



...You can make a difference!

The Friendship Force of the San Francisco Bay Area

...a force to promote peace

Vol. 24 No. 5

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA NEWSLETTER

November/December 2007

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Time flies when you are running as fast as you can. Two years go by in the blink of an eye. The time has been spent on worthwhile endeavors: exchanges to the Philippines, Germany, and Wisconsin (Madison and Milwaukee); the establishment and use of the Speakers Bureau to try to recruit new members, as well as a meeting especially for new and prospective members; the continued fostering of the Friendship Forest (the memorial benches will soon be in place at Prusch Park); bringing the membership levels back from their lowest point in 2005 to around 100 today; hosting Queanbeyan, Australia and Madison during the last two years; having great World Friendship Days and Holiday Luncheons in Fremont and Sunnyvale; the return to San Francisco for our September meetings in the main public library; the interesting and team building area group gatherings in San Francisco, Palo Alto, San Jose, Fremont and Union City. Yep, two years fly by when you are enjoying yourself.

In this Newsletter other members are going to write about Germany, but I have to add my two cents, too. I lived in Germany in the '70's during another life. So I had something to compare my new impressions with. First, I have to say the Germans are a different culture from ours. They look like us, but they are different. How, you say? Well, in old East Germany they all have to agree upon a decision as a group. I think that is the Communist influence. In the West people are more autonomous, but they have their differences, too. The differences are more prominent between the Old East and West. They must have their cake and coffee at 4 p.m., and dinner is light, soup and salad. In the old East, the food is heavy and full of fat, but the people are thin and athletic, while in the West they are slow and heavy set. The East is jealous of the richness of the West, while the Westerners are jealous of the East because they are getting financial resources that they think the West should have. However, my take was that the East was thriving and so was the West. The West thought the infrastructure of the East was great, but I saw how good the infrastructure of the West was. The people of the East were warm and invigorating, while in the West they were a little more standoffish and sedate. These are general impressions and not to be confused with our hosts, who were excellent and kind. Karen and I ran the gamut, from an entrepreneurial widow in old East Germany, to a retired Air Force General and

his frustrated teacher wife in the West, followed by a 23-year-old single mother and student in the far West. Yes, a fantastic time in Chemnitz, Berlin, Hannover, and Gelsenkirchen.

In conclusion, I could not have accomplished anything without my two Boards of Directors and Vice Presidents Ron Greenwald, and, especially, Karen McCready.

—Barry Rader, President

MADISON, WISCONSIN EXCHANGE 9/19-24

The exchange started off with a wild, windy, and swaying Golden Gate Bridge/city tour by Cable Car Charters with Henry, Tour Guide at the wheel! As the tour wound through the Golden Gate Park, blankets were exchanged for a sunny afternoon lunch at the De Young Museum and tea at the Japanese Tea Garden.

After tea, many adventures followed as everyone ventured out on their own to discover the city via MUNI, cab, and cars to the Wharf, Chinatown, Presidio, and the Castro.

Our next group activity took place at the beautiful Filoli Gardens for a tour and lunch. Then off to Stanford University for an informative tour of the Cantor museum and Memorial Church by Dee and David Gustavson. With 100 cameras ready, our photo shoot began in front of the photogenic quadrangle's arches. At day's end, many looked forward to the various pot lucks planned to meet and greet our Ambassadors from Madison.

On our last day together as a group, we met at the San Francisco Public Library for a catered box lunch of South American, Cuban, and Mexican cuisine from La Parrilla Grill for the Farewell Party. Following lunch, we attended the FFSBA

 **Holiday Luncheon** 
Sunday, December 9, 2007, 12–3 p.m.

Location: Michael's at Shoreline in Mountain View
The reservation flyer was mailed in November.

**Mark December 9th on your calendar
and plan to join us!**



Annual Meeting. The program featured a presentation by Ron Greenwald about Habitat for Humanity trips, and the Wildflowers from the Mayflower Community Chorus sang, including their signature song “Peace on Earth.” Keeping with tradition, we all clasped hands around the room and sang together with smiles and joy in our hearts.

