

## 2023 May Newsletter

FFWM

Mon 5/1/2023 7:00 AM

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

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# May 2023 Newsletter

## Presidents' Message

Happy Spring! At least some days feel a little like spring.

We have good news. I heard from Allison Lindsey of FFI and we have been assigned two outbounds for 2024. This includes a domestic outbound to north Carolina in March and an international outbound to Wairarapa, New Zealand and Newcastle, Australia in July. At this time we have not been assigned an inbound, but this is only the first round of matching. Hopefully, we will be assigned a club for hosting next year. Thank you to Lisa and Jerry for filling out the forms to make these assignments possible.

We have two upcoming outbounds and an inbound, so we will be hearing about those in our next few newsletters.

Please submit any photos or articles about our journeys or events.

Nancy

## Movie Night

**Don't Miss Movie Night!**

**Featured Film: Mr. Jones**

**7:00pm, Wednesday, May 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Walden Woods Clubhouse**

**630 Wynding Oaks, Kalamazoo, 49006**

Mr. Jones is a biographical thriller filmed in 2019 by Polish director Agnieszka Holland. It tells the story of Gareth Jones, a journalist from Wales, who in 1933 travels to the Soviet Union and uncovers the truth about the Holodomor, the devastating famine in the Ukraine, in which millions died. The film is in English with no subtitles.

We will furnish the popcorn and soft drinks. You can bring anything else you might want to munch on or drink.

## LEO

Note the date and time change!

The next LEO will be at **Casa Tequila**

23901 City Center Circle

Mattawan. on **May 6th at 6pm.**

RSVP to Lyn Hargreave at [lynhargreave@gmail.com](mailto:lynhargreave@gmail.com).



Seven members met April 12 at 12 noon at the Curragh, a traditional Irish pub in Holland.

## More from our Social Committee:

### Dinner and a Concert!

6:00pm, Tuesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> (June LEO)

### Meijer Gardens

**1000 East Beltline Avenue NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49525**

Come enjoy a slightly different kind of LEO! Arrive before 6:00pm, bring your favorite portable outdoor chair, plant it on the amphitheater grass to save your spot, and join us for dinner and a concert! Meet us at the James & Shirley Balk Cafe at 6:00pm to grab a bite in time for the 7:00pm concert, or you can bring your own picnic food and eat outdoors. Who are we going to hear perform? We don't know yet and we don't care! The music is always good and we have each other as company! You will need to pay the Meijer Gardens entrance fee in order to enjoy the concert. You are always welcome to arrive earlier in the day and enjoy the beautiful gardens before our LEO begins.

### Circle the Date for a Picnic, Hiking and Kayaking!

**2:00pm, Tuesday, July 18<sup>th</sup>**

**Littlejohn Lake Park  
3540 113th Avenue  
Allegan, MI 49010**

Bring your own lunch and enjoy the great outdoors as we gather for a mid-summer picnic. There is a lot of space to play yard games, a beach area where we can launch kayaks and hiking trails to enjoy mother nature.

## **Journeys**

### **Domestic Outbound Journey:**

May 15 to 28

- Eastern Washington / Northern Idaho: arrive on Monday, May 15th, depart on Monday, May 22nd
- Lower Columbia: arrive on Monday, May 22nd, depart on Sunday, May 28th

Journey Coordinators are Nancy Draayer and Lisa Fisher. This journey is filled!

### **International Outbound Journey:**

June 26 to July 9

Friendship Force of Metropole Ruhr (Germany) and Friendship Force of Limburg (Belgium).

Journey Coordinators are Louise and Jerry Potratz.

**C'mon! It's not too late!**

**Join us for Germany/Belgium this summer!**

We have the opportunity to take two more guests on our journey to Metropole Ruhr, Germany, and Limburg, Belgium from June 26<sup>th</sup> through July 9<sup>th</sup>. If you are interested, please contact Louise Potratz as soon as possible (269-569-4423 or LPL4@hotmail.com).



**Domestic Inbound Journey:**

July 23 to 30

Friendship Force of Orlando will visit us.

Journey Coordinators are Pam Sackett and Mary Giddings.

Please email Pam at [tulikivi@msn.com](mailto:tulikivi@msn.com), or Mary at [fgidrow@gmail.com](mailto:fgidrow@gmail.com), if you are interested in home hosting or day hosting our visiting ambassadors.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>MAY</b>	15 Eastern Washington/Northern Idaho	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 Depart for Lower Columbia	23	24	25	26	27
28 Depart for home	29	30	31			
<b>JUNE</b>	26 Metropole Ruhr	27	28	29	30	
<b>JULY</b>						1
2	3 Limburg	4	5	6	7	8
9 Depart	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 Greater Orlando arrives	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 depart	31					

**Orlando Inbound Daily Schedule as of 4/8/2023**

Sunday, July 23: Arrival

**Monday, July 24:** Welcome Brunch Potluck

PM: Guests choose from Gilmore Car Museum, Air Zoo, Kellogg Manor tour, KValley Museum

**Tuesday, July 25:** Day in Grand Rapids

Meyer May House, Ford Museum, Sheshco Grill, Meijer Gardens

**Wed, July 26:** Day in Amish Country

Leave Kalamazoo at 10am for lunch in an Amish home

Menno-Hof Museum, Yoder's Market

Options: open air flea market, Shipshewana arts & crafts shops

**Thursday, July 27:** Day in Kalamazoo

Walking architectural tour, lunch downtown

Ladie's Library tour, Bell's Brewery tour in Comstock

**Friday, July 28:** Day at Lake Michigan

Arrive at 10am for Dune Buggy ride in Saugatuck

Picnic lunch at Mt. Baldhead Pavilion

Options: hike the dunes of Mt. Baldhead, ride the chain ferry, tall ship in South Haven (must reserve in advance), explore Saugatuck and/or South Haven, visit a winery (Fenn Valley, etc), Dinner suggestion: Salt of Earth in Fennville.

