

March 2020 Newsletter

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



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

Covid-19's impact on Friendship Force International



A note from Lyn Hargreave (written March 9):

As all of you can imagine, FFI journeys to Asia (Japan, Korea at present) are being cancelled. It is unknown how this will impact future journeys to other locations. Many may not know, or realize how the organization budget functions. It is primarily from the fees that journey participants pay to FFI when

they go on a journey. Approximately 50 journeys have already been cancelled and the number of participants in other journeys have been impacted. That is already ~20% of FFI's income that will be lost this year, and it's just beginning. This web address of the Johns Hopkins site to keep up to date link may be informative as to what is happening in the world. <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/opstdashboard/index.html#/bda7594740fd40299423467b48e9ecf6>

What does this mean for our local gatherings? Right now Michigan is virus free, and we hope it does not become a real issue here. If the situation changes we will notify you if there are any changes to anticipated gatherings.

In Other News . . .

John Richmond has been trying a new way for doing **surveys**. This is a work in progress and he is learning the software. The first attempt has been a recent survey for all to complete on programs (one time presentations) which may be of interest, and activities which may be fun ways for members to get together on a more regular basis. The strongest clubs in the FFI network are those who "play together, stay together". Since we travel and host just 2-3 times a year, there is a possibility for other gatherings for those who are interested. **If you have not completed your survey, please do so.** You just need to click "Submit" at the end and it will go to a spread sheet for compilation. THEN the work begins to organize all the results. Help will be recruited. Please be ready to volunteer.

Also, recently a **questionnaire** was sent to all by Shirley Wiersma asking about the hosting capacity of members. We need this information in order to ascertain how many guests we can accommodate in homes and availability of dinner and day hosts. **If you've not completed and returned this to Shirley, please do so ASAP.** If you don't recall getting it or it has gotten lost among your many emails let Shirley know at shirley_wiersma@yahoo.com so she can send you another.

Coming Up

LEO's coming up: The next will be at Sheshco Mediterranean Grill, 2121

Celebration Drive, Grand Rapids, April 6. This will be our last LUNCH time gathering at noon. In May we will return to "on the 6th of the month, at 6:00" by meeting at Casa Real for a Mexican meal at 232 W. Allegan Street in Otsego. June we will go to Ada for a Turkish dinner at Zeytin. Watch your email for the announcement of these events about a week in advance. Upcoming events can be found at <https://www.friendshipforcewmich.org/upcoming-events.html>.



March LEO: 23 members met at the Curragh, an Irish pub, in Holland.

Journeys

Next Outbound . . .FF of Izmir and FF of Bursa, Turkey

We were informed by FF of Bursa and FF of Izmir that the Turkish government as asked that all non-essential travel to and from their country be postponed or cancelled. Therefore, we are postponing our journey to Turkey this month. The good news is that our new members will have a chance to go on this journey when it is rescheduled!





October 2020 Inbound: FF of Turialba, Costa Rica

Journey Coordinators: Jerry Potratz & Lyn Hargreave
Keep your October calendars as free as possible as we will need help planning and hosting this club.

August 2020 Inbound: FF of Quad Cities

Watch for more information on this. . .

2021

We will be receiving our outbound journey for 2021 any day now! Stay tuned. . .

Midwest, Southwest, Great Lakes Conference

September 18-20 in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis-St. Paul. There is an optional tour of the North Shore of Lake Superior prior to the conference if folks are interested, along with other pre-conference activities. More can be found out via the U.S. e-flyer about this and other journeys available to U.S.

members: <https://www.friendshipforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/MARCH-2020-US-eFlyer.pdf>

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello Friends:

There are a few points that I want to stress to all FFWM club members as we move further into 2020.

First: We have an amazing club that is only getting better!

- What other club our size could have hosted three inbound journeys, with one of them being a language journey, and organized a very successful membership drive, all in 2019? Answer: In my opinion, none!
- With the help of our Taste of Friendship Force recruitment event on October 16th, we increased our membership from 48 members at the end of 2018 to 61 members at the beginning of 2020. More than a 25% increase!

Second: We need to engage with each other to guarantee a successful 2020!

