



PASSPORT

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LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

NOVEMBER 2010



**Let There be
Peace on Earth**

**Holiday Potluck Dinner Party
Friday, December 3
Appetizers 5:30 PM Dinner 6:30 PM**

Greetings from Your President

by *Gaylord Becker*

I cannot describe the beauty as seen at the FFI World Conference as many of the 500 plus in attendance were dressed in their native costumes. George Brown recognized each country during a group meeting.

We arrived in Washington DC from Farmington, CT on Friday Oct. 15. Lee Rockwell held a FFI Regional meeting with representatives from the Midwest clubs followed by a dinner with our friends from Northern IL, Tom and Sally Coyle. Conference theme was Explore – Understand – Serve.

Saturday's opening session was led by George Brown, FFI President. Keynote speakers were all great. "Welcome", Chuck Goldfarb President of FF of the National Capitol Area followed by "Greetings" from Thomas W. Dortch Jr, Chairman of FFI Board of Directors; "Call to Action" by John Suddes, "Friendship Force and Citizen Diplomacy" was covered by Sherry Mueller, President of National Council for International Visitors and also a FFI Board Member; Patrick Madden, Executive Director of Sister Cities International; Vera DeBuchanne, Open World Program Manager and Charles Damback President of the Alliance for Peace Building and former Executive Director of National Peace Corps Association.

After lunch we had a choice of 6 workshops. I chose "Discover USA" hosted by Lee Rockwell, David and Pat Meyer. The theme was "Life on the Mississippi" selected at our Midwest Regional meeting in Chicago May 2010. Several countries were present with standing room only. The workshop was a great success. No doubt the exchange will need to be scheduled more than once to accommodate the interest. I attended a workshop with Questions and Answers hosted by George Brown. This session was good to hear issues from other clubs and how they handle various situations.

Sunday started with a workshop on "Strategies for Club Growth". Most of the strategies presented were what our club is pursuing. Later, there was another Q&A Workshop presented by George Brown. New clubs in 2010 were established in Morocco, Albania, Switzerland, Russia, Japan, Mexico, Argentina and China. A Trail-blazer session was directed at Africa, Russia, and Asia to form new clubs in 2011.

George Brown recommended establishing connections with other organizations, (Chamber of Commerce, Sister City, Rotary, Teacher Exchanges, Garden Clubs, and Club activities posted in local newspaper). He suggested establishing shorter host time.

The banquet was a Gala

evening event with great food. Entertainment by David and Ginger Hildebrand and dancing to music by Daryl Davis followed welcome and recognition of Delegations

Monday "Welcome to My World" with George Brown Moderator. New Clubs are Nepal (Shiva Shrestha), Morocco (Lotfi Lamrani), Albania (Ali Lacej and Diana Maliqaj), and China (Jack Cong). See Brian Ridenour's article for details on Albania. In 1995 George Brown wrote to Jack Cong, with exchanges starting the following year. As of today, China has hosted over 1000 ambassadors and sent 200 ambassadors to the USA. Twenty two percent of the world's population is Chinese. Indonesia created more clubs in 2010 than any other country.

The Peace Award was presented to Andrew Young. The Wayne Smith Award was granted to Kazuo Aichi, Tokyo Japan Club. Kazuo organized 32 clubs in Japan from 1976 to 2009, is an FFI Director and a Member of Diet Government. Volunteer Award was presented to Vicki Vance of the FF of Baton Rouge, LA. Outstanding Leadership Awards were presented to the FF of Sacramento, CA and the FF of Edmonton, Canada. Hamburg, Germany had a video on 2011 World Conference, Aug 26-30 with all the sites and activities planned. Closing ceremony included the singing of "Let There Be Peace on Earth".

Don't Miss the Holiday Party Friday, December 3, 2010

by *Jeanne Zwiebel - Activities Chair*



Begin the 2010 holiday season by joining your friends at The Friendship Force of Lincoln's Holiday Potluck Dinner Party. The party will be on Friday, December

3 at Forest Lake Club House. We will begin the evening at 5:30 with soft drinks, wine, and appetizers. That will give us plenty of time for relaxed conversation before dinner that begins at 6:30. Guests are welcome.

