

The Friendship Force



CEDAR RAPIDS/IOWA CITY
PO BOX 81
CEDAR RAPIDS IA 52406

N E W S L E T T E R MAY 1995

MANY THANKS

The attendance was great and the participation outstanding for the "Gifts of Friendship" display at our March meeting. Thank you to the members and friends who attended and a special thank you to those who shared their interesting gifts and comments with us.

1995 EXCHANGES

The Moldova - Ukraine Outgoing Exchange had to be cancelled in mid April since we only had 8 of the original 16 confirm their plans with their deposit.

Atlanta provided a list of Passport Members from other clubs who indicated an interest in exchanges with the New Independent States. Out of 15 contacts 3 families were going on the Moscow Cruise and the others had schedule conflicts or were concerned about the fighting in the area that started in December. The cost for two week exchange had increased to \$2300 without the train fare from Moldova to Lugansk, Ukraine and return. Atlanta was still trying to determine that cost.

Ken and Janis Schmitz are going to Ukraine with the Milwaukee Friendship Force Club. Mary Jane McCollum from Cedar Falls and her friend are going on the Moscow Cruise.

NORDRESTEDT. GERMANY INCOMING EXCHANGE originally scheduled for early August, is now scheduled for one of the last two weeks in October. These are the only dates they can come. Remember the Friendship Force Motto - "Be Flexible".

Anyone interested in serving on one of the committees or home hosting should sign up at the meeting on June 4th or contact Betty Emrich, Exchange Director. Activity ideas or suggestions are also welcome.

LUGANSK. UKRAINE INCOMING EXCHANGE date is November 2 through 9. We are pleased that they have accepted our invitation to visit Cedar Rapids/Iowa City in 1995. Application forms for Exchange Director will be available at the June 4th Meeting.

*BAGHDAD. IRAQ Each club has been requested to nominate 2 persons to be considered by Atlanta to participate in **DESERT PEACE**. For more details please refer to the enclosed information and letter from Wayne Smith. This should be an exciting experience of Friendship Force in action where it is needed most.*

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

The Cedar Rapids/Iowa City Friendship Force Club members and friends extend our sincere sympathy to Jon Mick and Family in their sorrow. Judy will be greatly missed in our Friendship Force circle as she has always been there to help with a happy smile and many good ideas. She played a great part in the success of our club. We will always miss her.

THANK YOU NOTE FROM JON MICK

The Friendship Force,

*Thank you for showing such kindness
at the time of our sorrow.*

*And thank you for making possible some of the
experiences and friendships that were so very
important in Judy's life.*

*Jon Mick
Scott, Bob, Amy and Corrie*

CONGRATULATIONS! Betty Emrich recently received a Governor's Volunteer Award through the Economic Development Commission for her work and involvement with International Organizations to Benefit Iowa.

HOSTING UKRAINE JOURNALIST

Our Club was asked by the International Center for Community Journalism to assist with providing homes for 2 journalists while they were interning at newspapers in Cedar Rapids and Iowa City. Jerry Stoner graciously accepted Nataliya Gabor, of Kiev, for 2 of her 4 weeks in Iowa City. Victor Mazaniy of Rivne stayed with the Schmitz's, Newman's and Milligan's during his 4 weeks. This was truly an enjoyable and educational experience for all. They were both wonderful people.

LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE JUNE 4TH SUPPER AT THE SHERATON INN - 5:00 PM. BRING A FRIEND FOR A FUN EVENING.

George Milligan

DESERT PEACE
A Visit of Friendship to the People of Baghdad

PURPOSE OF VISIT

To extend a hand of friendship to the people of Baghdad by ordinary citizens of the United States of America.

INVITATION

The Women's Federation of Iraq has invited The Friendship Force to send up to one hundred goodwill Ambassadors to visit ordinary citizens of Baghdad.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

Due to sanctions imposed on Iraq after the Persian Gulf War by the United Nations and the United States of America, travel restrictions have been imposed on US citizens wanting to travel to Iraq. To hear those restrictions, call (202) 955-0377 for a recorded message of the United States State Department.

