept. 23, 1994 by Colombian narco-guerillas and held hostage in the Andes for 11 months. He made it out alive and was later interviewed by Mike Wallace for 60-Minutes. He'll show us excerpts of the Mike Wallace interview and give us the behind-the-scenes background.

Tom will tell us "the rest of the story" and will be happy to respond to questions at our January meeting.



A Year in the Valley of the Shadow
The true story that inspired the
movie *Proof of Life*



Our club went on an exchange to Colombia in 2007 where we did see lots of military, but the situation was much more stable by then (at least in the parts we visited).

This not-to-be-missed meeting will be at the Tracy Gee Community Center, starting at 11:00am on Saturday January 29th. As (almost) always, this will be a pot luck so please bring something tasty and if you can think of something on a Colombian theme, all the better! See you then!

2011 Outbound Exchange to Brazil

PJ Missman will no longer be able to act as our Exchange Director for this exchange, so we are looking for a replacement. Would anyone wanting to go also agree to take on this challenge - with help from all of us? It's nice to know that there is also a small contribution toward the ED's expenses on such trips.

Our outbound to Brazil now includes exchanges to two cities in Brazil. We will be visiting the beautiful beach town of Itanhaem and also Blumenau, which is famous as the most "German" city in Brazil. Our visit there will include a mini-Octoberfest! We will include an "extension" to Iguazu Falls, so this will be a really wonderful experience. We do not have exact dates yet, but this will be mid June/early July, and will probably be 17-21 days, depending on whether you want to stay in Sao Paulo for a couple of days or not. We do not have costs yet either; but you can check your favorite airline for approximate fares.

This trip is filling up fast. The greatest number of ambassadors that Itanhaem can handle is 18. We have 11 people from our club who have indicated interest and 6 people from San Antonio, so we are already close to having a full exchange. This means that if you are truly planning on joining us on this fantastic experience, you need to send a \$100 deposit per person to Linda Marlin as soon as possible. It is early, but this trip may fill up very fast. Don't lose your chance to come with us!

2011 FFI World Conference



FREIE UND HANSESTADT HAMBURG

HAMBURG

**Let's get together...in
Hamburg!**

Join friends from around the world in
Hamburg, Germany, for the Friendship
Force International 34th World
Conference on August 26-30, 2011.

Click here to register!



friendship force
INTERNATIONAL
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Since all prices are being quoted in Euros and using the conversion rate on 1/4/11, it appears that the conference fee will run around \$373, with a double room around \$48 and a single room at \$75. Airline reservations are on your own. Go to the FFI website and see what all you get for the price. You certainly couldn't see Hamburg on your own for anything near this price.

Recap – December Holiday Brunch & Revels

by Ray Missman



Twenty three of us attended our holiday party at Baba Yega's Restaurant on Saturday, December 11th. It was an opportunity to visit and get better acquainted with our fellow members, eat some great food and enjoy a beautiful garden.

Then nine of our group went on to see the Christmas Revels 2010 performance at the Wortham Theater on UH main campus. This year's theme was 'A Celtic celebration of the Winter Solstice'. So we heard lots of bagpipes and saw some Irish step dancing. Father Christmas (below, center) even showed up. There was also an evil worm (lower right) that tried to slay old man winter. (I wasn't exactly sure what that was all about.)



LET'S BE FRIENDLY!!!!

by Ruby Reviere

The Friendship Force is all about being friendly. Sooooo I suggest that we should not only be friendly on an international basis, but also in our club as well. I would like to see more interaction among members especially with our new members who may not know anyone. I've noticed that usually those who are long-time members tend to visit mostly with members that they've known for a long time. This is very understandable. However, I suggest that each of us makes a real effort to be friendly to anyone that we don't know. Maybe we should have a mentoring program where current members take new members "under their wing" to help educate them about Friendship Force, introduce them to other members, make a special effort to get to know that person, sit with them at the meetings, etc.

It is kind of scary for some people to come to a meeting for the first time and if they are ignored they are more likely to see this 'Friendship Force' group as not being so friendly.

Our Houston Friendship Force club has given me opportunities to get to know people not only from all over Houston but also from all over the world, which would never have happened without this organization. A good way to get to know your fellow FFH members is to join in all the activities of the club, serve on committees, attend Board meetings, and especially join in the International Dining Nights, which are smaller and more conducive to personal conversation.

So let's make a big effort to make this year the friendliest ever.

Membership Update

by Elizabeth Spooner, Outgoing Membership Chairman

I have just completed sending off our FFI charter, membership list, and dues to Atlanta so we will be able to participate in exchanges for the year 2011.

You may be interested to know that we now have 24 single memberships, 11 family memberships, and 35 households for a total of 46 members. This number is down from 62 we had last year; however, we have added three new members: Charlye Jo Ivy (former VP), Maureen Erney, and Margie Jefford.

This is my last duty as Membership Chairman. After ten years, I feel it is time to "retire" and turn over the job to another lucky soul. I have thoroughly enjoyed the job and the challenge of bringing new members into the club. I thank all of you for your cooperation and assistance throughout the years.

I am turning over my job to Jean Porter who just joined our club last year. She has an enthusiastic and outgoing personality and will be a great asset to the board. Look for Jean at our sign-in table on January 29th at Tracy Gee. Pick up your new official membership list from her at that time.

New Facebook Account

We can thank Jay Mabey for creating a Facebook account for us. Jay and his wife, Jacquie, joined us about a year ago after they moved here (again) from Iowa, where they were active members of the local Friendship Force club. Jacquie is our new Secretary, so they have jumped right in, in a big way.