I want to take this opportunity to extend thanks to Nancy Mueller, Madison Exchange Director, my Madison/FFSFBA Committee, Hosts, Day Hosts, and Pot Luck Hosts for just saying, YES! Without all these wonderful, fun loving adventures, we would not have had such a wonderful, successful exchange.

—Gail A. Boyd, Madison Exchange Director

WEB SITE FOR INTERNATIONAL FOOD

I’ve started a website where people can upload and share their food photos from around the world—whether it’s street food, homecooking or restaurant food. It’s a way for everyone to sit down at the table together—at least virtually! I know there are a lot of photographers in the group, so I’d love to have club members add photos from their travels.

The address is: <http://www.BeenThereAteThat.com>

I also write a food blog on the site—and anyone who went on the trip to Kyrgyzstan a few years back might be interested in this story: <http://www.beenthereatethat.com/blog/index.php?/archives/11-Pig-Headed.html>

—Gayle Keck

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9th

12 NOON to 3:00 PM

We will be gathering for holiday friendship and cheer again this year at Michaels at Shoreline, located in Mountain View’s Shoreline Park. The program includes a report on the exchange to Germany and singing of holiday songs. Think about bringing someone new who might enjoy the Friendship Force.

The social hour is noon to 1:00 p.m. with a no-host bar. Lunch will be served at 1:00 p.m. Lunch choices include New York Steak (\$26), Broiled Salmon (\$23), and Wild Mushroom Crepes (\$17).

Please make your reservation by Monday, December 3rd. Send your check payable to FFSFBA to Darlene Boyanich. Include your name(s), and menu selections. Questions? Call Darlene.

Directions: Hwy 101 to Shoreline North (towards the bay); follow the road 2 miles to Michaels. Their phone is 650-962-1014.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME IS HERE

You will soon receive a club membership renewal notice. Hopefully you will all renew your membership. I will provide membership renewal forms at the Dec. 9 Luncheon, so you can fill out the form and pay your membership dues at that time if you wish.

—Louise Heiduk



The incoming group from Madison, Wisconsin, with FFSFBA hosts, near three works by Rodin, taken on our visit to the Rodin Garden at the Cantor Art Center at Stanford University.

LITERACY PLUS PROGRAM HONORS BOB COWEN

When Barry and I went to the reception for Literacy Plus volunteers at Hayward's City Hall on November 7, we had no idea that we would be in the cheering section for our FFSFBA member, Bob Cowen. I completed training just before we left for the Germany Exchange, and I have had only three tutoring sessions with my student. Bob, however, has been tutoring for twenty of the twenty-two years of this program. Not only was he lauded for his long and outstanding service, the library administration also presented to him a proclamation from his state legislators recognizing his contribution to many learners and to the community. Perhaps some of our other members have some time to donate to this very worthy cause in their own communities. We're proud of you, Bob!

—Karen L. McCready

SPREADING THE WORD, ALONG WITH A GIFT IDEA

“Have flipchart; will travel.” On November 6, Barry and I loaded up our roadshow, including the easel and the FFSFBA brochures, and headed over to a Fremont church to make a speakers' bureau presentation to the Country Club of Washington Township Women's Club. As the name might indicate, this chapter of the national organization has a long, distinguished history of providing programs for children, scholarships, and other philanthropic activities. The current president is former FFSFBA member Mary Wolfe. Mary set

the tone for us to settle into a comfortable, informal account of our experiences. Later, Mary and another former FFSFBA member, Gladys Rohrer shared their own memories of Friendship Force activities. Gladys knew that several of us would enjoy hearing about the time that Margaret Kingery led her and a couple of Egyptian young men on a brisk walking tour of San Francisco. Mary wrapped up with a stirring testimonial for the lasting friendships she has made around the world as a Friendship Force ambassador. The audience of about thirty women listened intently and asked many questions. We want to thank Mary Lynn Pelican for arranging this opportunity for us and Mary Wolfe for helping us to convey the story of Friendship Force.

Although we did not sign up any new members from this outing, one of the ladies said that she wants to buy a gift membership for her son. How about that for a gift idea? Does anyone have a friend or relative who might enjoy such a gift, especially one who is about to retire and have more time to travel? Bring them on!

