



Sorry for the delay folks-computer issues :-)

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**July 12, 7:00 p.m.:** FYI: Chenery Auditorium, Kalamazoo, Russian music concert with guest artist Gannady Zut. \$20.

**July 22, 12 noon** for all. Lunch at the Union Restaurant, downtown Kalamazoo, followed by a visit to the Kalamazoo Institute of Art's Louis Comfort Tiffany exhibit.

**July 26. 11 a.m.:** FF of W. MI Members only, potluck at the home of Roy Pearson and Marci Ellis, see details below.

**August (Mid) 5:30:** for all, Ethnic Potluck, GR area.

**August 27, 3:00:** FF of W MI members only, pool party and potluck at home of Peg Stantizek. See details below.

**September 21-28:** 4<sup>th</sup> Coast Adventure. Our "inbound" themed exchange with participation from all.

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

**October 19-November 8, 2014:** West Michigan and Memphis to Salvador and Araraquara, Brazil with visits to Rio and Iguazu Falls.

**November 15:** 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Russian Festival at Western Michigan University's Fetzer Center.

To find out what goes on at this event, check out last year's festival here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A7Nno451sCw>

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER (or page):

For the recent regional meeting in Cincinnati the presidents of all of the Friendship Force clubs in the Great Lakes Region were asked to report on the health of their clubs. I want to share in summary form what I was able to tell those in attendance.

At the present moment we have 45 dues-paying members, 12 couples, 19 single women, and two single men. This is both an increase over last year and a sizeable increase over five years ago. Of those 45, only three could be considered as totally inactive (not attending social functions, participating in inbound exchanges or traveling outbound with FFI). At least nine couples and 11 singles are able to home host, and at least 34 are capable or interested in still traveling outbound. Another two members have served as dinner or day hosts for inbound exchanges.

The ages of our members range from 46 to 93, with a mean age of 71 and an average age of 70.4 years. This, however, fails to tell the whole story. Broken down into

five-year age cohorts, our total membership is represented by the blue bars on the graph which appears at the end of this newsletter. Of those 45 current members, 26 have joined the club during the past four years. Separated again into the same age cohorts, these newer members are shown by the red bars on the same graph. The average age of these 26 new members is 65.2 years. Hence, it can be seen that we have been growing both larger and younger over the past five years. It is evidence that the organization can be potentially attractive at least to singles, childless couples or empty nesters over 45 years of age. Attracting still younger singles or couples with small children undoubtedly poses more of a challenge.

In terms of our club this is very good news indeed. To put it into perspective, we are the only club in the Great Lakes Region that can point to substantial growth during the past five years. And, while we are still one of the smaller clubs in the region, we are no longer the smallest. We have also begun to develop a solid presence in the Holland area to compliment our established presence in the Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids metropolitan areas.

We have accomplished this by working diligently to improve the visibility of both Friendship Force International and of our club throughout western Michigan, as well as by making the recruitment of new members a top priority. But marketing in and of itself isn't sufficient to convince those who do discover us to actually commit to becoming members. I am convinced that we are most likely to draw in folks willing to become involved in our organization for the long term by being true to the mission of FFI. which is *to promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people*. Yes, we do offer outstanding travel opportunities abroad, but such travel needs to be seen as one means to fulfill the Friendship Force mission, not an end in itself. Indeed, as a club, I would suggest our greatest strength lies in our willingness to welcome into our homes and our lives folks from other cultures, whether those folks come to us from half way around the world or from within our own communities. You are all party to our recruitment efforts when you participate in any way to our inbound exchange programs and when you support our social gatherings. You are the friends that give friendship its meaning. Thanks to all of you who have made our club successful over the last five years and longer. Keep up the good work.

