

**FFWM March 2022 Newsletter**

FFWM &lt;FFwesternmichigan@gmail.com&gt;

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To: Marcia Ellis &lt;marcia.ellis@wmich.edu&gt;



## A Note From the President

All,

I have enjoyed the winter weather, but I have succumbed to the siren's call and will be spending the month of March in warmer climates. I am going to test out what it is like to be a snow bird, as they say. I know there are quite a few of our members that are doing the same thing. We are, hopefully, breaking out of this global pandemic and travel will become increasingly easier and safer.

You will see a number of articles in this newsletter that address Journeys. Yes, there are Journeys happening in 2022! Although we are anxious to travel together as a club, the timing of our club Journeys (e.g., to Turkey and Azerbaijan in October) may not match your availability, or you might have a higher interest in other destinations. Some of these 2022 Journeys have openings now and some may have openings by the time the dates arrive. Below, we have provided you with links to review these Journeys.

## 2023 Outbound Travel Requests

FFI is currently in the planning process for 2023 Journeys. Your FFWM board took into account our Fall 2020 membership travel survey and FFI's list of clubs willing to host, and we requested two international outbound journeys for 2023. Our first request was for Germany and the U.K. and our second request was for Australia and New Zealand. FFI will review the requests from all clubs worldwide and matchup requests to travel with clubs available to host. We should hear back from FFI in May as to what matches have been approved for FFWM. We would normally request just one international journey per year, but for 2023 we requested two. We know that we have many members who are anxious to travel and we also have a lot of new members who have yet to make a journey with FFI. We will let you know what we have been assigned, when we receive notice.

Jerry Potratz

## Interim Journey Catalog

This catalog lists upcoming special journeys being offered by FFI. Eventually this information will be listed on MyFFI website. This is why it is important for those of you who have not yet signed up on this website to do so! [Save this link](#) so you can refer back to it to see upcoming journeys.

### [Journey Catalog 2022](#)

## Journeys 2022

**2022 Journeys are happening. Find out where... here!**

All around the world, FF clubs are getting ready to host visiting Ambassadors. The above link takes you directly to a list of Journeys [that have openings](#) for additional Ambassadors. There is another link that allows you to see all of the Journeys being planned by FF clubs. Your FFWM membership allows you to review this list and apply for

that trip... if they have openings.

To review the complete list of Journeys, follow these steps:

1. Go to [www.my.friendshipforce.org](http://www.my.friendshipforce.org)
  - a. Of course, this assumes that you are registered for the site.
2. Go down to the blue-boxed area at the bottom of the page.
3. Click on "Explore Member Resources" (just above the grey Report a Bug tab).
4. Click on the box that says "Complete List of Journeys and Regional Flyers".
5. Click on the box that says "Complete List of Journeys".
  - a. You will see a list of Journeys and dates.
6. Click on the Journey that interests you.
7. Fill out the form to express your interest and get more information.

### **Friendship Force Festival at Sea: The Northern Isles**

For those of you that enjoy cruising, FFI is offering a cruise onboard Holland America's new ship Rotterdam. The cruise (August 28<sup>th</sup> – September 11<sup>th</sup>) will take you to Norway, Iceland, Shetland Islands (UK), and Scotland. Check out the opportunity to join FFI CEO Jeremi Snook, and other like-minded FFI members, at the [my.friendshipforce](http://my.friendshipforce.com) website.

## **FFWM Journeys**

The following are the journeys in the works for FFWM.

Outbound:

Turkey and Azerbaijan

Journey Coordinators: Louise Potratz & Marcia Ellis

Dates: Late Sept to late Oct. Expect an email very soon describing the journey, journey dates, and cost.

Inbound:

1. Kern County, California

Journey Coordinators: TBD

## 2. Lubeck Germany

Journey Coordinators: TBD

# February LEO



12 FFWM members met at Casa Real in Otsego for the February LEO. Great food! A lot of conversation about travels...mostly to warmer weather. Shirley is joining FF Detroit on their journey to FF Southwest Florida this month. People are looking forward to journeying again!

Next LEO is March 12th at noon at P.F.Chang's, 2064 E Beltline Ave NE, GR. RSVP to Shirley Wiersma at [shirley\\_wiersma@yahoo.com](mailto:shirley_wiersma@yahoo.com).

## Rick Steve's Lecture "How Travel Makes Us Better Global Citizens"

by Cathy Dopp

Rick Steve's – the legendary PBS Travel Guide and a huge fan of the Friendship Force – recently gave this lecture as part of the Calvin University's "January Series". This lecture, as well as his fantastic

book “Travel as a Political Act – How to Leave your Baggage Behind” is not your typical travelogue. Instead of focusing on good deals, travel hacks and beautiful destinations, these pieces focus on how travel opens us up to realities we didn’t know existed. Rick is extremely passionate about making the human connections with people from different cultures – which is why he recommends the Friendship Force and World Affairs Council to travelers who want to cut through stereotypes and engage on a deeper level.

Little did I know when I offered to write this article what would soon happen in our world. And it’s really stunning how differently the Ukraine Crisis is hitting me now than it would have before I joined the Friendship Force. Before, I’d never met anyone from the Ukraine. Before, I’d never met anyone from Russia – let alone spend a week at their house. Before, I would have assumed every person in Russia was whole heartedly determined to crush Ukranian opposition and reclaim ‘their territory’.

But now I think of the young student from western Ukraine who spoke to us in Allegan – and how her parents were afraid for her to come home. And now I’m almost as concerned for my Russian friends as I am for Ukranians. Now I know how much the regular people suffered from the international sanctions imposed after the Crimea Invasion. Now I know how many people cautiously question or even openly dislike Putin, but have no safe or real alternatives. And right now I’m laying awake at night worrying about my friend Natalia who not only is risking arrest by protesting the invasion in the streets of Moscow -she’s posting it on Facebook...

I guess that’s exactly what Rick’s talking about when he says “Travel rearranges the furniture in my mind”. Of course I’m preaching to the choir with this group – this is what the Friendship Force is all about.

But good heavens, the world needs us now more than ever!

Note: Our Ukranian student was from the East side where the Russian rebel groups are, not the West.

Following are some more of Rick’s philosophical travel gems:

The Calvin Lecture: “How Travel Makes us Better Global Citizens”

<https://calvin.edu/january-series/livestream/2022>

The book: “Travel as a Political Act” available at bookstores or online.

Exceptional Episodes available on YouTube or RickSteves.Com

“Why we Travel”

“Travel as a Political Act”

“Hunger and Hope: Lessons from Ethiopia and Guatemala”

“Iran: Yesterday and Today”

“The Holy Land: Israel and Palestine Today”

Happy St. Patrick's Day!



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Friendship Force of Western Michigan · 302 Sabin · Kalamazoo, MI 49006 · USA