The main course, baked ham with cherry glaze, will be provided, but please plan on bringing an appetizer, main dish, potato, vegetable, salad, or relish tray. Each dish should serve 12 to 15 people. We will depend on you for serving utensils, since Forest Lake does not have them. You may wish to bring wine to share.

Please RSVP by November 25 using the form included

in this Passport. The price of the party is \$4.00 per person. Send registration forms and checks to Jeanne Zwiebel 1025 Lamplighter Lane, Lincoln NE 68510. If you have questions call Jeanne at 489-1247 or email jz82924@windstream.net.

Directions to Forest Lake Club House: South of Pioneers Blvd. on South 70th Street. Turn west on Forest Lake Blvd. Proceed one block to the roundabout and turn right on 69th Street. Proceed to Summerset Court and turn left. The Club House is on the right. Be sure to use the parking envelopes as on-street parking is not allowed.



Reservations are required and must be received by November 25. You may send your reservation to Jeanne Zwiebel, 1025 Lamplighter Lane, Lincoln NE 68510. Questions to Jeanne 489-1247 or jz82924@windstream.net

Name(s) _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

Guest's Name _____

Number of persons attending _____ x \$4.00 = \$_____

 Please choose one:

I will bring ___ appetizer ___ main dish ___ potato ___ vegetable ___ salad
___ relish tray (*Appetizers should be delivered by 5:30.*)

___ I will help clean up after the party.

Off to Connecticut and the FFI Conference

By Betty Starr – Exchange Director

We made it! Twenty enthusiastic ambassadors arrived in colorful Connecticut for FF of Lincoln's reciprocal exchange. Coming by air (12) and car (8) all with different venues, we arrived to enjoy the spectacular Connecticut Fall Foliage. Some of the ambassadors met their hosts at the airport and the rest drove directly to their hosts' home. We all had dinner with our hosts Saturday evening.

We had free time to become friends with our hosts before the Sunday Welcome at Bob & Nancy Marshall's in Longmeadow, Mass. We were greeted by a Highland Bag Pipe performance as we grilled out for the welcoming meal. We met 20 of the ambassadors on the exchange as they were introduced to the FF CT Hosts by the Lincoln ED.

Accompanying the FF Lincoln club were: * Marilyn Peterson & *Rita Powell (FF MWV, Oregon), *Bill & *Delores Ebert, *Don & *Betty Johnson, & Ray & Clara Hoffman, (FF St. Louis, Missouri), *Lynn & *Susan Harrington (FF Kansas). Ten others were from FF Lincoln: Nancy Comer, *Becky Grutell, *Gaylord & *Marilue Becker, Erna Rethmeier, Roger & Judy Keetle, Loris Purtzer & *Duane & *Betty Starr. (Names indicated with (*'s) traveled on to the

Conference at the conclusion of the CT exchange.)

Throughout the entire exchange the weather cooperated to the fullest as we enjoyed gorgeous sunny days to view a colorful state. Our first adventure was to Mystic Seaport, a true museum by the sea. Mystic Seaport is the nation's leading maritime museum. Founded in 1929, the Museum is home to four National Historic Landmark vessels, including the Charles W. Morgan, the last wooden whale ship in the world now under going reconstruction. The Seaport also featured a working preservation shipyard, a re-created 19th century seafaring village with many demonstrations of historic sea life in the various village buildings. The Freedom Schooner, Amista, was constructed here in Mystic Seaport and its replica is now housed in the museum waters. It was the ship used in the Amistad (1997) movie. Most of us ate lunch at the Chowder Festival which served a variety of chowder soups and dishes. An optional trip to view the USS Nautilus, the world's first nuclear submarine, was a spectacular exhibit. It is also designated a National Historic Landmark. We were given the opportunity to board and walk through the operations on the sub. Many ambassadors treated their hosts to dinner on

Monday at various restaurants along the seacoast.

On Tuesday, we arrived at the Mark Twain home for a guided trip through the house and a quick look at the movie currently in production on the grounds for the independent film market. After lunch in the legislative building, we took a guided tour through their gorgeous colorful state capital with a brief glimpse and wave from their governor, Jodi Rell, as she headed back into the capitol. Their club provided small group dinners, and we learned about other club members in FF Connecticut.