Three different legal firms have been contacted to interpret these travel restrictions to The Friendship Force. All advise that the US government cannot prohibit its citizens from traveling to Iraq for this would be a violation of the First Amendment to the Constitution. However, the US government can, and does, make it illegal to travel to Iraq ON A UNITED STATES PASSPORT. Therefore, any US citizen going on this mission of friendship to the Iraqi people must do so knowing that their government will not go to their aid in case of any problem. The Friendship Force will require that all Ambassadors on this journey sign a waiver releasing The Friendship Force from any legal responsibility for their participation in this citizens' exchange. The Women's Federation of Iraq will obtain entry visas for those on this exchange from the Iraqi government which has agreed to issue visas to Friendship Force Ambassadors, even though those going will be traveling without a recognized passport.

Also it is illegal for US citizens to spend money in Iraq. However, all expenses of this Friendship Force exchange within Iraq will be paid for by the Women's Federation of Iraq. Those expenses, however, will be minimal and care is being taken that this visit not be a heavy burden for the Women's Federation.

Due to the sanctions, it is not possible to fly directly to Baghdad. Therefore, The Friendship Force will travel from Amman (Jordan) by bus to Baghdad. This journey will be made aboard a motorcoach. The trip will take approximately 12 to 16 hours.

HOSTING BY THE IRAQIS

Due to the political and economic climate in Iraq, personal safety is a concern. Every effort will be made to see that our Ambassadors are treated well. To diminish the chance for harm to those who go on this goodwill mission to Iraq, all Friendship Force Ambassadors will be housed at a hotel in Baghdad. Each Ambassador will have a day host who will spend significant time with him or her throughout the visit to Iraq.

DATES OF TRAVEL

All Friendship Force Ambassadors will depart the United States on June 2, Friday. They will return home on June 13, Tuesday.

ITINERARY

In order to obtain a general overview of the Middle East, this group will travel from the USA to Israel arriving the evening of Saturday, June 3. The group will overnight at a first class hotel in Jerusalem.

On Sunday, June 4, there will be an orientation meeting to focus on the purpose of our visit to this region of the world. Following lunch, there will be an afternoon visit to many of the historic sites in and around Jerusalem.

On Monday, June 5, the group will travel throughout the interior of Israel, visiting both Jewish and Arab villages which are in the Galilee area.

On Tuesday morning, June 6, the Ambassadors of The Friendship Force will travel to Jordan. A visit will be made to Petra, the ancient and incredible city which was carved from stone thousands of years ago. The evening will be spent at a hotel in Amman.

Early on Wednesday morning, June 7, the group will depart via motorcoach for the crossing of the desert to Baghdad. All will be hosted on this evening at a hotel in the capital city of Iraq.

On Thursday morning, June 8, our Iraqi Hosts will meet us at the hotel for a welcome ceremony. After this, each host family will take their guests to visit their homes and city. Dinner will be in the homes of the Iraqi Hosts. Each Ambassador will be matched with a person of his or her own vocation or area of interest.

On Friday, June 9, the Iraqi Hosts will call for their guests in the morning and spend the entire day with them.

On Saturday, June 10, all Friendship Force Ambassadors and their Hosts will attend a professional folklore performance of singing and dance which is geared to tell the history of the Iraqi people.

On Sunday, June 11, the Iraqi Hosts will take their guests to Babylon for a picnic. Babylon is about a two-hour drive from Baghdad. Feasting, dancing, singing and fellowship will be the order of the day. There will be a farewell dinner at the hotel on Sunday evening.

On Monday, June 12, the Ambassadors of The Friendship Force will rise early and return across the desert to Amman. They will stay at a hotel in Amman for the evening.

On Tuesday, June 13, the group will depart from Amman and arrive home the same day.

COST

The cost of participation in DESERT PEACE will be \$2500 per person from New York. This cost will cover all transportation, rooming and meals, and sightseeing in Israel and Jordan.

April 5, 1995

D. Wayne Smith, Founder and President

George Milligan
The Friendship Force of Cedar Rapids-Iowa City
2313 Ridge Trail NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402



Dear George:

Iraq!

The name of that nation raises all kinds of thoughts in our minds. We remember the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. Then we see in our minds the incredible sights on CNN of the bombing of Baghdad. Desert Storm and the Persian Gulf War have caused Iraq to become a pariah among the nations of the world.

