

## 2022 September Newsletter

FFWM <FFwesternmichigan@gmail.com>

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

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friendship force

WESTERN MICHIGAN

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

# September 2022 Newsletter

## President's Message

During the month of September, our club is going to experience the best of what Friendship Force has to offer. We will welcome new friends from Germany and get a chance to share with them why we love to call Western Michigan our home. We will journey to Baku, Azerbaijan, and Bursa, Turkey, to make more friends, experience their wondrous countries, and become ambassadors ourselves...

representing Western Michigan and the United States.

A "World of Friends is a World of Peace" is the tagline for Friendship Force International. Throughout this month, we get a chance to take our small steps toward this worthy goal. We accomplish these personal connections not by putting on any faces, but by simply being

ourselves... that's all that members of Friendship Force have to do. I sent an email to you last weekend outlining the itinerary for our German guests who will be visiting us from Sept 14 to Sept 20. Please let me know the activities in which you would like to participate. You can email me at [jerrypotratz@hotmail.com](mailto:jerrypotratz@hotmail.com) or call me (269-569-3259). I would especially like to see good attendance at our Welcome Luncheon and Farewell Dinner.

## FF Lubeck Visit

All club members are welcome and encouraged to join us at the events of the week and especially the parties! Come and meet our guests from Germany!

**Welcome lunch** at Nancy Draayer's (1416 Balboa St, Portage) on Wednesday, Sept 14 at 1pm. This is a catered event, so please RSVP to Jerry Potratz ([jerrypotratz@hotmail.com](mailto:jerrypotratz@hotmail.com)).

**Farewell party** at Walden Woods Clubhouse (Dunns Ridge, Kalamazoo) on Tuesday, Sept 20 at 6pm. This is a potluck. RSVP to Shirley Wiersma ([shirley\\_wiersma@yahoo.com](mailto:shirley_wiersma@yahoo.com)) or Alice Asmus ([alice.asmus@gmail.com](mailto:alice.asmus@gmail.com)).

Also, there are easy opportunities to meet up with our guests at those events that do not have any attendance restrictions, such as **Meijer Gardens** (Thursday, Sept 15 at 12:30) and the **Gilmore Car Museum** (Saturday, Sept 17 at 3:00, Hickory Corners).

See Jerry's email to you from last weekend for information on all of the scheduled activities.

## A Fun August Outing!

### Picnic, Disc Golf, Hiking and Games!

Tuesday, August 23rd 17 members met at Oshtemo Township Park to eat and play disc golf. Those who didn't play hiked along for the walk.



## LEOs

September 6 at 6pm  
 Bab El Salam  
 129 W Centre Ave, Portage, MI  
<https://www.babelsalamportage.com>  
 Middle Eastern food  
 RSVP to Lyn Hargreave (lynhargreave@gmail.com)

## Join the Board

To all our members. . . start thinking about board service. Terms are for 2 years. Duties include:

- Selecting the officers from those Directors elected by the Club membership.
- Appoint committee chairpersons.
- Approve the financials of the club.
- Set the annual schedule for journeys

# Work with a fun group of people!

## Journeys

### Inbound 2022

September 14-20: We welcome FF Lubeck, Germany. We will have 7 guests. Journey Coordinators: Jerry and Louise Potratz, John and Patty Richmond, and Nancy Draayer.

### Outbound 2022

September 22- October 22: Seventeen ambassadors will visit FF Baku, Azerbaijan and FF Bursa, Turkey. Journey Coordinators: Marcia Ellis and Louise Potratz. We are getting ready to depart!

### Inbound 2023

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

### Outbound 2023

Metropole Rohr, Germany

### Outbound 2023

Eastern Washington - Northern Idaho

## Travel Opportunities

Click the link below to review a catalog of Special Journeys that are currently being offered by other FFI clubs. Perhaps there is a journey that interests you!

[2022 Journey Catalog](#).

## Remembering a Journey



In 2018 eight of our members visited the FF club of Medicine Hat.  
Just this past June 2022 the FF of SW Florida club visited

Medicine Hat. Michelle Kemps sent me this picture of a plaque on which is engraved the clubs that have visited Medicine Hat. We left our mark!!!

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## A Young Man's Journey

The following is an essay by Nick Dopp Oelschlaeger about his first overseas trip with his aunt, Cathy Dopp. Nick is a 22 year old teacher in Nebraska.

### Dubai

In March, I became an international traveler. And not only did I make my first trip out of the United States, it felt like I saw the world in one week as I explored the World Expo 2020 in Dubai. Before I get into details, a great thank you to my Aunt Cathy (Mom's sister) who did nearly all the planning of the trip, hyped it up for 6 months, and guided me through international travel essentials like riding the metro.

