

**Friendship Force of Cedar Rapids/Iowa City
General Meeting
November 11, 2007**

President Dianne Karal called the annual General Meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. at the Herbert Hoover Presidential Library in West Branch, Iowa. Approximately 50 people were in attendance.

Before official business was discussed, the group of ambassadors who traveled to Japan discussed the exchange. Ambassadors experienced the westernized culture in Tokyo and the more traditional culture in Gifu. Exchange Director Victor Klopfenstein said the hosts were wonderful and both clubs did a great job involving their members in the exchange. The Tokyo Club had visited Cedar Rapids about 20 years ago and still had fond memories of our club. President Dianne said each host spoke some English and used electronic translators to help when necessary. Vic asked the Tokyo Club to request our club for their 2010 exchange and the Gifu Club for 2011.

Exchange Director Steve Williams reported on the Open World Exchange. Seven Russian delegates and two interpreters participated. Most of them were involved in elder care or general social services. The delegates met with a group from the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop. Steve said they used two vans to transport the group and that worked very well.

Exchange Director Margaret Miller discussed the Peru exchange. Only six ambassadors from Peru were allowed to come due to visa issues. Three people from the Cincinnati Friendship Force Club also came. The week's activities included a farm tour, school tour, Celebration Belle river cruise, and much more. The Peruvians said our club gave them a different experience than the Cincinnati club because we had activities in the evenings, too.

The minutes from the July 15th general meeting were reviewed. Jim Nieman made a motion to approve the minutes as read. Mary Stull seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

Winston Edson presented the Treasurer's Report. The Exchange Fund has \$5,276.89. The General Fund has \$7,662.63. The IRIS Host Escrow account has \$2,787.50 and the Promotions Fund has \$2,713.30. Total assets are \$18,440.32. Winston explained that we had an extra \$900 because the Open World exchange had a profit.

Richard Miller gave the Membership Report. Our club currently has 105 members. He is now collecting dues for 2008. If members have a credit from hosting, they can use that to pay dues or for travel.

President Dianne told the membership that a website was in development. Darby Anderson reported that she had started it, but it was not complete yet. The website will have information about our club, as well as a password protected membership directory, section for meeting minutes and information on past exchanges. Several members expressed concern over their personal information being on the website. It was agreed that each member would be contacted for permission before the directory went online.

President Dianne stated that the new club brochure should be ready by the end of the year. The brochure will reference the website for more information.

Vice-President and Exchange Director Tressa Youngbear discussed the outgoing exchange to Berlin. Phyllis Seidl has agreed to help Tressa with the Exchange Director duties. The exchange was planned for the first week in May but Tressa was notified that this is a holiday week for the Germans. Tressa has requested May 12-19th instead. She said ambassadors can purchase their tickets individually, or meet at the travel agency and book them with others. She said purchasing tickets individually provides more flexibility. Ticket prices are significantly higher right now due to fuel surcharges. Tressa estimates the exchange will cost about \$1500. As soon as she hears confirmation on the dates from the Berlin ED, she will let everyone who is signed up know, so they may purchase tickets as soon as possible.

Incoming Exchange Director Steve Williams reported on the exchange from Berlin/Brandenburg. The exchange is scheduled for August 18th, 2008. The ambassadors will be coming from stops in Long Island and Milwaukee. Steve does not have information on the ambassadors yet, but should know more in March. Darby Anderson, Steve and Nancy Miller and Connie Williams volunteered to help and/or host.

President Dianne stated that Tressa Youngbear sent in the club's requests for 2009 exchanges. Our choices for an outgoing exchange were 1)Peru/Brazil, 2)England/Belgium, or 3)Canada. These choices were made based on member input from the prior year.

This led to a discussion of how exchanges are filled. President Dianne explained that many clubs are growing by using exchanges as a method of recruitment. She asked for member input on saving a few spots on each exchange for new people the club draws in via advertisements. Mary Carson stressed that we are not a travel club. Colleen Nieman stated that these people might not understand what the true purpose of Friendship Force is. Steve Miller agreed that we wouldn't fulfill our mission this way. Mary Stull stated her support for advertising for other club events, but hesitated to advertise for the exchanges. President Dianne stated that our club is aging and we need to try to recruit new, young members. Connie Williams said we need to market our group better and grow membership so we can take turns hosting and don't get burnt out. Steve Williams favored saving a few spots for new people because longstanding members understand the process better and know who to contact to sign up for an exchange. Nancy Miller suggested we run general advertising for the club in the travel section of the newspaper. President Dianne said Margaret Miller has volunteered to be a New Member Mentor to help new members understand our club's purpose and find ways to get involved. Phyllis Seidl said that recently she found out some former Friendship Force members didn't realize the club was still in existence. It was also suggested that we contact the media to cover our events. Mary Lukas stated she was hesitant to pay for ads that don't show the balance of our club, not just the travel. She explained that she joined the club because she wanted to host. John Haack said our current members should recruit more and invite people we already know.

Ed Junkins made a motion to investigate recruitment and advertising possibilities. Connie Williams seconded the motion. Mary Stull amended the motion. She moved that we form a committee to explore new member initiatives. Membership approved this motion.

President Dianne asked members to review the slate of officers for 2008. Steve Williams made a motion to approve the entire slate of officers as printed below. Jack Knopp seconded the motion. Motion passed.

2008 Slate of Officers

- ◆ Co-Presidents- Stephanie Schulte and Tressa Youngbear
- ◆ Vice-President- Darby Anderson
- ◆ Secretary- Janet Thulin
- ◆ Treasurer- Dick Hansen

2008 Board Members

- ◆ Director At Large (12-08) – Mary Lukas
- ◆ Director At Large (12-09) – Audrey Bradford
- ◆ Membership- Marty Novak
- ◆ Communications- Vic & Pat Klopfenstein
- ◆ Activities Coordinator- Jill Rinkenberger and Margaret Nelson
- ◆ Historian- Connie Williams
- ◆ New Member Mentor- Margaret Miller
- ◆ Past President- Dianne Karal
- ◆ Exchange Directors- Tressa Youngbear (Outgoing Germany,) Steve Williams (Incoming Germany,) Sally Fairchild (Incoming Seattle.) Open World ED to be determined.
- ◆ 2007 Exchange Directors- Mary Carson (San Diego,) Jim Nieman (North Carolina,) Margaret Miller (Peru,) Vic Klopfenstein (Japan) and Steve Williams (Open World.)
- ◆ Newsletter- Sally Nelson and Mary Stull

Newly elected Co-President Tressa Youngbear stated the 2008 Board of Directors would meet the afternoon of December 9th at the Marion Library. She would e-mail more details in the near future.

Outgoing President Dianne closed the meeting at 4:50 p.m., sincerely thanking everyone for their support over the last year.