



Newsletter

Spring 2014

PCIV Multinational Group Visits Columbia By Kathryn Ashton Helms

Palmetto Council for International Visitors had a multinational group visit Columbia on Wednesday, February 26- Sunday, March 2. There were four male visitors from Sri Lanka, Argentina, Poland, and Indonesia, escorted by an English language officer from Kentucky. The group arrived late on Wednesday due to a flight delay, so unfortunately the events for Wednesday night were cancelled.

They got off to a fresh start on Thursday morning with a meeting with Sid Bedingfield at the University of South Carolina's School of Journalism where they discussed the power of the media around the world. Following the meeting, they had a nice lunch at California Dreaming and then walked to the next meeting with the SC Research Authority. Later that night, they attended the University of South Carolina Incubator Showcase and then turned into their rooms for the night.

On Friday morning, they had a meeting with Mayor Benjamin. They all found the meeting to be very interesting and informative. After the meeting, we walked across the street and Jim Byrum toured them around the Statehouse. They were very impressed by the building, and the ELO even made the comment that it is one of the nicest capital buildings he has seen. The Midlands International Trade Association then hosted a luncheon at the Palmetto Club. There, they got to speak about trade in their countries and make connections with people. Following lunch, Henry escorted the group to a meeting with the SC Commerce Department where they learned about economic development in South Carolina.

Saturday, the group opted to rest in the morning and experience Columbia in the afternoon. We took them to the Robert Mills House and then headed out to Lake Murray. We drove across the dam and then decided to take a walk across. They really enjoyed the walk, and we even found that people in the community had started putting locks on the fence on the damn, like in Paris and some of their countries to signify love. After the walk, they went to Liberty on the lake where they got to sit on the porch and enjoy the warm air, the view, and some good ole country music. They finished the night at Leigh Ann Spell's home where they had a lovely southern meal with her and her sweet family.

On Sunday, they departed for San Antonio, Texas. They all expressed how much they enjoyed their time here in Columbia and asked to thank everyone who made the trip successful.



PCIV Update from Jim Byrum

Leigh Ann and Jim Byrum attended the NCIV National Conference in Washington on January 29 to February 1. There were representatives there from all 50 states. It was a stellar event, stocked full of meetings with U.S. State Department personnel, invited speakers and ambassadors, as well as receptions and meetings on the Hill with SC Senate delegations. NCIV is stretching to broaden their scope within the context of citizen diplomacy and has officially changed their name to Global Ties/ US.

CCFI interns, Kathryn Helms, Nick Ulmer, and Henry Chambers work with PCIV on program planning and management. Natalie Smith is a new intern recruit. Gladys worked diligently for some time to organize all the data and file our end of the year report for PCIV. This report is a mammoth undertaking of facts and figures representing hours of work and detailing all the international visitors that we hosted during the year. It is the foundation each year for our annual US State Department funds allocation. Thank you, Gladys!

Upcoming PCIV events are the MCID/Electricity from Nuclear Power group from Slovakia in May and the Multi-regional American Youth: Inspiring Leadership (dates TBA).

CCFI Fall 2013 Fundraiser



CCFI raised \$752 at the dress rehearsal showing of "The Foreigner." CCFI members and friends came to the Town Theatre for a delightful evening of Larry Shue's farce in which Charlie Baker feigns ignorance of his native English tongue to elude conversing with tourists at a Georgian lodge.

Among this evening's highlights, CCFI hosted attendees with complimentary wine provided by members and a fine assortment of fruit cheese provided by Earthfare. CCFI would like to thank the Town Theatre for sponsoring CCFI's annual fundraising campaign as well as Earthfare for their continued endorsement of CCFI endeavors.

Friday Lunches for International Students at Maxcy

Imagine making sandwiches (at home the night before) for 143 hungry students and serving them in an hour! Sometimes Robin Dean and her team of volunteers have accomplished just that!

The Friday lunches that CCFI hosts and coordinates at USC's Maxcy International House continue to be a major success. Serving hundreds of students and thousands of meals over the course of the last several months, CCFI remains committed to helping the international students feel at home in Columbia. Individuals from Australia, Austria, the Bahamas, France, Iran, Colombia, Italy, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Tajikistan and even larger groups from India, Hong Kong, Turkey, Bangladesh, China, Taiwan, and the United States flock in every week to enjoy the wonderful hospitality and energy of Robin and her team.



Weekly student turnout ranges from 99-150 students and 8-15 volunteers at a time. It is not uncommon to have well over 30 countries represented at any given time. Seats at tables are taken quite quickly in the dining area at Maxcy. And most of the time, students stay chatting at the red-checkered tables well after the last crumbs are gone!

