

2024 March FFWM Newsletter

FFWM <FFwesternmichigan@send.mailchimpapp.com>

Mon 4/1/2024 8:00 AM

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

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FFWM Newsletter April 2024

President's Message

Great Cycle Trails of New Zealand

Lisa Fisher and I recently did this Global FF Journey with 16 other e-cyclists from the USA and Canada. The group cycled on trails in Auckland, Hamilton, Cambridge, Waikato, Kapiti, Hutt Valley and Central Otago. We were lucky enough to have perfect weather throughout the entire three weeks, and the scenery was spectacular. As well as 10 days of biking, the group travelled from Auckland to Queenstown by bus, ferry and train. Along the way, we were treated to a Maori cultural experience at Kohutapu Lodge, visited glowworm caves at Waitomo, enjoyed hospitality from the Hamilton-Waikato, Kapiti Coast and Wellington clubs, visited a working ranch and admired the lakes, mountains, and farmland in both the North and

South Islands.

After arriving in Queenstown, fourteen of the original 18 stayed for another week to explore the Milford Sound region. We embarked on a ferry ride on Milford, Where we were treated to some of the most beautiful scenery I've ever encountered. We even saw dolphins swimming by the ship and seals playing on the rocks. Another highlight was hiking part of the Routeburn trail. The steep climb was well worth the stunning vistas at the top where we ate our lunch before heading back down. I personally enjoy seeing the NZ Wood pigeon, NZ fantail and many other endemic birds. It was a successful journey in which many friendships were formed while enjoying a shared interest.

Nancy Draayer



Routeburn Trail



Milford Sound



FF Group



FF Bikers

March LEO



There were 26 or 27 of us there including one new member and two guests. There were many Irish dishes for folks to dine on at the potluck. After lunch folks enjoyed 3 sessions of round-robin type Irish "Team Trivia". Catherine Henze ended up with highest score!

Next LEO

Our April LEO will be on the 12th at noon at Rock N Thai Cafe. Check out the menu on their website: <https://www.rocknthai.com/>. It is located at: 3006 W SHR DR, HOLLAND MI 49424. [616.298.8770](tel:616.298.8770).

Everyone is invited back to Loie and Dan's for cookies and conversation after lunch. Their address is 2955 Loganberry Ln, #41, Holland 49424.

Please **RSVP to both Loie Dye-Gustafson** (wordpictures@gmail.com) and **Lyn Hargreave** (lynhaargreave@gmail.com) for reservations.

2024 Journeys

International Outbound:

FF Wairarapa, New Zealand and FF Newcastle, Australia with FF Cheyenne, WY

Journey coordinators are Louise and Jerry Potratz. Current tentative dates are: August 14th - September 5th (with possible extension to September 9th).

Domestic Outbound:

FF Western North Carolina

Journey Coordinators: Shirley Wiersma and Arleigh Smyrnios. Date: April 2-8.

Full journey!

International Inbound:

1. FF of Limburg, Belgium with FF Sarasota, FL

Journey Coordinators: Jackie Howlett and Lisa Fisher. Date: October 20-27.

2. FF Xalapa, Mexico with FF Northern Illinois.

Journey Coordinators: Marcia Ellis and Loie Dye-Gustafson with Dave and Teresa Barnes. Date is June 19-26, 2024.

Please consider volunteering to help these journey coordinators!! You don't need to have experience as a coordinator. You will work with someone experienced. This is a great way to get involved!

Save the Date!
FF Xalapa, Mexico



We have 8 guests from Xalapa arriving at 5pm on June 19. Also joining us on this journey will be Sait and Meral Tosun from FF Bursa, Turkey. **We have no home hosts at this point.** We have 4 couples and 2 singles needing hosts. **Please email me if you can home host for this journey!!**

We are also looking for **dinner and day hosts!** Thank you to those who have already volunteered! Please email Marcia Ellis at ellism@wmich.edu if you are available to host or provide a dinner.
Marcia Ellis & Loie Dye

Traveling



When the Unexpected Happens

By Kathy Berglund

In February I had the good fortune to go on a Friendship Force club trip to New Zealand. The trip (see above related article) was a 21 day excursion that included 10 days of biking on E bikes and staying with host families. Since New Zealand was at the top of our bucket list of places to visit, my partner, Larry Ellison, and I jumped on the opportunity. We landed in Auckland on February 8th. We had a wonderful welcome dinner on Saturday February 10th where we had the chance to meet all of our fellow travelers from clubs all over the United States and Canada. Sunday, Feb 11th we started with the first day of biking. We took the early ferry over to Waheke Island. We were fitted with E bikes and state of the art helmets. We had a lovely bike ride around the perimeter of the island culminating with a visit to a winery that sat on the top of a very big hill. If you've never been to New Zealand, the flat spots are few and far between. At the winery we enjoyed a 360° view. We were able to see downtown Auckland from across the bay. It was spectacular! Larry and I then decided to go back to a beach we had visited to just rest and relax for a little bit as the winery was the last stop on the tour for the day.

