



# PASSPORT

A Publication of The Friendship Force of Lincoln  
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**Join us in the Rockies**

**The Friendship Force of Northern Colorado  
hosts Lincoln, Nebraska June 21- 28, 2012.**

## Greetings from the President

by Nancy Comer - President



**B**ecause of a busy January, the FFL Board delayed its first meeting of the year until February. It was good to finally get together with new Board members, all of whom I wish to thank for agreeing to serve. Let me also thank everyone serving on FFL's numerous committees and others who volunteer and assist throughout the year. As you know, there is a lot of work to do, and with everyone helping, our goals can be accomplished.

While FFL will continue with exchanges and its normal social activities, there are a couple of new initiatives underway that I want to share with you

In an effort to build bridges between FFL and Lincoln's international communities, FFL has a new International Service Projects committee headed by Joanna Rogers. Its goal is to promote interaction and build friendship through projects and

social activities. For example, there was the Sudanese/FFL luncheon reported elsewhere in the Passport.

Another committee, New Exchanges, is chaired by Betty Starr and is exploring offering an exchange focusing on the Great Plains. This is an effort to develop a themed exchange, a relatively new idea from FFL which was initially discussed at the regional meeting in Lincoln last year. There is also more about this elsewhere in the Passport.

FFL is also working on what we are calling "diversity dinners." The idea is to connect with others in the community from different ethnic, religious, age, and cultural backgrounds. Perhaps you would be willing to open your home to a small group dinner with a few members of FFL and a few international students at UNL, a new immigrant family to Lincoln, or someone from a different ethnic or racial background.

Of course, filling exchanges and traveling to other clubs as ambassadors will be a crucial part of the year's activities. FFL was fortunate to fill its exchange to Turrialba, Costa Rica in January with 20 ambassadors from FFL. In spite of language and cultural differences, what was strange when we first arrived was familiar by the time we departed. Build-

ing global understanding one friendship at a time works. Thanks to Gaylord Becker for leading this exchange and his leadership as president the past two years.

Looking ahead, Larry Kluck will be leading an exchange to Northern Colorado June 21-28. See a note regarding this exchange in the Passport.

If traveling is not for you, you can still be involved in building friendships with people of other nations by home hosting, or participating in activities offered to all club members during an exchange. We will be hosting an Open World Exchange from Russia June 8-16 and will need hosts and help with planning. The Passport has more information on this also. In October, FFL will host ambassadors from Niagara Falls, Canada. With so much to do, there will be plenty of opportunities to be involved.

While you may not know me, I hope to meet you during the coming year. I am very much committed to the ideals of FF. If you have suggestions on how we might better accomplish the goals of FFL, please share them with me.

In friendship,  
Nancy

# Enjoy a Summer Exchange in Colorado

By Larry Kluck

**T**he Friendship Force of Northern Colorado will be hosting FFL June 21 through 28. You will recall that FFL hosted the Colorado club last fall and had a wonderful time. Below is an excerpt from information sent from the ED for the exchange.

“Northern Colorado Friendship Force invites you to experience the purple mountain majesty that awaits you in the foothills of Colorado. We plan to visit several towns along the Front Range; possibly Fort Collins, Loveland, Greeley, Boulder and Estes Park.

In Fort Collins you will enjoy the Old Town Historic District with its museums, galleries and shops. Colorado State University is located near the center of town where we will be able to enjoy an evening of music on the Oval. Tours are also available to some of the state’s most notable craft breweries. If you are drawn to the natural beauty of the surrounding area, a visit to nearby Horsetooth Reservoir is just minutes away. Other options include: The Noosa Yogurt plant, the Great Stupa, Shambala, and Red Feather Lakes.

You will be surrounded by the beauty of the arts in Loveland. After author John Villani visited Loveland, he was inspired to write the book



*The 100 Best Small Art Towns in America*, and consistently lists Loveland as a true arts destination. Loveland is home to the Loveland Museum/Gallery, two foundries, numerous studios and galleries and the Rialto Theater.

June 22 kicks off ‘stampede’ time in Greeley! The Greeley Stampede is billed as the “World’s Largest 4th of July Rodeo & Western Celebration” and dates back to the late 1800s. Before heading to the rodeo, we plan to step back in time with a visit to the Antique Washing Machine Museum. Most of the nearly 2000 washing machines have been restored. A visit to the Centennial Village Museum will complete our look at the life of early settlers in Northeastern Colorado.

Husker fans have certainly experienced some of Boulder’s ‘sports moments’, however, we invite you to spend a few

moments touring a tea factory (Celestial Seasonings), admiring the intricate paintings and carving adorning the Dushanbe Teahouse, and visiting the Leaning Tree Museum. We will complete our day at one of Boulder’s brewpubs.

