



Volume 32, Issue 2

March/April, 2013

# MN and IA ambassadors experience Texas-style warmth and hospitality

by Barb Emer, exchange director



**MN/TC member Susan Meyer and Rose Schultz of the Central Iowa club learned about feathered friends from a guide at the Estero Llano Grande World Birding Center in Weslaco, Texas.**



**Club members Barbara Wallace and Joyce Sharp experienced Texas barbecue prepared by Sylvia Parrao, a Central Iowa member and chef for the farewell dinner. Note the wardrobes, which would not have been suitable for January in Minnesota.**

In January, seven Minnesotans and four Iowans enjoyed a welcome reprieve from winter as we journeyed south to Texas. There we were royally hosted by the Rio Grande Valley club. Among the interesting activities our hosts had planned were a tour at a birding center, feeding sea turtles on South Padre Island and a U. S. Border Patrol tour. One afternoon we crossed the border into Progresso, Mexico, where we had an authentic Mexican lunch and saw many dentists on the sidewalk awaiting patients. No ambassadors opted to have any dental work done!

All too soon our week came to an end and we faced the harsh reality of returning to our frozen tundra. A special thanks to the four Iowans who joined us and were excellent examples of what an ambassador is: They were engaged, flexible, friendly and fun.

As a side note, many of you haven't been on an exchange for quite some time. I hope you'll consider joining the Shelby, North Carolina exchange in October. I can't think of a better way to meet warm, friendly people, see interesting sights and learn a lot about an area. If interested, contact Gene or Marie Selchow at: [g.m.selchow@unique-software.com](mailto:g.m.selchow@unique-software.com); 651-688-8202.

## Experience Brazil: April 28-May 15

Join Friendship Force Chicago for a one week homestay with the Belo Horizonte club followed by a 10-day extension to Manaus, Iguacu Falls and Rio de Janeiro.

Belo Horizonte, located in a mountainous region of southeastern Brazil, blends history, beauty, gardens, caves, culture, and a delightful hosting club. Our extension will include the "must-sees" of Brazil: Rio de Janeiro, the spectacular Iguacu Falls, and Manaus.

Estimated costs: \$2,100 plus international flight: Chicago to Rio April 28-29, return May 14-15, approximately \$1300.

A visa is required.

Interested? Contact Katherine Coyner at [kcoyner@att.net](mailto:kcoyner@att.net) or 630-584-1974.

# Words from the president

by Jim Collins,  
club president



Friends, spring is just around the corner. Our club is fortunate to welcome two new board members. Nancy Wallin has accepted the duties of membership director while Jane Heller will be our new communications director. It is so healthy and refreshing to have new energy and the fresh perspective which these new board members will provide.

As many of you know, Berni Marleau has been ill, and has resigned as membership director but has agreed to continue as club historian. Berni is recovering and she deeply appreciates your kind thoughts.

In addition, Barb Emer has agreed to act as vice-president for the remainder of 2013. This is in addition to her role as exchange coordinator.

We are still looking for someone to consider being vice president for 2014 and taking over as president for 2015. I hope you will consider the position. If you would like more information, please call or e-mail me.

Barb Emer recently led a very interesting exchange to southern Texas. I have had excellent reports from the members who accompanied her.

We have a number of exciting international and domestic exchanges for 2013. In July, Blaine McCutchan will lead an exchange to the Democratic Republic of Georgia with visits to Tbilisi, Sighnaghi and the Kakheti region for an international wine festival. Blaine will host an informational meeting for club members this spring.

In October, Gene and Marie Selchow will lead an exchange to Shelby, North Carolina. Gene and Marie have a number of people already signed up, so don't delay in calling them for more information. We are also awaiting word on the rescheduling of the incoming Indonesian exchange which was canceled last year.

The board is also considering an exchange from Brazil and one to Russia for 2014.

With your involvement, support and ideas we will enhance our mission of fostering international peace through personal relationships.

## FFMN/TC Board of Directors

### Elected Officers

**President: Jim Collins**

idicollins@aol.com, 612-869-1587

**Vice-President: Barb Emer**

bemer@usfamily.net, 651-787-9791

**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**

djwleak@aol.com, 952-474-9685

runyldag@comcast.net, 651-698-7956

**Membership: Nancy Wallin**

nrjorgenson@hotmail.com, 763-521-1535

**Communications: Jane Heller**

jane.e.heller@gmail.com, 612-823-4570

**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 The Republic of Georgia, July**

**Brian McCutchan**, helloblaine@yahoo.com, 763-443-7879

#### **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**

mnbenher@aol.com, 763-588-1158

# Davor Zanella was director of historic exchange to Croatia

Mary Ann Novak, exchange director

I recently received this sad note from Croatia.