We started to head down the big hill and I looked down at my speedometer and realized I was going way too fast. As I applied the brakes, I looked up and saw Larry's front wheel violently oscillating. He lost control of the bike and had a horrific fall onto the road. He tumbled a good way and then came to a silent stop. Some bystanders called an ambulance.

The ambulance crew on the island took wonderful care of him and then they sent a police boat to get us with another ambulance crew in attendance. We crossed the harbor and we were transported to Auckland City Hospital by another ambulance.

I was so impressed with the care that he received at the hospital. New Zealand has national healthcare. All of the various medical specialties

worked together to make sure that he was thoroughly evaluated and an appropriate plan of care was developed for him. He ended up having multiple rib fractures, a fractured collarbone, a fractured shoulder blade, a bruised lung and a bruised kidney. He stayed in the hospital for 9 days!

I'm sure the thought going through your mind at this point is "I sure hope they had good travel insurance". We did, but so far they have not asked for the information!! The Accident Compensation Corporation is a fund established to care for anyone in the country of New Zealand who is involved in an accident or has a workplace injury. This extends to people from other countries who are on holiday in New Zealand. Net result after nine days in the hospital, three CT scans, multiple x-rays, a pain pump, and nerve blocks, our hospital bill so far is zero dollars!

I can't say enough good things about the people in New Zealand. We met a lovely couple on the ward in the hospital who invited us to their beach house after Larry got discharged from the hospital and we were able to have him rest and recover for four days there. He was then well enough to sit in the car so I rented a car and we toured many different places and salvaged the remainder of our vacation.

The friendship force ambassadors were very kind and compassionate, offering their thoughts and prayers for Larry. The person that handled making all the arrangements is working hard to get us as much refund as possible for the parts of the trip that we did not get to enjoy. We will also file a claim with our travel insurance.

So if you get the opportunity to go to New Zealand, please do, as it is spectacularly gorgeous. The people are kind and compassionate. And if you have a health event in New Zealand, you will be well taken care of.

Goodbye to a Friend



Dennis Mahoney was a member of FFWM. He passed away Feb 7, 2024. May he rest in peace. His obituary can be found here: <https://obits.mlive.com/us/obituaries/kalamazoo/name/dennis-mahoney-obituary?id=54321985>

Well Wishes

Charter member Jennette Parkhurst is now home recovering from surgery for a fractured hip after a fall. Those wishing to send well wishes can do so at 1687 16th St , Otsego, MI 49078.

Board Meeting

The next board meeting is April 17 at 7pm. Typically board meetings are held on the third Wednesday of the month. We will announce the dates and times through this newsletter.

Any member interested in attending please notify Nancy Draayer at ncdraayer@gmail.com. You will receive an invitation to the meeting which is held via Zoom. You don't even have to leave your house!

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](#)

FFI Regional Conference

FF North American Regional Conference

Registration is now open to all of our members in Canada, Mexico, and the USA. This is your chance to join us for an inspiring event celebrating cultural exchange and friendship while discussing the issues that



matter in your region.

Date: October 7-10, 2024

**Location: Drury Plaza Hotel Downtown Milwaukee,
Wisconsin, USA**

Visit the [conference website](#) for more information about the conference and how to book your hotel room with our conference discount code. [Register now](#) to secure your place!



[Click here for more information about Festival At Sea 2024.](#)

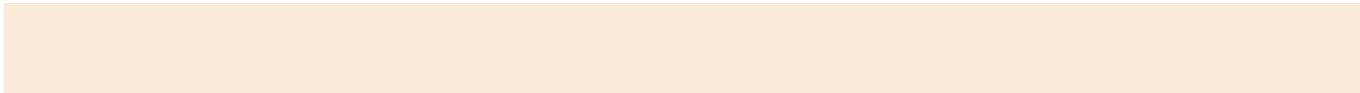
Contribute to the Newsletter

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.

My FFI

The members-only portal, 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 signed up, click [Word](#) or [PDF](#) for detailed instructions.





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