



Volume 32, Issue 1

January/February, 2013

Club ends 2012 with gala affair

by Don Wolter, editor

Some forty club members gathered in the party room of Gordon and Mary Elscott for MNTC's annual holiday party on December 8.

As usual, the event combined business and pleasure.

In the election of officers for the 2013 board of directors, Jim Collins, Rita May and Ken Scherber were elected to the positions of president, secretary and treasurer.

The position of vice-president remains open as no candidate has been found.

Jim Collins announced that he will continue an aggressive search for a candidate to fill this position. He urged members to step forward and become part of the leadership for the new year.

In what has become an annual tradition, former club president Joyce Sharp conducted a drive to collect food and cash for a local food shelf. Members contributed 64



It's hard to tell who has the bigger smile, newly elected president, Jim Collins, or the outgoing chief executive, Blaine McCutchan. In any case, the gavel was passed.

pounds of non-perishable food and \$38 in cash.

She reports, "There were some smiling volunteers when they looked in my trunk to see all the food plus the money."

A time of food and fellowship followed the business meeting.

As usual club members provided a lavish spread of main dishes,

salads and desserts to ensure that no one went home hungry.

President Jim Collins expresses his thanks to the Elscotts for hosting the gathering and to Buddy and Donna Leak and Dagmar Runyon, activities directors for taking care of logistics of providing beverages, plates and utensils.



Club member Jacquie Hagen found a lot to like as she checked out the delectable choices on the buffet.

Look inside for upcoming events!

***Terra Cotta warrior exhibit on January 15. See page 4.
Nellie at the St. Paul History Theater. See page 4.***

Words from the president

by Jim Collins,
club president



Friends!

It was great seeing so many of you at the holiday party and annual meeting.

On behalf of all of us, thank you, Mary and Gordy, for providing the party room and being such fabulous hosts.

I would like to thank the membership for electing me president of our club and will do my best to live up to your confidence and trust. With their dedication, thoughtful decisions and hard work, our board members will make my job an easy one.

I would like to express special thanks to our outgoing president, Blaine McCutchan. He has served our club for two years and has been a valuable mentor for me.

For our local club and Friendship Force International to be successful, we need the support of each member. One of the many ways you can help is by encouraging your friends to join Friendship Force. By becoming a member, a person is introduced to some great people within the club while also experiencing the opportunity to learn about other cultures and further the cause of world peace. Friendship Force is truly a wonderful gift to give.

A second way in which members can benefit our club is by volunteering for a position on one of our committees or by becoming an ambassador on outgoing exchanges or a host for incoming groups.

We also need someone to step into the position of vice-president, which is currently vacant. This is a relatively easy job. I speak from two years of experience. If you call me and volunteer, I won't have to call you.

As the great American philosopher, Willie Nelson says, "I get by with a little help from my friends." Thank you in advance for your support, your commitment to improving international understanding and your friendship.

Together let's have a wonderful year.

FFMN/TC Board of Directors

Elected Officers

President: Jim Collins

idicollins@aol.com, 612-869-1587

Vice-President: To be announced

Secretary: Rita Mays

ritawmays@yahoo.com, 612-730-5129

Treasurer: Ken Scherber

kenfargo@yahoo.com, 651-487-4001

Past President: Blaine McCutchan

helloblaine@yahoo.com, 763-443-7879

Committee Chairpersons

Activities: Donna Leak and Dagmar Runyon

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runy1dag@comcast.net, 651-698-7956

