

**FFWM April 2021 Newsletter**

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Mon 4/5/2021 5:59 AM

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**friendship force**

WESTERN MICHIGAN

<https://www.friendshipforcewmich.org/>

# April 2021 FFWM Newsletter

## Notes From Our President

### Spring Has Sprung!

Spring has sprung! Hmmm.... really? I think this phrase is meant to communicate that Spring... that glorious season of rebirth that annually appears after a Winter of 5:00 pm darkness... has arrived! It tells us that it is time to celebrate and smell the sweet flowers that bring such beauty to this season. However, isn't there another, less poetic, almost directly opposite interpretation? Perhaps I have spent too much time in quarantine over the last twelve months, but I also remember that my Slinky... the pre-compressed helical spring toy of my youth, which joyously traveled down a flight of steps end-over-end, bouncing and reforming itself with each drop... if sprung... was ruined. Sprung

meant done. Kaput. Throw it out!

Where do you stand on sprung? Joyous or Disastrous? The beginning or the end? Are both interpretations equally valid? So, if you are still reading my message, you are probably wondering... "what is the point"? It is simply this... that each of us has a view, a thought, an opinion that is worthy of sharing... a different perspective that is worth hearing. Over the next few weeks, FFWM and FFI are going to be asking you to fill out surveys. See this Newsletter for the details. Fill them out. Spring your thoughts on us! In fact, you don't have to restrict your feedback to the surveys. Call me or contact any FFWM board member and let us know what you are thinking. We value your opinion!

## Ready or Not?

Last Fall, FFWM conducted a survey to find out when our club would feel comfortable hosting and traveling. The bottom-line answer to both of these questions was "at least one year from now". At the time this survey was distributed, we were hoping that an effective vaccine would be approved and distributed "sometime in 2021".

As it turns out, although we are only in April, most of us who wanted to be vaccinated have already received our vaccinations. We know that covid variants continue to stress the health system and delay our return to normal, but we are no doubt ahead of the recovery timetable that we could visualize last Fall.

Our pent-up desire to host and travel competes with our need to be safe and secure. FFI knows that the whole organization is weighing this trade-off, but it is also anxious to see some clubs be the first out of the nest. FFI is asking clubs to consider hosting a domestic journey sometime this Summer/Fall. We can set parameters around this Journey such as requiring vaccinations for guests and hosts, limiting the number of days, co-hosting with another club, etc. Travelers would probably be individuals, not a club. Our hosting opportunity would be posted on the FFI website and interested FFI members throughout the U.S. could apply. You will soon be receiving an email survey asking for feedback on this inbound opportunity. Please consider the questions and share your perspective with us! Ready or not?

## FFI Membership Survey

I recently received an email with a link to a membership survey being conducted by FFI. The online survey covers a variety of questions... from your identification with its mission, to what you

most enjoy when traveling, to the changes you would most like to see implemented by the organization. It is a broad reaching survey, but it only takes a few minutes to complete. PLEASE help FFI by completing this survey. FFI wants to know what you think. They want your opinion as they design the future of our organization. FFI is putting all ideas on the table. Why not submit your ideas for their consideration? Right now is the right time!

Jerry

## Where in the world?



25 FFWM members played a game called "Where in the world?". We had 5 teams competing to see how many of the pictures they could name, including the country, city, etc. The photos used were submitted by club members from their travels. A good time was had by all!

Our **next trivia game** will be Tuesday, April 27 at 7pm and will focus on facts about our great state, Michigan. It is fair to prepare!!!

# Journeys are back (for 2022)!!

We have received our journey assignments from FFI.

Inbound:

Kern County, California (Bakersfield)

We will need exchange coordinators for this journey!

Outbound:

Bursa, Turkey, Tbilisi, Georgia and Veliky Novgorod, Russia

Note: Louise and Marcia are the exchange coordinators for the Turkey portion of our outbound. They continue to communicate with Greater Izmir club of Turkey, who wishes to wait until fall before committing to a week of hosting due to the Covid-19 virus pandemic. The itinerary for the exchange that did not occur will stay the same, assuming Izmir will be hosting again in 2022. The weeks in Novgorod and Tbilisi will need exchange co-directors and may or may not be part of the Turkey exchange. Details are not available at this time due to many unknown variables. Watch our newsletters for further developments.

If you are interested in volunteering to be a journey coordinator for the inbound journey or the outbound journey to Russia/Georgia, please contact Jerry Potratz (phone: 269 569 3259 or email: [jerrypotratz@hotmail.com](mailto:jerrypotratz@hotmail.com)). Two coordinators are needed for each journey. If you are new to journeys, working with an experienced coordinator is the perfect way to see how it is done!

PS. Get your Covid-19 vaccination so we can travel again!!

## Friendship Force Online

FFI Online is now live. It will eventually house all our member resources and exclusive member-only content, and keep you up to speed with news from FFI and around the world. Eventually the member portal will eventually be how you sign up for journeys, pay

any fees etc. The minimum information required to sign up is your name, club and email address.

Be sure to sign up! Here is the website page:

[https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign\\_in](https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign_in)

## Information from the Discussion of North Korea

When we had the program on North Korea we mentioned we would send a link for more information. Yeomi Park is the woman who gave the TED talk that we saw during the discussion. Googling her name will keep one busy all day. This one is probably the most revealing: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=za34H-dT8I0>.

This article is also very informative about one way that oil gets to North Korea, despite sanctions: [Here](#).

Lyn Hargreave

## FFWM Photocluster

Most recent topic was architectural windows. Here are a few of the photos discussed. Check out our photos at <https://ffwmphotocluster.shutterfly.com/>





FFWM Photocluster will be meeting next on April 15 at 7:30 via Zoom. The topic will be Sunrises and Sunsets. If anyone is interested in joining in, they should contact Dave at [Hargreave@wmich.edu](mailto:Hargreave@wmich.edu).

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