

THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF MISSOURI-St. Louis

2013 IN REVIEW

Prepared by Mary E. Johnson from Club Minutes and the Club Newsletter

ELECTED OFFICERS FOR 2013

Mary Johnson, President; **Mary Widmer**, 1st Vice President (Membership Chair); **Maureen McGrath**, 2nd Vice President (Social Activities Chair); **Mike Lykens**, Treasurer; **Donna Lykens**, Secretary.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jerry Johnson, Auditor; **Jerry Wunderlich**, Budget Director; **Milt Zoschke**, Domestic Exchange Coordinator; **Bob Hoffmann**, Historian; **Arlene Nickels**, LEO Coordinator; **Della Bibko**, Newsletter Circulation; **Mary Johnson**, Newsletter Editor; **Nancy Brower**, Open World Coordinator; **Ellen Kaye Augustine**, Publicity; **Kenvi Sheehan**, Telephone Tree; **Dee Ebert**, Ways and Means; **Jerry Johnson**, Webmaster. **Exchange Directors:** **Arlene Nickels**, Louisville KY Inbound; **Maureen McGrath**, Belgium Stopover Inbound; **Sue Williams**, Napa/Sonoma CA Outbound; **Bill Ebert**, Lansing MI Outbound; **Mary Johnson**, Brazil Inbound.

BOARD MEETINGS

Five Board meetings were held during the year to carry out the business of the Club. These meetings were held at the First Presbyterian Church in Kirkwood.

FINANCES

Membership dues for the year were \$30 for individuals and \$45 for families. At the end of December 2013 there was \$12,217.69 in the main checking account at Pulaski Bank.

EXCHANGES

Inbound Domestic Exchange from Louisville, KY – April 10 to April 15 – Arlene Nickels, Exchange Director.

Fourteen ambassadors from Louisville enjoyed a Friday morning at the symphony; a Sunday afternoon Cardinal baseball game; attended home-hosted dinner; rode to the top of the arch; visited Cahokia Mounds; and enjoyed other activities planned for them.

Stopover Exchange from Limberg, Belgium –July 13 to July 17 – Maureen McGrath, Exchange Director.

Four members of the Belgium Club did a three-night stay in St. Louis. They attended mass at the St. Louis Basilica Cathedral, followed by lunch at the Feasting Fox. They took a backstage tour of the zoo and had lunch at Grant's Farm. Their last day included a tour of the Missouri Botanical Garden and saying farewell to Club members at the Club picnic.

Outbound Domestic Exchange to Napa-Sonoma, CA – July 22 to July 27 – Sue Williams, Exchange Director.

Seventeen ambassadors from the St. Louis Club flew to California and were matched with host families in Napa, Sonoma, Santa Rosa and Petaluma. Ambassadors picnicked among the Redwoods; drove along the Sonoma coast; visited wineries; toured the historic town of Sonoma; and went with their hosts to places of personal interest such as the Culinary Institute, a Russian Orthodox monastery, an historic fort, and several museums.

Outbound Domestic Exchange to Lansing, MI – September 4 to September 9 – Bill Ebert, Exchange Director

Six ambassadors from the St. Louis Club drove to Lansing in early September. Among the highlights of this Exchange were a visit to the Gerald Ford Museum in Grand Rapids; a tour of the Michigan History Museum in Lansing, led by the Lansing Club's Exchange Director; an evening boat ride and dinner by Silver Lake; a walk through the Meijer Garden and Sculpture Park; and an fascinating presentation at the National Superconducting Cyclotron Laboratory.

Inbound International Exchange from Fortaleza, Brazil – September 28 to October 4 – Mary Johnson, Exchange Director.