*Dear Mary Ann,*

*We are very sorry to inform you that Davor passed away on January 15. After more than three years in bed and after a series of strokes, his heart gave way. The last two months were very difficult for him and for us. We thought you'd like to know.*

*Zeljka, Davor, Linda and Luka Zanella*

Dr. Davor Zanella was the director for the exchange which my husband Lou and I led to Croatia in September of 1999. Twenty-seven ambassadors from Minnesota made the trip.

This was a unique undertaking, as Croatia had no Friendship Force club prior to this exchange. Lou and I worked with the Croatian Cultural Society of Minnesota and Dr. Zanella in making arrangements.

I wrote the following excerpt for an article in *Friendship Force Magazine* following the exchange.

“On our arrival in Zagreb, we were met by our hosts. In fact, the ambassadors were whisked away in just a matter of minutes and we were assured by Dr. Zanella that all was fine. We were not only taken care of at the airport but for the rest of the week in a grandiose manner.”

The exchange to Croatia was the beginning, not the end, of relationships with Minnesota. Ambassadors from Croatia paid us a return visit in 2000 for a week of sightseeing, dancing, eating and relating.



**Exchange director Lou Novak and ambassador Pjerina Dekanovic demonstrated that music and dance cross international boundaries. They performed at the farewell party during the 2000 exchange in Minnesota.**

## *Couldn't afford to head south for a break from winter?*

*Join us for a spring indoor-outdoor luncheon on March 20*

*at Bachmans' garden center*

*at 6010 Lyndale in Richfield.*

*10 a.m.: tour*

*12 noon: lunch*

*RSVP required to Donna Leak by March 13.*

*djwleak@aol.com, 952-474-9685*



# Vicki Hill recalls many years, memories

by Vicki Hill, club president emeritus, life-time member

Being what they call a “Life Member” of Friendship Force I have been asked to recount some of my experiences. There have been so many wonderful events in the last 30-some years it’s hard to pick out a few.

One of the best benefits of belonging to this organization is all the friends I have made locally. I can now say I have friends from all corners of the Metro area. I may have been somehow involved in the majority of club exchanges. I also have been club president, secretary, historian and parliamentarian, and have served on more committees than I can remember.

In 1980 I heard about Friendship Force from a friend and convinced my parents to sign up for an exchange. They went to South Korea, and I hosted my first ambassador while they were gone. I was hooked.

The first time I was an ambassador myself I went to Venezuela and stayed with a man about my age. His wife had gone to care for her ailing mother and left him to care for me. I remember handing him my shoe so he could attack the *cucarachas* in the bathroom. It was a wonderful trip.

Over the years I have hosted ambassadors from Korea, Japan, England, New Zealand, Colorado, South Australia, the Ukraine, Nebraska, and Germany. It was so enjoyable to show them the Twin Cities and our lifestyle. I have to say I visited parts of the Cities I never would have seen otherwise.

I have led exchanges to New Zealand, France and Alberta, Canada. I have traveled as an ambassador to Germany, Florida, Oklahoma, and Venezuela. My parents also traveled as ambassadors for many years and I helped them host guests from many more countries. Along the way I also attended international conferences in Wisconsin, Las Vegas, London and Bangkok.

I still have contact with many of the people I visited or hosted, and have seen some of them again over the years. I have so many wonderful memories of great experiences and could go on and on about them. And I still do to those I meet who are not familiar with Friendship Force.

After Tom and I retired, we moved to North Dakota. Alas, no clubs there to join. I lost Tom in 2012 but still winter in Arizona. The nearest club is 120 miles away from my home, and I have yet to venture there to check them out. But one of these days I might just meet some of my Minnesota friends again on an exchange to where-ever. You just never know.



**Vicki Hill is more than willing to lend a friend a hand. Here she allows fellow club member Willis Unke the use of her shoulder.**



**For many years, the golden globe was awarded to the club’s “volunteer of the year.” Here, Mur Senn presents the cherished award to Vicki Hill. The globe has mysteriously disappeared. Some speculate it may now be in North Dakota or Arizona.**

# Berni reports on membership

by Berni Marleau, membership director

I am very pleased to announce that Nancy Wallin will soon become membership director for our club.

