



friendship force
WESTERN MICHIGAN

October - December 2015

Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

UPCOMING EVENTS

SEE MORE DETAILS ON THESE EVENTS AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER

October 30, 6:00 Diwali Festival. Fountain Street Church, GR Free, donations requested. Reservations BY MONDAY 10/26. Contact: [Dopp Cathy@yahoo.com](mailto:Dopp_Cathy@yahoo.com)

November 16, 5:30. Board Meeting, Allegan Public Library Bring a sack supper.

November 22, 3:00 Plainwell Library, 180 S. Sherwood Ave. Presentation on Russian exchanges by Giddings, Dopp and Elferdink. Dinner after at Old Mill Brew Pub.

December 12, Noon Annual Board Meeting with Election of board, and Christmas celebration: RSVP: [Dopp Cahty@yahoo.com](mailto:Dopp_Cahty@yahoo.com)

March 12-19, 2016: Outbound to Omaha.

June 7-13, 2016 Inbound from Aichi Japan

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

As our 25th anniversary year comes to a close I want to take a few minutes to consider where we have been and where we are going. Our membership presently stands at 53, with the possibility of several more members being added in the months just ahead. That is up from 28 members in 2010. The increase in new members is even more dramatic than it first appears because 10 of those members from 2010 are no longer in the club. That means that we have gained 35 new club members during the past five years, a time when many other Friendship Force clubs have been in decline. And, as we grow larger, we also grow younger and that too bodes well for the future.

This year we hosted two successful inbound exchanges for the first time, a domestic exchange with Louisville, Kentucky and an international exchange with the Bruanschweig-Peine Club of Germany. Though we were not granted an outbound exchange by Atlanta for 2015, 15 of our members logged 16 weeks of outbound travel during the year with other Friendship Force clubs, visiting Haliburton and Ottawa, Ontario; Central Europe; Columbia; Cuba; North Carolina; Peru; and Russia. In addition, six of our members traveled together to Hawaii for three weeks, where they met with members of the Kauai Club and renewed friendships formed when two of that club's members participated in our Fourth Coast Adventures exchange in 2014. Next year our club is scheduled to travel outbound twice, to Omaha, Nebraska and Australia, and to have at least one international inbound exchange, with Aichi, Japan.

As our club has grown we have sought to open up more opportunities, particularly for our newer members, to grow into leadership roles by doubling the size of our elected Board of Directors from four to eight persons. This change has spurred our Board to carry out an extensive revision of the by-laws, something that all of you will receive in the next few days to consider before our annual meeting in December. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the key changes being proposed so that you can vote intelligently at the annual meeting.

Finally, the Board is considering raising club dues from \$25 per person to \$35. Club dues were raised last year from \$20 to \$25, but that was in response to an increase in the per capita amount sent to Atlanta. The portion of your dues retained by the club remained at \$10. The membership increases mentioned above have required more marketing on our part and that has driven up club expenses to the point where we feel that more revenue is needed to support those marketing activities as well as the greater role in hosting exchanges. To date, most of you appear to favor an increase in dues rather than the development of fund raising events. As soon as the Board hears from a majority of the membership on this point, we will make a decision on the question of revenue enhancement.

Finally, I want to thank all of you once again for the wonderful support you provided for our recently completed inbound exchange. Almost 75% of our membership was involved in some way in making that exchange a success. That is something to be proud of.

Dave

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/>

INBOUNDS:

Braunschweig and Peine, Germany 9/26-10/3

We welcomed 15 ambassadors from this club and appreciated the participation of many members. From all reports the activities were a hit and all the home, dinner and day hosts were enjoyed by the participants. The weather was sunny and fall like until the day when our friends were waiting for the bus at the Oakland/I-94 car park. Once the bus arrived our good-byes were quick so all could get into vehicles and get warm.