**Saturday, July 29:** Free Day

Options: return to Saugatuck for Venetian Festival activities, South Haven for Tall Ship ride (reservation needed), Car Museum, Air Zoo, KIA, blueberry picking

**Sunday, July 30:** Farewell Lunch, 12 noon at Walden Woods clubhouse

**Hosts:** Lyn & Dave Hargreave, Arleigh Smyrnios, Susan Andress, Kathy Berglund, Shirley Wiersma, Marcia Ellis & Roy Pearson, Mary and Fred Giddings

**Dinner hosts to date:** Barb Wright, Cathy Dopp, Laurie & Jim Zeich

**Day hosts to date:** Jackie Howlett, Gayle and Paul Franklin

**We need more dinner and day hosts!**

## Looking for Contributors

Would you like to contribute something or share a travel experience in this newsletter? If you are willing to share your adventures, a photo, or anything related to travel, cultures, places you've visited, please email your article to Marcia Ellis at [ellism@wmich.edu](mailto:ellism@wmich.edu).

## My FFI

The members-only portal, [my.friendshipforce.org](https://my.friendshipforce.org), is the go-to place for news, journey opportunities, payments, virtual experiences and all other member-relevant information. If you have not yet sign up,

click [Word](#) or [PDF](#) for detailed instructions.

## A Night Out

April 20th ten of our members attended a performance "Night of Rakugo" (Japanese Comic Storytelling) with Katsura Sunshine. "Phenomenal drummers!" Lyn Hargreave said. Dinner at Kyoto afterwards.



## Friends and Family in "Newtro" South Korea.

From Cathy Dopp

Last September I was finally able to visit my son in South Korea for the first time since Covid. Jacob is an English teacher in Incheon which is about 20 miles from downtown Seoul. We picked September for the trip because the weather is beautiful and he had some time off for Chuseok. Neither teachers or students get many days off in South Korea!

Chuseok is the Asian version of Thanksgiving and is celebrated on the Fall Equinox. It is the second most important Korean holiday after the Lunar New Year. Most businesses and schools close and there's an annual traffic jam as South Koreans head to their hometowns to celebrate with family. It is also a time to honor all relatives, both deceased and alive. I was surprised that the Chuseok Dinner is even more complicated and ceremonial than a Jewish Sedar. And in addition to the 20+ traditional dishes served, you can give your host a "SPAM GiftPack" for only \$65 dollars (yes – that's good old American

Spam)!

So, I was very honored when members of the Seoul Friendship Force took time to meet me for a day during this very busy month. I actually got hooked up with the Seoul Club when my bid won the Friendship Force "Homestay" Auction for Seoul. I had planned to visit and stay with the club in 2020, but we all know how 2020 went. (I was actually on the plane over the Pacific Ocean when the airlines stopped all flights to South Korea!) But we were finally able to connect for a day. Given that it was Chuseok, I didn't want to impose on their holiday.

But four members still made time to meet and we had a great time visiting the main palace and sharing Friendship Force stories. They were particularly intrigued to hear about the American television show M\*A\*S\*H – and I'm sure viewing parties ensued!

On the other days when Jacob was teaching, I was able to join several of the free Seoul Walking Tours. English speaking volunteers will take you on walking tours of over 24 different areas and topics. We visited food markets, temples, old and new neighborhoods, ancient bridges and more. Talking to the guides between highlights was a treat as well. (I think I recruited a few new FF members for the Seoul Club too 😊.) Most guides were retirees and had mind boggling stories about the Korean War, aftermath and recovery. One guide told me how he, his mother and baby brother traveled on foot over 200 miles to get to safety in Busan during the war. He also told me how his first words in English were "Give me chocolate!" – which he repeated for every American GI he could find.

On another day I accidentally climbed a mountain. Never trust what a Korean calls "an easy hike" – apparently they sent me on the 'easiest' way to the top of Mount Bukhansen. It was a beautiful national park and I constantly ran into ancient bridges and temples built by Buddhist monks centuries/millenniums ago. If you look closely at the photos of the palace throne, you'll see the painting of the five royal mountains. I ended up on top of the second mountain from the right! Fortunately for me, there are still many Buddhist Monks on the mountain, and they supplied valuable water and rest stops for the 6 hour adventure. I have travelled to quite a few countries in my life, but I've never experienced so much "history in the making" as I did in South Korea. As I flew in over Incheon Bay, I realized it was the same bay my father-in-law arrived on to fight the Korean War years ago. The South Koreans are rightfully proud of how they rose from one of the ten



poorest countries in the world to one of the world's richest in less than 50 years. Add to that the lingering bitterness from the Japanese occupation, and you see where they also go to great extents to recover so many buildings and customs that were destroyed during that time. I was surprised to learn that many Koreans over the age of 70 had to learn how to speak the Korean language because they were only allowed to speak Japanese during those years.

The word that South Korea uses to describe this fascinating mix of old and new is "NewTro" – they love the new and they love the "retro". So hanboks and cellphones, temples and freeways, palaces and skyscrapers are the norm, not the extremes. I hate having my son so far from home (and close to Kim Jong-un). But it is an amazing place that I look forward to returning to...



## 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!

[2023 Journey Catalog](#)

## 2023 Club to Club Journeys



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*FFWM Newsletter*

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

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