



# friendship force

## HOUSTON

April 2011

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

FF Houston,

I hope you enjoyed our March meeting. One of the more important things we did was to do some brainstorming on ways to bring in new members. And you came up with lots of good ideas. If you think of any others, please share! And having the ideas is only the first part – we all need to help to reach out and invite people who are interested in the world and want to explore it.

We have a special speaker for the April meeting – from the Houston Museum of Natural History (HMNS). The topic is the Silk Road. Maybe you saw the exhibit last year at HMNS. I for one am really looking forward to this talk. Look for more details later in the newsletter . . .

We have official confirmation from Friendship Force International for our 2012 Inbound and Outbound exchanges! Kumamoto, Japan will visit – now scheduled for January, but have asked them if they might instead prefer to come in March – better weather, and the rodeo! Our outbound will be to Tarapoto and Lima, Peru in June. So start thinking, and start planning that vacation!

**HELP STILL WANTED:** Our Secretary, Jacquie Mabey, had to resign from the Board due to a new work opportunity. So we urgently need someone to step in. Can you attend monthly Board meetings? Don't worry about the details – you will get lots of help.

Do we have anyone who might be informed on what it takes to become a tax-exempt organization? We are looking into this and need guidance. Your input would be appreciated.

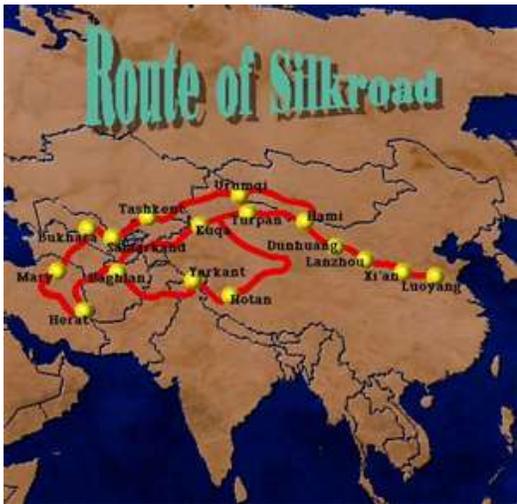
In Friendship,

***Ray Missman***

## Learn about the "Silk Road"

"Horse Steps on a Swallow", a bronze statue unearthed from a tomb of the Han Dynasty (A.D. 25-220) with 3 hooves in the air and one gently grazing the swallow, evokes reveries of the ancient Silk Road together with scenes of wild geese flying in the vast clear sky over sandy wilderness while caravans of camels laden with silk fabrics are plodding west to the tinkling of the bells on their necks. Written records about the spread of Chinese silk to India date from the fourth century B.C. when the Greek writer Ctesias used the word 'seres' (Greek for silk) when recording Chinese affairs.

Wouldn't you like to pack your luggage to go and investigate this wonderful area?



Because the Houston Museum of Natural Science had this exhibit last year and because the upcoming Houston Festival's theme is The Silk Road, we are having a docent from HMNS come share her knowledge with us. Even if you saw the Museum's exhibit, you will learn more from a person who had "hands on" experience with the information and exhibit material.

We will also have our usual potluck luncheon, so bring something tasty, as usual. We DO have some good cooks in this group!!

## Membership News

by Jean Porter, Membership Chairman

Ready, Set, Let's Grow!

The top four suggestions from our brainstorming session at our last meeting regarding ways we can increase our membership were as follows:

1. Newspaper articles: text written by one person and sent by our members to their local media sources representing areas where our members live.
2. Brochures & business cards to hand out and post.
3. Bulletin boards at suggested locations: libraries, community centers, precinct offices, YMCA's, retirement centers, colleges/universities, singles meeting places, etc.
4. Brainstorming sessions at our monthly meetings, getting members involved & "word-of-mouth" campaign by members.

Thanks to those of you who participated in our first Brainstorming Session at our 3/26 meeting. FFH brochures and new FFH business cards should be printed and ready for distribution to all of you by our next meeting date. Don't forget to email or return the "Membership Goals" sheet by this month's meeting (4/30). Give us at least one location where you could place brochures and the name of a periodical/newsletter in your area that might be a good source of advertising. Let's get the word out about FFH -- membership is the lifeblood of our organization. Don't forget the best advertising is "Word of Mouth"! Tell a friend & extend an invitation! Many thanks for your help!

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## Last Month's World Friendship Day

FF Houston celebrated World Friendship Day with a more varied meeting than normal. We wore costumes from our recent travels, ate great food from a variety of countries made by our members and showed pictures from the first FFI exchange to Morocco taken just recently.



And to change up the pace, we had a brain storming session about ways we could increase our membership, coming up with lots of good ideas. Then we had a "song practice" testing our choral skills on a variety of Texas songs, which we hope will lead to something we can do for in- and outbound exchanges. We had the words and music, but definitely need to work on our comfort level!! If anyone feels like they might be willing to be our song leader, just jump right on in.

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## International Dining Night for April



Nine of us met for an early dinner at Spanish Flowers on North Main for some great TexMex food, good atmosphere, and good conversation. The most fun thing about these International Dining Nights is that we have an opportunity to visit and get better acquainted with our fellow members. You really ought to try to join us.

Joy sends out an "Evide" (electronic invitation) as a reminder (although it was a little late this time) and you can see who is coming and who has replied. Please look for these invitations and do not think they are "spam". All responses are registered (yes, no and maybe) so we know who is and is not able to attend. And you can write a note of explanation as well.

