

A Publication of The Friendship Force of Lincoln www.friendshipforcelincoln.org

Number 116 Lincoln, Nebraska November 2009



Don't Miss the Holiday Dinner Party

Saturday, December 5, 5:30 PM Forest Lake Estates Club House, in Lincoln



Greetings from Your President

by John Comer - President

hat a joy it has been to serve as your president the past two years. A bit apprehensive when asked to serve in this important position, I am pleased that I managed to say yes. I was not particularly knowledgeable of the ins and outs of club activities when initially asked to become president. I leave the office with a more complete and thorough understanding of what makes this organization work, at both the local and international level. I am amazed at the commitment of all of you to the goals and purpose of Friendship Force. So I leave knowing more than when I came in. I guess that is always the case. But what I really cherish from my service is that I have gotten to know all of you. You see Friendship Force not only enables us to make friends in other countries, it helps cultivate friendships right here at home. Thanks for being my friend and thanks for allowing me the opportunity to serve.

World Exchange Recruiter position revived

by Pat King

everal years ago, FFI asked clubs to appoint a World Exchange Recruiter (WER) to assist members in finding exchanges. Because of the success of FFIs E-Flyer, the WER position was eliminated. However, some members still seek assistance in finding an international exchange that suits their needs.

Because of this, the Board reinstated WER and linked the duties with the Domestic Exchange Coordinator (DEC), designed to assist and promote domestic exchanges. If you need assistance in identifying either a domestic or international exchange, contact Pat King, DEC/WER at (402) 489-3695 or pking4@neb. rr.com.

Don't Miss the Holiday Dinner Party Saturday, December 5 Social Hour 5:30, Dinner 6:30

By Jeanne Zwiebel, Activities Chair



Main Dish___

elebrate the holidays by joining with your FFL friends at a potluck dinner. We will get better acquainted, eat, and try to get you in the holiday spirit. The main course, Valentino's lasagna is provided, but please bring an appetizer, dessert, main dish, or relish, salad or vegetable tray to serve 12 to 15. Please also bring serving utensils. Plates, cups and napkins, coffee and tea will be provided. Those who wish may bring wine to share.

Please RSVP by December 1 using the form below. The price of the party is \$6.00 per person. Send registration forms and checks to Jeanne Zwiebel, 1025 Lamplighter Lane, Lincoln NE 68510. If you have questions, you may

contact Jeanne at jz82924@ windstream.net or 489- 1247. Location: Forest Lake Club House. Directions: South of Pioneers Blvd. on South 70th Street. Turn west on Forest Lake Blvd. Proceed to the round-about and turn right on 69th Street. Proceed to Summerset Court and turn left. The Club House is on the right. Be sure to use the parking envelopes as there is no on-street parking.

_dessert ____appetizer

Please return this form with payment to Jeanne Zwiebel, 1025 Lamplighter Lane, Lincoln, NE 68510 no later than December 1, 2009

Yes, I plan on attending	
Name(s)	Phone
Address	
Email	
Guest	
Number of persons attending X \$ 6.00	
I will bring the following:	

salad

__vegetable __

relish tray____

We are Celebrating! Ten Years of Hosting Open World & World Friendship Day

by Kay Rockwell

he Open World Leadership Program has been an important component of FFL's international connection over the past 10 years. U.S. Senator Ben Nelson recognized FFL's contribution to enhance understanding and capability for cooperation between the United States and the countries of Eurasia at Open World's 10-Year Anniversary Gala Celebration at the Library of Congress in DC on September 29. Senator Nelson, an OW Board of Trustees member said in his prepared remarks: I'd like to share a couple of examples of its (OW's) success from my own

state. It is with pleasure that I note that Lincoln's Friendship Force Club has hosted a number of Open World Delegates. Among them, a professor at Kemerovo State University in Russia was hosted in Lincoln by Dr. Kay Rockwell of Friendship Force, which is an Open World grantee. The professor was particularly impressed by student volunteer activities such as the 4H program for high school students. Inspired by what he saw in Nebraska, he started a student volunteer program at his university, as well as an after school science club. The professor also took note that public buildings in

the U.S. have access ramps for the disabled. And today there is an access ramp to the entrance of Kemerovo University. I'd like to recognize both the professor, Vladislav Ovchinnikov, and Dr. Kay Rockwell who I understand are attending this gala. Let's give them a round of applause!