Leading into the trip, I thought I had great expectations for what I was about to experience, but little did I know it what was to come. To illustrate this, I will share that during a six hour layover in O'Hare airport, I kept telling my roommates that the thing I was looking forward to was eating meals on the airplane. I had heard Emirates airlines may be the most luxurious in the world and I figured even my economy ticket would have good accommodations. The airplane food was pretty good, but a week later, it was the last thing I was talking about.

I can tell you what I did during my week in Dubai, but the whole time I was there I wished I could bring more people with me to fully experience what it was like. In an effort to give you that experience in words, let me explain what it was like to each of my 5 senses.

### Sight

Everything felt new, and if it wasn't, it was clean and well kept. When I got to the airport, I thought it was the nicest building I had ever been in, that was until I got to the mall and Expo. The scale of architecture in Dubai felt enormous. The largest city I had been to previous was Chicago, and it felt like Dubai took Chicago's height and stretched it out for 30 miles. There were also ornate details and elegant designs. Not only is Burj Khalifa the world's tallest tower but it's also rather nice to look at as well with it's smooth asymmetrical leaf tiers.

Expo provided even more visual stimulation as it was designed by teams of the world's leading architects and landscapers. Trees and vegetation grew up buildings and over sidewalks, but never intruded on your space. Pavilions made bold statements of national character, while sculptures and open spaces invited the eyes to relax. A theme, I probably cannot do this place justice in words.

### **Sound**

Dubai felt relaxed, and the sounds I heard matched that feeling. In what I thought was so unlike the adrenaline packed sport culture present in America, the central plaza of Expo (Al Wasl) was often drawing crowds to relax and enjoy peaceful sounds of nature and music. Performances were more often beautiful and captivating as they were energetic and surprising. Car horns were normal on the streets, but people slam on the brakes when they see a yellow light, so driving isn't one to one comparable to the United States.

Another cool feature of sound was seeing crowds fill the Expo's main concert area for acts we had never heard of. First, popular with the local Emiratis, was Pan Arab waves, a small ensemble of world class musicians playing traditional instruments to the arabian cultural area. Then, there was Googoosh, an aging Iranian diva. After looking into her popularity, we discovered Googoosh is banned in Iran for progressive political commentary and that the Iranian government objected to her performance at Expo. Our last day at Expo drew the biggest crowd for Parokya ni Edgar, a Philipino rock band popular in the early 2000's. Think Green Day, but Philipino and more widely popular in their culture. We found that there is a large Philipino population in Dubai and even met a lady who had moved to Dubai, but whose real dream was to move to America.

### **Smell**

Dubai smelled great. In an effort to capture the smell and take it with me, I spent nearly 100 Obama money on cologne and incense like wood. I bought the scents from a Souq, a small street shop in a market no wider than an alley. The owner asked me if I meant Obama money or Dirhams (Emirati money). He also told me that his doctor told him not to think about his decisions as I was thinking about the price we were nearing. I was upsold some, but not a ton, maybe \$30 or \$40, and I get to share what the Middle East smells like.

### **Taste**

I ate many wonderful things during my week in Dubai. And it all tasted even better because it wasn't as expensive as it would be in America. I found that generally I was paying about 75% of what I would spend for an item in America. Did you know you can buy water for less than a dollar at the Dubai airport? I

digress. Early on, my taste buds were treated well by Hafiz Mustafa Baklava. I mean, I didn't think I liked Baklava. But the creations at this store dripped with sweetness and gleamed with sugar.

Expo also afforded many exciting food opportunities, as each country present offered favorites of their local cuisines while large food halls presented menus curated by world famous chefs. Some of my favorites were Indian butter chicken, an African lobster roll, outstanding street gyros, and a saffron camel milk milkshake. I also grew in my appreciation of nuts (especially pistachio), and yogurt, as these ingredients were often featured.

## Feel

Dubai felt clean, respectful and relaxed. Did you know that drinking water on the train is a \$25 fine? These strict laws meant that most places I went, I felt clean and comfortable being there. The people around also contributed to this feeling as many were happy to give assistance and young people often gave up their seats on the metro to their elders.

Expo provided some tactile wonders like the gigantic waterfall sculpture that massages your feet. We felt like we won the lottery when an unannounced airshow started perfectly in view as we stood with water gushing over our ankles. We also enjoyed lounging in beanbags on a lawn while we watched the Hungarian conservatory for traditional dance on the main stage. Oh, and the Oman pavilion had hand sanitizing stations that looked like drinking fountains but were actually steaming frankincense infused sanitizer into the air. I strongly recommend this as the most pleasant way to sanitize your hands.

In review, I am so grateful to my Aunt Cathy for guiding me on this trip to Dubai and to see the world at Expo 2020.



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