—Karen L. McCready

SURVEY SAYS: WE LIKE CARPOOLS AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS

The board wants to thank the twenty who responded to the survey regarding general meetings. If we may interpret this as a representative sampling—20 per cent of our membership—we gained some valuable insight from this effort. Here is a summary of the responses:

- With 12 of the 20 checking “distance of travel to meeting,” we know that we need to encourage and help to coordinate carpools. More on this later.
- Six suggested that we vary the day of the week, and we will continue to try to do that, depending upon availability of facilities.
- The most popular type of program is “cultural lectures about other countries and nationalities,” with 18 showing at least moderate interest in those.
- Sixteen wanted to hear about recent outgoing exchanges or conferences.
- Cultural movies received 14 votes.
- Travel tips, entertainment (e. g., singing or dancing groups), and world religions were equally popular with 12 checks for each.
- Health and other senior issues seem to be better left for other organizations.
- Some suggestions for programs were to consult with Sister City committees about possible speakers and to describe what it’s like to home host as well as the details about being an ambassador.

To sum up our conclusions, we know that we need to accommodate the travel distances to meetings by moving the meetings around the Bay as much as possible and also to form a network to help people get to meetings. While the programs may not be the main reason or even a major reason why people attend meetings, we are working to provide an interesting variety of thought provoking and informative topics. As the vice president-elect, and thus in charge of programs for 2008, Dee Gustavson invites everyone to contact her with program ideas.

—Karen L. McCready

REPORT ON OUR FRIENDSHIP FOREST

A lot is happening at our Prusch Park Friendship Forest. Last week, Don Dillon arranged for another truckload of wood chips to be delivered. After the gardener pushes piles around with the tractor, we may have to have a work party to rake the piles out.

We were planning to order two benches to be placed on both sides of the ARBOR at the entrance to our Friendship Forest. When we were gathering information to order the benches, Gina, the Park Superintendent, gave us one that was left from a previous project! So we have ordered the second bench and scheduled the subcontractor work on the concrete pads for the benches, which should begin soon.

Don Dillon has ordered new plaques for the trees established in our Forest (18, I believe) to be all the same color (green and white) and hopefully more permanent.

The next project we hope to accomplish is a map board listing the trees by name and the group honored for each, and identified as FFSFBA FRIENDSHIP FOREST. On this board will be listed (in a different color) the trees that have died and been replaced several times and will not replace again. Different types of trees will replace them.

Come and enjoy our Friendship Forest!

—Mary Alice van Doorn, Friendship Forest Historian

GERMANY EXCHANGE GARNERS RAVE REVIEWS!

Cinematography: “Driving through the beautiful countryside with all the fall colors was stunning.” —Sara Turner

Action sequences: “Heartstopping races to catch the train!”

—Barry Rader

“See the boulders from which the wicked witches of the West fly out on April 30!”

—Karen McCready

Dialogue: “One of the highlights of our Germany trip happened very early. After traveling for what seemed like 3 1/2 days we arrived in Chemnitz to be greeted by a very lively young couple who spoke little or no English. Since we speak little German we had a great time with them learning to speak Deutschlish, trading dictionaries back and forth, and made some good new friends.”

—Elinor and Bruce Wilner

“View many community gardens, and visit several of the garden cottages.”

—Dee Gustavson

Realism: “See firsthand the contrasts between life in the old West and the old East.”

—Wil Heiduk

But we all know that this was not a movie. In fact, what draws most of us Friendship Force members back for one exchange after another is the experience of life as average citizens actually live it, making friendships that you hope will last for the rest of your lives. Of course our hosts want us to see all the picture postcard sights that anyone would expect to see in that area, as well as sharing some time with their families and getting involved in their typical domestic routines. While we twelve ambassadors from FFSFBA (Dee & Dave Gustavson, Wil & Louise Heiduk, Katharine Kleinke, Karen McCready, Barry Rader, Karen Rice, Sara Turner, Bruce & Elinor Wilner, and Bob Worcester) did spend seventeen days in the same cities, sharing most group activities, each of us had unique experiences with our respective families, and most of us traveled on our own either before or after the exchange weeks. You will see some of those postcard views as well our individual candid shots during our program at the Holiday Luncheon. In the meantime, I will try to capture some of the group and personal highlights.

