



friendship force
WESTERN MICHIGAN

January - March 2015

Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 28, 2:30, Allegan District Library. Jordanian scholar presentation.

April 18: 10:00. Enjoy a walk at the Kalamazoo Nature Center. Meet Dennis Mahoney at the kiosk.

May 6: Board Meeting 5:30, Hargreaves. Anyone i welcome.

May 7: 6:00 Dinner, 7:30 Jewish Film Festival movie, followed by speaker. Celebration Cinema North.Grand Rapids:

June 26-July 1, Inbound Exchange Louisville activities. Schedule within the Newsletter.

July 25: Regional Meeting. Dayton. Home hosting will be provided 7/24 and 7/25.

YOUR BOARD

President: Dave Hargreave

VP: Lyn Hargreave

Secretary: Debra Williamson

Treasurer: Roy Pearson

At Large Members:

Sue Bohlander

Jane Curtin

Laura Jane Colber

Cathy Dopp

www.friendshipforcewmich.org

To those of you who are snow birds I can attest to the fact that there is indeed still soil and plant life beneath the white carpet we have lived with for the past two months. And, for those of you who remained in the loving embrace of southwestern Michigan during that time, hibernation may be at an end for another year. As the weather warms and flowers begin to stick their heads out of the ground, we have much to look forward to in the months to come. However, I want to take this time with you to look backwards for a moment.

This past fall a number of our club ventured south to Brazil where we were hosted by the wonderful members of two clubs, Araraquara and Salvador. Upon returning home I began to organize the pictures I had taken and that initially tended to focus my attention on the Salvador exchange since that area has much to commend it in terms of history and natural beauty. However, even though I had a paucity of photographs to remind me of it, I found myself constantly reflecting upon our exchange to Araraquara.

Most decidedly Araraquara was not able to compete with Brazil's third largest city to the north in terms of either history or natural beauty. Still, I have very fond memories of my week there. It was the people, and that is to take nothing away from the people of Salvador who were as gracious as one could hope for. The difference, at least for me, was the generational experiences I had in Araraquara. It seemed to me that all of the events we experienced during that week were multi-generational, a mix of people from our own ages down to children who had yet to experience their first birthday. At our farewell dinner, I saw a grandfather dancing with his granddaughter. And it is those images that have stuck with me. I really was given an opportunity to fully experience their culture - diapers and all.

This is what Friendship Force was once all about. Not simply people developing friendships across the cultural barriers that divide us, but about whole families extending the hand of friendship to one another. As the organization itself has grown older so too has the concept of club-to-club exchanges. We find ourselves many times in the company of those our own age. I would like to see if we can change that at least on a small scale within our own club. I am aware that this is America and, unlike Araraquara, our offspring are most often far removed from the communities of their parents. However, that is not true for all of us.

So, to those of you who have family in the area, I extend an invitation. Please consider including them in some of the events, particularly those that do not require participation fees or have limited space requirements (such as beach cookouts), when we are hosting Friendship Force clubs from elsewhere. It would even do us a world of good to get to know the extended families of our own members. Consider taking one or more of your grandchildren along on an outbound exchange with you. Let's show the rest of the world that we too change diapers and dance with our grandchildren.



EXCHANGES

The **World of Friends** Catalog has a variety of exchanges listed that currently have openings. The catalog usually comes out the 15th of the month, so be sure to check after that date for the most current listings: Here is a link to the site: http://catalog.thefriendshipforce.org/index.php/catalog/all_list/

Many of our members have found exchanges here. We have a member who recently went to Halliburton, Canada for a winter exchange, others who are currently in Cuba, and coming up: two to Ottawa, Canada, three to Russia, one to Peru, one to Columbia, four are going to Central Europe, and one to the North Carolina eco walk. Another has applied and is considering the quilting exchange in Houston. Others are on waiting lists.

REGIONAL AND WORLD CONFERENCES:

Regional meeting will be in Dayton, OH on July 25. Home hosting will be provided for Friday and Saturday nights. If possible, please plan to come. Your ideas for the future of our organization are important. Advise Lyn Hargreave if you can go.

World Conference: This will be held in Vancouver from August 28-31. Chances are it is full as there were limited spaces, but conference planners were attempting to find a way to increase availability. If interested it would be worth getting on the waiting list. Check the web site at: <https://www.etchouches.com/ehome/102747>

INBOUNDS:

Louisville, KENTUCKY: June 26-July 1

Marci Ellis is our Inbound ED for this exchange. She is still looking for day and dinner hosts, and perhaps some home hosts. We do not have an exact number of ambassadors coming at this point so number of hosts is questionable. Please contact Marci with your willingness to participate: ellism@wmich.edu.

The schedule:

Friday: We will meet the Louisville folks in Topeka IN for an Amish lunch, tour of an Amish home and the Menno-Hof Museum.

Saturday: Visit to Binder Park Zoo, Gilmore Car museum and Miniature Museum.

Sunday: AM free, PM: Meyer May House

Monday: Ford Museum, Meijer Gardens

Tuesday: Saugatuck Dune Ride, Holland/Saugatuck walk about. Farewell at the Lakeshore cottage of Mary and Ron Voss.

