

FRIENDS OF INDIA NEWSLETTER

Vol. 27 Number 1 March 2013

Message from Jack Slattery, President

A belated Happy New Year 2013 to all!! I apologize for not getting out a newsletter sooner. The past year has been one of transition for FOI. Some details here and on our new FOI website.

You may know we lost the **www.FOIndia.org** website when our web host went out of business or was totally damaged by one of the severe storms that hit New Jersey. Our new website is <https://Ganga633.Squarespace.com>. You can access it using the full address but most browsers (e.g., Internet Explorer, Google, etc) will bring you to it by entering only **Ganga633** in the search box or line of the browser. Note: letters are not case sensitive.

Also **John Kuberka**, our FOIndia.org Webmaster for several years needed to devote more time to his work with returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan. John, we want to thank you so much for your patience and technical support in introducing FOI into the digital age. I am not sure we can thank you enough for all that you did for us. We wish you the very best in your most important and difficult work. We send you and those you work with out blessings.

Our new Webmaster is **Maureen Nichols**, whom many of you met through email or personally during the Peace Corps 50th Reunion in Washington DC in 2011. Maureen, welcome again and thank you for all you are doing. Maureen brings with her memories of India as a daughter of **John Chromy**, an India 3 RPCV, and the technical and social media skills to keep FOI up with the times while maintaining the security of FOI information.

Also of note: **India III RPCVs** (1963-1966) had their 50th Anniversary of entering the Peace Corps reunion in Puerto Rico (PR) the last week of January 2013. A group of sixteen participated, 11 volunteers and 5 spouses. This group served in Mysore/Karnataka and Punjab/Himachal Pradesh...mostly working in agriculture and home science. About seventy Trainees began "Outward Bound" training at Arecibo, (PR) in January 1963 before going to icy cold St. Paul campus of the U of Minnesota for three months. In June 1963, 41 were sworn-in as PC Volunteers and left for India! These were the days of overnight disappearances!! So 10 India III RPCVs is not a bad showing after 50 years!!! A set of pictures of this reunion can be accessed on Google+ <https://plus.google.com/u/0/photos/113951791574681383395/albums/5841187520876209057?authkey=CJHj9tr2toTRpwE> and a pdf summary of the reunion is posted on Ganga633 as 50th in Puerto Rico.

From this gathering in Puerto Rico, **Mary Andrews** as agreed to coordinate India III information and activities and to link it to **Ganga633** website. So please contact her or if you need assistance please email me and I will pass it on to her. A few other India groups are doing this and my hope is that more groups will do the same. If you have a website, it can be linked to FOI or use **Ganga633** to house your information. Maureen will be sure to apply any special security requirements you want. In any case please visit **Ganga633** and give your suggestions, updates, stories, photos, etc. to Maureen (mnichols@austin.rr.com) and myself (FOIndiaSlattery@aol.com). Also please:

1. Let other RPCVs and family members know about the website and newsletter and to contact us if they want a newsletter by email or by mail.
2. Encourage our friends, here in the US and in India to participate.
3. Help make the Friends of India a home that includes both subgroups, e.g., Individual India groups (1-130) or by activity, e.g., agriculture, science teacher training, well-drilling, health and nutrition, etc.

Final Notes:

- (1) Please, please keep sending FOI-related **Photos and stories** (digital or otherwise) to [Maureen](#) or [me](#) for website.
- (2) **PayPal** is available on the [Ganga633](#) website.
- (3) We will be doing only **two newsletters per year**.

A Brief History of
FRIENDS OF INDIA

FOI began in 1986 with a small group of India Returned Peace Corps Volunteers : Steve Thompson, Katie Fiskien, Kay Stone, Suzanne Zapasodi, Sylvia Morrison, Reid Melton, Randy Baxter....others. Out of that came the first FOI Newsletter, editor Steve Thompson printed Vol.1, 1987 with a mailing of 204. Vol.2, 1988 increased to 874 pieces. This year (2012) our mailing is at 830 and our average member/donation response is 150 people/year.

