



# THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF GREATER ATLANTA NEWSLETTER



JANUARY • FEBRUARY • 2013

## THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Greetings to all!!

I am so enthusiastic about the new year for the Friendship Force of Greater Atlanta! We have several opportunities to host people from all over the world, two fantastic outbound exchanges and the Friendship Force international conference in New Orleans. We are also planning for local social activities for all club members. Even if you can't host an ambassador or travel with us, we hope that you will try to participate in as many events as possible.

The Board of Directors has worked very hard to improve communications through the news flashes, the newsletter and our website. Please take advantage of these great resources to help you stay informed about our activities. If you do not have access to a computer or if you are uncomfortable finding your way in cyberspace, let us know, and we will find a way to keep you up-to-date on the club news.

I just have to tell you how excited I am about our outbound exchange to Peru in May and our exchange to Australia in September!!! I had hosted an ambassador from Lima in September, 2010, and had so much fun with the whole group. I was delighted when our request for a reciprocal exchange was approved. I signed up immediately, because I really want to see our wonderful Peruvians again. Glenda and John Wilhelm are experts at leading outbound and inbound exchanges, so I know we will have a wonderful time!

I had hesitated to plan for the Australian exchange, as my finances for 2013 are going to be very tight. But then I met Sue Mills, a new member who is going to be the ED for the exchange. So I will be going to see our friends in Sydney in September! Harvey Brickley had generously volunteered to do some of the groundwork on the exchange and got the ball rolling. Sue took the ball and is running with it!! Her energy and enthusiasm are infectious, and I think she will be a fantastic ED! You will find more information about both exchanges in other sections of this newsletter.

Please consider inviting friends and co-workers to attend some of our events. Also, if you are a member of an organization that needs speakers for meeting programs, contact Catherine Douds, and she will arrange for someone to talk to your group. The club also has a digital projector, sound amplifiers a portable projection screen and a slide show about Friendship Force in its inventory. These are just some of the ways that you can help bring in new members and strengthen the club.

As always, if you have any ideas for club activities or questions about the club, please feel free to contact me at [madamew@hotmail.com](mailto:madamew@hotmail.com) or (404) 351-5352.

In Friendship,  
Cynthia Williams  
President

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

The last issue of our FFGA Newsletter contained a brief background biography about each of the club's members elected to serve as officers on the club's Board of Directors. As editor, I received feedback from many readers that this was a feature that should be continued. Therefore, each future issue of the Newsletter will contain a brief biographical sketch about one or more of our club members. This issue will start with two of FFGA's committee chairpersons who serve on the club's board of directors.



Steven pins Catherine's wings on at her Graduation Ceremony in 2011.

Steve and Catherine Douds have been married for 21 years, have three children and reside in Peachtree City. Both are employed by Delta Air Lines where Steve is a pilot and Catherine is a flight attendant. Both enjoy travel and interacting with people from different countries.

From a very young age, Catherine demonstrated an interest in foreign lands and a desire to learn about other cultures. As a teenager, she paid for her own summer travel to England and became hooked. She has been a volunteer in several English language immersion programs in Spain and served as a missionary in El Salvador. Her travels include visits to Canada, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, England, Holland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Puerto Rico, Scotland, Spain and Wales.

Steve is a Navy veteran who served as a P-3 Orion pilot based in Jacksonville, FL, and deployed to stations like Sigonella, Sicily, and Keflavik, Iceland. He also served as a Catapult Officer on the USS Enterprise. His military duty took him to many countries throughout South and Central America, Africa and Europe. He and Catherine enjoyed a rarely recognized benefit of military life – 13 homes in 12 years!

Together they moved many times, but they finally settled for good in Peachtree City and have enjoyed an active membership in FFGA since 2010. They participated as ambassadors on the outbound exchange to Costa Rica in 2011. They have also hosted military officers from Portugal and Mexico during the period when the club had a program to host international officers from Fort Benning on weekends. Catherine has been Membership Director for two years and Steve recently took on the job of Web Administrator. They look forward to many future opportunities to meet friends within FFGA and through FFGA's exchange programs.

(Reported by Vicki Van Der Hoek)

## FFGA ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦



(L to R) Portia Scott, Smith Fleming, Beverly Edwards and Carla Kelley anticipate an afternoon of enjoyment at FFGA's Annual Holiday Party.

