

FFWM January 2021 Newsletter

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



January 2021 Newsletter



January President's Message

It was very nice to see so many of you at our virtual annual Holiday Party on December 21st! I certainly enjoyed myself and I hope everyone that logged-on had a good time.

Like many of you, I have been listening to end-of-year reviews of 2020, including major stories about the impact of the pandemic. According to experts, I should be suffering from “cognitive sluggishness” compounded by “isolation anxiety”. I must admit that I do feel a little bit of both. It strikes me, though, that the activities our Social Committee sponsored in 2020 directly combatted these maladies... our minds were stimulated by trivia games and scavenger hunts and our isolation was reduced by seeing so many smiling faces on our Zoom screens.

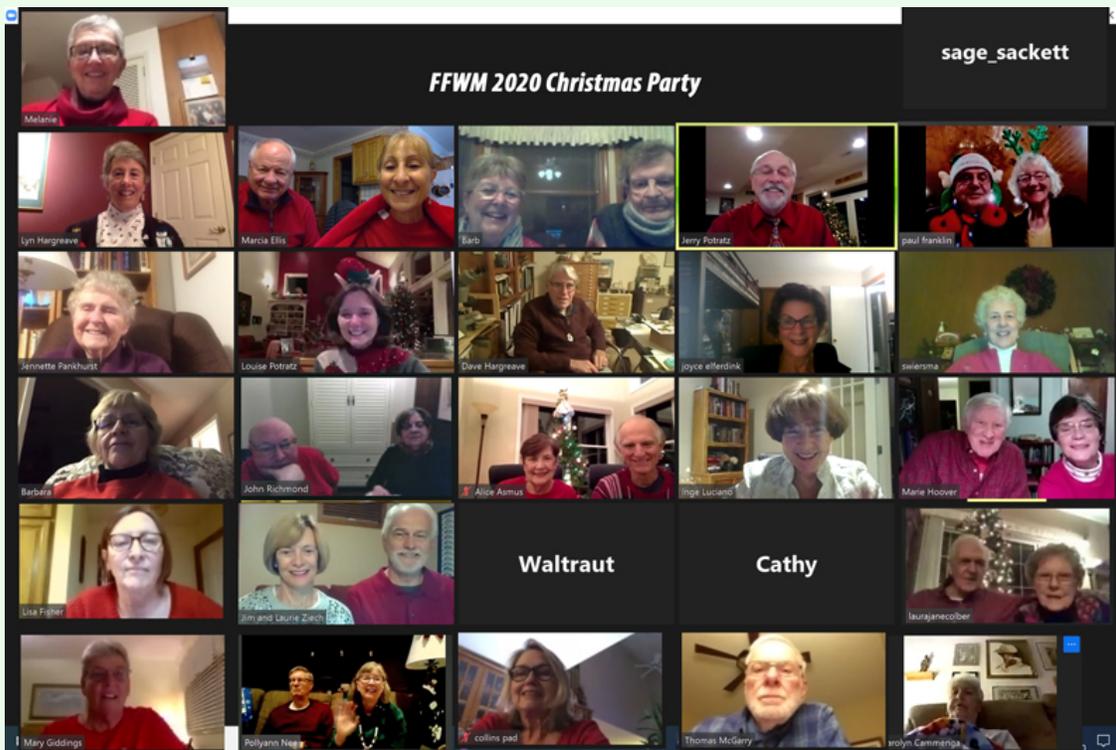
As we start 2021, we will probably be doing a little more zooming. Please join us... for your own mental stimulation and emotional health! Hopefully, we can begin meeting in person, by the second quarter of the year and maybe even traveling or hosting toward the end of the year. Whatever happens, let's embrace 2021 and further the cause of friendship!

Jerry Potratz

The Christmas party was a smashing success!!



To start things off and get us in the merry mood of Christmas, all members received a snack package prior to the party to be enjoyed during the party. The cookies were especially tasty!



37 FFWM members attended the party. We played games, learned about holiday traditions in Japan (from Bill Hoover), Austria (from Waltraut Knoll), and The Netherlands (from Lisa Fisher), listened to poetry and songs, and visited with each other! It was the best party

you could have online! Our social committee (Lyn Hargreave, Louise and Jerry Potratz, and Patty Richmond) did a fantastic job in planning and executing a wonderful online party! It was a very merry Christmas!

Game Night



We are going to play Trivia again!!! Mark your calendars!

Wednesday, January 27th, 7:00 pm

You don't have to be a Jeopardy finalist to participate. This is far more about social interaction than competition. Come join us and have some fun!

Watch your email boxes for Lyn's Zoom invitation!

FFWM Photocluster

FFWM Photocluster will be meeting January 12 at 7:30pm to review our holiday photos. Anyone wishing to join us is welcome. Just let Lyn Hargreave know so she can send you a Zoom invitation. Below are some of the photos. . .



FFI Is Moving Forward

From Jerry Potratz

The board and leadership of Friendship Force International did some real soul-searching in 2020. The organization significantly trimmed its staff and invested in technology. I took the time to listen to FFI CEO Jeremy Snook's recent online presentation and read the member-submitted Q&A's. I want to share a couple of highlights with you:

- We will be invited to establish **individual online accounts** with FFI. Most of us have a FaceBook account, email account, etc. Why not an FFI account? Although there will be limited functionality at the beginning, over time, your online account will allow you to connect with other members, former hosts and guests; sign up for journeys (Yes, someday we will be journeying again!); and participate in new and special programs only

available online... such as a pen pal program, educational webinars, and other FFI Virtual Experiences.

- What is FFI's position on **travel-related environmental impact**? There are a number of ways individuals and groups can reduce their impact and promote more environmentally conscious travel practices. FFI has established a task force to develop training and educational materials for clubs to reference when planning future journeys.
- Does FFI envision **individual travel** rather than group travel being a part of FFI's future? Yes, in fact, single members have already traveled and hosted individual members within the global network. There is sound research supporting the need for Friendship Force to continue building clubs, while, at the same time, making it possible for individuals to travel and host.

I think these types of changes are very positive and I am anxious for us to gain personal experience with them. Other changes are also being discussed. As an active club, we should be aware of these considerations. I have asked Lyn Hargreave, who is on the international board of FFI, if she would be willing to discuss some of these changes and have a Q&A with us and, in typical Lyn fashion, she said "of course". Our Zoom meeting with Lyn will be:

Wednesday, February 3rd, at 7:00 pm

Prior to this meeting, you may want to familiarize yourself with the options FFI is considering by viewing this video "[A Stronger Way Forward](#)", **with FFI CEO, Jeremi Snook, and reviewing this PDF document of [Frequently Asked Questions and Answers](#).**

A Sad Note

One of our future hostesses from FF of Greater Izmir, Turkey, Ayca Erman, passed away on December 13, due to complications from Covid-19. She was going to host Louise



and Jerry Potratz in April 2020 before our Journey was cancelled. Louise had been communicating with her throughout 2020. This photo is of Ayca and her husband, Cevat. Our condolences to her family and the Greater Izmir club.

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