

2023 January Newsletter

FFWM <FFwesternmichigan@gmail.com>

Mon 1/2/2023 5:10 PM

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

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friendship force

WESTERN MICHIGAN

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

Presidents' Message

Happy New Year from your new co-presidents!

I would like to give a shout out to Jerry Potratz, our outgoing president. He has done an excellent job for the last few years. Not an easy job to keep a club involved during these difficult times of COVID. I think I speak for everyone that his hard work is much appreciated.

Lisa Fisher and I have agreed to be co-presidents for the upcoming year. We will be looking for someone else to be president for 2024.

Listed below is the list of new officers and committee chairs. Please consider getting more involved this year with FFWM. You can do this

by joining one of our committees. Just contact one of the committee chairs. Strong clubs have lots of people involved, but clubs with only a few people involved run the risk of dying out. Also, we would love to see you at our LEOs (Let's Eat Out). It's a great way to meet other members and socialize. Strong clubs have members who are engaged with each other. Another way to become more involved is to volunteer to host during our incoming journeys either by home hosting, dinner hosting or day hosting. Also, you can help with the welcome or farewell dinners. Many hands make light work for all involved. Of course, you can get involved by traveling on our outgoing journeys. That can be a fun part of Friendship Force.

Speaking of our upcoming outgoing journey in May, Lisa Fisher and I are the journey coordinators for our trip to Washington/Northern Idaho and the Lower Columbia Clubs. Some of you have expressed an interest by contacting Jerry. There will be an email coming out soon with details. Please look for it and respond if you are interested in going on this journey. We look forward to having a great year!
Nancy Draayer

Social Committee Message

Join us for the Lantern Festival on February 4th!

As was mentioned in last month's newsletter, FFWM will be highlighting and participating in activities in our area that offer opportunities to expand our global understanding and build our cross-cultural awareness. The Asian Studies Initiatives of the Haenicke Institute for Global Education (Western Michigan University) is sponsoring their very first Lantern Festival Gala at 4:00pm on Saturday, February 4th, at Chenery Auditorium in Kalamazoo (714 S Westnedge Ave, Kalamazoo, 49007). Aiming to promote reconciliation, peace, and forgiveness, the Lantern Festival marks the first full moon of the new lunar year and the end of the Lunar New Year celebration. The program includes performances from the Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra, Community Voice (Crescendo Academy of Music), an award-winning Peking Opera actress, lion dance, dragon dance, martial arts, and more.

Tickets are \$5 for seniors and can be purchased at Pacific Rim Foods (Kalamazoo), Zhang Portage Community Senior Center, and online at Ludus - Asian Initiatives, WMU. If you are interested in attending, please purchase your ticket and let Jerry Potratz know of your interest (call 269-569-3259, or email at jerrypotratz@hotmail.com). We will attend the gala and then proceed as a group to a local Chinese restaurant for dinner. Jerry will make a reservation based upon the number of members attending the gala. If we have too many attendees to get a reservation, we will order takeout and go to Jerry and Louise's house for dinner, conversation, and maybe some games!

No LEO for February. Lanterns instead!

Since Sunday mornings are typically filled with church or other family activities, we will not have a LEO at noon on February 12th . Instead, we will substitute the Lantern Festival (see above) on February 4th as our LEO for the month. Join us at the festival, followed by dinner! Should be fun!

New Board Members and Positions

Here is what our Board looks like in 2023:

Lisa Fisher, Co-President

Nancy Draayer, Co-President & Vice President

Pam Sackett, Treasurer (new board member)

Shirley Wiersma, Secretary

Cathy Dopp, at large

Loie Dye Gustafson, at large (new board member)

Jerry Potratz, at large

John Richmond, at large

Stan Sackett, at large

Committees:

Membership Committee Chair, Loie Dye Gustafson

Communications Committee Chair, Marcia Ellis

Social Committee Chair, Jerry Potratz

Board meetings will be held at 7pm on the third Wednesday of the month via Zoom.

Committee chairs are requested to attend board meetings.

LEO !

Our next LEO is January 12 at 12 noon at Roam by Sanchez.
Located at 250 Monroe Ave, NW, Grand Rapids.
RSVP to Shirley Wiersma at shirley_wiersma@yahoo.com or 269 385
3952.

2023 Journeys

Outbound

International: Metropole Ruhr, Germany

Domestic: FF Eastern Washington/Northern Idaho May 15-22

FF Lower Columbia May 22-28

Journey Coordinator: Nancy Draayer & Lisa Fisher

Inbound

International: possibly FF Bursa, Turkey in the fall

possibly FF Nashik Riverside, India in June

Domestic: FF of Greater Orlando

possibly FF Bursa, Turkey

Journey Coordinators are needed for these journeys. Get more fun out of your FFWM membership by volunteering if you are at all interested. No experience necessary!! We will pair you with an experienced journey coordinator. Contact Marcia Ellis at ellism@wmich.edu.

FFWM Holiday Party

Our holiday party and annual membership meeting was held on December 2 at Martell's in Kalamazoo. We had 24 members and 6 guests in attendance. Following a festive dinner we went to Miller Auditorium for a Christmas concert presented by the Kalamazoo Concert Band and the Kalamazoo Children's Chorus. It was a lovely evening!



Travel Opportunities

Click the links below to see a catalog of 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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