Sixteen ambassadors from Fortaleza Brazil arrived in late September. Although many of our guests did not understand much English, communication was not a deterrent to enjoying time together. Club members knew several people who spoke Portuguese and we were fortunate to be able to call upon them to participate in many of our activities. The planned events were well attended by our Club members. Included in some of the activities was a road trip to Onondaga Cave and Maramec Springs in outstate Missouri; a tram tour of the Botanical Garden; lunch and a boat ride on the Mississippi River; home hosted dinners; and a potluck farewell which included a DJ who taught everyone line dancing, and in return our guests demonstrated several Brazilian dances.

LEO (LET'S EAT OUT) – Coordinated by Arlene Nickels

March – The program at Old Ferdinand Shrine in Florissant included a tour of the church, convent, and rectory. The Shrine is the oldest Catholic Church west of the Mississippi. Lunch was at Hendel's Market Café, followed by a tour of Sacred Heart Church across the street from Hendel's. This LEO was organized by Rose Watts.

May – The program included a guided tour of the newly renovated Central Library in downtown St. Louis followed by a pre-lunch talk and tour of St. Raymond's Maronite Cathedral given by Monsignor Moussa. A lunch of Lebanese cuisine was enjoyed at the Cedars Banquet Hall across the courtyard from the Cathedral. This LEO was organized by Mary Johnson.

August – The program was a docent led tour of the new addition to the St. Louis Art Museum followed by lunch at the museum. This LEO was organized by Arlene Nickels.

November – The program was a tour of the 1955 Frank Lloyd Wright House in Kirkwood with lunch at the Big Sky Café in Webster Groves. This LEO was organized by Charlotte Balettie.

ANNUAL CLUB SOCIAL EVENTS – Coordinated by Maureen McGrath

International Dinner – This dinner, scheduled for February 21 at St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Clayton, was cancelled due to bad weather.

Club Potluck (and Welcome Dinner for the Friendship Force Club of Louisville) – April 10 – Held at the Coeur De Royale Condo clubhouse in Creve Coeur. Hosted by Arlene and Herb Nickels.

Summer Picnic (and Farewell for the Belgium “Stopover” Exchange) – July 16 – Held at Longview Farms Park in Town and Country.

Annual Club Meeting (and Welcome for the Brazilian ambassadors) – September 29 – Held at Aberdeen Heights Retirement Community in Kirkwood. Hosted by Martha and Emmett Kaelble.

Holiday Luncheon – December 5 – Held at Pietros Restaurant in St. Louis.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Publication of “*The Force of Friendship: The History of the Friendship Force and the Friendship Force Club of Missouri-St. Louis, 1977 to 2012*” – written by Club member **Bob Hoffmann**. This 72 page book gives a year-by-year look at the Club’s activities, programs, Exchanges, and the people who made it all happen. Besides documenting the history of the Club, the book was also used as a fund-raiser, selling for \$15.00 with the proceeds going to the Club.

International Festival – February 24 – **Ellen Kaye Augustine** arranged for the Club to have an information table at the 12th Annual International Cultural Arts Festival in Maryland Heights.

NineNetwork Volunteering – June 6 – **Ellen Kaye Augustine** coordinated the Club’s volunteers in staffing the phones during the public radio membership drive.

New President for Friendship Force International – FFI announced that Joy DeBenedetto was appointed as its new president and CEO.

International World Conference – November 23 to November 25 – New Orleans, LA. **Sue and Ron Williams, Nancy and Richard Brower, Judy Leonard and David Curtis, and Dee and Bill Ebert** attended the 36th World Conference where they went to workshops, socialized with members from other Clubs, learned new strategies for Club growth, listened to great music, ate great food, and came back enthused about what Friendship Force is able to accomplish locally and around the world.

MEMBERSHIP COUNT

The membership at the end of the year was reported as 74.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2014

At the Holiday Luncheon on December 5 the following were installed as Officers for 2014. They had been elected at the Annual Meeting in September.

Sue Williams, President; **David Curtis**, 1st Vice President; **Maureen McGrath**, 2nd Vice President; **Bill Ebert**, Treasurer; **Dee Ebert**, Secretary.