The grandeur of Rocky Mountain National Park is a ‘must see’ again, and again. This year we plan to drive into the subalpine forests and stroll around an alpine lake. Along the way you will most likely spot some elk, bighorn sheep, deer, coyotes, eagles and the occasional moose. Other options include: hiking, window shopping in Estes Park, and exploring the elegant 102-year-old Stanley Hotel.”

Colorado can accommodate a large group and hopes many FFL members will join in a week of adventure and friendship. Costs are tentatively set at \$200 plus transportation. The plan is to carpool so transportation will be relatively cheap, amounting to the reimbursement cost for those who drive. For more information, contact LarryKluck@hotmail.com. The standard FFI application for the exchange is available on the FFI website: [http://www.thefriendshipforce.org/index.php/site/clubresources\\_forms](http://www.thefriendshipforce.org/index.php/site/clubresources_forms).

# Costa Rica: New Friends and a Lot of Fun

By Gaylord Becker, Exchange Director

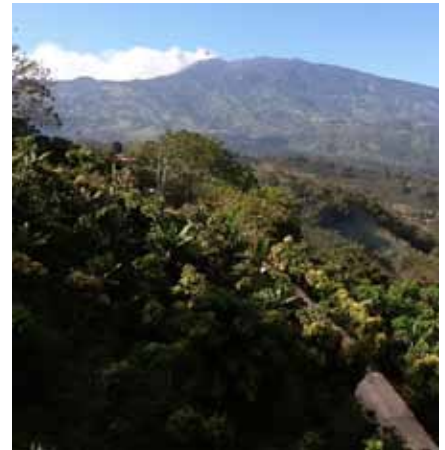
**O**n Friday, January 13, 14 ambassadors climbed aboard two vans heading for Eppley to fly to Costa Rica. The group was joined by Harold and Jo Hollman, FFL members from Jackson, Mississippi, in San Jose, and three others from Lincoln traveling on their own joined the group in Turrialba where all were home hosted for a week by members of the Friendship Force of Turrialba.

Ambassadors spent the first night in San Jose, and toured the city the following day, stopping at a museum of ancient golden artifacts. That afternoon the group boarded a shuttle for Turrialba, about 50 miles away. Ambassadors met their hosts at a lovely park in the center of town and dispersed to various homes for a time of relaxation before attending a welcome party that evening. In addition to fine food, there was dancing and entertainment provided by a local singer/musician who was the brother of one of the hosts.

Sunday was a free day spent with host families, an opportunity to get acquainted and learn to communicate in spite of the language difference. Some hosts spoke English but some did not. In such cases, hosts learned a little English and ambassadors learned a little Spanish. On Monday there was a drive

through the Orosi Valley, a rich agricultural area, with a stop at a factory that exported string beans and mangos to the US and Europe. Tuesday found the group at the summit of the Irazu Volcano. Not active for more than 100 years, the crater looked little like a volcano, but the nearby Turrialba volcano for which the city is named could be seen spewing smoke from its crater. Nothing to get alarmed at, the locals tell us it happens from time to time. Few will forget the visit to Irazu as the wind was blowing across the barren landscape at 40 plus miles per hour. "Hold on to your hat!" To and from, the road featured coffee, sugarcane and pineapple fields. Ambassadors learned that higher elevation coffee fields produce the best coffee.

Wednesday saw a visit to a macadamia farm and processing plant; Thursday morning the group traveled to a small coffee factory. At noon, in an isolated spot surrounded by tall shrubs and beautiful flowers, ambassadors were entertained by the host club at a farewell party. "Wow, where did the week go?" There was fun, laughter, dancing and friendship. FFL provided some entertainment of its own, inviting the Turrialba club to join FFL in the Hokey Pokey – you know, "you put your right hand in." They loved it. The



next morning we bid our host families adios, boarded a bus, and began a week of touring.

Traveling through the countryside ambassadors stopped at a banana plantation and later a banana processing plant. In route to the hotel for the evening, a drive of four hours, the group enjoyed an aerial tram over the tropical rain forest below. The hotel, the Sueno Azul (the Blue Dream), was accessible over a suspension walking bridge that took you to thatched roof cabins nestled in a park-like setting complete with a reflecting pond. "Did I tell you to stay on the path after dark? There might be snakes in the grass." An interesting stop took the group to a cocoa plantation where it was learned how chocolate was discovered – quite by accident – and processed by native people. "Trust me, it tastes great." There was a stop at a research station owned by a consortium of universities, some in the U.S., where native plants and animals are the subject of study. The next day

## Costa Rica continued

took the group to Tortuquero, famous for the thousands of turtles, now a protected-species, which crawl from the Caribbean and lay their eggs on the beach, an event that takes place in March and October of each year. Accommodations in Tortuquero were at a lodge squeezed between an inland water way, the only access route, and the Caribbean Sea. The sound of breaking waves greeted ambassadors each morning and lulled them to sleep each night. Into the rain forest again by boat revealed exotic colorful birds, iguanas sunning themselves, monkeys feeding in the trees, and crocodiles that looked like driftwood.