Dave Hargeave

## EXCHANGES, PAST & FUTURE

### INBOUNDS

**September 21-28 2014 Fourth Coast Adventure:** Our exchange is full with 16 ambassadors. We have 6 coming from Canada, 1 from Germany and others from the US (NE, FL/RI, AL, WY, IL HI) As stated in the last newsletter, in addition to days which will include biking, kayaking (with G.R. Paddling members Jeff and Rita Neumann), hiking and exploring Warren Dunes and Warren Woods, we anticipate visiting Art Prize and Meijer Gardens. There will also be activities still to be determined along the lake shore including a dune ride at Saugatuck and a sunset beach cook out at Holland S.P. The week will end with a sail on the tall ship Friends Goodwill at 3:00 on September 27. There will be room for 12 members with hosts getting first right of refusal. Others, please let us know if you are interested. . .

**PLEASE mark your calendars and commit to these dates.** We will be needing home hosts, day hosts and dinner hosts. We can't do this without your commitment. Expect to be contacted within the next few days via email to identify what participation you are willing or desirous of participating in/with. These are interesting and active ambassadors. It should be a lot of fun.

### OUTBOUNDS

**June 1-4, 2014 Louisville, Kentucky**



Ten of our members participated in this exchange following our regional meeting in Cincinnati Ohio. I think we found this an interesting cultural experience and enjoyed new friends and Louisville sites such as Churchill Downs where we had lunch. We saw how baseball bats were made at the Louisville Slugger factory and enjoyed sipping and tasting a variety of Kentucky bourbon as we toured a bourbon facility. We extended an invitation for the club there to visit here in W. Michigan. Since both of our schedules are

full this year, we will look at 2015, but 2016 is also a possibility.



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

This exchange is progressing as planned. Folks are in the process of applying for visa and getting their inoculations. There are seven ambassadors participating from W. Michigan and eight from Memphis.

### OUTBOUND 2015

Eight members will go to the **Big Island and Kauai departing the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in May and returning the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in June (a total of 22 days) in 2015..**

Because of lodging and land transportation constraints there will be no additions unless there are cancellations.

**Other OUTBOUND possibilities.** There may still be the possibility of another domestic outbound if there is interest. Many USA clubs were not assigned outbounds this year and may be willing to host a group from Western Michigan. Please let your president know if you are would like to do this AND are willing to organize it, or know someone who would take this lead.

### OTHER 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.



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## OTHER INFORMATION AND ACTIVITIES:

### 2014 Regional Meeting: May 30-June 1



This started with an Ohio River Dinner Cruise on Friday evening and progressed to an all day workshop on Saturday. Twenty five people from our Great Lakes regions, including folks from a new club which is forming in Bloomington IN and visitors from Louisville, and Allison Lindsey from Atlanta attended this meeting titled "Looking to the future with Traditionalists and Millennials". It was a working meeting with everyone providing input into the topics of how to make FFI more visible in our communities, recruiting new members, keeping those new recruits and then going beyond the club to club exchanges. Looking into the future taking into consideration between the average FF member and the "now" generation. Numerous ideas were discussed and a summary made that hopefully will help the members that were there work toward a healthy organization into the future.



### 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 will 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.

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### 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:

**Grand Rapids:** Cathy Dopp from our Meet Up connections arranged for a presentation of FFI to a group from the Ex-pat Meet Up members. There was a lot of enthusiasm from those present.

**Holland:** Sue Bohlander hosted a dinner for a group of Holland residents. Lyn and Dave Hargreave again presented information about FFI. There was some general interest, and we are hopeful that just spreading the word about Friendship Force will help. We look forward to possibly doing more in the Holland area, perhaps presenting at one of their HASP meetings.

### MeetUp:

We continue to grow our Friendship Force of West Michigan Meet Up group. . **ALL members are encouraged to go to "<http://www.MeetUp.com>"** Click "Find" at the top. **Put in your closest location Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, or Holland and search for Friendship Force.** You should see our group come up. Click on that and "join". There is no cost, and except for reminders of meetings and happening that week, including reminders of our own meetings your email is not going to be filled with spam from this. It is a very easy way to RSVP and let me know you will be coming to our various activities.