FOI Presidents began with: Steve Thompson, then Brian Hernon, Ed Willett, and at present is Jack Slattery. Treasurer/editor is George Nepert. Data-base keeper is Merele Kinsey.

In 1988, FOI became 501(C)(3) tax exempt status with the IRS. FOI published its first member directory in 1989. The function early on was to have yearly gatherings to talk about India past & present & reunite with other RPCV's.

History of FOI Conference ("Gathering") date & places are as follows:

Aug. 1988, 1st conference at GWU in D.C.
 Aug. 1990, 2nd " " " , Indian Dancers for entertainment, dinner Katie Fiskien's home
 Aug. 1991, 3rd " " Taj Mahal Restaurant in D.C. , dinner at Katie Fiskien's home.
 July 1992, 4th " " lunch in D.C., dinner at Katie's
 June 1993, 5th " " Gandhi Memorial Center in Washington, D.C.
 May 1994, 6th FOI gathering in Atlanta, GA at NPCA Conference
 May 1995, 7th " " in Austin, TX " "
 (1996 FOI begins its first India charity outreach, "Ecological Development Foundation", Sarwar, Karnataka, started by RPCV Joe Emerson.)....FOI now supports 6 India charities.
 Mar. 1996, 8th FOI Conference at Taj Mahal Restaurant in D.C.
 May 1997, 9th " " " Café Taj in D.C.
 Sept. 1998, 10th " " " Delhi Deli in D.C.
 June 1999, 11th " " " FOI booth at NPCA Conference in D.C. (?)
 Oct. 2005, 12th " gathering at Jack Slattery's home in Wilmington, N.C.
 Aug. 2011, 13th " picnic in Falls Church, VA.... Coordinated by Ed Willett

FOI's existence has evolved from annual gatherings of FOI friends & members that love India, with now having the primarily focus on its support of six India charities. The following pages will tell about them.

Note: Besides giving to its established charities, FOI has given one time donations to:

March 2001 CARE, for Gujarat earthquake disaster relief efforts, \$1,000
 May 2004 Community Building project for the poor in Bhavsor, Gujarat \$500
 January 2005 Tsunami Relief efforts to fishing villages on S. India coast, \$11,500
 2010, Haiti earthquake relief efforts, \$500



**Michael Quaid & Willy James Ambulance Service 2012 Report By Gnanmithra Jettappa,
Manager of Sanjeevini Trust (FOI charity #1)**

This year, 2012, the ambulance shifted 185 patient's from Sirwar and surrounding villages to the District Hospital in Raichur or to other hospitals. Pesticide Poisonings: Of these 185 patients, 50 were agriculture laborers who were poisoned working in paddy fields applying toxic pesticides. All were saved, but 3 still have chronic severe CNS problems. Also, 20 people tried to commit suicide by drinking pesticides. Ten of these people were saved by the ambulance and 10 people died from drinking pesticides. Accidents: The ambulance shifted at least 40 accident cases to Raichur Hospital. Fifteen of them were so serious, the ambulance took them on to the multi-specialty hospital in Bangalore or Hyderabad. Delivery cases: Fifty delivery emergency cases were shifted to hospital by ambulance. All mothers survived, but 9 very premature babies died because they were so small. Heart attack and severe hypertension: The ambulance shifted 40 cases to the hospital this year. Fifteen died and 25 patients were saved.

The ambulance is now 4.5 years old. It has gone 120,000 kms. This year there were several big repairs: new tires, engine reconditioned and new battery. We have maintained the ambulance very well. It should last another 5 years or maybe more. The ambulance has not been in an accident as it is driven very carefully by the driver and myself. The Ambulance Service is valued and respected. People in small villages feel like the ambulance is like a god. Anytime they phone for the ambulance night or day it comes quickly. They do not have to pay bribes. If village people called for a rental vehicle at night for help, the drivers would be drunk so no matter what the emergency, they will not come even for lots of money. Pranesh Raj, M.D., in Raichur says that compared to his work as a doctor and the work of the hospital, the ambulance service is most important. Without the ambulance, he and the hospital could not help these people, and they would die.

Tell Us Your Story!

