



FRIENDSHIP LINKS

FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF EDMONTON AND AREA NEWSLETTER
DECEMBER, 2009



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V.P (Exchanges)

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I just want to take this opportunity to wish all of you and your families a wonderful Christmas Season. I also wish to thank you, the members, for all your work over the past year, including outgoing, continuing and new Board members. I look forward to 2010 with great anticipation. If you are traveling over the holiday season, travel safely and if you are heading south, we'll see you in April. Best wishes for 2010.

2009 President's Report Year End Summary

Our membership committee has brought in 40 new members over the last two years including about 8 (5 households), who joined in the spring and hosted for our Festival. We currently have 103 members, although we expect a few members will not renew their membership for various reasons. We do have a list of 16 perspective members awaiting an upcoming orientation session that is mandatory for all those wanting to join our club.

2009

January - General Meeting

February – March - 23 Ambassadors participated in an Outbound to New Zealand and Australia including a reciprocal visit to the Gold Coast, Australia.

February 28 - In recognition of World Friendship Day, members participated in a Habitat for Humanity "build" in Edmonton. Those not participating in the actual build were involved in the lunch preparation and serving all the workers.

April 23 - Our club celebrated our 10th anniversary by holding a banquet for all members and inviting as many former members as could attend. The Charter President Diana McIntyre was given 10 yellow roses, a small token gift of appreciation, and a Lifetime Membership to our club in recognition of the contribution she has made to the formation of Friendship Force Edmonton and Area and the help she offers to club officers on a continuing basis. The Charter members still active in the club were presented to the group and also presented with a single yellow rose signifying friendship.

May - General Meeting

August 19-28 - We hosted a Friendship Festival to acknowledge our 10th anniversary and to celebrate the cultural diversity of our area. We had 63 Ambassadors from 7

countries participate and the evaluations have been most gratifying. The hard work by a core committee of 12 from the beginning and the contribution of over 90% of our members in the Festival directly or indirectly, made the Festival possible.

September - Our club, as mentor for the Friendship Force of Hay River, had the pleasure of hosting Ambassadors from various clubs in route or returning from their exchanges in Hay River. Over the last couple years we have hosted mini-exchanges (ranging from a few hours to 2-3 days) from Oklahoma, Greater Milwaukee, and most recently Brussels/Pajot. It has been an excellent way for our members to meet Ambassadors they would not likely see otherwise and arrange a short program among themselves.

- The only formal activity planned was the Let's Eat Out (LEO), which to date have been very well attended by the membership at large.
- The AGM and First General Membership meeting of the new term were held.

October -15 club members participated in the FF Canadian Conference in Niagara, Ontario including 10 who participated in a pre-conference Outbound Exchange to Western Michigan. Our club had the highest number of delegates, with the exception of the host club, Niagara. In honour of our 10th Anniversary and Festival, each member attending the conference was presented with a ticket to ride across the Niagara Falls. Following the conference, several members participated in home stays in Niagara, St. Catherine's and Hamilton before continuing on to Ottawa, where their club also offered home stays to conference participants.

November -12 members participated in a four-day bus trip to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. There they visited the caves, explored what was once known as "Chicago North", checked out the Temple Gardens Mineral spa and casino and took a side trip to the Royal

Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) headquarters and training center in Regina.

December - We had our annual holiday celebration with a catered meal. It was an opportunity to just relax and enjoy the company of good friends.

We do try and arrange a social per month especially when there are no Outbounds or Inbounds in progress. We have a group of members who gather together fairly regularly to play Bridge and now we also have a number of dedicated walkers, who are exploring Edmonton's river valley on a more or less a regular basis.

Marilyn Caskey
December 5, 2009



COMMUNICATIONS

Recently, we have implemented a system of sending e-mail messages on Mondays rather than all through the week. We hope that everyone is receiving the messages. If you have information to share with the club, please send it to us before the Monday send-out. Almost everyone in the club has an e-mail address so it seems to be an efficient way to communicate.