The U.S. Congress established Open World in 1999 to enhance understanding and capabilities for cooperation between the United States and countries of Eurasia. Thanks to Open World, some 15,000 current and future Eurasian leaders have traveled to the U.S. and been exposed to new ideas and practices that they can adapt for use in their own work. Since 1999, FFL has hosted 12 delegations from Russia, Ukraine, and Tajikistan. Themes focused on education, youth issues, government accountability, women as leaders, and economic development. Many Nebraskans, especially FFL Club members, benefitted from hosting 113 delegates. The program energizes both OW delegates and FFL members as they learn about each other's culture and society and the social and political issues that confront them.



Kay Rockwell of FFL, Senator Ben Nelson, and Vladislav Ovchinnikov of Kemerovo, Russia at Open World's 10-Year Anniversary Gala Celebration at the Library of Congress in DC on September 29, 2009.

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Let's celebrate FFL's association with Open World as we recognize March 1 as World Friendship Day. Ambassador John O'Keefe, Executive Director of the Open World Leadership Program at the Library of Congress in Washington, DC will attend and share with us the impact that OW is making in Eurasia.

Initial plans are: DATE: Saturday, February 27, 2010, 4:00 – Meet and Greet Ambassador O'Keefe, 6:00 – Gala Dinner recognizing 10-Years of FFL's OW programs and World Friendship Day.

Watch for an e-mail announcing final plans after January 1, 2010.



Jolene Schauer of FFL, Vladislav Ovchinnikov of Kemerovo, Russia, and Steve Niemeyer of Burwell plant a tree at the Wheeler County Fair Grounds in Bartlett, Nebraska. The "Thank You" tree stands as a reminder of the Russian's visit with 4-H'ers in October 2007.

Tajiks Focus on Child Protection Issues

by Kay Rockwell

ne Friendship Force of Lincoln recently hosted five governmental department heads from Tajikistan as part of the Open World Leadership Program. The Tajiks visited Lincoln October 3-10 and focused on children's rights; they met with Juvenile Judge Linda S. Porter, UNL Dean Marjorie Kostelnik, Mayor Chris Beutler, Senator Amanda McGill, and Assistant Secretary of State J. P. Green. They also visited Friendship Home, the BigBrother/Big-Sister Program, the Lancaster County Youth Services Center, CEDARS Youth Services, the WIC Nutrition Program, Clinton Elementary School, and the Nebraska State Capitol.

The Open World Tajik delegates were very thankful for the opportunity to learn about Child Protection issues in Lincoln. A few of their comments include:

- "It surprised me to see how people participate in making laws. Any individual can participate and make a difference. However, I think people are less active politically than they have the chance to be."
- "The friendship between Tajik and American people has become much stronger

- this last week. This experience has made my world view much wider."
- "We must implement new ideas we learned in Lincoln about children's rights; but these rights are also important for the world community."
- "It impressed me to see how children's rights are protected; and the way each agency/organization addressed their own goal and then cooperated with other agencies to meet child or family needs." The delegates also shared things they want to do upon returning to Tajikistan. Some of these include:
- 1. Conduct meetings with colleagues and share the experience I've had with child rights organizations.
- 2. Encourage partner organizations to work together on child protection issues.
- 3. Start a Big Brother/BigSister program.
- 4. Help Centers working with children get support for their programs. And, conduct training for specialists working in these centers.
- 5. Involve the community in working with children and their families.
- 6. Create an association of the generous people in the



A Tajik Ambassador enjoys a train ride at Omaha's Henry Doorly Zoo

- community we need to work with charities too.
- 7. Encourage state authorities to cooperate with NGOs.
- 8. Analyze all the information I received and apply it as I work on creating legislation for child protection.
- Implement a back pack program to send food home with children so they do not go hungry.

The Tajiks truly had a wonderful time! They appreciated everything FFL did to illustrate what the U.S. is like, what democracy means to us and how we work together to address youth issues in our society.

Albanian Development Exchange A Success

by Brian Ridenour, Exchange Director



bassadors from 10
different US states,
including 4 persons from Lincoln participated in Friendship
Force's first exchange to Albania. Like many FF exchanges,
the participants in the exchange were older Americans.
The age range, excluding local
Peace Corps volunteer Alissa
Ridenour, was from 59 to
83. Five men and 13 women
participated. There were three
married couples in the group.