A new member recently asked for a program “describing exactly what it is like to be an ambassador.” Of course, no two experiences are the same, but just explaining how we got from point A—SFO—to Chemnitz—our first home stay city—might provide a good sample. Barry and I departed SFO on a “red eye” on September 29, flying via Toronto and Frankfurt to Berlin, taking a cab to the Berlin train station (Bahnhof), meeting up with the other ambassadors at the station, taking a train with the group to Leipzig, and changing to a train to Chemnitz. We arrived in Chemnitz about 7 p.m. on September 30. Whew! Exhilarating, huh? Of course, their time is nine hours ahead of ours.

You may know that FFI had assigned our club only the week in Hannover, which we shared with a club from Estes Park; but Wil Heiduk discovered on the German FF website that Chemnitz had no incoming exchange scheduled, so Dee Gustavson contacted their president, Margit, and convinced her that their small club could find enough hosts for our group. We wanted to see firsthand how the eastern sector had changed since reunification of the country and how they were adapting to life without Soviet control. Indeed, no matter how hard the government has tried to bring former East Germany up to the economic level of the West, they still are playing catch up. As we may have expected, the generation that grew up learning Russian rather than English in school was not nearly as fluent in English as their western counterparts. In fact, some of the hosts spoke no English. We were fortunate to have Dee and Dave Gustavson, Wil Heiduk, and Katharine Kleinke along to translate for us. We learned not to expect to have signs and tour narration in English. As always, we found ways to communicate within our host households and in the shops. We quickly adapted to such charming customs as breakfast buffets of meats, cheeses, and fresh breads and the daily 4:00 p.m. ritual of cake and coffee. When I say fresh bread, I mean that our host or hostess ran out every morning to buy it fresh at the bakery and apologized when the bakery was closed on Sunday.

For me, among the highlights of our Chemnitz week, besides our wonderful 64-year-old hostess, recently widowed, were traveling to Leipzig and Dresden to see how miraculously and meticulously these two picturesque cities had been restored since the war. Also, demonstrating just how much the reunification had meant, Petra wept tears of joy when her friend in Augsburg called to wish her a happy Reunification Day. After all those years, she had been able to develop friendships in the West.

We found no greater testimonial to friendship on this trip than our informal hosting by members of the Berlin club. Dee had contacted their club simply asking if we might meet some of them for coffee. They took the lead and developed our three-day itinerary in Berlin to include helping us transfer trains on our arrival day in Berlin, escorting us to a club meeting, guiding us daily on tours, and giving us a guidebook to their government buildings (Bundestag).

Being a gardener, I quickly noticed the many greenbelts throughout Germany, even as we were flying in to the various cities. Many cities have community garden areas in which people lease small plots, probably about a quarter acre, and plant vegetables and flowers and, perhaps, a play area for the children. Each of these plots has a small garden cottage. One of our ambassadors even shared a tiny garden cottage with her hostess. The gardens are called Schreber gardens, after a man who in the 1800's realized that many people need the satisfaction of gardening. He was supported by many industries, which were perhaps more caring for their employees in those days. Fittingly, the Hannover hosts held the welcome party in the community center of their garden complex. There we met

ten members of FF of the Rocky Mountains who were joining us for this week of exchange. After feasting on all the local delights, we toured several of the individual gardens. Of course, Hannover played such a major role in the history of Western Europe, and the reigning British monarchy came from the rulers of that region. One of the regal remnants of the Hannoverian royalty is the Herrenhäuser Garden, a two kilometer long network of formal gardens, fountains, and grotto. This proud city's Rathaus displays four large models of the city, showing important eras in its history since 1300.