Wednesday, a bus trip to NY City proved to be a long day with many traffic delays. We included the Metropolitan Museum of Art, lunch in Little Italy, a boat trip around the Hudson River with a cruise by Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty. Evening provided us with a view of Rockefeller Center, St. Patrick's Cathedral, and an after dark visit to "off" Times Square. With a quick meal along the return trip, we met our hosts waiting after our slightly delayed trip.

Thursday, we toured the Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington, CT. It was a historic home in original condition designed by and for its owner, Theodate Pope Riddle. A self-taught architect, she designed and built the home in the early 1900's as well as many other homes and schools in

the Farmington area. She left it as a memorial to her parents with a stipulation that the home remained intact and open to the public. It featured many unique architectural details ahead of its time. After stopping for lunch at the Café Buono, we headed for the American Clock & Watch Museum in Bristol, CT. It provided us with a view of many unusual time mechanisms, which included many built in the city of Bristol.

Before we knew it, it was time to say Farewell to our special friends in CT. The “Witch of the West” appeared at the farewell to surprise everyone and again introduced the ambassadors to our CT friends. Dinner at the Farmington Woods country club in Avon, CT included salmon, roasted vegetables, salad, and a cranberry cake & ice cream for dessert. Nine of us described Connecticut in a series of words from S-T-A-R-T-L-I-N-G down to the word I. Each Ambassador described their experience in Connecticut using the letters in each word, which is created with the removal of one letter.

Early Friday, after saying “Goodbye” to our new friends, thirteen of us left for the conference in Washington DC, and the remaining ambassadors returned home, visited friends, relatives or further travels along the way. Seven of us boarded the Amtrak Ver-

monter train at Hartford and three at Wallingford accompanied by the CT Club president Henie Stolzman. Six ambassadors drove directly to Washington DC.

The invitation to Connecticut was an adventure for our club (and ambassadors from the three other clubs). With the timing before the conference, it made this an all-inclusive FF exchange. Through CT’s history, fall colors, friendships and experiences we enjoyed, these events brought us closer to the mission of FFI to Explore, Understand, Serve.

Membership News

*By Mary Bryant
& Joanna Rogers,
Membership Co-Chairs*

The 2010 Membership Year ended officially with 154 memberships. 69 family and 85 individual for a total of 223 persons. A great year! Attention now turns to 2011. As of October, a third of the 2010 members have renewed. Although membership fees are not due until December 1, why not renew before the holiday rush. 2011 dues are \$30 for an Individual and \$40 for a Family. Please mail your check, payable to The Friendship Force of Lincoln, to PO Box 30334, Lincoln, NE 68503.

FFL to Host Newly Elected Legislators from Russia

By Kay Rockwell,

February 12 -19, 2011, FFL will host six newly elected Russian legislators coming through the Open World (OW) Leadership Program. The idea of the exchange is for the Russian legislators to see how the Nebraska legislature works—how they ...create laws, ...determine the state budget, ...discuss the issues that are important to their citizens, ...determine which issues need attention. The visitors will also see the consequences of the laws, that is, how the legislation affects government, citizens, and organizations. Senator Amanda McGill will serve as titular legislative host as the OW delegates see the legislature in session, observe them in committee, and meet individually with senators. FFL’s home hosting and social activities will illustrate how we work, live and play in our democratic society.

Program Leaders for this OW visit are Kay Rockwell, Gloria Van Ackeren and Pat King. This will be an interesting and fun program. If you can help with either the legislative focus or the social activities, please contact: Kay: krockwell1@unl.edu or 484-5431 or Gloria: glrvanack@windstream.net or 420-5320

Experiences of a Rookie Exchange Director

by Betty Starr

With my first exchange to Connecticut and the International Conference in October 2010, I would like to encourage more members to apply and step-up to be an exchange director for the Lincoln club.

This job is not as difficult as everyone thinks! First, you usually have a long time to prepare for the exchange. Second, There are some VERY talented people in our club who will assist you with questions, sources of information, club policies and any other situations which you need to address. I found our internal sources of leadership in the club to be open, and willing to help me if I asked.

Third, I took the ED training session conducted by Richard Spencer offered this year and which answered a lot of questions. Fourth, the training manual developed by FFI is well worth the read.

