



International guests energize event

by Don Wolter, editor



International bowlers posed for the obligatory group photo to conclude their day of friendly competition. Front row: Diana Demkin, Germany; Linda Li, China; Virginia Frezza, Italy; Paula Castro, Spain; Aline Tomazelli, Brazil.; Mathilda Svensson, Sweden. Back row: Blaine McCutchan, USA; Jaz Bidgood, Australia; Rita Mays, USA; Flavia Saccoccio, Italy; Jamie Dukowitz, USA; Eli Müller, Germany; Sondre Nordstrand, Norway; Don Wolter, USA.

Bowlers from every continent except Antarctica and Africa gathered at the Brunswick Zone in Brooklyn Park for an afternoon of active socializing on Sunday, April 14. This event has become an annual MN/TC affair.

Blaring rock music and flashing strobe lights created an atmosphere different from that of most of our club's activities, but the contingent of exchange students from Armstrong High School felt very much at home.

The young people displayed their good upbringing by enthusiastically thanking club members for inviting them to the bowling party.

Their parents have taught them well.

No, despite appearances, Rita Mays was not attempting to talk Eli Müller into sharing her pizza. Club members had the opportunity to discuss many topics with members of the younger generation including drinking and driving, a potential reunion in Switzerland and prom attire.



Words from the president

by Jim Collins,
club president



Friends,

Hopefully, by the time you receive this, spring will have arrived. In the meantime, if you find that groundhog, shoot him.

I am very pleased to announce that we have an incoming exchange from Vyborg, Russia this coming September. Vyborg is on the border of Finland and only 81 miles from St. Petersburg. For more information on our destination, check out <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vyborg>.

For many years Vyborg was a Finnish city. Last year the Madison, Wisconsin club was hosted in Vyborg. In the next few weeks we will be recruiting an exchange committee and hosts. If you would like to volunteer for the exchange committee or to be a host, please contact Barbara Emer at 651-787-9791 or bemer@usfamily.net.

In 2014 we will have an exchange to St. Petersburg, and you can take a short train ride to Vyborg and visit your new friends.

I would also like to remind you about the domestic exchange to Shelby, North Carolina, this coming October. It is filling up fast, but to reserve a spot contact: Gene and Marie Selchow at 651-688-8202 or g.m.selchow@unique-software.com.

In July, Blaine McCutchan will be leading an exchange to the Republic of Georgia for the International Wine Fest. The dates are July 23-29 with an optional home stay from July 29 through August 3. You can contact Blaine at: 763-443-7879 or helloblaine@yahoo.com.

A big thank you to Joyce Sharp, who is serving as interim membership director until Nancy Wallin takes over.

Last but not least, share the Friendship Force with a friend. If you would like to have the *Minnesota Ambassador* e-mailed to a friend, just contact me at 612-869-1587 or idicollins@aol.com.

With your involvement, support and ideas we will enhance our mission of 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

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Treasurer: Ken Scherber

kenfargo@yahoo.com, 651-487-4001

Past President: Blaine McCutchan

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Membership: Nancy Wallin_

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Members-at-Large

Carol "Ben" Szyplinski

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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

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E-mail Announcements: Carol "Ben" Szyplinski

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He saw the world through Mary's eyes

excerpted from Star-Tribune tribute

Pete McKenna was born in Washington, DC to Peter and Mabel McKenna on August 24, 1924. He graduated from St. John's College High School in 1942, and he enlisted in the Army.

He was assigned to General George S. Patton's 3rd Army, 80th Infantry division as an anti-tank gunner. He sailed to Europe on the Queen Mary, landed in Normandy, and fought his way through France, Luxembourg and Belgium to Germany.

On April 2, 1945 in Kassel, Germany, a tank shell exploded in his face and he lost his eyes and two fingers. Pete spent two years in the hospital before being discharged. He enrolled at Catholic University of America in 1947 and with help from the Veteran's Administration, who provided readers, he graduated with honors in 1952. In 1948 while at the VA Hospital for more plastic surgery, he charmed his nurse Mary John, and they were married in June of 1949.

In 1951 Pete was elected National President of the Blinded Veterans Association. In the next eleven years he earned his Master



No one loved a picnic more than Pete McKenna did. He is pictured here with his wife Mary and Rose Foreman in July of 2010.

of Arts degree in psychology at the University of Minnesota, had nine children and opened the Marion Shop in Richfield.

Pete was the main sales person at the Catholic gift shop until 1966 when he became the operator of a convenience shop at the Minneapolis City Hall and— with the help of his children—served the needs of Minneapolis city employees for many years. In 1977 he was able to utilize his counseling training to

become a full-time benefits counselor at the VA until his retirement in 1989. Pete enjoyed travel by car, plane and ship. As a member of the Friendship Force he travelled the world visiting Europe, Asia and South America. He went with his family to Blinded Veterans conventions throughout the United States.

