

Friends Connection
Friendship Force of Sarasota
www.friendshipforcesarasotaflorida.org

January, 2012

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Vice Pres: Gloria Grenier
Secretary: Debbie Boyd
Treasurer: Bob Joyce
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Mentor/Membership Book chair: Ramona McGee
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President's Message

I hope all of you have celebrated a joyous holiday season with family and friends, and I wish a very happy and healthy new year to all.

At the top of this page you see the names of chapter members who have agreed to serve as officers, committee members and chairpersons for 2012. Brief biographies and photos of the officers will be featured in the newsletter for the next few months. I look forward to working with this fine board and say a sincere "thank you" to all of them. Many have been hard at work already planning for the coming year. Ramona McGee and her committee will put in place a new mentoring & membership program to attract & retain new members and integrate them better into our club. Gary Anderson has purchased a projector for our club, and you will see it in operation at the first general meeting of the year on January 5 when Web Administrator Linda Vendeland presents an excellent and entertaining slide show of our club activities of the past year, The Year in Review.



Two exciting international exchanges are planned for 2012: Bogota, Colombia, inbound May 19-26, EDs Bonnie Frey and Reeta Dean; and Tirana, Albania outbound in September, ED Helga Ponischil. A domestic exchange may also be in the works for the summer.

In February we will meet at the Oriental Buffet for dinner and an interesting program by David Haralson of Sister Cities. In March we will celebrate World Friendship Day by our traditional International Dinner with a new twist: we will invite as our guests as many prospective new members as you, our members, can suggest. Entertainment will include "Where in the World is Carmen Sarasota?", a geography photo ID contest, with prizes!

We need every member's help to make 2012 a year of growth and excitement and friendship. When called upon for assistance, please find a way to say "YES."

Judi

Calendar of Eventsmore info inside****

January 3	Joint Board Meeting at home of Bob and Judy Joyce 7pm
January 5	General Meeting at Waldemere Fire Station 7pm***
January 24	Board Meeting at home of Judi Stratton 7pm
February 2	General Meeting at Oriental Buffet 6pm***
February 21	Board Meeting at TBA 7pm
March 1	World Friendship Day
	International Day Dinner at Waldemere 5pm***
March 27	Board Meeting 7pm TBA

Congratulations to our new officers for 2012!

President - Judi Stratton Secretary - Debbie Boyd

Vice President – Gloria Grenier Treasurer - Bob Joyce

The other members of the board for 2012 are listed in the banner at the top of this Newsletter

President - Judi Stratton grew up in Wisconsin, earned her BA in French at Duke University in NC and her MA at UW Madison, but she has lived her whole adult life in Florida, somewhat of a rarity in this state populated by retirees from elsewhere. She is a retired teacher, having taught French at Sarasota's Pine View School for the Gifted. She still teaches an adult French class once a week, gives private lessons, and until recently has done consulting work for the Florida Department of Education scoring the certification exam for French teachers. She also speaks some Russian and some Spanish, and has studied a smattering of Portuguese and German. Judi is 68 years old and recently divorced after 40+ years of marriage. Her surviving family members are a sister in Allenspark CO and a brother with extended family in Santa Clara CA. She lives in Venice with the company of a quirky young cat named Nefertiti.



Judi has many interests which she enjoys with a large circle of friends: travel, kayaking, bicycling, hiking, theater & movies, photography, concerts, gardening, especially raising orchids.

Vice President - Gloria was born in Rhode Island, educated in Massachusetts and Kansas and lived in several foreign countries. She appreciates the opportunities that she's had to interact with various cultures. Her knowledge of the French language has opened doors. She worked in a private French laboratory while living in Paris and used the language in Morocco to perfect her bargaining skills! Gloria has served on the board of many organizations throughout the years. Presently, she is the City Director for Hamilton ON on the Sarasota Sister Cities Association (SSCA) BOD. She's also a member of the Alliance Française, ENCORE, the Gulf Coast Community Choir (GCCC), and the Friends of the Sarasota Ballet. She is looking forward to an exciting year as Vice-President of



the Friendship Force Club of Sarasota where she will plan monthly programs and coordinate domestic exchanges.

The **January General meeting** will be a look back at 2011 with a photo slide show of various events and a look forward to some of what 2012 will mean to our club.

What's Ahead?

The **February General Meeting** will be held at the **Oriental Buffet**, 4458 Bee Ridge Rd. Sarasota, due to the Waldemere Fire Station not being available because of the FL primary elections. .

A full buffet is offered, including nonalcoholic drink, tax and tip for \$13 per person. A cash (no credit cards) bar is available for wine and/or beer.

Following the buffet dinner, the meeting will feature **David Harralson** to speak about experiences abroad. After a career as a professor of English Renaissance Literature and as an academic dean and library director at Utica College, Syracuse University, Dave and his wife Chloe moved to Florida. They've lived in Palm Aire for nine years.

Dave is active in Sister Cities, the Sarasota Arts Alliance and Mote Marine Laboratory.

After speaking about Sister Cities, an organization similar to Friendship Force that promotes citizen diplomacy, Dave will share some of his travel adventures. He directed a university London Theater Tour, spending the month of January in London for 25 years, taught in and conducted tours to China, and traveled whenever the opportunity arose. Dave and Chloe love scuba diving, the most recent trip being to the Bay Islands of Honduras.

Dave is certain to present an informative and interesting talk in a witty and humorous manner. Do mark your calendar and plan on attending our February Friendship Force meeting at the Oriental Buffet on February 2 at 6 pm.