Yes, all of this takes time, but it is rewarding to see your planning come together as a completed project. Did I make some mistakes? Sure.....! If I apply for another exchange, would do a few things differently? Sure.....! No one realizes all the situations you might encounter on the exchange. I was fortunate I had very active FF people on the exchange and willing to participate whenever asked. That

is part of the responsibility of being an ambassador for your club.

Think about applying to be an ED. Start with a domestic exchange which can be equally as much fun as an international exchange. As for now, become part of a committee, ask to serve, don't wait until you are asked, and find out what makes the club work. Be a willing volunteer with your time and efforts to help. New members become active. This is your way of learning the operations of the club and its activities.

Thanks to all my ambassadors going with this exchange to CT and the Conference. I've made some wonderful friends with this exchange and encourage more of our members to become Exchange Directors for our club and further understand the purpose of The Friendship Force.

Next Leo

The next Let's Eat Out will be Thursday, November 18th at the House of Hunan. The restaurant is located in the strip mall at 56th and Hwy 2, just west of The Fort. We will meet at 5:30 and order at 6:00. Everyone orders on their own and pays their own check. Please let Kathy Mueller know if you can make it. RSVP Kathy Mueller at 525-3357 or km-ueller@lps.org

Ambassador John O'Keefe praises FFL

By Kay Rockwell

Last February many of you gathered at the Country Club of Lincoln to celebrate World Friendship Day & OW's 10-Year Anniversary. Special guests included Senator Ben Nelson, Senator Amanda McGill, and Mayor Chris Beutler.

The celebration highlighted how citizen diplomacy helps the U.S. and Eurasian countries overcome the many obstacles to practical and clear understanding of each other. Ambassador O'Keefe, Executive Director of the Open World (OW) Leadership Center, recently stated "The Lincoln program in particular has led the way to partnerships with Tajikistan and Russia. The celebration itself showed local and national officials the key role FFI plays in promoting a positive image in America's heartland. The many enthusiastic guests were a tribute to FF and its person-to-person grass roots mission, and highlighted how federal support helps as emerging democratic countries implement program in response to UNICEF guidelines."

Exchange News

How About Summer In Canada?

Plans are moving forward for the exchange to Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. The dates: July 12-19, 2011. Join the Native Indian and Japanese Cultural celebrations and explore the beautiful and World Heritage sites of the area. There is space for 20 ambassadors. For more information, contact Bridget Disney, bridget.disney@gmail.com, 402-691-0084 (Omaha)

Lincoln To Host 2011 Friendship Force Regional Conference

Representatives from 13 Midwestern FF clubs (Chicago, Madison, Milwaukee, Minneapolis-St. Paul, St. Louis, Dubuque, the Quad Cities, Cedar Rapids, Ames, Des Moines, and Eastern Nebraska-Omaha) will be hosted in Lincoln for the 2011 Regional Conference, April 14-16. Meetings will be held at the Carol Joy Holling Conference Center near Ashland. The Center is located in a peaceful wooded location close to the Platte River. While many conference participants will stay at the conference site, both Eastern Nebraska (Omaha) and Lincoln will offer home hosting.

FFI president, George Brown will attend and the major focus will be theme-based exchanges, an idea introduced at the recent FFI World Con-

ference by the Midwest region. A theme-based exchange will feature a special three-day optional motorcoach tour of central Nebraska. The "Magic Friendship Bus" will again head west and focus on ranching activities in the Sandhills. The tour will include a stop at Ashfall and two nights at Calamus Outfitters near Burwell. While the cranes will have headed north, it will be the height of the mating season for prairie chickens. The parading and dancing of the orange breasted male is something to behold. Look for more details soon. If interested, contact Lee Rockwell, 1411 Kingston Road, Lincoln 402-486-0900.

How About Eastern Europe In The Spring?

