



Friends Connection
Friendship Force of Sarasota
www.friendshipforcesarasotaflorida.org

January, 2013

President: Judi Stratton

jaspetite@comcast.net

Vice Pres.: Gloria Grenier

Secretary: Donna Schaeffer

Treasurer: Bob Joyce

Membership

Database & Directory: Margaret Lewis

Club Expansion & Mentoring: Gary Kuhns

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Editor: Nancy Rehbock

RNRehbock@tampabay.rr.com

Web Administrator: Linda Vendeland

Social: Bonnie Frey

Publicity: Peggy Hayden

Sunshine: Margaret Mills

Sister Cities: Carol Booffer

Historian: Vivian McNamara

Past Pres. - Jack Vendeland

President's Message

I hope you all enjoyed a festive holiday period, starting with our FF-SRQ Holiday Party at Rosebud's enlivened by a visit from our own special Santa Claus. In the newsletter banner above are listed 2013 elected officers and appointed chairpersons. In addition I would like to acknowledge the following committee members who have also agreed to serve our club for the coming year.

Club Expansion and Mentoring: Debbie Boyd, Annie Carter, Reeta Dean, Ramona McGee, Richard Muehlenhard, Donna Schaeffer.

Social: Gretchen Castner, Anna Davis, Janet Eubanks, Mary McClendon, John Langmann, Nan Place.

We are delighted to welcome so many 2012 new members among our chairpersons and committee members. They already know that the best way to draw maximum benefit from club membership is to get involved, and we look forward to working with them.

Another way to get involved is to be the Exchange Director of an upcoming inbound or outbound exchange. Roger Gatlin, Florida Field Rep, will conduct an ED training session for interested members of all Florida FF clubs at his home in Orlando on January 12. Please contact Roger at roger.gatlin@gmail.com if you would like to participate. Our FF-SRQ will also conduct ED training early in 2013 here in the Sarasota area. More details will be forthcoming soon.

2013 will be a year full of interesting exchange experiences and opportunities to form new friendships around the world. On the docket is a domestic exchange from Seattle/Tacoma WA in April as well as our club international outbound exchange to Greater Yalta, Crimea, and Rostov-on-Don, Russia in September/October. And I expect to be able to announce at any moment an exciting international inbound exchange for November 2013. FF-SRQ seems to be "Johnny-on-the-spot" recently, as Lonely Planet named Albania their top destination for 2012, and National Geographic Traveler has now listed the Crimea Number 1 of 20 "Best of the World Must See Places" for 2013.



If you have not yet renewed your club membership you are overdue. In this newsletter you will find a membership renewal form for 2013 to complete and return with your dues to treasurer Bob Joyce. The sooner you return it, the sooner we can get a 2013 club directory back to you! If you did not update your hosting database form in 2012, please fill that out and return it to Bob as well.

Looking forward to a challenging but fulfilling year as we work together to attract new members in our area and to build friendships across artificial barriers of country and culture, changing the way we all see the world.

Judi

One's destination is never a place, but rather a new way of looking at things.

Henry Miller

Calendar of Eventsmore info inside****

January 3	General Meeting at Waldemere Fire Station 7pm****
January 22	Joint Board Meeting 7pm at home of Donna Schaeffer
February 7	General Meeting at Waldemere Fire Station 7pm****
February 26	Board Meeting at TBA
March 1	World Friendship Day
	Mindy Simmons Concert at UU Church****
March 7	General Meeting at Waldemere Fire Station 7pm
March 26	Board Meeting 7pm at TBA

January 3 general meeting at the Waldemere Fire Station –7pm. This will be an excellent opportunity to bring your friends who may be interested in becoming members of our active chapter. The program will consist of the FF -SRQ **“Year in Review”**, complete with a photo presentation of our various activities and travels in 2012. The club scrapbook will also be on display.

In addition, a Friendship Force International DVD on Global and Themed Exchanges will be shown.

Light refreshments provided.

February 7 general meeting at the Waldemere Fire Station --- 7 pm

The program for the evening will focus around the Chinese New Year celebration. We will enjoy some of the highlights via video of the New Year celebration that will include various dances performed by youth and adults. Light refreshments served.

All FFS members are invited to attend the 2013 Chinese New Year Celebration on Feb 2 at the T.J. Johnson Youth Center at the Faith Baptist Church at 8751 Fruitville Rd. Admission for this event is \$15 for individuals and \$25 for families. The included flyer has more information.

Congratulations to our new officers for 2013!