Many have condemned the government of Iraq, calling it today's "evil empire." The Friendship Force will leave that judgment to others. Ours is another mission. As it was in the days of the Cold War with the Soviet Union and with Mainland China, our task is to create an environment where seeds of personal friendship can be sown across the barriers which divide people.

The fact is that there are millions of Iraqi citizens who are suffering terribly at this moment. They are human beings just as we. And they are caught in an awful situation and can do little, if anything, about it. They need a hand of friendship. It is easy to be a friend to those who have no problems. It will not be easy to befriend the Iraqi people. Any attempt to do so will be misunderstood by many. Living conditions in Iraq are difficult. The journey there will not be easy. But few need friendship now more than the Iraqis.

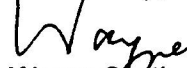
The Friendship Force will take its first exchange to Iraq in early June of this year led by our Chairman, Richard Falk. The Board of Trustees met in March and unanimously voted to do this. Rosalynn Carter was present and "strongly urged" us to go forward. I already had met with her and Jimmy Carter on three different occasions in the past few weeks to seek their guidance on this issue. They believe that a visit to Iraq by The Friendship Force is very much needed at this time. Their daughter, Amy, has been the first to volunteer to go as an Ambassador. Larry Woods, a feature reporter on "people" stories with CNN, is planning to cover this brave visit to Baghdad.

As I write this letter to you, two U.S. citizens are imprisoned in Baghdad for straying over the Iraqi border without a visa. The Friendship Force is being invited to enter Iraq with a visa. (See attached page.) I am planning to go to Baghdad before the end of April and meet with officials of the Women's Federation of Iraq, the organization which has invited us to visit. I will assure myself that this visit has every prospect for success before this proposed exchange leaves the USA on June 2.

It is my hope that this delegation can be composed of experienced Friendship Force Ambassadors from all over our country. It would be wonderful if every U.S. Friendship Force club could be represented. I am writing to you to see if you can nominate two people from Cedar Rapids-Iowa City who would be willing to be a part of this historic visit of friendship. Your nominees must be physically and emotionally tough and thoroughly committed to the ideals of The Friendship Force. I need your recommendation no later than May 1. We will then contact the nominees directly about the application process which will require a statement of their reasons for wanting to participate in this exchange. Attached is some technical information about the journey itself which your nominees will need to know.

Thank you, George, for your devotion to making this world a world of friends, believing that this is the way to have a world of peace.

In friendship,


Wayne Smith

Enclosure

April 25, 1995

George Milligan
The Friendship Force of Cedar Rapids-Iowa City
2313 Ridge Trail NE
Cedar Rapids, IA 52402

Dear George:

On April 5 I wrote to you about a Friendship Force exchange with the citizens of Baghdad. You were requested to nominate two persons from The Friendship Force of Cedar Rapids-Iowa City who would be both qualified and willing to participate in this important exchange beginning on June 2.

Since writing to you, events have occurred which make a June date for this exchange impractical. Several members of our Board of Trustees have been consulted and believe that it would be wiser to wait until at least the Fall before going forward with this venture.

I will continue to receive recommendations regarding persons who would make excellent Ambassadors for this experience in international friendship when the time does become right to go forward.

Thanks once more, George. Your leadership in The Friendship Force is an inspiration to all of us.

In friendship,


Wayne Smith

THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF
CEDAR RAPIDS/IOWA CITY
PO BOX 81
CEDAR RAPIDS IA 52406



Join us for a Sunday Supper with Friendship Force!!

Date: Sunday, June 4, 1995

Time: 5:00 - 8:00

Place: Sheraton Inn

525 - 33rd Avenue S. W.
Cedar Rapids
Right off Interstate 380 at 33 rd Avenue

Five Good Reasons to Come ...

Easy to find... between CR and Ia City

No food to fix... sandwiches, relishes and dip, cookies, and cold drinks all for \$5 each!

Chance to see your Friendship Force friends and share some fun and conversation.

Speaker: Don Beckley will talk to us about his experiences in Africa as a Peace Corp Volunteer.

Business meeting with updates on upcoming events.

See you Sunday!