The exchange began in Tirana, the capital city of Albania and remained based there for the first four nights. Highlights included a visit to the National Museum of History, an outing to the mountain top community of Kruja, including visiting its historic bazaar and the Skanderbeg Museum, and a half day outing to the mountain top Dajti National Park, with a breathtaking ride to and from the park via gondola. Two nights of Friend-

ship Force experiences with local Albanians were enjoyed in Tirana including visits to six Albanian homes.

Nights 5 and 6 were spent in Berat, where the group relaxed and explored one of Albania's most ancient and interesting cities. The highlight was a visit to the citadel, with the community of homes located within the citadel. An outing to a winery, including wine tasting, Albanian style, was also enjoyed. Day 7 was primarily a transit day, traveling from Berat in the South of Albania to Shkodra in the north. A tour of the Grecian ruins at Apollonia was involved along the way.

Days 8 through 10 were filled with activities in and around Shkodra and included visiting a foreign language high school, where English was the most popular language to study, and visiting local Mosques, an Orthodox Cathedral and Catholic Churches. The entire country demonstrated remarkable tolerance among the faiths, coexisting and even cooperating in the restoration of their faiths in a country in which, until the fall of communism, religion had been illegal.

Museums, the Rozafa Castle, high above Shkodra,

and the fascinating Venetian Mask Factory were also highlights. But most important, our ambassadors were able to spend two nights in the homes of Shkodra residents who were experiencing a Friendship Force exchange for the first time.

Among the more interesting and enjoyable activities for the group were the meals.

Generally speaking, the meals were excellent everywhere we traveled and were enjoyed by all, probably overly so. I doubt anyone lost any weight, notwithstanding the extensive walking that was required.

The success of this exchange will no doubt be judged by the fact that new Friendship Force clubs are forming in both Tirana and Shkodra. Strong leaders and a dedicated group of members have been identified in both cities. They look forward to the opportunity to welcome future exchanges and, eventually, to opportunities for outbound exchanges. The Albanians encountered lived up to the advance billing of being among the most friendly and gracious people in the world.

Moroccan Exchange

by Laurie-Ann Scott, Exchange Director



Bob Wagner is ready for the adventure to continue

hile our Lincoln friends were slogging through one of the wettest and coldest Octobers on record, nine members of FFL, joined others, including five from Canada, to a very warm Morocco! Bob and Marilyn Wagner, Jane Kinsey, Julie Splichal, Dorothy Anderson and Mississippi member Jo Hollman joined Laurie Ann and Larry Scott for this adventure which traversed much of the country of Morocco circling counter-clockwise. This was such an amazing and intense experience. The ancient culture and sights and beautiful buildings with their

mosaics and intricately carved ceilings and graceful arches transported us to another era. We meandered through the ancient medinas, or old parts of town within the walls. We visited a huge square in Marrakesh where the activity ranged from snake charmers to monkey-handlers, dancers, musicians and a huge gathering of people...this was "where the action is!" in Marrakesh. The Berber people lived in Morocco before the Arabs who came after the advent of Islam. The two groups assimilated and the country is now 97% Muslim. Theirs is the last absolute monarchy in the

world where the young king is considered the political leader as well as the spiritual father of the country. We visited a Berber pharmacist and were enthralled with his encyclopedic knowledge of herbs and cures. We had a unique "Day in the Life of a Berber" experience in a small village where some of us went to the well for water to load up on the donkey. Others made bread, others made tajines (the national dish) for lunch, and all of us participated in the ritual of making sweet, mint tea. Jane's tea was judged the winner! Certainly a highlight was going out on the Sahara Desert at sunset by camel. After four-wheeling over the dunes, we rode on the camels over an hour until we came to our camp where we lounged on rugs and were served dinner and later enjoyed singing and dancing. Sleeping under the stars was an unforgettable experience as was climbing the high dunes to experience the sunrise.

"Come with me to the Casbah," I don't know who said it but we sure did it, experiencing the fortified towns of yore which offered unforgettable views and a feeling of living in another era. We are in the land of Lawrence of Ara-

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bia, The Gladiator, Cleopatra, Apocalypse, Hidalgo, and Babel which were all filmed here.