Before departing on the last day back in San Jose, some tried their luck at zip-lining – tooling on a cable just below the forest canopy at 30 miles an hour – while others toured an active volcano, a church constructed of tin, and a modern coffee processing facility.

Arriving back in Lincoln a bit tired, it all seemed like a wonderful dream, un sueno maravilloso. Try an exchange, bet you'll like it.



### Meet new FFL members Hope, Kathryn and Marilyn!

**T**he recent Costa Rica exchange was their first. Hope Partridge was a bit apprehensive about her lack of Spanish language skills, but felt she could adapt. She did. For her, the host family experience was the highlight of the trip. She learned a great deal about the culture and developed an appreciation for how the Costa Rican government is preserving rain and cloud forests for future generations.

Also concerned with language, Kathryn Neyens and Marilyn Watson felt it best if they were hosted together. Both found every aspect of the exchange positive and delightful. An added bonus was getting to know fellow FFL club members.

### Think Spring: FFL Outing to Pella, Iowa for the annual Tulip Festival

**W**inter got you down, then think spring. FFL will be traveling to Pella, Iowa for the Annual Tulip Festival May 4th. Don't miss out on a fun day and an explosion of color that engulfs the charming community of Pella. Bring your camera! Motor coach will depart Lincoln from McDonald's at 65th & "O" Street at 6 AM returning about 7 PM with a stop for dinner along the way. Donna, our guide, will have games for our amusement to and from. Space is limited to 55, but feel free to bring a friend. Cost is \$99.00 per person which includes lunch, transportation and all activities. Reservations to Kathryn Neyens at [tomnka@yahoo.com](mailto:tomnka@yahoo.com) or 402-890-0077 by February 20th.

## FFL Hosted by Sudanese Community of Lincoln

by Joanna Rogers, Services Committee Chair

**A** noon luncheon was hosted by the Sudanese community of Lincoln for members of FFL on Saturday, January 28th at First Presbyterian Church. The gathering was the Sudanese way of saying thank you for a picnic lunch hosted by FFL for them during the summer. Both activities are the result of FFL's new Service Committee charged with building bridges to Lincoln's ethnic communities consistent with the goals and mission of Friendship Force.

Twenty FFL adult members and four children along with 30 Sudanese adults and an equal number of Sudanese children were served native dishes prepared and brought by Sudanese families. A slide presentation featured aspects of family life in Sudan. Several speakers shared the hardships wrought by invasion and civil war. Lincoln has residents from both sides of the conflict who are finding new ways to cooperate with each other in their new homeland. FFL members learned about Sudan and the difficulties of trying to survive in a war-torn land. Kathy Mueller and Diane Conley provided crafts for the children to make sacks for



Meals on Wheels on Valentine's Day.

The Committee's next activity will be in early May involving the Center for People in Need. We will be assisting persons seeking gifts for Mother's Day. If you can volunteer during the day and would like to help in distributing items, contact Amy Birky at 402-489-2024 or amy1940@inebraska.com. In August a silent auction is planned for the Annual Meeting where items from other countries contributed by FFL members will be auctioned off. Proceeds will go to projects of Friendship Force International. The final activity of the year sometime in October will assist Kids Against Hunger.

Thanks to everyone who attended the Sudanese/FFL luncheon.



## The Canadians Are Coming!!!

**O**ctober, 2012, FFL will have the opportunity to welcome 20+ Niagara Falls, Ontario Friendship Force ambassadors to Lincoln. Martha Abra is the ED who is working with Sue Imig, FFL, and her committee, planning six days of activities. A cook-out and hayrack ride have been scheduled. The Canadians are anxious to see our remarkable Capitol, Husker complex, Speedway Motors, the Quilt Musuem, Bedient Organ Co., and Homestead National Monument just to mention a few. If you would be willing to home host or host a small group dinner, please contact Sue Imig, [sueimig@yahoo.com](mailto:sueimig@yahoo.com), or Barb Ridder, [bridder@neb.rr.com](mailto:bridder@neb.rr.com).