Ernestine Brazeal, our Social Chairperson, went all out this year to insure that we had a wonderful time at our Annual Holiday Party. This year's gala event was held in the northwest quadrant of the city at the beautiful Vinings Club. Its spectacular view of Atlanta as seen from Overlook Drive was a real crowd pleaser. Ms. Brazeal not only arranged for a tasty buffet meal but also provided numerous small door prizes delighting those in attendance. Professional-grade musical accompaniment on the grand piano and superb vocal renditions were provided throughout the party by Ms. Bernice Hall. Attendees also had a brisk after dinner work out as each table of guests rose to repetitively announce the gift bestowed by their true love during the "Twelve Days of Christmas" song, as directed by Kent Vickers, the impromptu Master of Ceremonies for the occasion.

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Each attendee's place setting was adorned with a special ornament for their Christmas tree, and Cynthia Williams presented a special Christmas ornament to each member of the FFGA Board of Directors for their support during her first year as President of our club. Several of our members attended the festivities with friends which resulted in our organization gaining at least three new additions to our membership rolls.

## FFI PRESIDENT TO RETIRE



FFI Pres. George Brown

Dear Friendship Force family,

I have decided to retire from my position as President of FFI effective June 30, 2013. This is something I've been considering for some time. There are both personal and professional reasons that have led me to the decision at this time.

At the personal level, I will turn 68 years old in June. I am looking forward to slowing down a bit and enjoying a long retirement with family and friends. I plan to stay active with some limited professional activities, but I will not be considering another fulltime position. In the years ahead I look forward to continuing my passion for international travel - but with a more leisurely schedule that can also include my wife, Jill. We are hoping to visit many of our Friendship Force friends in the years ahead.

This is also a good time for me to step down professionally. Having worked on the FFI staff for a combined total of 23 years, the past nine as president, I can look back with satisfaction on many great things we've been able to accomplish together. Our new Global Expansion Plan is well underway, and FFI is in very good shape. Now is a good time for the Board to select a new president to build on this foundation.

In my remaining months at FFI I will be working with Kathy Thomas, our newly promoted Chief Operating Officer, and the Board of Directors to ensure a smooth transition for new leadership. I will be traveling less, spending my time preparing the office for the next president. In addition there are elements of the Expansion Plan that I will be devoting time to as well, working with the Board and staff to use my remaining months as president to the greatest advantage for the Friendship Force. I will also be taking some time off to prepare for the next stage in my life.

Looking back over all my years at the Friendship Force there have been many great moments, but none more meaningful than the recent conference in Japan, with the theme "Hiroshima for Peace and Friendship." I wish all our members could have shared that experience as we reaffirmed the original goal of Wayne Smith and the Carters to use friendship as a powerful force for peace and understanding in the world. Our mission is relevant today as it was 35 years ago, and I urge all of you to continue on this road we have travelled together.

This is not a goodbye letter, as I will continue to be in the office on a regular basis in the coming months. More importantly, I look forward to continuing the friendships I've made on six continents through this incredible global family we call the Friendship Force. With gratitude for the opportunity to work with all of you over the years, I remain,

In friendship,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George E. Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive.

George Brown

## FRIENDSHIP FORCE INTERNATIONAL'S INTERIM LEADER



Kathy Thomas started with Friendship Force International in the travel department in 1992. In January of 2003 she became the program coordinator for Europe, working with clubs and exchange directors in that region. In 2004 she became Manager of Program Services and in 2012 she became FFI's Chief Operating Officer, overseeing the program services department as well as the communications and educational projects coordinators. A native of Atlanta, after graduation from university with a degree in psychology and French, Kathy worked for several major airlines including Swissair and Austrian Airlines.

## UPCOMING EXCHANGE REPORTS



### **Clemson University's International Teachers Visit: 15 – 17 February 2013**

Members of FFGA will welcome fourteen international teachers and one graduate escort at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library on Friday the 15th of February. The teachers are taking part in a 5½ month course of study at Clemson University in South Carolina and will be hosted by our club members as a part of Clemson's cultural immersion program. The visitors represent the countries of India, Indonesia, Kenya, Lebanon, Morocco, Philippines and Senegal. The escort graduate hails from Illinois.

While they will be spending the nights in the homes of their hosts, they will also visit other venues in Atlanta and Cartersville. Among the sites they will attend are the Georgia Aquarium, the World of Coca-Cola, Etowah Indian Mounds, the Booth Western Museum and the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historical Site. A full report on our initial participation with Clemson University's Student/Teacher Program will appear in the next Newsletter.