Pete loved Boy Scout camp—even in sub-zero Minnesota winters—and counseled many scouts working on their citizenship

merit badges.

A year ago, Pete and his wife Mary were interviewed by Berni Marleau for a story in this newspaper. She asked: “Was it difficult, traveling without being able to see?”

Pete answered. “No, because Mary is an excellent describer. She describes everything, and I am able to see it in my mind's eye. I haven't missed anything with Mary by my side.”

Peter died on April 3. He was 88.

Check out these websites

www.friendshipforce.org

www.friendshipforcetwincities.org

“Caminar es atesorar!”

“To walk is to gather treasure.”

•••• **Spanish saying.**

Jeanne Goemer was world traveler, educator

excerpted from Hantge Funeral Chapel tribute

Jeanne Goemer was born on February 11, 1923 in Meeker County Minnesota. She graduated from Litchfield High School in 1940 and earned degrees from Bemidji State College and the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Jeanne married Archie Goemer in 1949. They raised their three children Robert, Steven and Lynette in St. Louis Park.

For the majority of her professional career, Jeanne taught in the Robbinsdale Area Schools, from which she retired in 1988.

Following retirement, she was active in the Litchfield United Methodist Church and in the Dassel Saddle Club. Jeanne also volunteered at the Darwin Hill horse trails and park.

An aficionado of music, Jeanne also loved horseback riding, growing vegetables and flowers, traveling and spending time with family, grandchildren and friends.

MN/TC member Marcia Hinitz recalls Jeanne as a wonderful fellow ambassador on Friendship Force exchanges.

Jeanne died on March 20 at the age of 90.



Join Northern Illinois on exchange to Canada

by Marcia Weissman, exchange director

We have room for a few more ambassadors for our exchange to Winnipeg and Ottawa from September 18-30.

Winnipeg is located at the junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. It is the eighth largest city in Canada, with a population of 640,000.

A multitude of ethnic groups live in harmony in the city, including Canada's largest

Francophone population outside Quebec, and the largest aboriginal population of any Canadian city.

Ottawa, the nation's capital, is a modern city, which does not conceal its 19th century origins. Its population is a vibrant English and French cultural mix.

Contact Marcia Weissman for more information at smarcia.weissman@yahoo.com.

Last call for Shelby!

by Gene and Marie Selchow, exchange directors

Hurry! Only four more ambassadors will be fortunate enough to join us on October 8 to be hosted by the "City of Pleasant Living." This is the nickname of Shelby, North Carolina.

We would like to fill their request to host a maximum of 22. By doing so, we would show our appreciation for their invitation which was offered four years ago. Finally it's going to happen.

Please join the 18 of us who are looking forward to this beautiful October retreat.

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

Leo to spring into summer

by Dagmar Runyon and Donna Leak, activities directors

May 28 LEO*

What: Free tour of the newly renovated St. Paul Union Depot followed by lunch in their Greek restaurant.

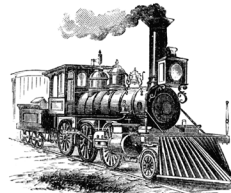
Where: 214 4th Street, East Lowertown, St. Paul.

When: Tuesday, May 28, 2013, 10:45 a.m.

I will be requesting a private docent tour. If a docent is not available, we will accompany the regular public tour. They will take up to 30 people on a docent tour.

Call Dagmar at 651-698-7956 if you plan to attend. I will notify the restaurant as to how many are coming.

Depot parking is south of Kellogg at Sibley Street. Look for the parking sign. Walk north to the Depot.



June 24 LEO

What: Special hamburger deal—grilled outside on the deck. In case of rain, we will move under a roofed area or inside to the restaurant.

Where: Lord Fletchers on Lake Minnetonka, 3746 Sunset Drive, Spring Park. Take Highway 12 to County Road 15 into Spring Park.

When: Monday, June 24, 11:30 a.m.

* **LEO** is our acronym for "Let's Eat Out!"



Exchanges: They are what we are about

by Barb Emer, vice president and exchange coordinator

Our incoming exchange for 2013

Friendship Force International has asked our club to host a new and still developing club in Vyborg, Russia, this September. This will be done in conjunction with the Madison club. Ambassadors will spend approximately one week with each club.

While Vyborg has hosted two exchanges from the United States, this will be their first exchange to our hemisphere! Details are still sketchy, but after some discussion, the board enthusiastically agreed to accept this invitation.

Additionally, with Vyborg located so close to the border of Finland, FFI hopes to open a club in Finland with help from the Vyborg club.