## Upcoming Open World Exchange from Russia

**T**he FFL will be hosting an Open World Exchange with participants from Russia, June 8-16, 2012. The theme is Youth, Innovation, Education. Julie Albrecht ([jalbrecht1@unl.edu](mailto:jalbrecht1@unl.edu)) and Gloria Van Ackeran ([glrvanack@windstream.net](mailto:glrvanack@windstream.net)) are co-ED's. They are looking for FFL members who are interested in serving on the planning committee and hosting. If you can help, please contact Julie or Gloria.



## Wichita to Host 2012 Regional Conference

**M**any of you may wish to attend the South-west Friendship Force Regional Conference, "Friendship on the Plains" in Wichita March 23-25. Conference registration and home hosting forms are available on FFL's website. Workshops include: international communication; how to be a successful ED; how to recruit new members; photography; managing the club via the internet; insurance, credit card slips, pins; themed and global exchanges; the humanitarian face of a FF exchange; and social media. George Brown will speak on "The FF Today and Tomorrow" as well as lead a workshop "Building a Strong FF for the Future." Claude Puntel will speak on "The Importance of Understanding Multi-culture" and do a workshop covering many topics related to dealing with other cultures.



## LEO will Feature Highlights from Lethbridge Canada Exchange

**I**f you want to see what you missed, come to the next LEO at Ruby Tuesdays, 56th and Highway 2, on Friday March 23 and hear Bridget Disney recount events of a magnificent exchange to Lethbridge including post exchange travel to Lake Louise and Banff in the Canadian Rockies.

We will meet in the private room to the back, beginning at 5:30 pm with ordering at 5:45. Friday nights are busy. To avoid delays in service, try to arrive on time. Make reservations with Diane Conley at 402-489-3472. If no answer, leave a message, especially the number in your party. Seating capacity is limited to 36, so reserve early. There will be individual checks, with an 18% gratuity added on, and discount coupons are accepted. Hope to see you there!

## Is a Themed Exchange in Our Future?

by *Betty Starr New Exchanges Chair*

**A**t the International Conference in Washington in 2010 and Hamburg in 2011, FFI encouraged clubs to create exchanges that focus on a theme. Generally speaking these were to focus on something that a club is uniquely situated to provide. Called “themed exchanges,” they are meant to attract ambassadors from all over the world.

At an organization meeting of the Board in November, a committee was formed to explore the possibility of developing a themed exchange for FFL. After several meetings, the committee has decided on the theme “Taming the Frontier: What Makes the Great Plains Unique.” This theme could involve just FFL or might be combined with other clubs located in the Plains. You might recall the Mississippi River exchange that involved several clubs bordering the river. The committee continues to search for activities consistent with this theme and is open to suggestions. In particular, activities that deal with the land, its peoples, and the challenges living in the region present and how they have been dealt with over the years to make the plains a productive and livable space. This is a general idea so a number of different activities might be a part of it.



Activities being considered, and not all of them would necessarily be a part of a single exchange, include: a simple hike through a prairie tract of land, a segment on native people with a trip to the Nebraska Museum of History, a visit to Nebraska’s historical State Capitol, to an operating ranch, a feedlot, something profiling the role of railroads in the settling of the Plains, a cattle auction, the Archway, a two-day excursion to the sandhills, etc. Many of these things we have, of course, done

in other exchanges. Here however, they will be marketed as a part of the particular theme, and hopefully attract ambassadors to see what it is we have to offer.

Tentative date is spring 2013. The goal is 25 ambassadors. The possibility still exists of linking with other clubs utilizing the same theme for a second or even a third week. The hope is to have the exchange sufficiently along to advertise it at the international conference this fall in Hiroshima, Japan. Of course, the entire club will have to get behind the idea and help with the various activities that such an exchange involves, hosting, socials, transportation, etc. The committee is banking on your support.



## Midwest Exchange Opportunities, 2012

**C**an't join your home club's exchange? OR Want to enjoy more weeks of international friendship? Here are great exchanges from our sister Midwestern FF clubs that you can join.

### Winter

- The Quad Cities and Lincoln exchanges are both full!