### **Open World Leadership Exchange from Ukraine: 22 – 29 March 2013**

John Wilhelm has volunteered to be the Exchange Director for an incoming Open World Leadership exchange of five delegates, one facilitator and an interpreter from the country of Ukraine. Initially the group will spend the weekend recouping from the flight, enjoying a welcome dinner at the Wilhelm's home, and seeing the sights of Atlanta with their hosts. This will include the premier attractions of the Georgia Aquarium and the World of Coca-Cola. The remainder of the week is when they participate in gaining an understanding of what the Open World Leadership program is all about. Their area of expertise is serving as government administrators at various levels within the hierarchy of Ukrainian cities and regional districts. Therefore, they will be attending roughly 36 hours of seminars and demonstrations about how functions similar to their own are done in our country. Some of their major stops will be at the state capitol, Atlanta city hall, Johns Creek City administrative offices and high school, and the Jimmy Carter Center among a number of other government venues. It is hoped that the traditional "Farewell Dinner" will be open to all FFGA members and their guests who would like to meet the Ukrainian delegates prior to their departure. At this time Mr. Wilhelm is seeking a restaurant that will accommodate everyone on the evening of Friday, March 29th. The cost will be pay-as-you-go for folks not directly involved in the exchange. More information regarding the dinner will be forthcoming in a Newsflash as soon as a locale is determined.

**What is the the Open World Program and how does FFGA play a part in it?:** In a nutshell, it is a program to bring rising young leaders (ages 25-35) from former Soviet countries to the United States to learn how our democracy and free enterprise system works and how it is governed. It is funded and administered through the legislative branch of our government and carried out with the assistance of the Friendship Force, the Rotary International, universities and a variety of other civic organizations. During their stay the delegates are exposed to our culture by living in the homes of their hosts. They also meet with their American counterpart professionals to gain information about operational techniques as they are practiced in this country. Hopefully, lasting ties and contacts are made that will promote good will between the two nations as these young leaders rise in their own organizations. FFGA has hosted more than a dozen of these groups since its inception in the year 2000. To learn more about this program please see the following web site: <http://openworld.gov/about/overview.php>



### **Outbound Exchange to Peru, South America: 12 – 25 May 2013**

Glenda Wilhelm, Exchange Director for the exchange to Lima, Cuzco and Machu Picchu, Peru, reports that two people have had to drop out of the exchange due to medical reasons and there is still room available to participate in this exchange. The last possible date to sign up is March 31st. At that time all fees must be paid. To see details of this exchange please visit [www.friendshipforceatlanta.com](http://www.friendshipforceatlanta.com) For any questions regarding this exchange please contact either Glenda or John Wilhelm at 770-921-4333 by telephone or [jwainc7@bellsouth.net](mailto:jwainc7@bellsouth.net) by e-mail. Make checks payable to FFGA and mail to Mrs. Glenda Wilhelm at: 6051 Millstone Run / Stone Mountain, GA 30087

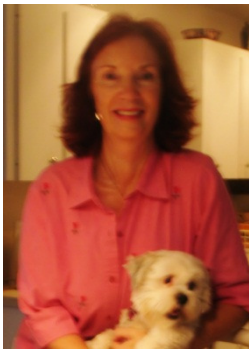


## Outbound Exchange to Sydney & Gold Coast, Australia: 02 – 17 September 2013

As mentioned at the beginning of this newsletter in “The President’s Corner”, this exchange now has an exceptionally talented Exchange Director in the person of Ms. Susan Mills. Although she is relatively new to FFGA she has impressed both the club’s president and our highly experienced conductor of outbound exchanges Mr. Harvey Brickley, who has been serving temporarily as the E.D. Not only has this lady become thoroughly familiar with the voluminous Friendship Force Exchange Manual, she has already contacted her Australian counterparts to tentatively agree upon dates and possible itineraries for this adventure “down under”.

As it stands now the exchange will get underway on the 2nd of September and return on the 17th, with a week of home hosting in Sydney followed by a flight to Brisbane, then travel by land to the city of Gold Coast for another week with Australian hosts before returning to the U.S.A. The total cost per person is approximately \$2,750, which includes all charges for transportation and both host and FFI fees. It does not include the twenty Australian Dollar charge for a tourist visa. This must be applied for by the traveler and can be done over the internet using a major credit card. Details are available at the web site <https://www.eta.immi.gov.au/ETA/etas.jsp> All air travel will be aboard Qantas Airways or one of their affiliated airline partners. If you are interested in joining this exchange, you will need to make a good faith deposit of \$200 per person made payable to FFGA by no later than February 28<sup>th</sup>. This deposit is fully refundable until April 1st, when airline passage will have to be booked. Please mail your deposit check to: Ms. Susan Mills / 6220 Brookwood Road / Norcross, GA 30092.