The Friendship Force of Lincoln is privileged to host a Friendship Force/Open World (OW) exchange to Ukraine in May 2011. Highlight of the exchange will be a visit with OW alumni, in particular the public officials and CEOs from Ukraine hosted by Lincoln in 2006. This is a very special exchange as it combines normal FF activities with the governmental and social focus typical of OW visits to Lincoln we have when OW delegates visit us. Ambassadors will be hosted by a one-year old club in Kiev and will spend some time helping to start a club in Odessa. Plans are to leave Omaha at 1 PM on May

11, arrive in Kiev on the 12th. May 20th ambassadors will travel to Odessa, spend three days there, return to Kiev on the 23rd, and depart for Omaha on the 30th. There is space for 12 ambassadors. An equal number of spots are reserved for UNL students who will participate in the exchange. Cost is estimated to be \$2,700 to \$2,900. If interested contact exchange directors Kay Rockwell at krockwell1@unl.edu or 484-5431 or Julie Albrecht at jalbrecht1@unl.edu or 464-2702.

Welcome!

We welcome four new members: John D. and Mary L. Clark, Bonne Jeanne Hessheimer, and Carolyn Kitterer. The Clarks came to FFL through OLLI while Bonnie and Carolyn were recruited by Joanna Rogers and Barb Ridder.

The membership committee has begun pairing long-time members with new and prospective members. 23 partnerships have been formed so far and we continue to look for others willing to sponsor a new or prospective member by getting to know them and participate with them in a social or exchange activities. If you are able to serve in this way, please let Joanna Rogers know (484-8678).

Southern Italy Revisited

by Richard Spencer

In May, twenty-seven ambassadors participated in Discover Southern Italy, an exchange designed to help establish a Friendship Force club in the region of Basilicata. Ambassadors from California, Florida, Hawaii, Minnesota, Nebraska, Texas, and Canada crisscrossed the southern part of the Italian peninsula visiting small town and large cities. There were stops in Rome, Sorrento, the Amalfi coast, Pompeii, Capri, Mount Vesuvius, Ercolano, Naples and dozens of small towns.

The six members of the exchange from Lincoln invite you to a presentation on December 15, 6 PM highlighting fourteen wonderful days and nights in this beautiful part of the world. To recapture the sights and sounds of Italy, Café Italia, located at South Street and Winthrop Road, is the location of this get-together. Some say Café Italia is so Italian, it requires a passport to

get in. But in your case, we will make an exception.

Please join us for an evening of photos, food, and friendship as we revisit southern Italy. Seating is limited and reservations are required.

Please return the registration form below with \$20 per person to Richard Spencer, 4251 Everett, Lincoln NE 68506 by December 20th.

Registration Form for Southern Italy Revisited

Name (s) _____
 Phone _____
 Number attending _____
 Amount enclosed _____



2011 Renewal or New Member - The Friendship Force of Lincoln

Mail to: Friendship Force, PO Box 30334, Lincoln, NE 68503. Make check payable to: "The Friendship Force of Lincoln."

Date _____ New _____ Renewal _____ Name Badge \$9.00 _____
 Name(s) _____
 Name Badge Name(s) *Please Print* _____
 Street Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Home Phone Number _____
 E-mail _____

CATEGORY: Individual-\$30 Family-\$40 Patron-\$50 Benefactor-\$75 Sponsor-\$100
 Replacement Name Badge @\$9.00

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

NOTE: New members each receive a complimentary name badge; replacement name badges cost \$9.00 each.

Tajik OW Alumni & FF Lincoln Charity Efforts

by Kay Rockwell

Government directors and non-profit CEOs working with child protection issues in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, were very excited about the many ideas to which they were exposed in the course of the Open World program in Lincoln. Upon returning to Dushanbe, they hope to (a) develop foster care and adoption policies, set up a shelter for homeless children, a home for pregnant teenagers, and open a Foster Care Closet for recycled clothing, (b) develop alternative judicial strategies for youth in trouble with the law, in particular set up a Teen Court, and (c) develop a BigBrother/BigSister program. In addition, they hope to implement volunteer programs and organize charity opportunities and get volunteers involved in community service organizations.

With such an enthusiastic response to their visit to Lincoln, FFL hopes to continue to support the Tajik OW Alumni with various charity efforts. In October 2009, \$50 from FFL helped get their charity efforts off the ground. These early efforts were also supported by the Dushanbe business community. Their contributions encouraged us to establish the Friendship-in-Action (F-in-A) project at our World Friendship Day and 10-Year OW

Anniversary Celebration. It resulted in an additional \$250, part of which was used to purchase shoes for needy children and repair the wash basin at Health Resort Center #40 for children suffering from tuberculosis. The center only has one wash basin and it was out of order.