I have really enjoyed my years in this position because I got to know a lot of the members at the various gatherings and was able to put faces to names.

Now for the last time, I get to nag those who have not renewed. Please take the time to complete and mail in the renewal form with the appropriate fees. For those of you receiving the newsletter electronically, there is a membership form on our website at [www.friendshipforcetwincities.org](http://www.friendshipforcetwincities.org).

Renewals have to be received no later than March 31. Please check the number in parentheses behind your name on the mailing label. If the number is a "12," then you need to renew. If you can't remember, please e-mail me and I will let you know.

**Berni has hosted and traveled as ambassador more times than she cares to count. Here she is pictured with her guest from Japan after successfully completing an origami project.**



# Berni reports on Berni

by Berni Marleau, membership director

Here is the update on my current regimen. Friday, February 15, was my tenth radiation treatment.

I go every day, Monday through Friday for radiation with the weekends off. Usually when I get home from the treatments, I lie down for a while.

The treatments do not take long. I am in and out before I realize that I have had a treatment. I am also taking chemo orally every evening. Who would have thought that I would become a clock watcher and a pill popper?

I take an anti-nausea drug at around 6:30 and then at 8 o'clock I take the chemo pill. This pill—for some reason—really makes me tired so I go to bed shortly after that. I go to bed with the chickens and get up with the roosters.

After about five to six hours of sleep, I am wide awake and usually get up early in the morning. I am able to get a lot of things done during that time. I usually go back to bed at around 5 a.m. and rest or sleep until 7:30 or so.

I am very fortunate that I have not had any really severe side effects from the radiation. I have to remind myself that I am still very early in the treatment phase and the side effects still can come.

Last weekend, the side effects from the chemo started to kick in giving me leg aches, rubber legs and tingling in the feet and hands. Sometimes, I cannot get comfort-

able no matter what position I am in. I felt really good on Wednesday and Thursday, so I pushed myself. I got a lot of things done, but I paid for it on Friday. So—from that experience—I have learned a lesson. I will not push myself again because I know what the outcome will be.

I am using a walker. I really don't trust my left leg. It holds me, but it is very rubbery. I feel a lot safer with the walker.

I will know by the end of March what the outcome will be. I know the treatment is working. If it isn't, I will deal with that when the time comes. But I have no doubt, it is working.

Thanks for all the cards and well wishes.

*Check out these websites*

[www.friendshipforce.org](http://www.friendshipforce.org)

[www.friendshipforcetwincities.org](http://www.friendshipforcetwincities.org)

# Looking ahead!



- March 20 .....Outdoor lunch at Bachmans' garden center. See p. 3.
- April 14.....International bowling. Details below.
- July .....Picnic and semi-annual meeting. Details to be announced.
- July.....Exchange to Georgia. See page 2.
- October 8.....Exchange to Shelby, NC. See page 2.



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 May/June issue is April 15.

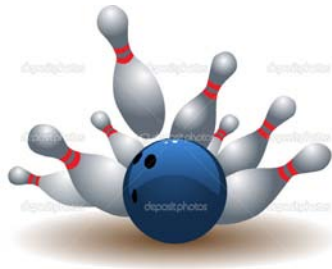
# Come bowl with international students!

*by Don Wolter, amateur bowler*

Bowling with exchange students has become an annual tradition for FF of MN/TC; this year will be no exception.

Come join as at Brunswick Bowl in Brooklyn Park on Sunday, April 14 at 2 p.m. The address is: 7545 Brooklyn Boulevard. Note that this is a change of location from years past.

The bowl-for-fun event will be followed by a social get-together for an afternoon snack and time to chat with representatives of a younger generation.



Bowlers of all ability levels are welcome as are non-bowlers, who may come to watch and cheer.

As in years past, members are encouraged to sponsor a student for the day to defray the cost of bowling and eating.

Please rsvp to Don Wolter at donwolter@hotmail.com or 763-545-0007 by April 7.



**Apparently it was Flag Day at Armstrong High School. Pictured are some of this year's international students. Countries represented include Italy, Sweden, Norway, Venezuela, Spain, Germany, France, China and Brazil.**

**Berni Marleau  
Membership Director  
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