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### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**March 23, 2014:** International Festival 4-8 p.m., Western Michigan University with pre-festival cocktails at Hargreaves. See below for details.

**April:** April in Paris (or W. Michigan) See below for more information..

**May 30-June 1, 2014:** Regional Meeting, Cincinnati

**June 1-4:** New member mini exchange to Louisville KY

**October 14-18:** FFI World Conference, Auckland New Zealand.

**October/November 2014:** West Michigan and Memphis to Salvador and Araraquara, Brazil with visits to Rio and Iguazu Falls.

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### PRESIDENT'S CORNER (or page):

To those of you who have gone south for the winter, we have alerted the local government authorities that they should feel free to dump problem snow on your properties. If you are lucky your houses will be accessible again by late May. For those of you who have chosen to tough it out here in the north country, be of good cheer. Roads will probably return to their normal widths before those houses become accessible. And yes, there really is solid ground down there somewhere.

In a slightly more serious vein, Fred Giddings resigned as Treasurer effective 21 December 2013. The Board accepted his resignation at their meeting on 10 February and appointed Roy Pearson to fill out Fred's uncompleted term. In the interim, I stepped in to prepare our financial report for the 2013 calendar year. That report was also accepted at our Board meeting and can now be accessed in the members-only section of our website. I would like to thank Fred for his year of service as Treasurer, and to thank Roy for stepping forward on short notice to take up responsibility for the fiscal health of our organization. I look forward to working with him on the Board.

In December of last year I sent out two surveys, a new-member survey to our thirteen new members focusing on exchange participation and a survey concerning club social functions sent to all members. I received a 69% response to the new-

member survey and a 58% response to the survey sent out to all members, both well above usual survey response rates. I don't want to bore you all with too many specifics, but I would like to share some of what I consider to be the highlights.

It was very heartening to see that all of the new members who responded were interested in the idea of short domestic exchanges of three or four days. You will note elsewhere in this newsletter that we have set up one such exchange for the beginning of June. It was even more heartening to see that all nine responding new members were interested in participating in one or more of the functions planned for our inbound themed exchange in September. It tells me that our desire to field a more active type of exchange resonates with newer club members.

As for the social-function survey, the house was evenly divided between those who would like to see us have functions once a month and those who would prefer functions every other month. Since we are considering social functions and there is no requirement to attend every function, we will probably continue to strive for one function a month. Responses to best times of day and days of the week also differed widely, suggesting that we probably should vary the time, day and place of our social functions so that everyone is able to attend at least some functions. You are also supportive of a wide variety of social functions which should keep us from falling into a rut on that score. The most interesting find was that there was widespread interest in establishing informal interest groups within the club. Hiking and biking drew the most interest, while canoeing/kayaking got a significant write-in vote (again pointing up the desire for more active sorts of club activities). But there were also clusters of members interested in book and/or movie discussions, music appreciation and gourmet/ethnic cooking.

The results of the social-function survey will be turned over to an expanded Social Committee, composed of Shiela Nichols, Lyn Hargreave, Deb Williamson, Peg Stanitzek, and Dennis Mahoney, for their consideration as they work to create a social program for 2014. I am sure they all join me in thanking those of you who took the time to fill out and return the surveys. I am excited to see what sorts of social activities become available to us in the months to come.

*Dave Hargreave*

## EXCHANGES, PAST & FUTURE

### INBOUNDS

#### September 21-28 2014 Fourth Coast Adventure:

This is our inbound for the year of 2014. It is currently published in the World of Friend's Catalog and has gone out to the world. We are eagerly awaiting applications. A targeted email "blast" to U.S. and Canadian members should be sent out shortly.

**PLEASE mark your calendars and commit to these dates.** As indicated in our last newsletter we will be needing home hosts, day hosts and dinner hosts. We can't do this without your commitment. We are hoping for 16 guests from around the world including the USA. The program will be similar to that done in September of this year with a few alterations based on the input from those who participated.

For those who are not familiar with the program this past year, you may find pictures and a short description on our club website under "Exchanges" then "Past Inbound Exchanges". The web URL address will be at the end of this Newsletter.

### OUTBOUNDS

#### June 1-4, 2014 Louisville, Kentucky:

Due to our regional meeting being in Cincinnati on May 31, this seemed like an opportunity to visit a club nearby. Louisville was contacted and agreed to host a limited number of our members (due to the fact that they have another group coming in 2 weeks.) Therefore this will be limited to primarily NEW members so that they may experience a Friendship Force exchange. Those who have indicated an interest will be notified shortly if they can be accommodated.

#### October or November 2014 - Salvador, Bahia and Araraquara SP BRAZIL.

This exchange is moving along. We are working with Memphis to select ambassadors.

The exchange will happen late October and go into November and will go to Araraquara in the state of Sao Paulo, progress to visits at Iguazu Falls and Rio de Janeiro before moving to our last home stay in Salvador, Bahia.

It appears that this exchange may be full with 16 ambassadors, but if you are interested please contact Lyn Hargreave immediately in case space becomes available.