A huge thank you to our **HOME HOSTS**:

Robin and Margaret Bowles
Myron and Laura Jane Colber
Jim Cousins and Melanie Perry
Jane Curtin
Marcia Ellis and Roy Pearson
Lisa Fisher
Fred and Mary Giddings
Dave and Lyn Hargreave
Bill and Sheila Nicholas
Debra Williamson

And to our **DINNER HOSTS** who also helped in many other ways:

Laura Ford
Pat and Dick Grupp
Dennis Mahoney
Patricia Merchant
Curtis and Jennette Parkhurst
Frank and Peg Stanitzek
Sandi Vegter
Alice and George Ward (non members)

And to the following **who provided day hosting, transportation, food for dinners arranging for the meeting /lunch in Holland, and support**:

Sue Bohlander
Connie Corriveau
Jim Dean
Cathy Dopp
Loie Dye
Joyce Elferdink
Rose Haaksma
Norma Killilea
Waltraut Knoll
Jeff and Rita Neumann
Jerry and Louise Potratz
Debra Smmitter

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We also met new friends during this exchange. Many who we hope to see again: Rick and Penny Briscoe (who also ended up day hosting), Jane Curtin's grand daughters, Paul Franklin (who accompanied our sing along on his mandolin), Heather Fuerstnau, Fred Gidding's grandsons, Cyndy Keesler, Uwe Stab, Sue Vegter, Alice and George Ward, Bob Weir and Shirley Wiersma. Also Marilyn Deussen a member of the Greater Lansing FF club came over to spend the Meijer Garden day with her host form our 2013 exchange. Proving that friendships do continue.



To see more photos, of our exchange go to our website: <http://www.friendshipforcewcmich.org/past-inbound-exchanges.html>

FUTURE INBOUNDS:

Aichi, Japan, 6/7-6/13, 2016

Aichi will be our next inbound. Their president has already told us they have 20 ambassadors signed up to visit us after their visit to the Detroit club. The make up of the group (couples, singles) has not been determined. But please mark your calendars as our ED, Marci Ellis will be looking for home hosts, dinner hosts and others to help out.

Additional Inbounds for 2016 have not been determined but there is a possibility for a short global exchange later in the summer.

OUTBOUNDS:

Omaha, Nebraska: March 12-19, 2016

This is still planned, and Omaha has notified us of their EDs for the Omaha portion. Therefore the cost of that portion should be coming soon. Omaha is a days drive, so it is anticipated that most who participate will be going by automobile and no plane reservations would be necessary.

The preliminary plan has been to spend a few days in Omaha before and after a visit to Kearney to see the great crane migration.

We have a list of prospective participants. If you are interested but do not have your name on the list, or are uncertain if it is on the list, please let Deb Williamson or Dave Hargreave know.

AUSTRALIA, Murray Bridge and Casterton ~ October- November, 2016

The dates once decided have had to be altered slightly. It is now likely we will start about a week later than originally planned. Starting instead in Murray Bridge and then going to Casterton. As indicated in the last Newsletter, these two locations are between Melbourne and Adelaide in South Australia.

Lyn Hargreave would like to know of your definite interest in going to Australia before advertising this in the World of Friends Catalog. She would also like to know what additional places in Australia you have an interest in. It is possible to plan independent journeys to various places. It is impossible to see all as it is like trying to see the USA in 10 days. But there are options which she will try to offer you IF you communicate what these are.

JAPAN, Aichi: From all indications this will be assigned to us for **October 2017**. Aichi has indicated they are willing to host us but officially this word has not come from Atlanta. Reciprocal exchanges are usually honored.

We have several people from outside our club interested, so be sure to let Lyn Hargreave know of our personal interest.. She will keep track of those interested though it is unlikely she will be the ED.

NEWS worth mentioning:

Bob Weir who joined us for the first two days of our exchange with our German ambassadors had a mission! Bob is a journalist for ENCORE magazine and he was learning all about Friendship Force of Western Michigan. His article will appear in the January issue. For those of you in the Kalamazoo area (though the magazine is distributed throughout SW Michigan) you will recognize this magazine as the one that is given to the audiences who attend events at Miller Auditorium. It is also found in many locations throughout the community. Be sure to pick one up in January to read all about us.