The website continues to change and includes photos of some of the most recent events. There is a members' page so that individual members can include announcements. You can also check there for information about upcoming events. Please bookmark www.friendshipforceedmonton.org for easy access.

Our club has purchased a laptop projector to show slides of trips and other computer-generated slide shows. The cost of the projector has been shared with St. Albert

Retired Teachers' Association and is to be used for club activities only. At the Christmas party this month, the CD that was prepared by Barbara Ashmore and presented to our Festival guests in August was shown. The trip to Germany and Turkey from the fall of 2008 was also on display. These two displays received a favourable response.

Larry and Donna Wyatt



MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

by Dianna Steele and John Yule

We hosted an information session for five guests at the Woodcroft Library on Nov. 23, 2009 from 7 to 9 pm. The session started with introductions, during which the guests shared how they heard about Friendship Force and we shared how we became members. We talked about the Club and the various roles available to members of our club. We focused a lot of attention on local involvement, types of hosting, club activities for members, and travel. Kathleen and Roy Harper also attended and Kathleen presented the up-coming plans for member activities for 2010. Everyone was invited to the Christmas party.

The video provided a very good summary of what the organization is all about. There was lots of time for questions throughout the evening.

Two participants, who attended this information session, came to our Christmas Party, so hopefully this is a good sign!

We also now have a committee link on our website.



SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The annual Christmas party was held on December 3rd at the Robin Hood School. Sixty-eight people attended the party and all had a terrific time! Their generosity yielded forty-two kilograms of food for the Food Bank. The evening began with a delicious roast beef dinner, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Twelve draws for wonderful prizes were made throughout the evening. The Wyatts showed a power point presentation of the events of the year, which, of course, included many great photos of our 10th anniversary festival. Thank you, Donna and Larry! There was lots of mingling and visiting going on; so much so that our president had a hard time getting her speech done! The evening concluded with a sing-song of Christmas carols with Eryl Jones at the piano.

Social activities are being planned for each month of the new year. Upcoming events, which are all still in the planning stages, include:

January - attending the Levy on January 1, 2010, as a social event and a promotion of our club.

February – a visit to the City of Edmonton Police museum and the No. 1 Fire Hall.

March – Habitat for Humanity.

April – Let's Eat Out at the Pearl River restaurant.

May – a visit to Greenland Garden Centre and then to Herb Holland's to view and/or purchase his tomato plants.

June – St. Albert Botanical Gardens followed by lunch at the Anhorn's.

As well, a schedule is being prepared for those who signed up for the pot luck suppers. One member will host 7 or 8 people, who will each bring something for the meal. These will be held once every two months. More details will be provided in the weekly fan out e-mails

Kathleen Harper



EXCHANGES

We have been very busy this summer with the Festival and a few extra things thrown in.

Our club hosted 11 Ambassadors from Belgium for 3 days at the end of Sept. We give our thanks to our club members who did such a fantastic job of hosting and being their guides. Some members met for a dinner with FF Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA when they were on route to Hay River, NWT. It is amazing how fast one can make friendships over dinner!

Inbounds for 2010:

1) Germany canceled their Inbound with us so we have been given Zeeland, Netherlands for June 20. John Yule is the ED.

2) Western Montana - Missoula, USA. EDs are Lynne and Lou Duigou. The exchange will take place July 26.

Outbounds:

We had to cancel our outbound to Nara & Oita Japan as there were too few members able to go. Those 5 members were fortunate to be able to join the Penticton/Okanagan FF club on their trip to Saitama (Tokyo) & Ehime, Japan for 2 homestays during the month of April with a week of touring in between. They should still see the cherry blossoms at that time.