Lunches have even included guest scholars. On Friday October 25, 2013, among the 112 students served were adult scholars from China, who were visiting the USC Department of Psychology.

The Friday lunches are so successful thanks to the amazing, amazing leadership of Robin Dean. Robin diligently gathers volunteers and community support so the students may enjoy tasty lunches and warm fellowship. Our volunteers are tried and true—some steady

veteran supporters and others newly on board. These stewards bring tremendous dynamism to each and every lunch.

Among these volunteers are Jess d'Atri, Mary Sue Barnham, Sandy Bax, Judy Beazley, Charlie Beazley, Kathy Bledsoe, Pat Cannon, John Crane, Fraser Creech, Margaret Crowley, Elaine Delk, Anita Dotson, Betty Douglas, Treasha Ellington, Rannie French, Lucille Garrett, Pam Greenlaw, Roland Griffin, Rebecca Hamby, Anna Hamer, Emily Hylden, Barbara Kovacs, Johanna Killooy, Lu Ahn Lee, Yuan Li, Jennifer Lundy, Barbara Nettles, Binda Niati, Margaret Perkins, Valerie Reed, Mary Revels, Becky Rich, Alexandra Rowe, Catherine Sharpe, Betty Smith, Wilma Smith, Corinne Tomahiro, Claire Wagner, Lee Walker, Any Weems, Clinton Welsh, Don Whittaker, Louise Wise, Beth Zeurcher, and others; CCFI's fabulous interns Kathryn Helms, Joy Gannaway, and Nick Ulmer; CCFI dedicated board members Marion Crane, Robin Dean, Julia Ferillo, Carol Gelhaus, Piedad Sanyer, Nancy Whiteside, and Joan Young; and countless others.



CCFI extends special thanks and warm gratitude to a number of sponsors:

Baptist Collegiate Ministries
English Program for Internationals
Crescent Hill Baptist Church
Green Lawn Baptist Church
Kathwood Baptist Church
St. Andrews Baptist Church
St. Joseph Catholic Women's Society
Trinity Episcopal Cathedral
USC Carolina International House
USC International Student Services



CCFI also receives excellent assistance from the administrative and custodial staff in the new International House dorm. Everyone pulls together for these formidable Fridays, and CCFI is most grateful for everyone's collaboration.

Volunteerism at the Friday lunches ranges from warm greetings at the door, sharing stories and laughs with students, making sandwiches and munchies, buying treats, offering financial donations, and much more! If you feel inspired to help out or contribute in some way, please contact Robin Dean.

International Friends for Dinner By Leigh Ann Spell

So a guy from Poland, a guy from Indonesia, a guy from Argentina and a guy from Sri Lanka walk into a home in Ballentine... Yes, this sounds like the beginning of a joke and in fact there was quite a bit of laughing and joking going on when this lively Palmetto Council for International Visitors (PCIV) group came to my house for dinner for the home hospitality portion of their visit to Columbia recently. Home hospitality is a vital part of CCFI's international visitors' program. While the PCIV committee arranges for professional meetings and cultural events during a groups' stay in the Midlands, the meals, receptions and visits to people's homes are really what build international connections and are what visitors often comment on the most when they leave.



The next time you receive an email message from CCFI requesting home hospitality for a PCIV individual or group, I highly recommend that you consider inviting these interesting and engaging individuals into your home. It is not often that you can have dinner in your home with people from around the globe! Each time my family hosts a group, we are amazed at how open and appreciative these visitors are to be able to come and have a typical American

meal with a typical American family. Many reports from international visitors show that the home hospitality visit is often what helps visitors see Americans as not the stereotypes that they often see/hear about in the media, but as hospitable people who really want to connect and learn about their culture. Personally, I always find it fascinating and fun to meet these international visitors. It is a learning experience for the whole family!



Front (left to right): Leigh Ann Spell, Kyler Spell, Hannah Spell (and Maggie Spell). Back (left to right): Santiago Sautel (Argentina), Ary Hardinata (Indonesia), Abdul Lathiff Mohamed Nafeel (Sri Lanka), Kathryn Helms (CCFI student intern), Natalie Smith (CCFI student intern), Dariusz Klimzcak (Poland), Henry Chamber (CCFI student intern) and Jamie Spell (CCFI member).





Annual Pot Luck Welcoming Dinner

Hundreds of students filled up the USC Russell House ballroom for CCFI's annual welcoming dinner!

