

August 2020 Newsletter

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Sat 8/1/2020 8:14 AM

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



friendship force
WESTERN MICHIGAN

August 2020 Newsletter

A Note From Our President

I hope this note finds all of you doing well.

This newsletter includes bios from new FFWM members, Polly and Rory Nee, and Carol Oudsema, and a story from relocated member, Jane Curtin. I'm looking forward to all of you getting to know our new members. They are wonderful people! The lesson we can learn from Jane is that you can continue to travel, as a member of our club, even if you no longer live here. Jane has recently traveled on Friendship Force Journeys, with other clubs, on trips that better fit her calendar and interests. I suspect that Jane will also be traveling again with FFWM, when the opportunity presents itself.

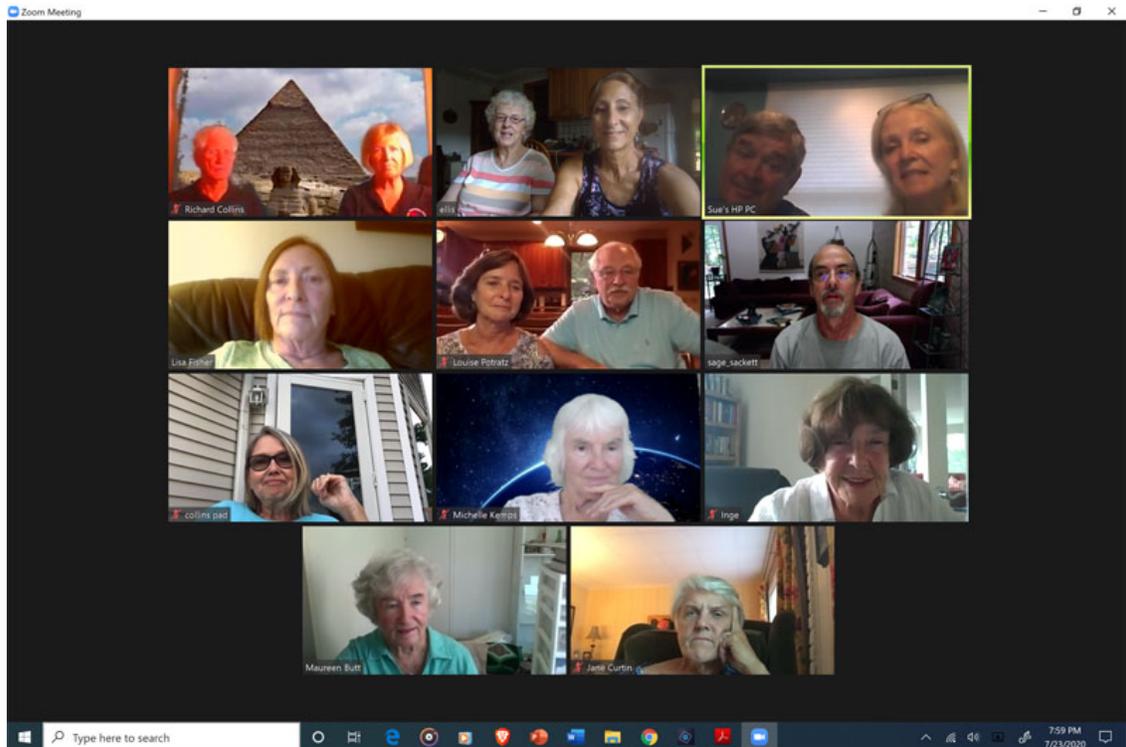
Our photo cluster club is growing in number and artwork, so please check out their link below.

You should have received an email with information on how to register for FFI's international **trivia event**, which will be happening on Monday, August 3. I've registered and I hope you will too. Should be fun.

We will continue to look into ways to engage our club. Until we can meet safely again in person, I remain virtually yours! Jerry Potratz

Meet Up with FFSWFL on Zoom

On July 23 FFWM members met with the FF Southwest Florida club for a zoom chat. The conversation was led by Floridians Sue and Rob Linehan. It was wonderful to reconnect with old friends! It was especially great to see Jane Curtin, FFWM member living in New York state, zooming in! See an article from Jane below.



Experiences From FFI

FFI is now featuring Virtual Experiences! This is a series of opportunities to meet friends, experience other cultures, or learn something new. There are three types of virtual experiences: Virtual

Journey, Learning Place, and Members Connect. Learn more [HERE!](#)

There are two dates for Trivia Quiz events. Some members of our club have signed up for the Trivia Quiz to be held on August 3 12:30 to 2pm.