Membership: Berni Marleau

beallnew2@comcast.net, 651-481-0721

Exchange Coordinator: Barb Emer

bemer@usfamily.net, 651-787-9791

Members-at-Large

Carol "Ben" Szyplinski

mnbenher@aol.com, 763-588-1158

Don Wolter

donwolter@hotmail.com, 763-545-0007

Exchange Directors

Outgoing to Rio Grand Valley, Texas

January

Barb Emer, bemer@usfamily.net, 651-787-9791

Outgoing to Shelby, North Carolina

October

Gene and Marie Selchow, G.M.Selchow@unique-software.com,

651-688-8202

Non-Board Appointments

Historian: Berni Marleau

beallnew2@comcast.net, 651-481-0721

Webmaster: Jane Bardon

janebardon@yahoo.com, 651-484-7989

E-mail Announcements: Carol "Ben" Szyplinski

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Shelby, NC club offers return exchange

by Gene and Marie Selchow, exchange directors

The Friendship Force Club of Shelby, North Carolina, has graciously invited us to be their guests beginning on October 8.

Shelby—nicknamed “City of Pleasant Living”—promises to show us Southern hospitality at its finest.

Four years ago, ambassadors from Shelby were in Minnesota at the end of August, and we have been looking forward to seeing their beautiful part of North Carolina ever since.

The population of Shelby is about 21,000, so the city will give us a relaxed environment, but with a variety of sights to see and things to do.

We may also include a day trip to the George Vanderbilt Mansion, Biltmore, near Asheville. Vanderbilt (1862-1914) made his fortune in railroads, steamships and other enterprises. He built the mansion as a summer retreat on a 125,000 acre lot. It would have taken a week to ride around the estate on horseback. Read more at google.com.

Marie and I are honored to be your exchange directors, and we will pack the best possible experiences into this event.

Some of you have mentioned your intentions at the holiday party. Please reconfirm with us. We hope to fill this group exclusively from our club.

Please contact us at g.m.selchow@unique-software.com or 651-688-8202 .



Some exchange directors hit the ground running. Gene Selchow did not even wait until he landed. Within minutes of volunteering to lead the fall exchange to North Carolina, he was recruiting ambassadors. Here he chats up Doreen Knoth, a new club member.

Saddle up; hitch up your wagons!

by Barb Emer, exchange director

Imagine a herd of buffalo thundering across the open range as you get up close and personal with native elk and buffalo.

Explore the history of the American cowboy and envision their rugged, lonely lifestyle as they drove cattle across the prairie to reach the railroads.

Visit the Chickasaw Cultural Center, the largest Indian cultural center in the U.S.

Home hospitality for this exchange will be provided by four Friendship Force clubs: Greater Omaha, Lincoln, Kansas and Oklahoma.

Upon arrival, you will spend the night in Omaha, where you'll receive a hardy Midwest welcome. This will be followed by five nights of home hosting in Lincoln—where the West begins. Nebraska introduces you to homesteading on the Great Plains and the vision settlers



brought here from all over the world.

In Kansas, you will be home-hosted for five nights in Wichita, your home on the range.

Oklahoma City will host the final portion of the exchange with the theme “Taming a Harsh Land.” You will experience a western rodeo at the 89er parade during their 82nd year of celebration. The end of the journey will feature an official chuckwagon cookout.

“The Great Plains Wagon West” is ready to roll! Will you come along?

Dates: April 8 to 24, 2013.

Estimated price: \$995, which includes FFI fees, host fees, and transportation among the four clubs. The price does not include airfare.

For more information go to thefriendshipforce.org or contact Betty Starr at www.friendshipforcelincoln.org.

Let's Eat Out (**LEO**) or life goes on— even in winter!

by Dagmar Runyon, activities co-chair

Check out these two exciting events to broaden your intellectual horizon and maybe also your waistline.

Tuesday, January 15

Where: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 2400 3rd Avenue South

What: Exhibit--China's terra cotta warriors: the first emperor's legacy

Background information: Buried for more than 2000 years, the terra cotta warriors of China emerged to instant fame in 1974. Archaeologists are still excavating the massive tomb of China's first emperor, Qin Shi Huang. There, 7,000 of the life-sized figures were discovered along with horses, chariots and other accoutrements the ruler expected to need in the afterlife. The show's objects include bronze and jade artifacts, gold and silver ornaments and architectural elements—some never seen outside China. On loan from more than 13 Chinese museums, the objects offer insight into an extraordinary moment in Chinese history, when emperor Qin transformed several states into a dominant superpower.