Wednesday: Ambassadors depart.

Braunschweig/Peine, GERMANY. September



Nineteen ambassadors will be coming from Germany on September 26 until October 3. They will be arriving here after a week in Montreal. This is a reciprocal exchange as we visited there in 2013. There is still need for day hosts and dinner hosts. Contact: LynHargreave@gmail.com

Tentative schedule:

Saturday Welcome: Potluck at home of Sheila and Bill Nichols.

Sunday: Morning free. Afternoon sail on the Friends Goodwill tall ship out of South Haven. We have 12 openings for members/guest to fill. This will be a 1.5 hour sail. Refund for cancellation. Please contact Lyn with your interest.

Monday: Wander Art Prize (Ford Museum) G. R.

Tuesday: Amish lunch, house tour, Menno-Hof Museum, Topeka IN

Wednesday: Lakeshore day, Saugatuck Dune Ride, Sunset beach picnic

Thursday: AM Meijer Gardens, PM Meyer May House GR

Friday: Free day with casual farewell.

Saturday: Ambassadors depart.

2016: Taichung, TAIWAN (with AZ)

Our president has written both the Taichung club and the AZ club who will be hosting these same ambassadors for a week. This is scheduled for May... a delicate balance to assure our snowbirds are back and our weather is warm, and that the AZ folks have not left for cooler climes and that it is not too hot there. Arizona has heard from a friend in Taichung that they are eager to come. (This is a reciprocal exchange between those two clubs), but we have not had any communication as yet. Language may be an issue.

2016: Omaha, NEBRASKA

Contact has been made with Omaha again about a reciprocal exchange in 2016. No date for an inbound has been discussed.

OUTBOUNDS:**Omaha, NEBRASKA**

We have suggested going there in March if that would be suitable for them, and then continuing west about 3 hours for an over night in Kearney NE for an evening and early morning viewing of the sandhill cranes as they migrate across this magnificent flyway along the North Platte River. Omaha felt they could probably work with this.

YOUR INTEREST AND COMMENTS PLEASE

In addition to those members going outbound on various exchanges from the World of Friends Catalog.....

HAWAII:

Six of our members are looking forward to traveling together to Hawaii to visit the Big Island and the island of Kauai this May and June. We hope to meet up with members of the Kauai Club, perhaps for a beach picnic. We will certainly make contact with Frank and Laura Marsh who participated in our 4th Coast Adventure in September.

2016:**AUSTRALIA, Murray Bridge and Casterton**

As has been communicated with members via email, this is our "match" assigned by Atlanta for 2016. It was our third choice due to several of our members indicating that it was one of their top four choices. We have been given a tentative time for this exchange of the fall (October or possibly November). A second questioning of members was made prior to the board accepting this exchange and there seemed to be enough interest to move ahead. However, we do not have sufficient interest at present to fill this exchange alone, but we have not heard from all members regarding their interest. If you have not signified an interest, but would like to participate in this exchange, please let Dave know at: david.hargreave@wmich.edu. If we do not fill the exchange with our own members, we will need to reach outside our club. If any of you have friends who you think would be interested in visiting this area of the world, then please invite them to join us. These two clubs are located in South Australia between Adelaide and Melbourne.

I have done some preliminary looking at possibilities and if packages are similar in 2016 as they are this year, it appears that it will be possible to tack on visits to other areas such as Sydney, the Great Barrier Reef, and/or Uluru including airfare from Los Angeles at a decent cost. Though keep in mind, this is a long ways away. Since this is more than a year out, details are not available at this time.

An email has been sent to the presidents of these clubs, but at the time of this printing there has been no response to report.

**SOCIAL FUNCTIONS, Past, Soon and Future:
Past:**

January 17 Several members met at the UICA in Grand Rapids to see the film: "The Girl Who Walked Home Alone", a fictional account of life of a young woman in Iran with vampire characteristics that left many of us trying to figure out the deeper meaning of what this film was really about. We followed the movie with a fine lunch at XOAsian Cuisine as pictured above.

February 21 We met at the "Red Barn," a private club house in Zeeland. Many thanks to Jean and Jesse Ramirez (Meet Up members and friends of Debra Williamson) who made this location possible. This ethnic potluck, with wonderful contributions, was attended by several new folks from the Holland area who we hope to see again in the future.

Sue Bohlander showed photos and talked about her global, Spanish immersion exchange to Mexico this past fall.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS, Past, Soon and Future:**Soon:**

March 28: 2:30 Allegan District Library, 331 Hubbard Street, Allegan. Hala, a young woman from Jordan will provide us with a presentation on her home country, her family, her school, her life there. Hala is currently an exchange student here in Western Michigan.

Not yet confirmed but there is a possibility that we will have a second student present for us.

Following this presentation(s) at 5:00, we will go for dinner at Salt of the Earth in Fennville. Please plan to join us.

Future:

April 18: 10:00 Let's enjoy friendship and celebrate this wonderful planet we live on with a walk at the **Kalamazoo Nature Center**. Dennis Mahoney will meet you at the kiosk area that is at the top of the path to the Interpretive Center. No admission is charged on this day.