Questions may be sent via e-mail to Ms. Mills at: [delray316@gmail.com](mailto:delray316@gmail.com) She may also be contacted by cell phone at 386-848-6220. (Note: you may have to dial 1-386-848-6220 if calling from a land line instead of a cell phone.)



E.D. Ms. Susan Mills

Susan Mills was born in New York City but lived the majority of her life in Iowa, where she worked at Iowa State University, in Ames. During her career she was employed as a college/university program administrator and states she loved every moment of it. Some of the positions in which she worked were: admissions, financial aid, housing, disability services, academic advising, and teacher certification. Ms. Mills has traveled extensively, including a period during which she taught English as a foreign language in Colombia, South America. She also lived in Glasgow, Scotland for a month as part of a university staff exchange program and has visited Ireland twice. Many of her vacations have been spent in the eastern Caribbean. She is looking forward to more travel, both independently and with the Friendship Force.

Susan retired in the fall of 2011 from the community college/state college system in the state of Florida and moved to the Atlanta area to be near her two grown daughters and her grandchildren, ages one and three years. She currently resides in the city of Norcross and shares her abode with Presley, an eight-year-old Lhasa Apso and with a calico cat named Alley that is thirteen years old and has been with her since her days living in Iowa.

## SPECIAL EVENTS



### 2013 Friendship Force International's World Conference 23 – 25 November 2013

We know it is early still to be signing up for something that is just short of being ten months away but please keep in mind that FFI must coordinate the conference with some 350 clubs worldwide. As these events are usually well attended, it may be smart to obtain your registration and hotel reservation as early as possible. FFI has already put together some great entertainment and tour programs, so it is not all seminars and classes. New Orleans is a fun city with many sites to see, and most of them are within walking distance of the conference hotel, or at least a short trolley ride away. Speaking of which, one can ride the trolleys for \$1.25 or if you are over 65 and have a picture I.D. it is only \$0.40. You can also purchase a 3-day pass for unlimited rides for \$12.00.

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If you are considering going you might find it more enjoyable to take the train on the AmTrak Crescent line. The seats in coach are comfortable, spacious and have internet connections. It is an eleven-hour trip, but it is a scenic one with wide windows for viewing. There is a club car and food is available for purchase. The current price is \$72.00 per person but AmTrak frequently features discounts. For more information on the conference please visit the FFI website at [www.thefriendshipforce.com](http://www.thefriendshipforce.com) and click on the event logo like the one shown at the upper left. Please let the editor of this newsletter know if you plan on attending. Maybe we could form a group from FFGA and share the experience together. Just send an e-mail to [kvickga@hotmail.com](mailto:kvickga@hotmail.com) saying "Count me/us in".



**You say you are sad because you are unable to go to this really great conference to have fun and meet folks from everywhere?**

**Well you don't have to be sad any longer. You can meet some of those same folks and have fun right here in the Atlanta area!**



### HOW???

Many of the international visitors already registered to attend the FFI World Conference have expressed an interest in being home-hosted by FF members while in the U.S.A. over the traditional Thanksgiving period before returning to their homelands. What a great opportunity to share our bounty with one or two of these visitors and to be able to show off our home town as well! Their travel day would be on the 26th of November, and they would depart on the 29th or 30th, meaning that they would need to be home-hosted for either three or four nights. No formal club activities are planned during the period so they would be your guests exclusively, but they understand that they will need to pay their own way should you take them to any attractions. We know that the Thanksgiving Day meal is special and usually involves family gatherings, but wouldn't it be nice to have visitors from another land provide some different conversation at the dinner table, or even better to maybe add an exotic dish from their homeland to your holiday meal? Please give it a thought, and if you feel that you would be able to host during this period let President Williams know as soon as possible so FFI can let their attendees know how many of them can be accommodated. Contact Cynthia Williams by e-mail at: [madamew@hotmail.com](mailto:madamew@hotmail.com)

### ODDS AND ENDS

**Don't be left out!** Our membership chair reports that there are still a few members who have not yet sent in their annual dues. Individual e-mails have been sent and even personal telephone calls have been made since last October to encourage renewals. Memberships always expire on December 31st of each year and it is now a month beyond that and time for the 2013 FFGA Directory to be published. Therefore it must be assumed that those who have not sent in their dues no longer wish to remain members. Their name(s) will be deleted from our club's membership rolls, and no further information about club matters will be sent to them. This information does not apply to those members who joined FFGA after July 1st, 2012.