Women and children were asked to participate in a writing competition sponsored by FORGOTTEN CHILDREN. Asked to write about their life stories, some of the mothers and students wrote in Tamil about their daily lives. These heart-breaking biographical sketches show how strong these women and girls become in the face of adversity. The following excerpts were used in a celebration day speech that highlighted “facing unfairness.”

Sivaranjani, a college student, wrote, “My dear village people, I have the mind to give but I am poor. Now I have nothing else to give except my mind.”

One of our poorest mothers, **Arulmani**, observed, “Since I belong to the Dalit caste, I was able to study only up to 5th standard. At the age of 14, I got married. There is no limit for the insults, mockeries, and difficulties experienced by me in life. With the help of Forgotten Children and the Sisters, I was able to educate my children. Now I am carrying on in life driving the life boat.” Arulmani, who is deaf, became a widow and suffered as a social outcast because of her handicap and status.



Celebration Day!

Many students, mothers, and alumni came to celebrate the work of FORGOTTEN CHILDREN. The mothers wore their best saris and danced with the students for us. It was with great pleasure that we met all of them especially our alumni, Jeyapackiam and Poornima. Both were among our first students to be sponsored, and now they are proud teachers.



A Cow for a Poor Widow

Last summer, a cow was given to Lakshmi, a widow who lives in a village near Kodaikanal. Lakshmi is grateful that she can now make an income to help her raise her children. This program is implemented with AWARD (Association of Welfare in Anthropology and Rural Development in Palani, Tamil Nadu, www.awardtrustpalani.org).

Lakshmi is proud of her cow—it has changed her life! Since inflation is high in India, the price of a cow is now \$700, including life insurance for the animal. Although this is an expensive gift, it changes the life of a woman who has no hope.

Who We Are

The Father Fleming Fund is a non-profit agency founded in 1997 by Gerry Nelson & Tom Brayak, former Peace Corps Volunteers in Orissa, India, upon the death of their dear friend and great humanitarian, Fr. Tony Flemings in order to continue the work he had been doing with lepers & handicapped children in Orissa, India.

We are one of several sources that fund a registered charity in India known as **VIKAS DEEPTI** ("Ray of Hope" or "Development Light")

Vikas Deepiti
C/O Vikas Bhavan
PO District Bargarh, Orissa, INDIA
www.vikasdeepiti.org



BACKGROUND

The state of Orissa is located in eastern India and, although blessed with abundant natural resources, is still one of the poorest states in India. Leprosy is still widespread, and there is an excessively high proportion of children with various handicaps and disabilities such as polio, cerebral palsy, mental retardation, congenital deformities, amputations, burns, club feet, spinal deformities, etc. These are caused by poor sanitation, poor nutrition, disease, poor healthcare, and sometimes abuse.

What We Do

Handicapped Children

Approximately 75 children stay at our hostel, Vikas Bhavan, and an outreach program reaches more than 2000 in about 250 surrounding villages.

Rehabilitation: Children aged 5 to 15 are given prosthetic limbs, wheelchairs, crutches, braces, etc. All of these are manufactured at our facility. A local orthopedist also performs corrective operations when necessary, for free. Trained workers administer physical therapy daily.



Education: Children at Vikas Bhavan are sent to three local schools daily on our bus. Our staff also gives tutoring help daily. Several children have gone on to college.

Vocational Training: The older girls are taught sewing & embroidery and are given a sewing machine to use to create income in their village.

Nutrition: The children staying at Vikas Bhavan are given all their meals. Most food is grown on site and the children help raise it (Rice, pulses, vegetables, chickens). The more able-bodied children also help serve the food and wash dishes.

Lepers

We serve three leper colonies with a total of about 750 lepers. It is a continuing battle to integrate lepers into general society due to the stigma associated with leprosy, but progress is being made.

Treatment: Lepers are fitted with prosthetic legs and given medication (Leprosy is treatable).

Education: Leper children are taught in schools set up in each colony.

Housing: We have provided more than 100 new brick homes, each with two 12 ft x 10 ft rooms, to replace mud huts.