Morocco has four mountain ranges and we spent time in three of them. We explored some very off-the-beaten track areas such as wandering through dusty, rock-strewn Tingher, where we were as much of an oddity as the things we saw. Women were very likely to cover their face with their scarves or robes as we passed. Men were always sitting in the cafes "conducting business" or watching the world go by. Children followed us everywhere...curious, smiling, and delighted if they received a treat such as a balloon.

We had two one-night homestays. The first was in Errachidia, where we were treated to an elaborate six hour lunch with five courses beginning with dessert! The second was in Azrou where we visited schools and a park where we could feed the Barbary Apes. Many positive experiences came from these brief stays with host families. People experienced quite a variety of living arrangements. It is not unusual for a home to have a reception room with couches surrounding a table. Family members eat on the table, gather in this room for activities, and sleep on the couches. A highlight for everyone was the time spent in the ancient city of Fes. (This is not named

for the hat "fez" but for an ax "fes" because the father of Fes found a "golden ax.") The ancient medina (or old town) dates from 808 with the medieval city dating from 1276. Of the million and a half residents, one third live inside the Medina. It is a labyrinth where one needs a guide to keep from getting lost. Our group walked four miles through this area. Ali Alami was considered by our group to be the best guide they had ever had. He managed to give people choices to do several things in Fes, but when they seemed to want to do more than one thing, he managed to let them all do everything they wanted, absolutely amazing.

"Balak! Balak!" Make way! A donkey is coming! The donkey is still the modus operandi for moving things in the medina which is impassable to cars or trucks. In 1927 Amy Bend Bishop, an American, was disturbed by the poor condition of the 40,000 mules and donkeys working in Fes at the time and donated the equivalent of over \$100,000 to establish a free veterinary service. It was named the American Fondouk ("fondouk" is Arabic for inn) and still exists today. Sometimes the animals make their way here on their own! We visited Meknes where Arabian and Berber horses are bred and trained as well as Rabat, the capitol of the country and ended our excursion



in Casablanca driving by the beautifully illuminated Hassan II Mosque at night before going to Rick's Cafe. If you haven't heard of Rick's, rent the Humphrey Bogart movie, Casablanca!

We return where no loudspeakers amplify the cry of the muezzine calling the faithful to prayer five times a day. No one is saying Salam Alaykum instead of Good Morning and we no longer need to say Lo Shokran (No thank you.) because we are not being followed by aggressive entrepreneurs trying to sell us something. Few beggars are sitting where we might say "Allah Yasahel" (May God help you in your troubles.) as we pass by. It is a reluctant return to Midwestern normality as this was such a fantastic experience. Consider joining another Friendship Force program to this amazing country. You will not be sorry!

Marilyn Wagner has made a wonderful "I-Movie" of our trip and we will be sharing impressions and memories with all in the near future!

2010 FFL Outbound Exchanges



Southern Italy Outbound in May

by Richard Spencer

🔫 his exchange begins in Rome. The first week will be in Basilicata, a mountainous region in Southern Italy and the last six days will be in Mediterranean coastal towns. Basilicata's natural beauty, ancient culture, deeply rooted local traditions, Mediterranean food, and above all the warmth and hospitality of its people, will provide an unforgettable experience. At times we will travel on secondary roads through the Apennine Mountains to small hilltop villages, with dramatic panoramas of mountain ridges and rolling hills. The application deadline is near, however there are still a few openings for this exchange The itinerary, cost, and details are available at http://www.datapdq.com/ or contact Richard Spencer 488-6930.

Global Outbound to Friesland, Netherlands in May

by Larry Kluck

oin this global exchange in 2010 to Friesland. The Friendship Force of Friesland is in and around the city of Leeuwarden. This is a beautiful agricultural area with windmills, dykes that reclaim land from the sea and meadows for raising the famous Friesian cattle. The exchange will be hosted from May 18th to the 25th.

Friesland activities will include four day trips with visits to Enkhuizen to view old homes of fishermen, Frisian Island, southwest Friesland where ambassadors will experience the old culture, the agricultural northeast, Weerribben National Park and Giethorn (little Venice), the tile factory in Makkum and other sites. We will tour Leeuwarden and meet with city officials

Before and after the home stay, ambassadors will have an option to spend a few days in Amsterdam touring the city and the surrounding towns and countryside, To see the city from one of the many canals that channel through the city, Ambassadors will enjoy a canal tour. Several free days will afford ample opportunity to visit other city sites.