FFL members have continued to contribute to F-in-A and we sent another \$325 home with the 2010 OW Alumni to encourage their efforts. Anora Akbarova, American Councils' employee in Dushanbe writes: "Thank you for taking care of Tajik children in need! We really appreciate your efforts and initiatives aimed at improving the situation with poor kids in Tajikistan. OW Alumni will decide how to use the money... part of it will go to the Khatlon Region where Farkhod will help us target how to use the money. In addition, I plan again to announce about charity events to be conducted in Dushanbe... All activities will be conducted by the end of October. After completion of activities and full usage of money, we will send a detailed report with photos. Let me know if you have ideas for using the money; we will be happy to apply your ideas toward needy kids."

Moore Memorial Scholarship

The scholarship honors Jeane and Jack Moore. Jeane and Jack were charter members of the Friendship Force of Lincoln when it was established in 1980. They served as ambassadors, hosts, and in many other capacities insuring the success of the organization and its goal of promoting international friendship.

Scholarships are available for travel and humanitarian, peace, cultural, and travel projects associated with either FFL or FFI exchanges or programs. The scholarship must be used within three years of being awarded and may not exceed \$2,000. Travel scholarships are limited to outbound exchanges with The Friendship Force of Lincoln and both members and non members may apply.

The history of the Moore's involvement in FFL and information and restrictions related to the scholarship are available on FFL's website (www.friendshipforcelincoln.org) For additional information contact Richard Spencer at 488-6930.

Touch Down Japan – Touch Down Nebraska:



by *Nancy Comer, Exchange Director*

Tokyo Exchange to Lincoln September 25-October 2, 2010 “When angels travel, the sun is smiling” proclaimed our Belgium hosts in 2008. We’d have to agree. As soon as our ambassadors touched down in Omaha, the skies began to clear and blue skies prevailed the entire week.

As ambassadors settled into their new “digs”, some of us tried to catch glimpses of the Husker game, while eating our dinner at a variety of venues throughout the city. The official welcome would occur the next day.

Sunday we headed to Omaha stopping first at Cabella’s, then grabbing a quick lunch on route to the Lauritzen Gardens and Antique

Show. Later, many wandered around the Old Market; some walked the trails and bridge over the Missouri. The ambassadors wanted their pictures taken with one foot in Nebraska and the other in Iowa!

Then it was time to move on to Ashland and our Welcome Party, where we donned western duds, handed cowboy hats to our ambassadors from Japan, Tajikistan and Canada, and joined Lincoln FF members for barbeque. There was line dancing for ambassadors and any other brave souls wanting to join them on the dance floor. Trouble arose when the sound system failed, but music, the international language, came to the rescue. The Tokyo ambassadors entertained with a traditional Japa-

nese song, and Canadian ambassador, Diane Roy, stunned us into silence and tears with her beautiful welcome, sung a capella and in French. Joining hands everyone began singing familiar cowboy songs, ending with “Happy Trails to You”.

Monday morning was spent touring the capitol. One of our newest members, Patty Henry took us on a tour of the Governor’s residence, and Sally Ganem herself joined our international group for lunch and presented each ambassador with an Honorary Citizenship Certificate. Gifts were given to the First Lady by delegates from Tajikistan and Tokyo.

The afternoon found us in Morrill Hall. Perhaps the most interesting part was visiting the Miss Mie exhibit. She is one of the original historic friendship dolls given to American children by Japan in 1927 as a gesture of goodwill during a period of increasing political tensions. We were grateful to Reiko O. Harpending, Director of the Kawasaki Reading Center, UNL who suggested and arranged for this opportunity.

Small group dinners in homes of FFI members, always a highlight of exchanges, ended this activity-packed day.