CLUB PINS:



To commemorate our 25th anniversary we have developed a club pin. These will be given to inbound ambassadors and are available for purchase (\$2.50) to members who wish to take them on exchanges to give to their hosts.

“I’M IN” Campaign:

As a newly elected board member, Lyn Hargreave has been on the “inside” with what is happening to our organization and would like to share the following with you.

Enrichment Voyages which our organization has offered these past several years has brought in ~\$100,000 in revenue. But the university who sponsored these trips has ceased this activity. Thus we (FFI) loses that revenue stream. As our membership ages we are finding that many of our older clubs are finding it difficult to recruit new members and therefore exchanges are going out undersubscribed causing another loss in revenue. Loss of membership means downsizing the home-stay, the core of our organization. What to do?

Charter members of FF of W. MI found out about the international organization when they read an article in a “Family Circle” magazine in about 1988. That kind of an advertising campaign has not happened for a long time. It costs money. But before the board can even consider an advertising campaign they must first update their website. Though our local club has been doing well, and growing we are the exception. .

If you have been getting email messages from FFI in Atlanta you are aware that the organization is asking for \$40,000 for the new website. There are many limitations with the present site and before more information can be added, it is necessary to update. They are not filling staff positions, and are making other money saving decisions but still find it necessary to turn to the organization’s membership for help.

Your local board has not taken any action to do this as a club. We would prefer to let this up to our members to consider the future of the organization and contribute to this campaign.

Here is the link to the “I’m In” campaign donation site. Please consider supporting your international organization with a tax deductible contribution toward an updated website which will begin to lead us into the future. <https://donatenow.networkforgood.org/imin>

After this, it is anticipated that there will be a larger call for funds to move forward with an advertising campaign.

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS, Past and Future

Past: Our inbound exchange from the German club provided many social opportunities for our members in September and early October.. Welcome and farewell parties, beach picnics, dune rides etc.kept us busy. Now we look toward the

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Future- SOON: October 30: The **Diwali festival** sponsored by the Kaufman Interfaith Institute. Organized by neighbors from the West Michigan Hindu Temple and held at the Fountain Street Church at 24 Fountain Street NE in Grand Rapids. We will enjoy special dishes, music, culture, and dancing! Start time is 6:00 p.m.

This Celebration is free and open to the public. Donations will be accepted at the door. It's lots of fun and the dinner is REALLY good. Cathy Dopp will make group reservations for us if you email her at Dopp_Cathy@yahoo.com or you can call and make your own reservation at: 616-459-8386

Note that Fountain Street is a one-way street coming eastbound from Division Ave. Parking is available either on the streets surrounding the church or in the Grand Rapids Community College ramp to the northeast of Fountain Street Church.

November 22, 3:00 (Sunday): Ransom Library, 180 S. Sherwood Ave. Plainwell, MI.

Cathy Dopp, Joyce Elferdink and Fred and Mary Giddings will share their experiences in Russia this past summer: A home stay in Moscow and Korolev, a bus tour of the Golden Ring and a visit to St. Petersburg.

Afterwards we will plan to grab a bite to eat at the Old Mill Brew Pub in Plainwell.

December 12, (Saturday) Noon: Our annual Christmas celebration AND annual meeting with election for your board of directors. **Four Roses Cafe, 663 10th Street, Plainwell, MI. IMPORTANT! RSVP to Dopp_Cathy@yahoo.com**

OUR MEMBERS:

Condolences to **Joyce Elferdink** for the loss of her mother

Well wishes to **Joy Kane Grau** who is recovering from a hip replacement. and **Cathy Dopp** who is recovering from abdominal surgery.

Thoughts and prayers to **Curtis Parkhurst** as he prepares for surgery November 2.