An option following Amsterdam is travel to Munich, Germany. Here, ambassadors will visit Schloss Nymphenburg Palace, the city center Marienplatz, and much more. Here also, free days will provide opportunities to explore this magnificent city.

Ambassadors will also have the options of attending the world famous Passion Play performed every decade in Oberammergau and/or a day trip to Salzburg by train. The global exchange concept permits ambassadors to do the home stay only, the home stay and Amsterdam, or the home stay, Amsterdam and Munich. Estimated costs:

- 1. Home hosting only (land charges only) May 18-25, \$907. This includes activities in Leeuwarden, FFI fees, hosting club fee, transportation from Amsterdam to Leeuwarden & return and other incidental costs.
- 2. Home hosting and Amsterdam (land only) arriving early May 16-29, \$1,900.
- 3. Home hosting, Amsterdam and Munich (land onlytransportation between cities not included) and with the options May 30-June 3, \$2,813.

For more information, contact Larry Kluck at LarryKluck@hotmail.com or evenings at 402-770-3398.

2010 Exchanges continued



Connecticut Out- bound in October

by Betty Starr

n March 2009, ambassadors from the FF of Connecticut visited Lincoln and participated in the wonderful "Crane Excursion." Earlier this year, Connecticut extended an invitation to us to visit them. And I say, let's go.

Tentative plans are to offer a five-day pre-exchange tour of New England. This will be followed with a six-day home stay with the Connecticut club. The pre-exchange tour will begin October 4/5th, the home stay October 9th.

Those wishing to participate in the Friendship Force World International Conference from October 16 to 18 in Washington, D.C. may travel there with members of the Connecticut club. This is a great opportunity to view the fall colors of New Eng-

land, visit our friends in Connecticut, and participate in the International Conference. The International Conference is NOT a part of this exchange. You must arrange you own travel, lodging, and conference registration in D.C. There will be options for you to participate in a home stay following the conference, but this also is not part of this exchange.

Connecticut can only accommodate 18 ambassadors, and preference will be given to those who register first. I am told at that time of year in New England, one can see the "The Great Pumpkin". With a full exchange, we have a better chance of doing so. Join in the search, have some fun, and meet new friends. Look for more details forthcoming via email and the Passport.

For more information, contact Exchange Director: Betty Starr, at bettystarr@inebraska.com or 402-486-4006

Hosts Needed for Domestic Exchange

he Friendship Force of Lincoln will be hosting another Crane Excursion and Exchange Friday, March 12 through breakfast on Thursday, March 18, 2010. We are inviting Ambassadors from The Friendship Force Clubs of Ft. Worth, Kansas (Wichita), and Quad Cities (Iowa); while some may drive, others may choose to fly. Approximately 40 individuals will spend time with us in Lincoln plus participate in a three-day (two night) motorcoach excursion to observe the Sandhill Cranes along with a variety of other sites around central Nebraska.

Home hosts are being sought who will welcome guest(s) into their home prior to 4:00 p.m. on Friday in time for a Welcome Party. Exchange activities are being planned for Saturday and Sunday with departure for the Crane Excursion early Monday morning. Guests are expected to return to Lincoln at approximately 9:30 p.m. on Wednesday. There will be a Farewell Breakfast at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday after which guests will depart for home. With the high number of out-of-town guests expected, approximately 20 to 25 home hosts will be needed. You will note that there are only four nights of home hosting in addition to the two nights on the road.

We believe this schedule will enable more members to host since the exchange activities will take place on the weekend. Please contact Joanna Rogers (484-8678 or rkrohn@neb.rr.com) as soon as you determine if you are able to host.



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This & That Merchandise

Merchandise for Exchange Gifts

Just a reminder that the FFL has gifts available for you to take on exchanges. If you are interested in purchasing items before January 1, contact Amy Birky at amy1940@inebraska.com or 489-2024. After January 1, contact Mary Lou Reeves at mary-reeves@cdolinc.net or 464-1803. Gift prices range from \$3-18. Examples include pins, pens, aprons, etc.