All days were filled with a myriad of activities, but Tuesday’s visit to Lincoln Southwest High School was without a doubt the most memorable

for our Japanese ambassadors. Here they had an opportunity to see a beginning Japanese class (5 weeks into the semester) and an advanced class who had written their own itinerary in hiragana and katakana for the school visit. The teacher, Jeremy Smith, had organized his students into small groups, placing a Japanese ambassador with each group of students. This allowed for very interactive discussion, with the ambassadors asked to critique students' written language and converse with them in Japanese. As someone who is learning the language myself, I was "blown away" by the students' skill and intonation of the spoken language. Likewise the ambassadors were impressed by the students' tour of their building and its fabulous facilities including labs, theater, gymnasiums, and libraries. Even during class change-over the students in the largest Lincoln high school moved through the building in orderly fashion. Principal Rob Slauson invited us to lunch with students in the school cafeteria. Our table was next to a table of special education students, some in wheelchairs and one who needed assistance to eat his meal. This is something you would not see in Japan where special needs students are in schools of their own. The Japanese kept saying they want to model their schools after America. Here, we're try-

ing to reach the achievement standards of the Japanese. We can learn from one another. A concert at Kimball Hall by the Chiara String Quartet topped off the day.

We were on the road again Wednesday morning, this time to Beatrice for a tour of the Homestead National Monument. It was somewhat difficult to get across a free land give-away (Homestead Act) that helped to populate the plains, even places like Alaska, and changed the way of life of the indigenous people forever.

An afternoon visit to the Bedient Organ factory was a first for all. Some rated this the most interesting tour.

By Thursday we were trying to get guides at Lewis and Clark Center to speak more slowly and the ambassadors most proficient in English to translate the idea of the exploration of the Louisiana Purchase. There was time to walk the trails and visit the earth lodge of Native people before rushing to lunch at the Lied Center. It was great to have other FFL members, including the Kenners from Hebron, share the meal with us.

The afternoon was spent in the orchards and Arbor Lodge. For most it meant a slice of fresh apple pie topped with ice cream. Delicious!

This evening we held a second small group dinner. These dinners receive rave reviews and enable us to enter-

tain not only the ambassadors, but new and prospective FFL members as well.

Friday was a free day. There were probably as many things going on as there were ambassadors. But all was leading up to the Farewell Party at the Knolls. Guests from the Mayor's Committee on International Friendship, and student officers of the Global Friends of Japan were able to join us. Some Japanese women wore their beautiful kimonos. By evening's end, even Lincoln hosts were dressed in red and blue silky festival coats, gifts from their Japanese ambassadors. Memories were shared, songs were sung, and we pledged friendship forever.

Thank you FFL for your support. More than 70 of you participated in this exchange. Fourteen persons served as members of the planning committee, 4 hosted ambassadors for the first time, and 15 families or individuals hosted small group dinners. Of course, many of you supported by attending various activities and interacting with the ambassadors throughout the week. We hope you enjoyed yourselves as much as we did.



The Friendship Force of Lincoln
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New Albanian Clubs Recognized At FFI Conference

One of the plenary sessions for all attendees at the FFI International Conference featured the establishment of new clubs in China, Morocco and Albania. The presentation regarding Albania recognized the contribution of Alissa Ridenour, daughter of Lincoln FF members Brian and Kay Ridenour. Alissa recently completed her two years of service as a Peace Corps volunteer in Albania.

During her time she assisted in the establishment of the new Albanian clubs in Shkoder (Alissa's "home" city during her Peace Corps service) and Tirana, the capital city. Alissa helped to organize the clubs in conjunction with

the September 2009 Discover Albania exchange led by Brian Ridenour. Lincoln members Diane Conley and Barb Ritter were ambassadors on that exchange.

After the exchange, Alissa continued to work with the new clubs. The Shkoder club was formally chartered by FFI in early 2010 and recently hosted its first regular inbound exchange from Nord, The Netherlands. Tucson, Arizona is scheduled to visit Shkoder in 2011. Tirana's club received its charter as part of the presentation at the International Conference and anxiously awaits FFI's assignment of its first regular exchange.

The presidents of the two

clubs, Diana Keci of Tirana and Ali Lacej of Shkoder, spoke to the conference participants about the activities of their clubs and about their country and cities. The pride of both in their homeland and the enthusiasm with which they are approaching Friendship Force activities was evident. They were introduced to the conference by Alissa and Brian Ridenour. Alissa was recognized by FFI President George Brown for her creative work in advancing the goals of Friendship Force through the creation of these new clubs. Her efforts and those of Brian were recognized by both club presidents. Ali Lacej referred to Alissa as Shkoder's "angel".