When: 10 a.m. Meet in the 24th-Street lobby entrance.

Tickets: Purchase tickets for \$18—weekday price. Call 612-870-3000 or e-mail www.artsmia.org. Tickets might be available at the door, but it's best to order ahead of time.

Lunch: Minneapolis Art Institute in D'Amico and Sons restaurant or in the Mezzanine, a casually elegant cafeteria-style dining room

Sunday, February 17

Where: St. Paul History Theater, 30 East 10th Street— between Cedar and Wabasha in downtown St. Paul

What: Play production of *Nellie*, an approximately two-hour performance. This is a celebration of Minnesota labor activist Nellie Stone Johnson, who paved the way for social change.

When: 2 p.m.

Tickets: Purchase tickets by calling the box office 651-292-4327. Cost for seniors: \$30, \$34, \$38.

LEO: Meet in the lobby entrance after the production. We can eat at Cossetta's on 7th Street for an early supper or make other arrangements.

Other options for group gatherings are endless: We could schedule movie outings, attend jazz performances on 7th Street in St. Paul or in Hopkins. How about big band dancing with dance lessons at St. Clair and Snelling in St. Paul? If you have an idea, check with me or Donna Leak, and we can have Ben Szyplinski send members an e-mail.

ps: Call me at 651-698-7956 if you purchase tickets for the January or February events, so that I know how many people to expect.

Lost and found

by Barb Emer,
exchange coordinator

I have a blue scarf which someone left at our holiday party. If you lost it or you know who did, please contact me at bemer@usfamily.net or 651-787-9791.



Check out these websites

www.friendshipforce.org
www.friendshipforcetwincities.org

FF exchange destroys stereotypes

by Bev Hanson, club member, as told to Berni Marleau, membership director

I heard about Friendship Force from a newspaper article. Rather than take tours and see the usual tourist sights, I like to stay with families or in small out-of-the-way hotels. Traveling this way, I can immerse myself in the culture, meet people and learn more about the country.

In 1988, I signed up for an exchange to Santiago and Vino del Mar, Chile. The exchange lasted twelve days, and there were twelve solo women ambassadors in our group. I wondered how the Chileans would react to women traveling alone. I had a preconceived notion that the women of Chili would not have the freedom to do anything without the permission of their spouses. Was I in for a surprise! I met women who had careers and families, were the heads of their households, were divorcees and were single career women. Women traveling alone? Definitely not an issue.

In 1988, Augusto Pinochet ruled Chile, and there was some unrest in the country. Soldiers with weapons were everywhere. To me, they all looked alike, with the same build, looks, height, weight, etc.

Members of my host family either served in the parliament or worked for the government. They were, therefore, on a watch list and could be arrested at any time. One of their sons who was on this list had escaped from Chile with his family and had relocated to Perth, Australia.

During our stay, we went to museums, concerts, plays, did a lot of walking and went on bus tours. We went past the markets but never stopped to shop. My host did take me to the food market. I was very impressed with the fresh fruit and seafood. On one of our day trips, our bus was stopped several times and was thoroughly searched by police and soldiers. We had to show our passports. I didn't feel frightened, but it was startling to have to go through this. The reason for these check-points—we found out later— was that Pinochet was traveling in the area.

I noticed that when people were asked about the indigenous population of the country, they did not want to talk about them. One of my day hosts took me to the foothills of the Andes. We were out of the city, and there were no soldiers with weapons to be seen. I was out of the car maybe 30 seconds to take a picture when up popped a soldier with a gun slung over his shoulder. My day host said we had to get out of there, and we left immediately. I never did get a picture of the Andes.

