



The Friendship Force of Wisconsin

Changing the Way You See the World

January 2013



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year everyone! We did not have a board meeting in December due to bailing out from an 18 inch snow storm. Our next meeting will be on January 18, 2013 at the usual time and place.

2013 starts off with a bang. On February 1-8, we host an Open World exchange of Legislators from the Ukraine. Sandy Drew has agreed to be our ED.

Other exchanges this year include the incoming exchange from Urla, Turkey on June 13-20. Mary Mastaglio is the ED. We are still working on the outgoing Oregon exchange for the middle of the summer. Gail Holmes is the ED. Our outgoing exchange to Indonesia takes place September 13-20. Ariel Ford is the ED. If you would like to help with any of these exchanges or go on any of them, please call or email the EDs.

I would like to thank everyone personally for their generous donations to the Friendship Force of Wisconsin. The donations will help us to send a representative to the International Convention. This is a benefit to our club as it helps keep our club up to date on new initiatives under consideration.

We will also be looking for a new slate of club officers for election in April. If anyone has a desire to be an officer please let us know so you will be included.

In Friendship,

George Wysock, President

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2013 CLUB ACTIVITIES

Monthly Board Meeting - Third Friday - 11:30 am
Everyone welcome - 615 E. Washington Ave., 2ndfl.

February 1-8, 2013 - Open World Legislators Exchange from Ukraine *

February 10, 2013 - Valentine Luncheon, Westside Club*

March 2013 – 35th Anniversary Celebration**

June 13-20, 2013 - Urla Turkey Inbound Exchange*

September 2013- Indonesia Outbound Exchange**

* Information in this newsletter

** Information to be announced later or previously announced



Open World Legislators Exchange from Ukraine February 1-8, 2013

The Ukrainian group includes five delegates, one facilitator, and one translator. Sandy Drew has agreed to be the ED for this exchange. She is a former lobbyist and has many connections with many of the current and former government types in and around Madison. Please help her if she calls, or if you would like to be involved with this exchange. Sandy's contact information:

Phone: 608.833.5811

Email sdrew24@tds.net





MI FAMILIA MEXICANA

Dave and Meg Vermillion, club members, share an experience that embraces what Friendship Force embodies resulting from an exchange they did to Perote, Mexico in 2010.

In 2010 Lincoln, NB was doing an exchange with Perote. The Perote club is in the state of Veracruz and 40 km from Xalapa. I hooked up with the Lincoln folks in Mexico City and after three days in a hotel overlooking the zócalo with trips to Teotihuacán, the archaeological museum, etc., we were off to Perote.

The Perote club met our bus. My family was a middle class family of four. The father owned a construction business and the mother was a school teacher. The two children, both girls, were ages 13 and 9. My Spanish was very bad and their English worse. Fortunately I had mi diccionario and we had a lot of fun (slowly) communicating!

At dinner that evening I said the following in my halting español. "Let us not be formal. Please consider me a member of the family - an extra grandfather." This really broke the ice! That evening the 9 year old came to my room to told me (in English) "Goodnight Grandfather". I was touched, and as I type this my eyes are misting up. Five days later Alejandría cried as I boarded the bus. Amazing!

It is now 2012 and the 13 year old is 15. La quinceañera is a coming out party with roots in times when this was a marriageable age. Families will at times spend huge amounts of money to show that their daughter comes from a good family and to launch her into society.

Mi familia Mexicana invited me to come as their guest as the "abuelo honorario" or Honorary Grandfather. I was conflicted but the more I thought "Why not?" So I went and had an incredible experience.

I flew to Veracruz, rented a car, and drove the 150km to Perote. Perote is a not a tourist destination. I never saw a non-Mexican face during my stay of 5 days in

this city of 50,000. I kept telling my hosts how much I was enjoying this! The food was 100% comida típica. I went overnight from living with a vegetarian in Door County to classic Mexican food cooked in lard and loved it!

What a party. What an experience. A sit-down dinner for 600 with open bar until 4 AM. I sat in the second row during Mass, as I was considered a grandfather. Non-stop music at the fiesta. Boy do they know how to dance! I had to get out there, of course. I turned around and two professionals were dancing on stilts! Then the limbo started and farmer hats appeared for the educated middle class men. What a fun time as goofy shoes and pantaloons showed up over formal suits! I was exhausted by midnight, but could not/would not leave until the end. My host told me that there would be no mariachis. He lied. After more food I heard trumpets at 2AM and 10 mariachis arrived and played until 4AM.

Living and experiencing with people of other cultures is a major part of what Friendship Force is about. I sat with 3 young professionals at the party. They all spoke English. Roberto works for P&G near Mexico City making Pampers. His English is perfect, unaccented, and provided a great running commentary. He is surprised at the stiffness of his American coworkers. "At parties they stand around and never dance - never have any fun!" Do you know about Banda música? It is loud and fast and always has a tuba and accordion. It at times sounds like polka and is fantastic for dancing after a couple of La Palomas. Roberto was a great dancer. I did not know what I was doing but danced with my hostess and two nietas ("granddaughters").