Self-Sufficiency: Many lepers now are raising cattle and driving rickshaws purchased through a revolving loan fund we established. Fishponds have been dug & stocked to provide food and profit. Pumps & wells have been installed for potable water.



2012 Friends of India Charity donations Report

Received from Friends of India "givers" \$32,236 in 2012 for its six charities. Since 1995, FOI has contributed a total of \$191,490 to India charities.

Charity #1: Sanjeevini Trust. Founded by PCV Joe Emerson I-38, assists poor Harijans in Sirwar, Karnataka. The Trust is managed by Gnanmithra Jettappa. The people are taught Aids education, preventive health care, free dental & eye clinics, helps the poor with medical treatments costs, promotes ecological agriculture, has a pre-school hot lunch program, and provides a medical transport vehicle serving the poor remote areas far from Raichur hospital. FOI has donated a total of \$28,362 since 1995.

Charity #2: Forgotten Children. Founded by Francoise Femington, provides basic education for 50 working children in the Kodaikanal area of Tamil Nadu. A substitute income is offered by providing a dairy cow as an incentive for the poor families to send their children to evening school.... The dairy cow provides compensation while the children are studying. The goal is to break the cycle of poverty and child labor and to educate the children. It also provides support for 2 poor bright students in college. FOI has donated a total of \$28,953 since 1997.

Charity #3: Father Fleming Foundation. Founded by PCV's Tom Brayak and Gerry Nelson. It works the leper colonies, the outcasts of society, in the Bargarth area of Orrissa. The FFF is called the Vikas Deepti ("Ray of Hope"). The goal is to empower the lepers to become self reliant. Areas of support: revolving loan program, a handicap children's training center, a water wells & pump program, commercial fish ponds, and new leper housing. FOI has donated a total of \$17,680 since 2005.

Charity #4: South Asia Pure Water Initiative. Founded by Michael Lipman (I-89) and Kathy Forsberg, SAPWII produces low cost home bio-sand filter system in the Kolar area of Karnataka. It is a very successful operation, manufactured locally, at a cost of \$35/unit for supplying clean water in the family unit. The short-term goal is to place 15,000 water filters in South India, supplying a potential of 225,000 people with clean drinking water. FOI has donated a total of \$11,243 since 2007.

Charity #5: Georges "Lucky Dozen" student sponsorship. Founded by George Nepert, I-26. Started in 2008 with 8 very poor bright girls being fully sponsored for undergraduate studies. The goal is to change a life via education one deserving girl at a time. Lucky Dozen has reached a remarkable level of 51 students being sponsored for education. The "Lucky Dozen" managed free of charge by Sr. Mary Therese, principal of P.C. higher secondary school in Thein, Tamil Nadu. About 60% of her students come from very poor families. FOI has donated a total of \$69,305 since 2008.

Charity #6: Hassan Homes of Hope. Founded by Jack Slattery, I-3, & Paul Wilkes. It is a boarding school of 90 girls, ages 6-16 living together receiving academic opportunities. Located in Hassan, Karnataka. They come from broken homes with financial problems and places that are unsafe for girls. The Salesian Sisters of Don Bosco and lay teachers provide education and life skills. Funds received goes for school supplies, desks & benches, matriculation fees & uniforms. FOI donated \$883 in 2012.

2012 FOI Report of Deposits and Expenditures

Income		Expenses	
\$40,275 donations & member dues		\$ 83 web host fee	\$ 635 charity #1
<u>540</u> FOI memberships via NPCA		90 NPCA affiliation fee	600 charity #2
\$40,815 total		315 NPCA memberships forwarded	648 charity #4
		717 newsletter & postage	29,470 charity #5
		27 delux checks order	883 charity #6
		90 money wire fees	
		<u>Total expenses</u>	\$33,558

"Friends of India" exists because of your support:

FOI is a tax deductible non-profit 501(C)(3)

FOI proudly helps support the following 6 charities: please check your preference