Please check us out at "Friendship Force of Greater Houston". We hope to get your comments and suggestions, as we try to expand our visibility to the community.

Contact Us

Friendship Force International

www.thefriendshipforce.org

Friendship Force Houston, TX

www.ffhoustontx.org

Facebook Account

[Friendship Force of Greater Houston](#)

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2011 FF Houston Calendar

Date	Day	Activity	Location	Time
Jan 29	Sat	Dr. Tom Hargrove: His true story that inspired a movie	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Feb 1	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7 PM
Feb 12	Sat	International Dining Night	Hunan Bo, 3237 Houston Ave. (just so. of N. Main & west off I-45N), 713-863-8234	6 PM
Feb 26	Sat	Guest Speaker from Brazil & Summary of FFI's World Conf. last Oct.	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Mar 1	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7 PM
Mar 12	Sat	International Dining Night	Kenneally's Irish Pub 2111 S. Shepherd hamburgers & pizza, under \$12	6 PM
Mar 19-20	Fri - Sat	SW Leadership Conf.	Oklahoma (details to come)	5 PM
Mar 26	Sat	World Friendship Day & Potluck luncheon Theme: "Make a Difference" Guest Speakers on Islam	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Apr 5	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7 PM
Apr 16	Sat	International Dining Night	Spanish Flowers, 4701 N. Main (west of I-45N), 77009, 712-869-1706	6 PM
Apr 30	Sat	Guest Speaker on "The Silk Road", HMNS exhibit	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
May 3	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7 PM
May 14	Sat	International Dining Night	Nelore Churrascaria, 4412 Montrose	6 PM
May 21	Sat	Tentative: Guest speaker on Baku and Azerbaijan	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Jun 7	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7 PM
Jun 11	Sat	International Dining Night	Casablanca Couscous, 5506 Richmond	6 PM
Jun ??		Outbound Exchange to Brazil		
Jul 5	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7 PM
Jul 16	Sat	International Dining Night	Charivari, 2521 Bagby	6 PM
Jul 30	Sat	Guest Speaker from Trinidad & Tobago	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Aug 2	Tue	Board Meeting Select Nominating Comm.	Tracy Gee CC	7 PM
Aug 13	Sat	International Dining Night		6 PM
Aug 26-30	Fri-Tue	FFI World Conference in Hamburg, Germany		
Sep 6	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7 PM
Sep 10	Sat	International Dining Night		6 PM
Sep 24	Sat	General Meeting Presentation of slate of officers	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Oct ???		Inbound Exchange from Western Waikato, New Zealand		
Oct 4	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7 PM
Oct 15	Sat	International Dining Night		6 PM
Oct 29	Sat	General Meeting & Election of officers	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Nov 1	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7 PM
Nov 12	Sat	International Dining Night		6 PM
Nov 19	Sat	General Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Dec 6	Tue	Board Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	7 PM

Dec 10	Sat	International Dining Night		6 PM
Dec 17	Sat	Holiday Party		

Tracy Gee Community Center is at 3599 Westcenter Drive, 77042, (713) 266-8193, located inside Beltway 8 West just south of Richmond.

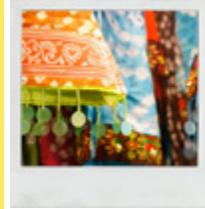
Join One of FFI's Exciting Exchanges in 2011!

Here are a few of our many opportunities:



DISCOVER THE WORLD-FAMOUS NATURAL BEAUTY OF NEW ZEALAND

Southland, Horowhenua and Taupo, New Zealand
([view exchange](#))

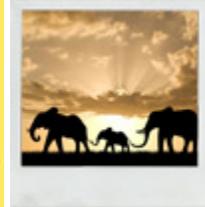


[Visit Asia](#)



JOURNEY THROUGH THE LAND DOWN UNDER!

Perth, Adelaide and Murray Bridge, Australia
([view exchange](#))

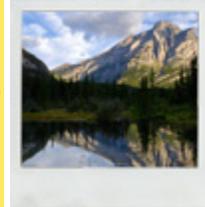


[Visit Africa](#)



FROM THE PANAMA CANAL TO THE VOLCANOES OF COSTA RICA - SEE THE SIGHTS OF CENTRAL AMERICA

Panama, Chile and Costa Rica
([view exchange](#))

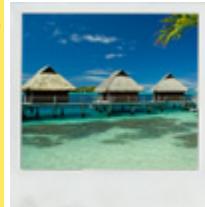


[Visit North America](#)



EXPLORE THE "DRAGON'S BACKBONE" RICE TERRACES OF GUANGXI PROVINCE, CHINA

Liuzhou, Guangxi Province and Shanghai, China ([view exchange](#))

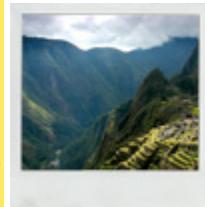


[Visit South Pacific](#)



TAKE A JOURNEY THROUGH GERMANY WITH ALL FIVE SENSES

Lübeck and Gelsenkirchen, Germany
([view exchange](#))



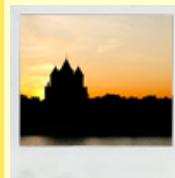
EXPLORE A LAND OLDER THAN TIME IN 5,000-YEAR-OLD IZMIR, TURKEY

Izmir, Ephesus and Istanbul, Turkey
([view exchange](#))



Wouldn't it be great if you got an email just because an exchange to your favorite place had an opening?

Let us know where you want to go by filling out our new survey - you might be pleasantly surprised! [Click here](#)



[Visit Europe/Eurasia](#)