There was a morning after party with muchas gorditas and visiting. I stayed two more days with my family and left with sadness and tears all around.

I have thought much about this Hispanic tradition. My obvious concern is the expense. Mi familia is middle class but not wealthy. Even in Mexico the cost had to be over \$20,000. Friends in Door County tell me that many go into debt to provide their daughter with a proper quinceañera. This was a marvelous family and community gathering. Family came from Mexico City, Monterrey and Veracruz. One young lady told me she delayed traveling to her university in Spain as she just could not miss this event. Such familial warmth is not common among those of us with

northern European roots. My German/English grandparents would never demonstrate such. I mentioned to my hostess that I cannot remember sitting on my grandmother's lap or being hugged. Andrea teared up.

Alondra, the 15 year old, was told by her mother during a two page toast that she was approaching adulthood and no longer a child. Andrea sent me her notes and I have translated them. A few lines are "You will have to take special care in the way you live....., because what you sow today you reap tomorrow.....there is an extensive and curved path between the girl and the complete and virtuous woman. Also ...the day will come that you will be a professional, and later a wife and mother...until then wholly a woman..." All present were charged to observe Alondra and correct her with loving hearts when needed.

I am conflicted over this tradition. I love these good folks and hope they will be able to visit us in Door County next summer. The two girls see their grandparents every day, as they go to them after school and everyone eats the evening meal together. My grandchildren live in Ohio and Georgia. Alex told me that family is everything to him. The expense troubles me. A girl at 15 is NOT an adult in today's world. Alondra looked 15 the day before the party, running around in blue jeans. The evening of the party she looked to be 21 with her hair and makeup and dress. There have to be temptations. I suspect that she will be OK, though, as the family influence is strong. I would never have met them without being involved with Friendship Force.



Yours in Friendship
Dave Vermillion



Moscow, Russia Exchange, September 2012

*An Afternoon to Remember! By
Lise Skofronick*

Friday, September 2, 2012--After the group tour of the Kremlin, Lise, David and Lise's host, Lidia, walked a few blocks to meet Leyla, whom Lise had hosted in Madison in 2009. After warm greetings at the Moscow River wharf, Leyla invited us for a boat tour to see the sights along the river. And what a trip it was! Leyla pointed out such key attractions as the Olympic Stadium, Moscow State University, Christ the Savior Cathedral, the Kremlin, and numerous expensive apartment buildings.

After an exchange of gifts, Leyla offered her homemade sweet cake and some chocolates, all washed down with cups of *Kvass*. Two hours later we disembarked and walked to a monastery seldom frequented by tourists--the *Novospasskiy*.

We entered its magnificent cathedral absorbing the spiritual ambience. As we breathed the incense, we listened intently to the monks singing vespers with their deep harmonious voices.

Since we were hungry, we decided to stay on the grounds of this peaceful place. The monastery offered a comfortable vegetarian *trapeznay* (dining room) where we consumed borscht, stuffed peppers, salmon pies, and *vatrushka* (sweet rolls with a custard filling). Tea followed. It was a wonderful day, we reflected as we rode the metro back to Lidia's house.



Friendship Force of Urla, Turkey to Visit Madison, Wisconsin --June 13-20, 2013

We are expecting up to 23 ambassadors. We need people to help plan this inbound exchange. If you would like to be part of the planning process, serve on a committee, be a host or a day host, or provide a dinner for a small group, contact Mary Mastaglio and Mary Babula via email mcbabula@sbcglobal.net or call us at 608-241-0212. An initial planning meeting will be scheduled soon. Call if you have questions.

Mary Mastaglio, Exchange Director

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January 2013
Valentine Luncheon Reservations

President: George Wysock 833-5326
Vice Pres: Helen Rugowski 238-9731
Secretary: Mary Lou Martino 467-2966
Treasurer: Margo McKnight 345-6827
Newsletter: Donna Hussin 845-3393

The Friendship Force of Wisconsin
Valentine Luncheon
Sunday, February 10, 2013

Westside Club-Madison Room **12:00 PM**
437 S. Junction Road **Cost: \$18.00**
Madison, WI



Entertainment by Diane Robinson, popular local performer
Bring a Friend!

Please: Your reservation and payment are due no later than Friday, February 1, 2013.

-----cut and return with payment 

_____ # attending x \$18 = \$ _____

_____ I need a ride _____ I can provide a ride

Names: _____

Make check payable to: The Friendship Force
Mail to: Fannie Hicklin, 3814 University Avenue, Madison WI 53705 Questions? 608-233-5748