Please join us!

FFWM Photocluster



The FFWM photocluster group met and reviewed photos submitted for the topic of landscapes. This picture was submitted by Stan Sackett. Can you guess where he took it?

The next topic is *flowers close up*.

The pictures that are moved to our permanent folder are varied and interesting.

They can be viewed [HERE](#).

Get to know our members

Rory and Pollyann Nee

We are originally from New York. Rory was born in New York City and grew up in the suburbs on Long Island.



Pollyann grew up near Syracuse. We met in a chemistry lab at SUNY-Brockport, majored in chemistry and moved to Kalamazoo to work for the Upjohn Co. in 1979.

We adopted our two daughters, both from South Korea in the 1980s, and currently have four grandchildren.

We have been avid travelers and active in our church over our 43 year marriage.

In retirement we continue to travel. We both enjoy reading. In addition Rory plays tennis regularly and Polly is active with activities in our condo association.

We look forward to making new friends with involvement in Friendship Force activities, including journey travel and hosting.



Carol Oudsema

I'm a lifelong resident of the Kalamazoo area, excepting college in East Lansing and a couple of years in Colorado in the '80s.

I have two adult children, a son and a daughter. I have worked as a Realtor and property manager for much of my adult career and am still

working. After a divorce, I've enjoyed a long term relationship with Vince Madarino, and his two adult daughters have joined our family. We've always been able to at least be a "typical American family", average in many ways, but willing to extend friendship and increase understanding to others.

Throughout my life I've had some meaningful opportunities to travel and to host and I find it truly rewarding and interesting to meet and learn about different cultures - or basically all the differences, and similarities, of people with open minds and hearts.

Over the years I have hosted: a high school student from Brazil for a year and went to her wedding years later. Also, students from Saudi Arabia (twice), Japan, China and Korea and had a housemate (professional) from Nigeria for a year whose wife joined us for three weeks. I always felt I gained more from these experiences than I gave.

I like physical, outdoor activities such as hiking or walking, bicycle riding, kayaking and playing tennis. I enjoy different foods, though I'm not a good cook (would like to learn more). I like to learn about different educational philosophies, nutrition and a little dose of arts or museums when traveling.

update from Jane Curtin

Email from Jane Curtin (7/25/20)

I'm glad I went on the Zoom meeting with FF Southwest Florida. It was good to see everyone.

This pandemic has really dealt a blow to FF. The whole world seems crazy right now. Maybe that is a bit extreme, but these sure are strange times. Here is my RV. I bought it a couple of months ago after my brother spotted it on Craigslist. Actually, it has been a dream of mine for a long time. I had hoped my



husband and I could see this country in an RV, but it took the pandemic to help me decide to just do it. I went with a friend who lives in Utica, which is a half hour away. She and I have been close friends since high school.

We left late in June. We boondocked at some wineries on route to save some money. I joined Harvest Hosts, a club where you can find places that you can stay at for free, often in wineries, farms or places that have ample space for one to three campers to stay for up to two nights. That worked out great. We took four days to get to Custer, SD. We saw Mt Rushmore by day and lit at night, Custer State park, the Black Hills, Wall Drug and did some fun things along the way. We went on a zipline tour, a high point of the trip, no pun intended. We spent two weeks in all. It was an adventure. I was shocked at how few people wore masks as we made our way west. Its no wonder the virus is taking off so much in places. We made sure to get out of Mt Rushmore area before July 3rd, too!

The RV is great for these times. We had almost all our meals in it and sleeping was very comfortable. It's a 2002 so there are a few things that need updating but all in all I was pleased with it. I'm going to go up in the Adirondacks tomorrow and try it in a really beautiful campground that I went to years ago. RV parks aren't pretty but it was practical to have the hookups when we went on the trip.

My house is pretty much done. Last summer it was All I did. This year I planted

some raised vegetable beds and lots of flowers in my tiny yard. It turns out it is plenty of yard for me to tend! My first few month here were not much different from the isolation we have to do now so I was used to it. I had just started to meet a few people when we were forced into our homes! What I really miss is all the fairs and festivals that make the summer special. Hopefully they can return next year. It was good to hear from you, keep in touch! Jane



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