Four of our members have signed up to go with Hay River, NWT in March 2010 to FF Atlanta and FF Oklahoma. Both are reciprocal visits and some of our members met Atlanta and Oklahoma after their visits to Hay River in the last couple of years. Using the opportunity to travel with other FF clubs, when you cannot participate in the home club exchange, is a great experience. Not only do you meet your hosts, but you meet other Canadian FF members as well.

Some members are planning to travel to Lethbridge for their Friendship Force's 15th anniversary on January 12, 2010. Greyhound fare is 2 seniors for \$80.00 with 21 days

advance purchase of tickets. If interested contact Marjorie Eckert.

Exchange Requests for 2011 - We have been given a reciprocal exchange to Bogota, Columbia. Our second week request was for Peru and our third choice was Chili. We should hear from FFI about the second week exchange shortly. It is hoped that those who voted for these choices plan to go on the outbounds in 2011. It is so very important that we fill our exchanges. Looking ahead, we have an exciting couple of years of new friendships.

VPs of Exchanges

Marjorie Eckert & Mary Ann Wichmann

From the Incoming Exchange Directors:

Exchanges: Zeeland - June 20-28,2010 - John Yule, Exchange Director

Missoula, Montana - July 26- Aug 1, 2010 - Lynne & Lou Duigou, Exchange Directors

We have agreed to do a joint committee for the two exchanges and will have our first meeting February 4, 2010 at 1:30 at Duigou's. We are looking for a total of 12 people including the exchange directors to work on the committee. We are looking for a balance of new members and experienced exchange committee members. Please contact the exchange directors if you would like to work on the committee.

John Yule, Lynne and Lou Duigou

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continued

**EDMONTON AND AREA EXCHANGE
WITH WEST MICHIGAN FRIENDSHIP
FORCE - OCTOBER 7 – 14, 2009**

West Michigan Friendship Force Club, like our Edmonton and Area Club, has members living in communities from Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo. They are a small club with under 30 members, but what they lack in numbers, they more than make up in friendliness and organizational skills.

The nine members of our club, who took part in this exchange, had little knowledge of the area when we began, but we came away quite impressed with all we saw.

Some of the places visited were the Menno-Hof Amish Museum followed by a traditional Amish Haystack lunch and tour of an Amish home, a stop at an Underground Railway house where slaves were helped on their journey further North into Canada, the Ford Presidential Museum and burial site and the Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park. We all were taken to see the sand dunes of Lake Michigan as well as a host of activities with each of our hosts.

With this being a small exchange we were able to meet as a group for three meals in members' homes. As a result, we feel we got to know all members of the club. We have had a busy fun filled week, ate too much and made some great new friends. The scenery was spectacular – each day brought a bit more color.

At the completion of our exchange all nine of us traveled on to the Canadian Friendship Force Conference in Niagara Falls.

Doug Southam



BOOK SALES FOR BURUNDI

Two successful book sales were held in November, one at the United Church fall bazaar and the other at the Holy Family Catholic fall bazaar, both in St. Albert. Nearly \$400 was raised to support the street children in Burundi. We await news from Barbara Olynyk as to how this money should be directed to the children.

Jessie and Frank Parker, and Eryl Jones

FRIENDSHIP FORCE CALENDAR 2010

January 1 – New Year's Levy, Edmonton (tentative)

January 6 – Board Meeting @9:30am, St. Albert United Church

February 13 – General Meeting

March 6 – Habitat for Humanity Service Project and supper

March 8 - Board Meeting @9:30am, St. Albert United Church

April 6 – 21 – Japan Outbound

April 22 – 26 – Northern Rockies Conference, Spokane

May 5 – Board Meeting @9:30am, St. Albert United Church

May 29 – General Meeting

June 20 to 28 app. – Netherlands Inbound

July 26 to Aug. 1 app. – Missoula Inbound

September 13 – Board Meeting @9:30am, St. Albert United Church

October 13 – AGM

October 16 – 18 International FFI Conference, Washington, DC

Please visit our website at:

www.friendshipforceedmonton.org/