President - Judi Stratton Secretary – Donna Schaeffer

Vice President – Gloria Grenier Treasurer - Bob Joyce

The committee chairpersons of the board for 2013 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 69 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 Grenier was born in Rhode Island, educated in Massachusetts and Kansas, and lived in many states as well as 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 Perpignan, France and sits 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 another exciting year as Vice-President of the Friendship Force Club of Sarasota where she will plan monthly programs and coordinate domestic exchanges.



George Brown has announced his retirement as Friendship Force International President effective June 30, 2012. George first joined the staff of FFI in 1983 and has served as president since April 2004. Follow the links on our club website or on the FFI website to read George's personal letter to Friendship Force clubs.

THANK YOU from RAMONA

I wish to say a BIG THANK YOU to all for the lovely bouquet of roses presented to me at our Holiday Party in honor of my award received as "US 2012 Volunteer of the Year". One of the highlights recognized was our increase in membership. Yes, I was the chairperson, but I did not do it alone. Thank you to Reeta and Judi for creative ideas of inviting guests to our annual Int'l Dinner and having a booth at a Folk Festival in Oscar Scherer Park. Thank you to Donna, Richard and Reeta for always being at meetings to help greet people. Thank you to Gary & Debbie for chairing the Oscar Scherer FF Booth. Thank you to Reeta for her creative beverages & appetizers at the Int'l Potluck to make the event special. Thank you to ALL who provided names of friends to invite to annual Int'l Potluck. Yes, it does take many "hands" for a success and it has been a most rewarding year! In Friendship, Ramona McGee

Meet Our New Members



Hank Prince and **Donna Starr-Prince** recently moved to Sarasota from East Lansing, MI.

They were members of the Greater Lansing Friendship Force Club and have now joined us. Donna and Hank are originally from the Cleveland, Ohio area, but lived in Michigan after graduating from college. They have three children and three grandchildren.

Donna graduated from Bowling Green State University with a degree in audiology and speech science and received her Master's in Speech Pathology from Michigan State University. She was a speech pathologist in the education system in Michigan. Donna enjoys travel, swimming, jogging, hiking and reading.

Hank graduated from the University of Dayton with a degree in mathematics and has a doctorate in Philosophy of Education from Michigan State University. He was a professor of literature and English composition at Lake Superior University. He also has some familiarity with German language. Immediately before retirement, Hank was Associate Director of the Fiscal Agency of the Michigan House of Representative for ten years. He supervised staff who formulated state budget spending for the Speaker of the House. Hank enjoys travel, reading, technology and fishing.

Hank and Donna live in Village Walk. They visited our club a couple of times last winter while renting in Sarasota.

Social Committee News



Thank you to the FF board members who are providing the refreshments for January meeting. Other members are invited to please add your names to the sign-up sheet to bring goodies for the February meeting or an alternative month if February does not work for you. Clean up help after the meeting is always appreciated.

Exchanges

Outbound

Ukraine & Russia Sept. 24 - Oct.11, 2013 (Approx. Dates)

Do you recognize this photo which was the cover of National Geographic Traveler Magazine December issue? This 20th century fairy tale castle, called the Swallow's Nest, sits atop a sheer rocky cliff 130 ft. above the Black Sea near Yalta, Crimea. The area was noted as the "playground" of the tsars - Riviera-

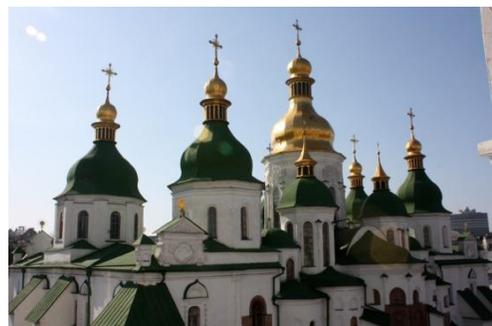


grade vistas, without the prices. Even in the time of Catherine the Great, Russia wished to annex Crimea for the wonderful weather & views. This region is filled with Russian and Eastern European tourists during the summer months, but not known to many Americans. We will have the opportunity to not only enjoy such wonderful sights, but to enjoy the people of this area as well. Anton Chekhov, who owned a dacha near Yalta said, "It is never winter here". Yes, we will have the opportunity to visit here in early October!

Speaking of Chekhov, we will also visit his homeland, Taganrog, near Rostov-on-Don during our week's home stay in this neighboring city. We'll also enjoy the folk cossack settlements, learn about the historical life, their song and dance. The area also has much Greek history. Their ED is fluent in English language and is a most interesting lady. Through my conversations with others who have visited this club, I believe we will have a warm and enriching experience.