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## 2011 Outbound Exchange to Brazil

Those who have signed up for the trip to Brazil are taking the trip of a lifetime! There will be not one, but two home exchanges [Itanhaem from June 19-26, and Blumenau from June 26 - July1] and a very exciting tour that Linda Doolittle (co-ED) has found for us from July 2 -9. Our first exchange is to Itanhaem, a small, scenic town. Brazilians pride themselves on their hospitality, so they are eager to show us around. And we are sure there will be lots of music and dancing and lots of food! Our second exchange is to Blumenau, the most German settlement in Brazil, whose Oktoberfest ties with Kitchener, Ontario for being the biggest and best outside of Germany. Although we are not going in October, our hosts will prepare one for us. After our two official exchanges, we will go to Iguazu Falls and the Pantanal - a huge plain with lots of wildlife to see. The Pantanal Conservation Area is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This trip is just about as exotic as a trip to Africa.



Aerial View of Pantanal



Capybaras

This was to have been a joint exchange with the San Antonio club; however, they have now decided not to go. Therefore, we have room for more interested travelers. If you know anyone who might be interested, please let them know and have them contact Linda Doolittle or Sidney Formanek, our co-Exchange Directors, whose information is in our "contact us" section of the newsletter. A \$100 deposit is all that is required at this time. It would be a shame not to have the maximum number of guests (18). Sources of additional information are: <http://wikitravel.org/en/Brazil> and <http://gobrazil.about.com/od/braziliancities/p/blumenau.html>.

## 2011 FFI World Conference



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

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

**Click here to register!**



friendship force  
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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.

## Contact Us

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## 2011 FF Houston Calendar

Date	Day	Activity	Location	Time
Apr 30	Sat	Potluck luncheon & Ms. Rima Blanc, a decent of HMNS, will "travel" the Silk Road with us!	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
May 3	Tue	Board Meeting	Missman's home	7 PM
May 14	Sat	International Dining Night	Café Piquet (Cuban), 5757 Bissonet, 713-664-1031	6 PM
May 21	Sat	Potluck luncheon & Bernard Navarro will introduce us to "Cuba as it was"	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Jun 7	Tue	Board Meeting	Missman's home	7 PM
Jun 11	Sat	International Dining Night	S'Ouvert Caribbean Café, 3030 Travis, 713-521-1313	6 PM
Jun 19 - Jul 1		Two Outbound Exchanges and one extension to Brazil	Linda Doolittle & Sidney Formanek, co-EDs	
Jul 5	Tue	Board Meeting	Missman's home	7 PM
Jul 16	Sat	International Dining Night	Hunan Bo (oriental), 3737 Houston Ave., 713-863-8234	6 PM
Jul 30	Sat	Guest Speaker: Linda Edwards, "My Stay in Malawi" & potluck luncheon	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Aug 2	Tue	Board Meeting Select Nominating Comm.	Missman's home	7 PM
Aug 13	Sat	International Dining Night	Tinto's (Spanish), 2015 W. Gray, 713-522-1330	6 PM
Aug 26-30	Fri-Tue	FFI World Conference in Hamburg, Germany		
Aug 27	Sat	Recap of Brazil exchange & potluck	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Sep 6	Tue	Board Meeting	Missman's home	7 PM
Sep 10	Sat	International Dining Night	Ruggles Green, 2311 W. Alabama, 713-533-0777	6 PM
Sep 24	Sat	Potluck luncheon & Guest Speaker from Baku, Azerbaijan, a sister city of Houston & Presentation of slate of officers for 2012	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Oct 4	Tue	Board Meeting	Missman's home	7 PM
Oct 15	Sat	Tour the Buffalo Soldiers Museum and lunch TBD	Map & info later	10 AM
Oct 29	Sat	Walking tour of downtown Houston & lunch TBD	Meet at Minute Maid Park (park in their "Diamond Lot" – map in Oct. newsletter)	10 AM
Nov 1	Tue	Board Meeting	Missman's home	7 PM
Nov 12	Sat	International Dining Night	Fish City Grill, 5172 Buffalo Speedway # C, 713- 668-0197	6 PM
Nov 19	Sat	General Meeting	Tracy Gee CC	11 AM
Dec 6	Tue	Board Meeting	Missman's home	7 PM
Dec 10	Sat	International Dining Night	TBD	6 PM
Dec 17	Sat	Holiday Party	Suggestions appreciated	

**JOIN ONE OF OUR EXCITING EXCHANGES IN 2011!**

Here are a few of our many opportunities:



**MOUNTAINS, PRAIRIES AND NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE - DISCOVER WESTERN CANADA**

Lethbridge and Alberta, Canada  
 July 18 to 29, 2011  
 ( [view exchange](#) )



**SPEND A WEEK EXPLORING THE CITY OF HAMBURG, GERMANY, FOLLOWING THE 2011 WORLD CONFERENCE**

Hamburg and Lueneberg, Germany  
 August 30 to September 5, 2011  
 ( [view exchange](#) )



**STUNNING CLIFFS, CASTLES AND A ROYAL RETREAT – DISCOVER THE ISLE OF WIGHT!**

Southampton and Isle of Wight, UK  
 October 2 to 10, 2011  
 ( [view exchange](#) )



**EXPLORE PERU’S CITY OF ETERNAL SPRING AND MANY FASCINATING RUINS**

Trujillo, Lima, Cuzco, Aguas Calientes, Machu Picchu and Arequipa, Peru  
 October 4 to 24, 2011  
 ( [view exchange](#) )



**EXPERIENCE HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY, CULTURE AND WORLD RELIGIONS IN ISRAEL**

Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, Galilee, Tel Aviv and Caesarea, Israel  
 November 3 to 16, 2011  
 ( [view exchange](#) )



**ENCOUNTER THE ONE-OF-A-KIND CULTURE OF VIETNAM**

Hanoi, Ha Long City, Hue, Hoi An, Da Nang and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam  
 November 18 to 30, 2011  
 ( [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](#)

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