Oriental Buffet, Feb. 2nd @ 6pm
Please join in for an interesting evening of good food and pleasant company. Name _____
of dinners at \$13 each _____ Total enclosed \$ _____
Make check payable to FF of Sarasota and mail to Bob Joyce, 1232 Pine Needle Rd. Venice, 34285



Social Hour 5pm – 6pm Dinner

The **March General Meeting** will feature our traditional International Potluck Dinner, brought back by popular demand! This year there will be a new twist - we will invite as our guests as many prospective new members as you, our members, can suggest. Entertainment will include "Where in the World is Carmen Sarasota?" a geography photo ID contest, with prizes! Please send contact information (name, address, phone, email) of prospective members to **Ramona McGee**, Membership Committee Chair, so that the committee can send invitations for this special evening.

Everyone is asked to bring a dish for 10-12 of your favorite cuisine from somewhere in the world. If you know any prospective members, invite them to join us. Costumes add to the festivity of the evening, so this is your chance to show off some of your souvenirs you've collected on your trips. Soft drinks, paper goods and silverware will be provided. The Social Committee of Betty Kuhns, Shellie Ramey, and J R Suess will be your hostesses for this evening.

For reservations, call or email Nancy Rehbock at nrehbock@tampabay.rr.com or 941-896-7958 and let her know how many are coming and if you are bringing a salad, entrée, or dessert for 10-12. Please make a small card with the name of your dish to be placed with it on the serving table and don't forget to bring serving utensils for your dishes.

If you can come early to help set up or stay late to help clean up, you will be most appreciated! As always, no alcohol is permitted in the Fire Station.

Please sign up now. We don't want you to come to the meeting at 7pm and have missed a great dinner and an opportunity to socialize!

Holiday Party Review

Forty one revelers had a grand time at the FF Holiday Party on December 1st at Stoneybrook Country Club. Appetizers and drinks whetted everyone's appetite for a very delicious dinner of salmon or chicken with huge slices of pies and ice cream for dessert. Of course, Santa and his helper elf were there in earthly disguise to pass out the gifts. Two of the more popular gifts were a bourbon fruit cake and a yodeling pickle.

Thanks to the Vendelands and Petersons and all the carousers who made the evening a grand success!!!!



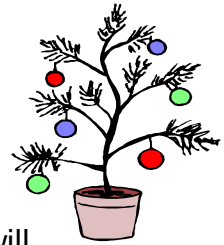
Be sure to go to our website for more photos!

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Ed. Note -- Post Holiday Thoughts

Buying a real Christmas tree is a thankless task. The only truly well-proportioned Christmas trees are the ones they use in advertisements. If you try to find one in real life you face inevitable disappointment. Your tree will lean to the left or the right. It will be too bushy at the base, or scraggly at the top. It will have bald patches, or the branches on either side will be oddly spaced. Even if you do, by some miracle, find a perfect tree, it won't fit in the car and by the time you strap it to the roof rack or shove it in through the rear door and drive home, the branches are broken or twisted out of shape. You wrestle it through the door, knocking off more pine needles, and someone will always ask "Is that the best one you could find?" Thank heavens we live in Florida where artificial trees are the norm!



Exchanges

Inbound

Bogota, Columbia – May 19 – 26



The Bogota exchange is gearing up to be a great exchange in May. We have a fun group of 25 coming. Some of our newer members are already involved and there is good enthusiasm for this incoming group, especially since some of our members visited there just a few years ago and look forward to renewing friendships. Please consider becoming involved so you too can share the excitement. Thanks to all who have volunteered to help, but more help is always needed for a successful and fun exchange. Everyone who has volunteered and our NEW MEMBERS please come to a **planning meeting at 6 PM at the firehouse January 5.**

Reeta Dean and Bonnie Frey, EDs

Outbound

Tirana, Albania – September, 2012

I have been in touch with the exchange person several times.

Right now I am still working on an extension visit and tour to the area north of Albania, a very historic and beautiful area. It has lovely beaches, high mountains, really magnificent landscapes, lovely old architecture and wonderful old history from many cultures, like Greek, Ottoman Roman, Italian and more. All have left imprints on each of the four countries to be visited, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia, all small countries. We would probably leave on Sept 5, arrive next day in Tirana, stay to the 13th, take a bus to Dubrovnik and start a tour of probably 14 days.

So far, Grand Circle has one of the best prices, I have them put a hold on 18 seats for now, but General Tours is also going to see what they can arrange for us. For the present I have given up in engaging a Tirana Travel Agency for various reasons.

I have scheduled a first meeting on **January 10, 2012, at 5 PM, at the Tower Lounge of Whispering Sands Condo** (by the Water).

I hope many of you can come. We shall talk, share some insights, listen to what the majority wants, and discuss our options.

Thank you and Have a beautiful Holiday Season.

Helga -

Phone E mail -- Lischinop@comcast.net



All dues run from January to December and need to be paid for the coming year by **December 31, 2011**. We try to put our Membership Directory out by the first of the year so it is important for you to **renew now**. Please send the following form, one per household, with your check. **Please update with current information and indicate if it is new.** Thank you.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

_____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email(s) _____

Dues \$ 20 per person x _____ = _____

Name Badge \$ 11 per person x _____ = _____

Total \$ _____

Please mail with check made out to FF of Sarasota to Wayne Peterson, 4427 Opal Ct. Sarasota 34233