One of my requests was to visit a school. We went to a public elementary school and visited the kindergarten and fourth grade classes. The older group wanted to practice their English. Before I left the classroom, I asked if anyone had questions. A boy raised his hand and asked me how old I was. The teacher was mortified because she found the



Bev Hanson and her fellow travelers posed in front of an equestrian statue in downtown Santiago during a day of sightseeing. She says, "I'm the one in the middle with the big purse nearly reaching the ground."

question rude and thought I would be offended. I told her it was okay because at least he did not ask me about my weight.

The only bad experience I had was a bout of food poisoning. As we entered an eatery, I overheard some of the people in the group saying this restaurant was not a good choice, because the food did not look good or fresh. As it turned out, their grumbling foreshadowed a rumbling in my tummy a few hours later. The grumblers had been right.

Getting to the airport at the end of the exchange was a bit of a challenge for some. I had no problems, but a few ambassadors who took the subway were tear-gassed by police trying to control demonstrating college students.

When I left, my host said that I was very lucky because they hadn't had any *terra motos* while I was there. The word sounded Japanese to me so I asked her what she meant. She explained that the word meant earthquake and that they experienced tremors regularly. They hadn't had one since I arrived and were happy about that. The feeling was mutual.

When I returned home, I wrote my hosts a thank-you note but never heard from them. Given the situation in Chile at that time, I can understand why they did not feel comfortable corresponding with me.

This exchange was a wonderful introduction to Friendship Force. To me traveling is about interacting with people and getting to know their culture, and that is the true spirit of our organization.

Looking ahead!



January.....Exchange to Rio Grande Valley.
Barb Emer, ED.

January 15.....Terra Cotta warriors at MIA. See page 4.

February 17....**Nellie** at the St. Paul History Theater.
See page 4.

JulyPicnic and semi-annual meeting. Details to
to be announced.

October 8.....Exchange to Shelby, NC. See page 3.

The *Minnesota Ambassador* appears six times annually. Don Wolter edits and produces it. You may contact him as follows:



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For questions regarding the mailing of the newsletter, contact Berni Marleau at 651-481-0721 or beallnew2@comcast.net.

The deadline for submitting copy and pictures for the March/April issue is February 15.

The new year—a time for renewal

by Berni Marleau, membership director

If you have not renewed your membership for 2013, please do so. The renewal form is on our website at www.friendshipforcetwincities.org, or you may call me at 651-481-0721 and I will mail you a form.

The cutoff date for renewal is April 15. If you do not want to renew, please let me know either by phone at 651-481-0721 or e-mail at beallnew2@comcast.net. Then I will place you on my “Do Not Bug” list. If you are unsure as to whether you have paid, look on the address label after your name. If you see a “12,” you haven’t paid; if there is a “13,” you have paid. For those receiving the *Ambassador* electronically, please e-mail me and I will let you know.

We have two new members. They are Doreen Knoth of Eden Prairie and Jeffrey Samuelson of Sebeka. Their address and contact information will be in the 2013 roster in the May/June issue of the *Ambassador*. If you would like it sooner, please contact me.

Let’s welcome Doreen and Jeffrey to our club and make them feel at home.

We had a total of \$687 in donations for 2012. A big “Thank you” goes to the following for their contributions: Barbara Gould, Murr Senn, Gordon and Mary Elscott, Gloria MacRae, Dolores Killian, Ben Szplinski, Vicki Hill, Beverly Hanson, Sam and Ava Guerrero, Susan Meyer, Berni Marleau, Barb Emer, Jack and Betty Lou Cardinal, Myron and Lavern Schettl, Willis and Rita Croonquist, Dagmar Runyon, John and Ardy Becklin, Jane and Jack Bardon, Don and Betty Lemmon, Lois Velasco, and Susan Hengelfeldt. If I have forgotten to mention anyone who made a donation, my sincere apologies

and thanks.

These donations are tax deductible. If you need a receipt for tax purposes, please contact me.



HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!

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