

2021 February FFWM Newsletter

FFWM <FFwesternmichigan@gmail.com>

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To: Marcia Ellis <marcia.ellis@wmich.edu>



friendship force
WESTERN MICHIGAN

February 2021 Newsletter

A note from the president

I hope this note finds all of you doing well.

Friendship Force is an organization focused on promoting understanding, cultural education and citizen diplomacy. In normal times, this mission is accomplished through homestay journeys... our signature program. How can we promote understanding and educate ourselves to the world around us without leaving home? The Social Committee has given some thought to this and is going to use the month of February and part of March to try something new.

The Committee would like to encourage all of us to participate in a deep dive into North Korea. Say what? Yes, we are going to take the land where no one can Journey and educate ourselves about the mystery that is this country. You will see what we are recommending in this newsletter.

Don't worry, we will also continue to sponsor other social activities... such as:

- February 3rd, 7:00 pm, a very important **Q&A with Lyn Hargreave covering the continuing evolution of FFI.**
- February 24th, 7:00 pm, **travelogue by Stan and Pam Sackett of their monumental 2020 trip to Africa.**
- Date to be determined... our own **"Where in the World" game, featuring photos from our membership...** see this newsletter for information on how to participate.

So, "come along with us", virtually, to Africa, North Korea and beyond. We will have fun and we will grow our understanding of the world around us.

Jerry Potratz

North Korea

Let's Learn More About North Korea

One of our board initiatives is to partner with other organizations in our area that share FFI's mission of promoting international understanding and cultural education. The World Affairs Council of Western Michigan (WACWM) is one of these organizations. Their mission is to empower the people and organizations of West Michigan to engage thoughtfully with the world. Through their actions, they intend to be credible, non-partisan, relevant, civil, and community building.

Our Social Committee would like to encourage you to participate in WACWM's "Great Decisions Global Discussion" series, where diplomats, policy makers and practitioners, think tank specialists and journalists lead conversations on global issues that impact us locally. *See this newsletter for information on the rest of this series.*

Especially, we would like to encourage you to observe the **February 8th virtual program on "North Korea: Getting Diplomacy Back on**

Track". The program runs from 6:00 pm to 7:15 pm and will require a \$10 registration payment. Go to this link to register: [Great Decisions 2021 | World Affairs Council of Western Michigan \(worldmichigan.org\)](https://www.worldmichigan.org/great-decisions-2021)

We would also like to encourage you, even if you don't participate in the above virtual program on North Korea, to read at least one book. Below are three suggestions. **We will hold an FFWM North Korea club discussion on Wednesday, March 10th, 7:00 pm.** The non-fiction books suggested for reading are:

- Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West, by Blaine Harden
- The Girl with Seven Names: A North Korean Defector's Story, by Lee Hyeoseo
- A River of Darkness: One Man's Escape from North Korea, by Masaji Ishikawa, Risa Kobayashi

If you have a different book, or information source that would be enlightening about North Korea, feel free to read and share your choice with us at our discussion. Please send the title and author to Jerry at 269-569-3259 or jerrypotratz@hotmail.com so we can offer your suggestion to others. Whether you participate in the virtual program and read a book or not, please join our FFWM North Korea discussion, via Zoom, on Wednesday, March 10th, at 7pm.

Let's unlock some of the mystery that is North Korea! Please join us for this virtual journey and club discussion!

World Affairs Council of West Michigan

World Affairs Council is offering new programs. (\$)

Feb 8: North Korea: Getting Diplomacy Back On Track (see above article)

Feb 15: Have we learned anything about this pandemic?

Feb 22: The European Union: The New Agenda Post Brexit

Mar 1: The Future of Business and Global Supply Chains

Mar 15: The Melting Arctic

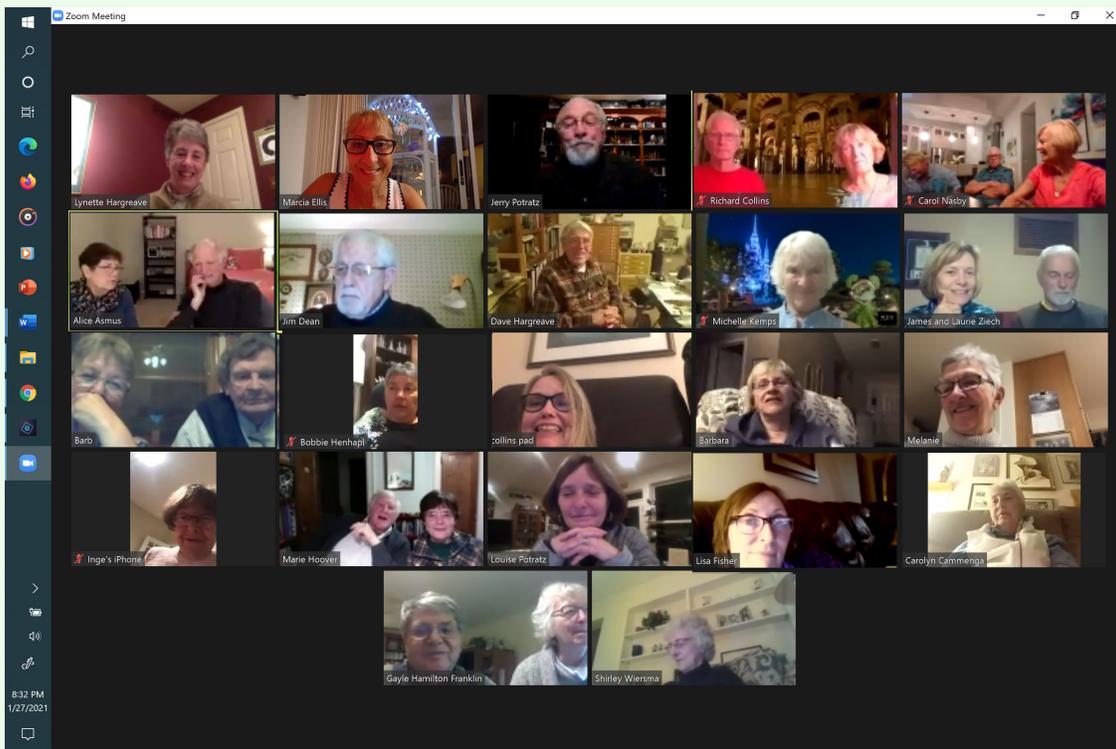
Mar 22: China in Africa and the Case of Ghana