Every year, CCFI members in collaboration with USC's International Student Services collaborate to usher in new and returning students from abroad. Last August, dinner was served!

From Southern fried chicken to amazing pastas and delectable salads, the evening's dishes were an amazing hit. In fact, they were so good and the turn out so grand that we had order pizzas to keep the line going. Students loved the food! But most of all, they enjoyed meeting new friends and commemorating with colleagues.

Members mingled and chatted with students, who shared their stories of coming to Columbia. From smooth flights to a few delays, students' sojourns to the states were flavored with excitement for the academic and cultural adventures of the semester. As the students settled into their new apartments, figuring out how to find what they needed in Columbia, they expressed how delighted they were to be here and to be welcomed so warmly by the community.

The enthusiasm was vibrant. Toward the end of the evening, everyone got up and danced. Nelson Jarvis, a well-known national caller, galvanized the crowd with the Texas two step and other line dances.

All in all, the evening was a wonderful celebration of cultural exchange and sincere fellowship!



CCFI President's Message

Happy Spring! I think everyone is excited to move out of a cold winter and into a warm spring. Although many have gone into hibernation over the winter months, CCFI board members have been very busy and are ready for new and exciting activities this Spring. Let me catch you up on what is happening with CCFI.

At the end of January, Jim Byrum and I attended the national meeting of Global Ties > US (formerly the National Council for International Visitors or NCIV) in Washington D.C. This meeting provided many great ideas that we have brought back to the CCFI Board to make our organization stronger than ever. We were able to meet with legislative staff members in the offices of Senator Lindsay Graham and Senator Tim Scott to advocate for international exchange programs in South Carolina (see photo of us at Capitol Hill), and we got to network with our colleagues from around the country. Other highlights of the meeting included a reception at the US State Department and dinner at the home of the Ambassador to the Netherlands, Peter Mollema and his wife, Marja. Jim, who has been to many of these meetings, commented that this was one of the best national meetings he has attended. I was honored to be able to represent CCFI and meet so many people who were dedicated to promoting and implementing international visitor programs.



CCFI Board members have been working diligently to reshape and revitalize our organization to best meet the needs of international students, international visitors and CCFI members. Over the past several months, we have been participating in a "re-visioning" process which has allowed us to identify which areas we want to focus on and promote the most heavily. Although this has meant revising how we provide some programs or putting some services on hold for a while, I believe we are on the road to being able to focus on what we find most important to the organization and providing programs and activities in those areas. Some highlights from this re-visioning process (which is ongoing) is that we decided to focus on the following student/visitor programs: 1) Palmetto Council for International Visitors (PCIV) – we have applied for funding to be able to increase the number of international groups that we bring to Columbia. We would like to get more CCFI members involved in activities (see my article on PCIV Home Hospitality – International Friends for Dinner - in this newsletter for one way you can become involved with these international visitor groups) and publicize more of the wonderful programs that our PCIV committee put together for these fascinating visitors. 2) International Student Luncheon/Hospitality – this committee has also applied for funding to not only make the Friday lunch more sustainable but to offer more activities for international students to interact with CCFI members. One example of a new event is the evening "get togethers", our first one was on March 20th from 5:30-7:00 p.m.– Happy Hour at the World of Beer. Hope you will be able to join us for more international student activities. 3) Arrival Hospitality – this continues to be a popular program with newly arriving international students and is a great way for members to volunteer for just a couple hours and be the first person that a new international student meets in Columbia.

As you can tell, this has been a productive and eventful winter for CCFI. If you would like to become more involved with any of the activities described above, please don't hesitate to contact me at the email or phone number below. Spring has sprung and CCFI is ready for some new and exciting activities this year!

Leigh Ann Spell
President of the CCFI Board
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803-960-4158



Happy Hour - March 20
World of Beer

CCFI Board Officers

President: *Leigh Ann Spell*
Past President: *Gladys Coles*
President Elect: *Misti Crawford*
Treasurer: *Amber Nix*
Recording Secretary: *Carol Gelhaus*
Corresponding Secretary: *Joan Young*

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PCIV: *Jim Byrum and Gladys Coles*
Ways and Means: *Open*

A special thanks to our hosts and sponsors for CCFI's winter/spring meetings and events:

- *Harold H. Adams with Custom Assurance Placements, LTD.*
- *Town Theatre*
- *Earthfare*
- *World of Beer*



Member Commitment

If you know someone who would like to become a member, please go to our [Membership](#) page.

CCFI hosts many programs throughout the year to aid international students and foreign nationals visiting the United States.

Please visit the website for details of those programs: <http://columbiacfi.org/programs.html>

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