Annual Meeting

he Friendship Force of Lincoln held its Annual Meeting Friday, August 28 at St. Mark's United Methodist Church. One hundred members and guests attended. The evening began with a potluck dinner followed by a short business meeting and entertainment by the Kokyo Taiko Japanese drummers.

Bob Wittstruck's Birthday

Group of FFL Members Helped Bob Celebrate His 89th. On August 21st about 15 FFL members traveled to the Legends on 84th to help Barb and family celebrate Bob Wittstruck's 89th birthday. Barb provided a delicious cake and Bob provided the entertainment, sharing with all in one of his favorite pastimes, Karaoke. Bob treated the crowd to a few songs of Sinatra's, Crosby's, and others

from the 40s and 50s. Bob was not the only one singing that night. Two lovely ladies serenaded him with a medley. Is Bob a bit embarrassed? NAH! He loves it.

Exchange Director Training

workshop for those interested in learning the procedures to organize and lead an exchange will be held the third week of January.

Leading an exchange is an opportunity to work with members of The Friendship Force of Lincoln, members of other Friendship Force clubs, and is a very rewarding experience. Attending the workshop is not a commitment to become an exchange director, but it will provide the skills and knowledge needed to lead one The workshop will cover everything you need to know to manage and lead an exchange.

Contact Richard Spencer at richspe@goitaly.net or 488-6930. Meeting date/time will be arranged to accommodate attendees.

New Scholarship Policy

by Richard Spencer

s many of you are aware, FFL has had a scholarship program going back several years. It has been used to assist members who could not otherwise afford to travel abroad. With few, if any, scholarship applications in recent years, the Board reviewed possible additional uses for scholarship monies. In September, it approved two categories of scholarship. Travel scholarships will continue the tradition of financially supporting individuals to travel on FFL exchanges administered largely as they have been in the past. Additionally, a second category of scholarship will be available for humanitarian, peace, cultural, and travel projects associated with FFL/ FFI exchanges and programs. There are restrictions and review processes associated with applying for and awarding these scholarships. These are found on FFL's website, www. friendshipforcelincoln.org. For more information, you may contact Richard Spencer at richspe@goitaly.net or 488-6930.

Membership News

by Mary Bryant

t's that time of year again when we ask each of you to renew your memberhip. Those of you who have considered joining, now is the time to do that as well. In 2009, the following individuals joined: Sara Ainscow, Dorothy Anderson, Shirley Barnell, Christina Buchholz, Lucy Connor, Linda Hall, Beth Hemmer, Jim and Connie Kisling, Sharon Lieske,

Sara and Jim McLoughlin, Darlene Schenaman, Julie Splichal (welcome back), and Barbara Wentink. Please welcome each of these individuals when you meet them at upcoming activities.

Tell your friends and family about The Friendship Force of Lincoln; or, better yet, bring them to a club activity. It might be Breakfast and Conversation on the second Saturday of each month – 8:30

a.m. at The Pantry Restaurant. It could be one of the frequent LEO'S (Let's Eat Out) that are held 5 or 6 times throughout the year at a variety of local restaurants. Of course, there are the quarterly social activities that vary in location and theme. Naturally, inbound exchanges always include one or more events that are open to all interested individuals. We like to think that there is something for everyone!



The Friendship Force of Lincoln 2010 Dues Notice

Dues for the 2010 calendar year are \$28 for an Individual Membership and \$35 for a Family Membership. Dues are for the calendar year from January 1st through December 31st and are not prorated. Prompt payment of dues ensures that you will continue to receive mailings from The Friendship Force of Lincoln. If you are a potential member, we hope that you decide to join our organization at this time.

Mail to: Friendship Force, PO Box 30334, Lincoln, NE 68503. Make check payable to: "The Friendship Force of Lincoln." Please mail no later than DECEMBER 1, 2009.

Date	New	Renewal	Name Badg	e \$9.00
Name(s)				
Name Badge Name(s) P	lease Print			
Street Address				
				Zip
Home Phone Number				
E-mail				
CATEGORY: □ Individu □ Replacement Name E		ily-\$35 □ Patro	on-\$50 🖵 Benefa	actor-\$75 🗖 Sponsor-\$100
Total Amount Enclosed	l:		_	

NOTE: New members each receive a complimentary name badge; replacement name badges cost \$9.00 each.