May 6: 5:30: Board meeting. Hargreave's 215 Sabin St., Kalamazoo.

May 7: 6:00 Jewish Festival Dinner (~\$7) The Wave Room at Celebration Cinema North, 2121 Celebration Dr. NE, Grand Rapids. Followed by the documentary film "Above and Beyond" at 7:30 (~\$5). Following the film there will be a guest speaker: Roberta Grossman.

June 26-30: Join us for any of the activities with the Louisville Inbound exchange. Communicate your participation to Marci Ellis at: ellism@wmich.edu Farewell will be a catered dinner at a beach home in Saugatuck on June 30. More details later.

OTHER ACTIVITIES OF INTEREST:**Holland:**

<http://www.holland.org/events/>

Tues, March 24, 6 pm: Cesar Chavez Lecture: "Cesar: My Academic Compass; The Influence of Chavez on Latina Faith Development," by Dr. Aida Isela Ramos of the University of Texas at San Antonio. Sponsored by Hope College Office of Multicultural Education. (616) 395-7867. Free, open to the public. At Maas Auditorium, Columbia Ave at 11th St, Holland.

Wed, March 25, 6 pm: Film, "The Good Lie." Drama about four Sudanese children orphaned in the Second Sudanese Civil War, \$2 nonmembers (must be 50 or older to attend). At Evergreen Commons, 480 State St, Holland.

HOLLAND, Cont:

May 1-2, Latin American Fiesta at the 8th Street Marketplace: 150 W. 8th St.

May 2-9, Tulip Festival. Check out events at: <http://www.tuliptime.com>

June 5, Remember When, car show. Downtown.

June 13, Multicultural Festival, Kollen Park

KALAMAZOO:

<http://www.discoverkalamazoo.com/events-131/>

March 20-22 & 27-29: World Language Film Festival, Brown Hall, Room 1025, near Miller. \$5

<http://www.wmich.edu/worldfilmfestival/schedule>

March 22: WMU's 26th Annual International Festival, 4 to 8 p.m., Bernhard Center Second Floor.

April 19, Free walk at Kellogg Bird Sanctuary, Hickory Corners. Kellogg Manor House open.

April 25, Tillers International Plow Day with demos of blacksmithing, rope making, repousse, spinning, card weaving and plowing with animals.

June 4-6: Greek Festival and annual KIA Bronson Park Art fair (Friday afternoon/ Saturday).

GRAND RAPIDS:

<http://www.experiencegr.com/events/>

May 3-7: Jewish Film Festival, Celebration Cinema North. Schedule at:

<http://jewishgrandrapids.org/programs-services>

Click on Film Festival.

June 5-7: Festival of the Arts

<http://www.festivalgr.org>

June 13: Official opening to the public of the Japanese Garden at Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park.

There are many events in Grand Rapids. Check the web site listed above and also the films at the UICA.

MEMBER UPDATE:

Debra Williamson's mother passed away in January.

Marci Ellis's mother passed away in early March.

Our condolences to Debra and Marci. Both of these passings followed long and drawn out illnesses with gradual declines so both passings were met with sadness but relief.

Frank Stanitzek had a serious bicycle accident while wintering in FL causing broken ribs and a hospital stay. He's progressing well and will be back to Michigan in May.

INTRODUCING NEW MEMBERS



JERRY AND LOUISE POTRATZ Kalamazoo

Louise retired in 2014 after 37 years as a speech therapist with The Kalamazoo Public Schools.

Jerry retired in 2012 from a career in Human Resources with Upjohn, Pharmacia, Pfizer, and Thermo Fisher Scientific. He is board President of Colleagues International and an adjunct faculty at WMU.

Both are on the board of the Kalamazoo Russian Cultural Association and are involved with the organization's monthly potlucks and Annual Russian Festival. Louise and Jerry enjoy hosting foreign visitors, for Colleagues International, and have a passion for traveling themselves, having been to Russia, Italy, UK, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, the Caribbean as well as domestic trips such as Utah, Colorado, Alaska, Arizona, and New England, to name a few.

They enjoy art hops, wineries, microbreweries, music, theater, hiking, cross country skiing, kayaking, tailgating at Iowa Hawkeye football games and exploring new places.

They live in Texas Township and have four grown children.

"We are really excited to join Friendship Force. We've enjoyed getting to know the members of Friendship Force and look forward to hosting and traveling with them. We are ready for new adventures! "

AND WE WELCOME:

A new member: **Debra Smitter** of Grand Rapids. We look forward to getting to know Debra in the coming months. She works doing disaster relief for the US Government, so her ability to join us is dependent on the rest of our country being free of floods and hurricanes.

A formal introduction and photo to come in a future Newsletter.

A Pledge of Friendship:

As a member of The Friendship Force, I recognize that I can make a difference. I recognize that I have a mission. That mission is to be a friend to the people of the world. As I embark upon this adventure I know that others will be watching me. I know that through my example to my fellow citizens and the people of other nations, the cause of friendship, love and peace will be furthered. I CAN make a difference.