If any of your information as listed in the club directory changes throughout the year, please remember to send an e-mail to our Membership Chair, Catherine Douds, at: [cdouds@bellsouth.net](mailto:cdouds@bellsouth.net) notifying her of the changes.

**Keep an eye out . . .** For the 2013 Club Directory. It will go to the publisher next week, and a copy will be mailed to your home address. If you have not received your copy by February 23rd it could mean one of three things: 1. We do not have your correct mailing address; 2. We did not receive your 2013 dues and you are no longer on our mailing list; and 3. The U.S. Postal Service has sent your copy to Timbuktu or erroneously destroyed it. Of course, it is remotely possible that we made a mistake and simply overlooked your name when addressing copies or even mislaid it on the way to the post office. All of the above, except Timbuktu, have happened before. Please let us know if you did not get your copy by e-mailing [cdouds@bellsouth.net](mailto:cdouds@bellsouth.net)

**Do you need a speaker?** Our club now has a few speakers who are capable of giving a presentation to small audiences about Friendship Force and the benefits of becoming a member. If you belong to a civic organization or church that might be interested, please contact Catherine Douds at [cdouds@bellsouth.net](mailto:cdouds@bellsouth.net) Our club's inventory includes an LCD Projector, amplifiers, projection screen and a professional five minute DVD put together by FFI about Friendship Force.

**Upcoming in April . . .** Time to start thinking about the Atlanta Symphony's Decorator Show House. This is an annual event which FFGA has supported for many years as a civic duty. We normally furnish docents who after receiving a briefing remain in one area of the show house for a few hours to answer questions about their area and to see that no items are removed. For volunteering as a docent one is allowed to tour the show house at no cost (Normally a ticket to do this is \$25.00.) When the FFGA Volunteers' shift is over, we usually adjourn to a local restaurant for lunch and socializing. More will be published in the future about this volunteer activity by way of a Newsflash, as plans are consolidated.



Steve Douds

**Check it out . . .** Steve Douds, our webmaster, would like to remind you that you should check our club's internet website on a regular basis, as updates are made to it almost weekly. The FFGA website is located at: <http://www.friendshipforceatlanta.com> There you will find information on exchanges, club by-laws, club officers and committee chairs, contact information, events, past news information for reference and much more. There is even a link to what to see and do in Atlanta and the current weather for our area. You might also want to take a look at the website of our parent organization at <http://www.thefriendshipforce.org> at least once a month.

**Newsflash Policy . . .** As the Newsletter Editor I am also responsible for the Newsflashes you will be receiving from time-to-time. The Newsflash was developed for making sure that club members are kept informed of items of interest and events that may occur before the next bi-monthly Newsletter is issued.

You will probably have noticed that the "To:" address line is always to Kent Vickers (kvickga@hotmail.com). This is so that only your name appears as the recipient, instead of all 30 or 40 other addressees appearing as well. It is for your security and to keep your e-mail address from being pirated to some hacker's spam list. The "Subject:" line will always begin with FFGA. This is so that you may add e-mails from FFGA to your acceptable list and they will go to your inbox and not into your "Junk" file. The "01-13 A, B, C or D means that it is the first Newsflash of the current year and the letter stands for the group of members into which your e-mail address falls. I am only allowed by Hotmail to send e-mails to less than 50 addresses at one time. Therefore your name is in one of those groups.

Every now and then I receive a request to send a Newsflash to the entire club membership about an event, concert, or activity taking place, which has absolutely nothing to do with the FFGA. I realize that each of you probably is a member of other groups and that they also have the need to reach as many people as possible when they are sponsoring an event. However, the sole purpose of the Newsflash is to keep you informed about events pertaining directly to FFGA that have or will take place between publications of the club's bi-monthly Newsletter. I zealously guard your e-mail address and will not use it to fill your inbox with non-FFGA related material. To do so would only cause you to soon disregard the Newsflashes as just another piece of Spam mail. I was recently challenged on this and have brought my viewpoint before the Board of Directors. They have accepted this policy regarding the use of the Newsflash medium and it is now an FFGA policy, as well. In short, please do not ask me to send anything out to the FFGA membership that is not FFGA related, regardless of how humanitarian, interesting or worthy that it may appear.

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♥ Have a joyous Valentine's Day ♥

Kent G. Vickers  
FFGA  
News Editor