1. *Sanjeevini Trust in Karnataka... provides medical care, ambulance service, AIDS care, self help*
2. *Forgotten Children in Tamil Nadu... keeping child laborers in school*
3. *Father Fleming Foundation in Orrissa... assistance to leper colonies*
4. *Pure Water Initiative in Karnataka... make & supply house water filter units for the poor*
5. *George's "Lucky Dozen" in Tamil Nadu... sponsorships for college for bright but very poor girls*
6. *Hassan Home of Hope in Karnataka... supports poor orphan girls at boarding school, ages 6-16*

Contribution amount \$ _____

check option: () \$35 NPCA dues included

Make check payable to: Friends of India. Mail to George Nepert, FOI treasurer, 34915 Gordy Rd., Laurel, DE 19956. Thank you.

Please fill in: name _____ email address _____

India group number: _____ Where: _____

Comments:

Contacts: FOI President, Jack Slattery, slattery33@aol.com Data-base, Merele Kinsey merelekinsey@att.net, Editor/treasurer, George Nepert, gnepert@hotmail.com

List of Contributors since July Newsletter

Abhilash, Deepa (MD)
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Bendet, Stanley
Berkowitz, Daniel
Bonneman, Fred 24 (CA)
Boschee, Jerr
Brazell, Terry
Brown, Carin
Bunce, Arthur
Bush, Sandra
Childs, Norris 42 (PA)
Chodrin, Earl
Conklin, Michael
Davis, Daniel
Day, Wm & Marjorie
Dixon, Gordon
Donohue, Randall
Dubel, Tom & Kathy 50 (NY)
Elliott, David
Engstrom, Roger & Nilam
Ernst, Roger
Fleischer, Richard
Flynn, Brian 30 (VT)
Forbes-Gray, Debra
Frettem, Elsa
Gauthier, Gary 26 (MI)
Gemerick, Allyn (VA)
Gibson, Jane 2 (CA)
Glass, Martia
Goetzinger, Linda
Gordon, Judy 21 (MA)
Gray, Lewis
Greig, Wylie

Hammond, John & Linda 36 (ID)
Harmelink, Roger 10 (CA)
Harcum, Edith (DE)
Hendricks, Nancy
Hughes, Claudia (DE)
Herbert, Winifred B. 14 (NV)
Huth, Kay
Isaacs, Everett (DE)
Jablonowski, Adam 20 (MI)
Johnson, Peter
Jolivet, David 16 (IL)
Kernstock, John (MI)
Kessling, Ed
Keintz, Mark
Kinsey, Merele (OH)
Klose, Christopher
Lawrence, Demetra
Leinen, Gary
Leonetti, Stephen
Lipman, Mike (CT)
Los, Karen 21 (CA)
Maddaus, John
Magee, Madeline 28 (PA)
Martin, Geoffrey 132 (NY)
McCleary, Keith
McKibbin, Michael
McFarlan, Joe 133 (CA)
McKoon, Bob
Mead, Terry
Moore, Bill 31 (MD)
Morrison, Dennis
Myers, Ray
Nardi, Henry (FL)
Nepert, George 26 (DE)

Nepert, Dale (MA)
Paskevicz, John
Pathy, Shashikala (MD)
Petersen, Ernie 3 (CA)
Psota, Ron
O'Toole, Neil (CO)
Ramirez, David 42 (CA)
Reichert, Carol 33 (NY)
Roschke, Tom (VA)
Ross, Gabriel
Sangamanaray, Archanna (MD)
Sawyer, Warren
Schafer, Sheldon & MaryAnn
Sexton, Matt (MA)
Simuel, Nancy 44 (WI)
Slattery, Jack & Cynthia 3 (NC)
Sonderland, Gary
Sortino, Claudette
Spinola, Susan 28 (WA)
Stone, John 99 (NY)
Tadlock, Larry 33 (WA)
Thomas, Woody 99 (GA)
Tucker, John 31 (OH)
Tucker, Pinkney
Warner, Jack 16 (MI)
Wesche, Stacy (MD)
Whittaker, Hilary (CA)
Williams, Anne 23 (ME)
Wolf, Thomas & Frances
Zimmerman, Paul & Margot (MD)

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