I have been checking with a local travel agent for a possible short tour of Kyiv and air travel prices. She has given me an estimate of a 3 night tour, including deluxe hotel with breakfast, a 1/2 day tour of the historic city and a choice of either an opera or a ballet for \$823. per person, based on double occupancy. This price includes airport transfers and all taxes. She is also looking at a 4-day tour. During WWII, the Nazis occupied Kyiv for 2-1/2 years, destroying many of its old buildings & industries. The right bank of the Dnipro River contains both the new modern and the historic Old Town. St. Sofia Cathedral is the world famous historical and architectural monument of the first half of the 11th century. The cathedral is not only famous for its mosaics and frescos by Byzantine masters, but has served as a social, political and cultural center.

The travel agent is waiting for replies from the airline for an estimate of a group rate. We would travel to Kyiv first, then to Rostov-on Don and on to Simferopol and Alupka in the Crimean Region of Ukraine. Our flight home would originate in Simferopol, Crimea. The fixed costs for this exchange are: FFI Fees \$300; Local Admin Fee \$25; Home hosting Fees \$200. This is a total of \$525. Please remember we may be staying in small hotels in the Yalta Region.



In January, I will e-mail all who have expressed an interest in this exchange, asking them to complete an application and make a deposit to secure their interest in the exchange. At this time the deposit will be fully refundable and I will notify you when firm deposits must be made.
Ramona McGee



Seattle-Tacoma WA– April 17-24, 2013

We all know how quickly time flies in Sarasota so we will begin to sign up volunteers to home host, day host and dinner host for the inbound exchange at the January 3 general meeting. This is a great opportunity for all to participate in a domestic exchange with no language adaptations. Judy Joyce is in charge of the home hosts and Peg Hayden will sign up the dinner hosts. We are looking forward to an exciting week sharing Sarasota's multi-cultural settings with our West Coast Friendship Force Ambassadors. This is a great opportunity for new members to experience an exchange.



NEWS FROM THE WEB

I have completed the 2012 Year in Review and I am looking forward to sharing it with everyone at our January 3 General Meeting. It is amazing how busy our club members were in 2012.

Who knows, you may even see a photo of yourself. 😊

www.friendshipforcesarasotaflorida.org

Linda Vendeland, Web Administrator E-Mail linvende@aol.com

Please renew your FF Membership for 2013 by filling out this form as soon as possible!

All dues run from January to December and need to be paid for the coming year by **December 31, 2012**. 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 Bob Joyce, 1232 Pine Needle Rd. Venice FL 34285

Feb. 2nd, Saturday- Sarasota's Chinese New Year Celebration - Welcoming The Year Of The Snake 2013



You are cordially invited to join us at our very special Chinese New Year Celebration on Feb 2nd, Saturday, 2013.

This Celebration, is proudly co-sponsored by GCAA (Gulfcoast Chinese American Association www.gulfcoastchineseamerican.org) and SCA (Sarasota Chinese Academy www.sarasotachineseacademy.org)

Event: Chinese New Year Celebration

Time: Feb.2nd, Saturday, 2013 1:00pm to 5:00pm

Location: T.J. Johnson Youth Center at Faith Baptist Church
8751 Fruitville Road
Sarasota, FL 34240-5201

Map Link: <http://www.manta.com/cmap/mmlhc7c/faith-baptist-church>

Mindy Simmons Concert
In celebration of
World Friendship Day
Presented by
Friendship Force of Sarasota

- **WHEN** - Friday, March 1, 2013 at 7:30 P.M.
- **WHERE** – Unitarian Universalist Church,
3975 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, FL
- **COST** - \$10, cash or check only. Buy tickets at door or by calling
941-378-2094.

About Mindy Simmons

Known fondly as the Sarasota Songbird, she has entertained audiences for over 30 years. Her warmth & laughter fill her concerts that include her original songs + old standards reflecting peace, love, & empowerment.

About World Friendship Day

This is a day of celebration in countries throughout the world that promotes friendship & fellowship among all human beings, regardless of race, color or religion. Friendship Force International celebrates World Friendship Day on March 1, because that commemorates the date on which Friendship Force was founded in 1977.

About Friendship Force of Sarasota

This non-profit group of over 100 area residents sponsors U.S. & international cultural exchange visits. The Sarasota club is affiliated with Friendship Force International whose purpose is to promote understanding among people & cultures around the world.

Proceeds from this concert will go to the Friendship Force International Legacy Fund that helps establish new local clubs worldwide. For more information, go to

www.friendshipforcesarasotaflorida.org/