### OUTBOUND 2015

We anticipate information within the next

couple of weeks regarding our proposed desire to travel to Hawaii in 2015. Once information is received it will be shared and we can then move forward with what we may do, either in Hawaii, or if not granted this exchange what options we have.

### OTHER OUTBOUND and TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES

#### World of Friends Catalog

This publication on the FFI web site has many exchanges listed with openings. You are able to find this catalog on the FFI website: <http://www.thefriendshipforce.org> or you may be receiving it in your email box. Unfortunately it is no longer sent snail mail. If you are not receiving it in your email box and wish to do so you may sign up for it through the web site, or let Lyn Hargreave know and she will sign you up to receive it.

#### Currently mentioned are:

- 1) A one week home stay in Cottbus Germany, other travel options on your own, coming up soon in **April**.
- 2) This **summer** spend 2 weeks exploring the Japanese Prefectures of Oita and Tottori prior to a 10 day tour.
- 3) This **fall**, practice your Spanish during a Mexican immersion experience.
- 4) Landscapes of New Zealand from late **September to mid October** with home stays in Wanganui and Manawatu. This will tie in with the International Conference which will be held in Auckland.

Check out the catalog for many other options.

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### OTHER INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES:

#### 2014 Regional Meeting:

**May 30-June 1** in Cincinnati with a full day of presentations and "work" on May 31. There will be home hosting available.

We anticipate our new CEO Joy DeBenedetto will be joining us, though the official confirmation is still to come.

"Looking Toward the Future with Founders and Millennials" will give us all an opportunity to look at the next generation of members. Afternoon group sessions will try to identify challenges and generate ideas for ways we might grow younger and remain vibrant.

But we are not looking at all work. The Friendship Force of Greater Cincinnati has made arrangements for those who are interested to participate in an Ohio River Dinner Cruise on Friday evening.

### 2014 World Conference:

Planning is already underway for next year's World Conference in Auckland, New Zealand. The conference will run from October 14 to 16, 2014, and it be held at the Rendezvous Grand Hotel Auckland. Registration will begin soon via the FFI web site. There will be post conference home stays, so you might want to consider this opportunity.

### The 2015 World Conference:

This will be held in Vancouver, Canada. The conference will take place September 11 to 14, 2015. More details will be available as the time approaches.

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## RECRUITMENT EFFORTS:

**MeetUp:** We continue to grow our Friendship Force of West Michigan Meet Up group. We are up to 17 people who have signed on. Nine of these have actually attended one of our meetings. This appears inflated because 3 are/were already members of FF of W. MI. Three others have been repeat attendees and one has joined.

For those who are on the internet, it would promote our organization if we showed a larger support group. Therefore **I encourage ALL of our members to Google "Meet Up Grand Rapids" and for interests indicate "Travel". You should see a photo from Germany with our group come up. Click on that and "join".** There is no cost, and except for reminders of meetings happening that week, including reminders of our own meetings your email is not going to be filled with spam from this.

We are paying for this service as a recruitment tool, so your help in promoting it is important. Thanks!

**Colleagues International (CI):** We continue to work with this Kalamazoo based organization. Further meetings are being held with their new director regarding ways to work together.

A meeting was held with the Director of Colleagues and a some strategic ways to promote both organizations discussed. These will continue to be pursued.

As mentioned before, anyone living in the Kalamazoo area and interested in hosting a guest, or providing a dinner for their international visitors should contact Susan Larner at [sllarner@hotmail.com](mailto:sllarner@hotmail.com)

## SOCIAL FUNCTIONS, PAST AND FUTURE

### PAST:

**January:** The goal this month was to have small group dinners involving a few new and a few current members, in all our three major communities of Holland, Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids. This was successful in Kalamazoo, but weather and health played an issue in the planning for dinners in Grand Rapids and Holland. This is still a goal, and will occur on a personal level in the future.

**February:** We met at the Allegan District Library on Saturday February 8. Two international students currently living in Kalamazoo, Daniyar from Kazakhstan and Raul from Azerbaijan talked with us about their school experiences here and compared that to their home countries. We got a bit of a geography lesson as well as learned about the landscape and customs of their countries. We had five guests attend: Jerry and Louise Potratz, Marlon Boyd, Joyce Elferdink and returning guest and MeetUp member Cathy Dopp.



Daniyar Marat with  
Cathy Dopp and Joyce Elferdink

### FUTURE:

**March 23: International Festival** at Western Michigan University. Plan to meet at the Hargreave's (215 Sabin St., Kalamazoo) at 2:30. Bring a nibble. We will have a bit of a social hour before proceeding by car pool to WMU's Bernhard Center. Here you may purchase tickets to exchange for food of the various

nations represented by the current students, and we anticipate a program of native costumes and dance.