Mar 29: The Saudi-Arabian - U.S. Relationship: Decades In The Making

The Global Mixer: Join Council member Cathy Dopp, the Council staff, and other Council members every Wednesday at 7 p.m. in February and March for an hour (or so) of global banter--and bring your favorite beverage!

[See their website for details.](#)

Game Night



On Wednesday, January 27th. 24 members of our club and 9 of our friends from FFSWFL had a good time trying to answer trivia questions. . . again!



A new game!!

The Social Committee is working on a new game and they need our help.

The game is called **"Where In The World?"**

Can you take a few minutes and go through some of your old photos of your travels?

The picture could even be of somewhere or something local. Find a photo that has something **identifiable** to give a hint of where the picture was taken.

This should be a lot of fun and we would like to encourage all club members to participate.

- Photos don't have to be from Friendship Force trips. They can be from your personal travels. The only requirement is that it must be from your own personal photo collection. No web-accessed photos should be used.
- For purposes of this exercise, photos should be of major landmarks, or popular destinations, that have some global relevance and are not so discreet as to be unidentifiable... just like in our Trivia Night games.
- Since many of our memories might be displayed around our homes in actual picture frames... what!?!?!... it is okay to take a phone photo of your photograph and submit the electronic version.
- Since we hope that all members participate, please limit your entry to no more than three (3) photos.
- Please indicate "where" the photo was taken and "what" is in the photo with each submission.

- The social committee will select the final game entrees from all submitted photos.
- Please send your photos electronically to jerrypotratz@hotmail.com
- Please submit your photos by Sunday, March 7th.

Once we have gathered and sorted through the photos submitted, we will announce the date of our own, FFWM, "Where in the World" game night!

Save the Date

When: February 24

Time: 7pm

Where: Your computer

What: An African Adventure with Pam & Stan

Photocluster

Next month our topic is **REFLECTIONS**. Check our monthly folder frequently for new additions.



FFWM History

Do you wonder about how FFWM came to exist?

Here is our story. . . . Written by Laura Jane Colbert after meeting with Jeanette Parkhurst, Fall 2015

Before there was a W. Michigan FF club there were two neighbor couples: Ann and Larry Mesbergen and Curtis and Jennette Parkhurst. After reading about FF in a Family Circle magazine Ann contacted a club in Inkster, MI and subsequently went on an exchange with them to Mexico.

Sharing her trip with the Parkhursts, they became very interested and contacted the Atlanta office and received information regarding exchanges available. In 1989 the Mesbergens and Parkhursts joined an exchange with the Cincinnati club to Australia – the Gold Coast for a festival and home hosting in New Castle and Ipswich. At this time Atlanta was handling all the flight arrangements. Because of an airline strike in Australia and with necessary last minute changes, the flight tickets arrived just in the nick of time.

They invited the Australians to come visit Michigan. This was “unofficial”. They came – 17 of them! This was after 3 official exchanges in other locations. Gathering up members from friends and family, quickly a club was formed and the ambassadors were well hosted and entertained.

In the meantime Mesbergens and Parkhursts were in touch with the Traverse City club and even home hosted when T.C. hosted an exchange from Mexico in 1989. Because of distance T.C. encouraged them to start their own club.

So, in 1990 a Charter was obtained from Atlanta with Ann Mesbergen as President and ? members.

From then on W. Michigan became an active club with exchanges, both international and domestic.

Early on, for 9-10 years the club made pavlovas, as many as 7,000, and sold them at the Grand Rapids Arts Festival. Not only was this a money making activity, but the members worked together toward a common goal. Finding baking facilities was sometimes a challenge, as well as cleaning and slicing strawberries.

Another money making project was hosting the Parade of Homes for G.R. realtors.

A conflict in 2000 lost many members. A few members were willing to pick up the pieces but for many years the club struggled with insufficient members to host and travel and exchanges were not assigned to the club by Atlanta. Consequently it was not until Lyn Hargreave asked for an exchange to New Zealand in 2011 and showed Atlanta we could fill an exchange by recruiting 25 ambassadors that we began again to be assigned outbound exchanges.

MAY 24 through 29, 1990

WELCOME, FRIENDS, TO WESTERN MICHIGAN!



HELLO TO THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF NEWCASTLE, NSW

FROM

THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF WESTERN MICHIGAN

Serving Nine Counties: Muskegon, Newaygo, Montcalm,
Ottawa, Kent, Ionia,
Allegan, Barry, & Kalamazoo

Meetings held at: Heather Hills Retirement Village
1055 Forest Hills Rd.
Grand Rapids, MI

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FFWM Newsletter

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