The FFSFBA ambassadors parted company on October 16, going on to visit relatives, to see other sights, going home, or, for Barry and me, continuing with eight ambassadors from the Rocky Mountains for a week's exchange in Gelsenkirchen. Now we were near the western border of Germany, near Essen and an hour from the Netherlands. This was quite a change from the quaintness of the eastern cities and the regal sophistication of Hannover. While prosperous, this is the "rust belt" area, home to factories, shipping ports, and former coal mines. Our tours represented these livelihoods: a boat tour of Germany's largest inland port, a visit to a simulated coal mine, a tour of the Krupps estate. (What didn't the Krupps make, including Hitler's war machines?) Instead of picturesque, we experienced more of the jovial, hearty, outgoing hospitality that we had enjoyed in the previous two and a half weeks. One of their leaders even said, "We're not fancy here. We just put the pots that we cooked the food in on the table." Of course, as before, we had plenty of opportunities to sample, generously, many varieties of beer, bratwurst (I drew the line at Curry Wurst, a popular fast food chain there!), and cakes.

As for our individual hosting experiences, you will hear more about all of that at the Holiday Luncheon. Come and hear from all twelve of us!

Respectfully submitted on behalf of our fabulous twelve,
—Karen L. McCready

WESTERN REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, SAN DIEGO, MARCH 10–12

The Western Regional Leadership Conference will be held in San Diego on March 10th, 11th and 12th of 2008.

They hope to accommodate all registrants with 3-day home stays, but at this time, have set an initial limit at the first 50 people that register.

The information can be found in their flyer at <http://FFSFBA.org/dfiles/FFwesternRegionalConf2008.pdf>

The registration forms are available at <http://FFSFBA.org/dfiles/FFwesternRegionalConf2008regform.pdf>

They have an excellent program and are expecting a good attendance.

Chuck and Julie Bras, Co-Chairpersons
Western Regional Leadership Conference
2008, San Diego, CA

2008 FFSFBA COMMITTEES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President@ffsfba.org: Karen McCready
VP@ffsfba.org: Dee Gustavson
Secretary@ffsfba.org: Steve Smallwood
Treasurer@ffsfba.org: Ivan Heling

STANDING COMMITTEES

Activities@ffsfba.org:
Membership@ffsfba.org: Mary Pelland
Newsletter@ffsfba.org: Dave & Dee Gustavson
Parliamentarian@ffsfba.org: Barry Rader
Publicity@ffsfba.org:

EXCHANGE DIRECTORS

No. Moreton, Australia—June 14–20, *InboundA*@ffsfba.org
Louise Heiduk
Reno/Tahoe—early April, *OutboundRT*@ffsfba.org
Greater Hamilton-Burlington, Ontario, Canada—September,
OutboundC@ffsfba.org Barry Rader

SUPPORT COMMITTEES

ExchangeBanker@ffsfba.org: Don Pelland
Merchandise@ffsfba.org: Lois Smallwood
Forester@ffsfba.org: Don Dillon
Karen Mitchell

Forest records: Mary Alice vanDoorn
Program@ffsfba.org: Dee Gustavson
Area Group Coordinator
Regional@ffsfba.org: Louise Heiduk
Sunshine@ffsfba.org: Darlene Boyanich
Webmaster@ffsfba.org: Geri Bechtle

FFSFBA website: <http://www.ffsfba.org>

Friendship Force International
233 Peachtree Street, Suite 2250
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Tel: 1-404-522-9490, 1-800-554-6715 Fax: 1-404-688-6148
Website: <http://www.thefriendshipforce.org>

2007–2008 CALENDAR

Sun. Dec. 9	Holiday Luncheon, Michael's Shoreline in Mountain View
Sun., Jan. 6, 2008	Board of Directors Meeting
February ?	World Friendship Day
March 10–12	West Coast Regional Conference, San Diego
Sun., March 16	Board of Directors Meeting
early April	Mini-exchange (long weekend) Reno/Minden/Tahoe
Sat., April 19 or Sun., April 20	Birthday Meeting
Sun., June 1	Board of Directors Meeting
June? July?	Annual Picnic at Prusch Park
Sun., August 3	Board of Directors Meeting
Sun., Sept. 7?	Board of Directors Meeting
Sun., Nov. 9	Board of Directors Meeting
Sun., Dec. 7	Holiday Luncheon



THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE
Bringing the world together since 1977
The Friendship Force of the San Francisco Bay Area
1422 Thunderbird Ct., Sunnyvale, CA 94087
Phone (408) 243-4822, <http://www.ffsfba.org>
info@ffsfba.org Fax by pre-arrangement