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

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## SOCIAL FUNCTIONS, PAST AND FUTURE PAST:

**May:** Several of our members journeyed to Marshall MI to join the Lansing FF club at the American Museum of Magic where we tried to learn all the tricks, but they remain a trade secret. A lunch with both clubs was enjoyed at Schuler's Restaurant and followed by a fascinating guided tour of the Old Post Office Museum. It was a fun day and we were joined by new Kalamazoo MeetUp member Jane Curtain.

**June:** A few of us met at JP's Coffee House in Holland and enjoyed a nice walk around Windmill Island. A brief shower fell just after we started, but a nearby shelter kept us dry until it passed. We enjoyed watching a blue heron being dive bombed by red-winged blackbirds before we continued our walk

after the shower. There were beautiful gardens and lots of conversation to enjoy as we walked.

## **FUTURE:**

### **Other future activities**

As indicated in the beginning, there are some activities on the agenda that need a bit more explanation.

**July 22.** Everyone welcome. Meet for lunch at the Union in downtown Kalamazoo. This is located at 125 S. Kalamazoo Mall (Burdick Street) **RSVP by July 16** to Lyn Hargreave 269-344-7091, via MeetUp or [lhargreave@charter.net](mailto:lhargreave@charter.net) so reservations can be made. We will sit at individual tables to assist conversation.

A docent led tour will begin at 1:30 at the KIA. Admission and the tour cost will be \$10 per person.

The Union is within about 3 blocks of walking distance to the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts where the Tiffany exhibit is held. There is a small parking lot across from the KIA on South Street for the KIA, and a parking lot (paid) behind the Union, with entrance off of Portage St., just south of Main Street.

**July 26.** Pot luck at the home of Marci Ellis and Roy Pearson. Due to this being held at a private home and limited space, this activity is just for dues paying members of FF of W. MI. There will be such activities as kayaking and pontoon boat rides. Please bring a dish to share.

Address: 455 Austin Blvd., Decatur, MI **RSVP:** [Ellism@wmich.edu](mailto:Ellism@wmich.edu)

**August (Mid)** an ethnic potluck is planned for the Grand Rapids area. At the time of going to press we are waiting a call back from Ada Township Park for the use of their Gazebos for this event. It is unsure if these are available for use in the evening. If not we will be looking at a location in Zeeland Township. This would be for everyone, and we will be sending out a general notice.

**August 27:** Pool party and potluck (we do love potlucks) at the home of Frank and Peg Stanitzek. Again because of space issues this is only open to dues paying members of FF of W. Michigan. Bring your bathing suit and a dish to share and come after 3:00 or when you can to "play". We will plan to eat after 5:00. If you live in the GR area, but are working, come as soon as you can.

**Comments or suggestions for other activities welcome. Contact:**

**Deb Williamson, Sheila Nichols, Lyn Hargreave**  
Contact info available via the membership list from the web site. Members have been given the password.

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## **INTRODUCING NEW MEMBER:**

### **SUE BOHLANDER:**

Sue came to the dinner held a year ago, then went off traveling and joined this past winter. She says of herself:

My former work included hospital nursing, health education and clinical drug research working for big pharma. Travel has been a big part of my life. I love active travel ofr hiking, biking, birding and other activities. Cross country skiing has taken me all over the US and Europe to try new ski areas. I love hills so I guess I may be a downhill skier at heart.

After living in Chicago suburbs for many years I moved to Holland ten years ago. I love living so close to the things I love to do. I am active in the life long learning program offered through Hope College, participate in three book groups, and am a very active grandmother.



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Those of you from whom information has been requested, please send. It will be used in future newsletters.

Remember our web page:

<http://www.friendshipforcewmich.edu>

Here you can find information on how to become a member of FF of W. MI and lots of other interesting things about our chapter and our past exchanges!