### Spring

- St. Louis To Limburg, Belgium, May 26-June 1.  
ED: Maureen McGrath, mnrnmcgrth@yahoo.com.sg
- Dubuque To Medicine Hat, Canada, June 6-19.  
ED: Gail Noel, gmnoel65@gmail.com

### Summer

- Minnesota-Twin Cities To Greater Hamilton & Burlington, CAN, June.  
ED: Unknown. Contact President: Blaine McCutchan, helloblaine@yahoo.com
- Des Moines To Mt. Barker & Queanbeyan-Canberra, AUS, late June.  
ED: Beverly Lytle, bdlytle@gmail.com
- Ames (Central Iowa) To Recife & Belem, Brazil, August or September.  
ED: Joan Herwig, jherwig@iastate.edu

### FALL

- Wisconsin/Madison To Moscow & Vyborg, Russia, September.  
ED: Sandy Wysock. sandrawysock@msn.com
- Chicago To Lima, Peru, October.  
ED: Unknown. Contact President: Larisa Sorkin, sork8@aol.com
- Omaha (Eastern Nebraska) To Semarang & Malang, Indonesia, October.  
ED: Shirley Siebler, shirleykjs@cox.net
- Milwaukee To Prague, Czech Republic, October.  
CO-EDs: Dave Kalan davekalan@sbcglobal.net & Suzanne Sullivan ssl28@gmail.com
- Northern Illinois To Taichung, Taiwan, 10/23-29,  
ED: Karen Li, kslitseng@yahoo.com  
NOTE: This exchange is coordinated so Ambassadors can continue to the Friendship Force World Conference in Hiroshima.

Friendship Force World Conference, October 30-November 2, Plus Optional post-conference home stays. For information go to [http://www.friendshipforce.org/index.php/conference\\_2012](http://www.friendshipforce.org/index.php/conference_2012) We hope to have a strong Midwestern representation. Last year in Hamburg 30 Midwesterners attended!

When contacting EDs for further information, be sure to identify yourself as a member of your home club.

## **2012 Board of Directors**

President:	Nancy Comer
Vice President:	Larry Kluck
Secretary:	Julie Albrecht
Treasurer:	Wendy Horacek
Past President:	Gaylord Becker
Membership:	Mary Bryant, chair; Gayle Bayer, Amy Birky
Newsletter:	Jim Ecklund, chair
Website:	Richard Spencer
Publicity:	Pat King
Activities:	Kathryn Neyens, chair
LEO:	Diane Conley
International Service Projects:	Joanna Rogers, chair
New Exchanges:	Betty Starr, chair
FFI Field Coordinator:	Laurie Ann Scott
Communication:	Jim Ecklund, chair
Breakfast & Conversation:	Milt Bayer
Merchandise:	Mary Lou Reeves, Amy Birky
Historian:	Jeanne Zwiebel
Diversity Dinners:	Nancy Comer

### **Exchange Directors: 2012**

Costa Rica:	Gaylord Becker
Northern Colorado:	Larry Kluck
Niagara, Canada:	Sue Imig,
Open World:	Julie Albrecht, Gloria Van Ackeren

# Membership News

By Mary Bryant

**P**lease welcome the following new members for 2012 who joined FFL in the last half of 2011: Jaci Hammer, Hope Partridge, Connie Jensen, Doris Carpenter, and Cynthia Didion. Our newest members are Dave and Diane Spomer who joined earlier this month. We would like to thank the following members who referred the above individuals to our organization: Gaylord & Marilou Becker, Sara Friedman, Kathryn Neyens, Erna Rethmeier, Barb Ridder, Betty Starr, and Bob Wagner.

Amy Birky has returned to the Membership Committee

and works with Gayle Bayer contacting prospective members and personally reminding each of upcoming club activities. The two of them are also responsible for planning interesting events to showcase the specifics of The Friendship Force of Lincoln and provide an insight into the home-stay and home-hosting experiences.

We appreciate referrals of family and friends to Mary Bryant at ab62359@windstream.net. Please include how you know the person along with their name, address, phone and email. They are provided an informational packet and copies of current

and future newsletters. Encourage your friends to attend our upcoming wine and cheese gathering for prospective and new members. We love to spread the word about our unique organization.

## Wine & Cheese for Prospective & New Members

**P**rospective and new members can find out more about The Friendship Force of Lincoln at a wine and cheese gathering on Monday, March 19 from 5:30 to 7:30 at the home of Gayle Bayer, 1901 South Knight's Place (South and 60th Streets). RSVP Gayle at 402-486-1415 or email Amy Birky at amy1940@inebraska.com.

## 2012 Dues Notice - The Friendship Force of Lincoln

**D**ues for 2012 are \$30 for an Individual Membership and \$40 for a Family Membership. Dues are for the calendar year January 1st through December 31st and are not prorated. 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/\$11.00 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name Badge Name(s) *Please Print* \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY:  Individual-\$30  Family-\$40

NOTE: New members each receive a complimentary name badge; replacement name badges cost \$9.00 each for a pin-on type or \$11.00 each for magnetic style.

Replacement Name Badge @\$9.00

Total Amount Enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

**PASSPORT**

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