**April:** The social committee has not met to fully plan the activity, but the idea of “April in Paris” (or West Michigan) has been suggested. Taking into account the activities that were expressed as possible interests, a suggestion has been made to have three events, one in each of our communities during the month. Members could come to one or all as they would like. We could include:

- 1) a dinner in a French restaurant,
- 2) discussion of a book of your choice about France. Suggestions include: “Postcards from France” A delightfully irresistible, charming account of a young American girl's year abroad. by Megan McNeil Libby, two books by Peter Mayle: “A Year in Provence” a witty and warm-hearted true account, of what it is like to realize a long-cherished dream and actually move into a 200-year-old stone farmhouse in the remote country of the Lubéron, or “Toujours Provence” the sequel. Also for those interested with a twist of food, Julia Childs’ “My Life in France” or any book that discusses French life.
- 3) A French Movie—perhaps shown in a local library in one of the communities.

**Comments or suggestions welcome.**

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## INTRODUCING NEW MEMBERS:



### **Robin and Margaret Bowles, Grand Rapids**

My husband Robin and I are originally from Scotland. He is from Evanton, near Dingwall, in the north east of Scotland. I am from Greenock, near Glasgow, on the Clyde. Robin’s father, who is 93, still lives in Scotland, and we visit him annually. My mother lives in Kaslo, British Columbia, and to keep things fair, we visit her once a year too ;). Add to this a son who lives in Seattle and a daughter in Washington DC, we have plenty of wonderful places to visit here in the US. We particularly enjoy

hiking, cooking, music and traveling. Robin also enjoys painting with watercolors.

I moved to Detroit with my parents when I was a child, and chose to return to Scotland when I graduated from high school. Robin and I met at the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh where we both worked. I was a nursing student at the time, and Robin worked in the engineering department. We married, and remained in Edinburgh for seven years. Our son Colin was born while we were there. It was, and remains, a wonderful city to live in. Our daughter Anne was born soon after we moved to Grand Rapids, when Robin was hired at Steelcase. He was fortunate to have had the opportunity to travel nationally and internationally for work. We have enjoyed hosting five foreign exchange students, each staying with us for a year while attending City High School with our children.

Robin and I moved to Grand Rapids in 1980, following a short time living in Detroit. In 1989 we had a wonderful opportunity to home host two architects from the (then) Soviet Union who were sponsored by the Grand Rapids chapter of Architects, Designers and Planners for Social Responsibility. The following year we were invited to spend two weeks in their homes and workplaces in Moscow and St. Petersburg. We experienced the bread lines and poverty, along with the wonderful subway systems... quite a contrast. We had another cross cultural travel opportunity in 2005 when I presented a paper in Taipei and Robin joined me in Hong Kong following the conference. We joined a small group tour to China for two weeks, and learned that small group travel can work well, especially with people who share some of our interests. So now we truly have the travel bug, and continue to prefer the option of traveling where we can meet with people, and learn from them. Friendship Force is a group that can do that. We hosted visitors from the Philippines who were here with Friendship Force many years ago. We have fond memories of that experience and of working at the Friendship Force booth serving Pavlovas during festival.

Robin has a degree in Design from Napier University in Edinburgh. He worked as an interior designer and project manager at Steelcase, and retired in 2012. I have a PhD in transcultural nursing from Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, and have worked in a variety of nursing positions in Edinburgh, Detroit and Grand Rapids. I retired from Grand Rapids Community College’s nursing faculty in 2012.

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## MEMBER UPDATES:

We are happy to report that **Rose Haaksma** and **Sue Bohlander** are home from recent surgery and doing well. We look forward to seeing much of them in the coming months.

## **OUR WEB SITE ADDRESS:**

If you still haven't checked it out, please do so.

<http://www.friendshipforcewmich.org/>

If you need the member resource password, please contact Lyn Hargreave. Since the Newsletter is posted to all, the password it can not be disclosed here.

There you will find the recent minutes of board meetings and the year end and current treasurer's reports.

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## **FOR YOUR INFORMATION:**

If you are interested in international topics and would like to attend interesting and educational topics you might want to consider the following presented by the World Affairs Council of West Michigan. These are held at 6:00 in the Aquinas College Performing Arts Center. There is a small admission charge:

Feb. 17: Out of Africa: How Food Insecurity and Water Shortages There Affect Us Here. Armchair discussion with Dawit Giorgis, Foundation for Defense of Democracies, Washington DC.; moderated by Deborah Steketee, Aquinas College:

Feb. 24: U.S. - Israeli Relations in a Changing Middle East. Armchair discussion with Dr. Yael Aronoff, chair of Israel Studies, James Madison College, Michigan State University; moderated by Dr. Michael DeVivo, Grand Rapids Community College.

March 10: Turkey at a Crossroads. Armchair discussion with Dr. Jerry Leach, formerly of the U.S. State Department, Washington, D.C.; moderated by Dr. Michelle Metro-Roland, Western Michigan University.

March 17: "Unintended Consequences of The Arab Spring," by Reza Marashi, National Iranian American Council, Washington, D.C.

March 23: U.S. Trade Policy in the Western Hemisphere. Armchair discussion with Walter Bastian, deputy assistant secretary for Western Hemisphere, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington D.C.. Moderated by Drew Johnston, President of Walgreen Co.

March 31: "Is China Opening Up or Closing Down?" by James Fallows, national correspondent, The Atlantic.

Thank you to Cathy Dopp for making us aware of these presentations.