- We want to get our new members integrated and actively engaged in our club! If you sponsored any new members, make sure to personally invite them... take them if you must... to club events.
- On March 4th, the Membership Committee held an orientation and informational meeting for seven of our new members. These types of efforts will likely be needed throughout the year. At this event, we took photos of new members and gathered their bios to be included in our newsletter.
- We want to re-engage our continuing members. If you know of a club member that has not recently attended a club event, contact them and invite them to join you at our next gathering.
- Our Social Committee will be working hard to respond to the feedback survey that you WILL HOPEFULLY BE providing us as to your preferences for social activities. We want to have interesting and enjoyable things to do during times when we are not traveling to, or hosting, other clubs.

Third: Our membership drive is ongoing and needs an additional focus on Grand Rapids, Holland, and places in-between.

- Each of us has a responsibility to promote our club and to introduce our club to new potential members. So, please consider inviting your family and friends to our social events.
- In addition, we can all be keeping our eyes open for interesting local activities that we might want to put on our club's social agenda. Having more activities in Grand Rapids and Holland will give us an opportunity to share FFWM with our larger community!
- I would personally be happy to meet with potential new members in Grand Rapids and Holland and I know that our Membership Committee would also welcome that opportunity! Let me know!

Fourth: Journeys in the time of the coronavirus!

- Obviously, we are going to be watching the coronavirus carefully for its impact on our potential journeys. We do not want to put ourselves, or our visiting ambassadors, at unnecessary risk. We will manage these events prudently.
- It remains to be seen as to the impact of the virus on local and international journeys. If, for prudent reasons, Journeys are limited, then we may have all the more reason to gather on a social basis and our Social Committee will be pursuing such events!

Please let me know if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions to improve our club!

In Friendship,
Jerry

Next FFWM Board Meeting March 18 at 7pm

If anyone is interested in attending or listening in please let Jerry Potratz know (jerrypotratz@hotmail.com). These meetings are held by Skype and at Jerry's house and you are welcome to join.

Minutes to all Board meetings can be found

at: <https://www.friendshipforcewmich.org/meeting-minutes.html>

What has been happening. . .

Welcome to new members. . . .



Alice and Paul Asmus

Welcome to Alice and Paul Asmus! Alice is a retired marketing professional. She is interested in gardening, anthropology, culture, gourmet cooking and people to people connections. Paul is interested in science (especially astronomy), art (especially functional ceramic ware), geology and anthropology. They have a dog, Jazzy

New Member Orientation

On Wednesday, March 4 there was an orientation session to acquaint some of our newer members with the Friendship Force organization. FFI's mission, how Journeys work, how to get involved, etc. Thank you to the Membership Committee for organizing this event!



FFWM Photo Cluster Shoot

In early March the FFWM Photo Cluster went to the Kalamazoo Nature Center for a photo shoot. Our Kalamazoo Nature Center was offering a program for photographing raptors so five members decided it would be fun. All came back into town and shared a bowl of chili afterwards. It was a gorgeous day for being outside. We'll meet on March 21 for a potluck and look at the pictures we took and hopefully decide another adventure.





Where our members are traveling

This past September, Sue Bohlander and I went to Bavaria, Germany on the "Hidden Treasures in Franconia: A Paradise for Hikers" exchange. We had daily hiking opportunities between villages, with our main luggage transported. We stayed in quaint hotels and stopped for beer breaks in the afternoons. The people, scenery, and experience were all wonderful. I rate this trip as one of the best I have experienced. Friendship Force Bavaria members were outstanding hosts.

Deb Williamson



Fred and I attended the international conference in Boulder, Colorado. The pikes peak club hosted us. Visited air force academy, pikes peak and garden of the gods. Beautiful country, wonderful weather and excellent hosts. Mary Giddings



FFWM Board & Committee Members

(<https://www.friendshipforcewmich.org/board-members.html>)

President: Jerry Potratz
Vice President: Nancy Draayer
Treasurer: Lisa Fisher
Secretary: Shirley Wiersma
Membership Committee: Dave Barnes, John Richmond, Melanie Perry, Lyn Hargreave
Social Committee: Jerry Potratz, Lyn Hargreave, Patty Richmond, Kathy Berglund
Communications Director: Marcia Ellis

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