I would like club members to give thought to being an exchange director or possibly a co-director for this exchange. We have a planning committee which does much of the work. We would certainly welcome some of the new members of the club to join the planning committee. I can't think of a better way to get involved, and once you're in the thick of planning an exchange, I believe you'll find it to be both an exciting and rewarding experience. If you're interested or have any questions, contact Barb Emer at bemer@usfamily.net or 651-787-9791.

Looking ahead

In an attempt to reveal where our members wanted to travel internationally, many of you took part in surveys during the past year.

Russia received the most votes followed by the United Kingdom, Germany and Costa Rica.

At the beginning of this year, President Jim Collins submitted these selections to FFI in Atlanta.

Good news! We have received two international exchanges for 2014. In the fall we'll travel to St. Petersburg and Novgorod, Russia, and in October we'll host ambassadors from Campinas, Brazil.

The board is pleased that FFI gave us the outbound exchange which was most requested. Also, keep in mind that the World of Friends catalog at thefriendshipforce.org currently has some 25 international exchanges with openings. Check it out. Some sound really exciting!



Berni reports on Berni

by Berni Marleau, club historian

Hi,

As you know from the last update, I had finished my chemo and radiation treatments. I kept getting weaker and more breathless. Even trying to stand up was a chore and really wiped me out. I was sleeping a lot.

It finally sunk in that these symptoms were probably not side effects from the treatments and were something else. I went to the doctor on March 26 and found out that I had multiple clots in both lungs. I could not be satisfied with only one clot, I had to have multiple clots.

I was hospitalized immediately and put on Lovenox twice a day. I could not be put on Coumadin because that would thin the blood out too much. The tumor in the brain could start bleeding and that would be the end of me.

So now I give myself shots twice a day. Things could be worse. Lovenox will not dissolve the clots but make them inactive, and hopefully no more clots will appear.

They wanted to send me home on March 29, but I did not feel safe or comfortable with that plan. I was still too



weak and tired easily. I asked to be transferred to a transitional care facility until I gained some strength and felt comfortable going home. I was sent to Langton Place in Roseville, which was exactly what I needed. I went home on Saturday, April 6.

So far things are going really well. I am able to implement a lot of the things I learned at Langton Place into my daily routine.

On Wednesday of this week, I go for my MRI and on Friday, I learn if the treatments worked and what is the next part of the treatment for the brain tumor and the blood clots. I will let you know at that time what the prognosis is. The thing that is hard to get used to is that I tire so easily. I can't do the things that I usually do or take for granted. Hopefully, that will come back. I was told that I would get about 70 percent of my strength back. That is so frustrating, but things could be worse.

Now, it is time for a nap.

Take care,

Berni

Looking ahead!



May 10.....Georgian/Russian **LEO**. Details below.
 May 29.....Union Depot **LEO**. Details on page 4.
 June 24..... Lord Fletchers **LEO**. Details on page 4.
 July 21.....Picnic and semi-annual meeting. Details to be announced.
 July 22-29.....Exchange to Georgia. Details below.
 September.....Exchange from Vyborg, Russia.
 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 Joyce Sharp at Sharp_330@msn.com, 952-544-9330.

The deadline for submitting copy and pictures for the July/August issue is June 15.

May **LEO** to serve many purposes

by Rita Mays, club secretary

How about a **LEO** which has past, present and future significance?

Past: A review of last summer's exchange to Georgia.

Present: Good food and fellowship.

Future: Preparation for an exchange to Georgia and incoming and outgoing exchanges with Russia.

Meet on **Friday, May 10, from 1 to 3 p.m. at Moscow on the Hill**—a Russian restaurant with authentic decor and food—to help get us in the mood for 2013-2014 adventures.

Location: 371 Selby Avenue in St. Paul.

Each person will order and pay for his/her own lunch. RSVP to Rita at ritamnffi@yahoo.com or 612-730-5129 by Wednesday, May 8, so that we are able to set up tables.

Menu items range from \$5 to \$10. Blaine McCutchan, Rita Mays and Don and Susanne Wolter will present a slide show of their 2012 Republic of Georgia wine tour exchange.

Blaine, our exchange director, is now taking reservations for a 2013 Georgia exchange from July 22-29 with an optional home stay from July 30 to August 2. Contact Blaine at helloblaine@yahoo.com or 763-443-7879.



Just a hint of the hospitality which awaits you in Georgia this summer. Pictured during last year's exchange are Blaine McCutchan; Gela, world-class chauffeur; Kate Maisashvili, tour leader; Rita Mays; Berni Marleau and Susanne Wolter.

At this **LEO** you will also learn more about this year's incoming exchange from Vyborg, Russia, a joint venture with the Madison, Wisconsin club, and our outbound exchange to St. Petersburg and Novgorod Russia in 2014.

See you on May 10.

Joyce Sharp
 Interim Membership Director
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