

Friendship Force of Madison Annual Meeting  
April 10, 2016

Held at Great Dane Pub & Brewing Co.-East, Madison, WI

President Sandi Wysock called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. with the singing of “Let There be Peace on earth, a table grace, the welcoming of everyone, introduction of new members, the Board, and lunch before the business meeting. Copies of the programs 2015 annual meeting minutes and treasurer’s report were on the tables – one per individual and one per couple.

**Secretary’s Report:** Motion made and seconded by Mary Lou Martino and George Winsock to approve the report as presented in the April newsletter. Passed

**Treasurers Report:** Motion made and seconded by Mary Lindquist and Donna Hussin to approve the report as presented in the April newsletter. Passed

### **Presidents Annual Report**

**Building Bridges:** Building Bridges has been a theme for both international and regional conferences this year. The theme refers to other cultures and also to building bridges toward the future and the next generations. It’s a theme that honors our mission while finding ways to link our past and to the future generations and realities.

**Board News:** The Board has been exceptional this year in the face of many changes and challenges. New officers were installed in September 2015 with Mary Babula as President. We never anticipated that she would not be able fulfill her responsibility. In December, the board appointed me as president to fill Mary’s term. Final standing committee chairs were selected in January. Sandy Drew agreed to fill the position of Vice President for the balance of the year. New By- Laws approved last year created new board positions of Member at Large (Maggie Dohm) and Exchange Coordinator (Gail Holmes) and changed how we elect the officers for the Board to ballot voting allowing for absentee ballots. The board also updated Standing Committee responsibilities which is covered later.

501(c) (3) a significant accomplishment for our club is that we received our letter from the IRS designating FFWIS-Madison as a 501 c 3 organization as of February 11, 2016. This means that donations made to the club will be tax deductible. We also learned that donations that are designated for FFI and are passed through our club are also tax deductible. Those of you who made a donation to the “I’m In Campaign” have received letters from FFI acknowledging your tax deductible contribution.

**Historian:** Janet Lonergan, with the help of Donna Hussin and Mary Lindquist are organizing past records from when we organized in 1980 through 2000.

**Newsletter:** Donna J Hussin. Donna continues to do a fabulous job. Our newsletter is routinely recognized as one of the better organized and most interesting newsletters in the region. We are currently looking for a volunteer to back up Donna in this position in case she would not be available to create and publish it.

**New Board Members** this year our members in new positions: Sandy Drew, Vice President; Nancy Brown, Activities; Stephanie Sorensen, Activities; Lise Skofronick, Outreach; Maggie Dohm, Member at Large. Board Members leaving positions with the reorganization of the board and changing of committee responsibilities: Fannie Hicklin, Activities and Exchange Director Maureen Kind. Completing terms in September and leaving the Board will be Lois Schulz, second term as secretary and Helen Ann Rugowski as past president.

We wish to acknowledge Fannie Hicklin with a certificate of appreciation for her many years as chairmen of the activities committee.

**Leadership:** Thank you for supporting our Leadership Training Programs. Building strong local leadership and keeping our leaders current and informed is critical to our success. Three members attended the Midwest Leadership Conference in Cedar Rapids and nine of our members attended the Vancouver International Conference. The club supported the president's travel to Vancouver. We will have at least three leaders at the upcoming Regional Conference in the Quad Cities. Lise Skofronick and I are honored that we have been asked to be presenters. We have a new FFI president, Jeremi Snook. We will meet Jeremi at the upcoming conference. I can tell you that the focus internationally is very much on growing, revitalizing, re-focusing on our mission and re-energizing clubs. Clubs are being strongly encouraged to develop strategic plans to provide a roadmap for future development. Clubs that survive into the next 10 years will be those that find a way to attract and retain new members, develop new leadership, and provide exchange programs that are attractive to the baby boomer generations. In short, expect many changes in how we operate.

Our board is making a commitment to provide at least one general meeting in addition to the annual meeting to keep you informed. The general meeting in November was well attended with 37 members present. Adrienne Moen, our Regional Representative was our guest. We received positive feedback from many members and encouragement to provide similar informational meetings in the future.

### **Exchanges**

First year with an Exchange -coordinator. Gail Holmes has worked very hard to stay connected to all exchanges and coach new ED's. In 2015 we received only an international incoming but no outgoing exchange assignment: Our international exchange was an English language immersion exchange with Guadeloupe in partnership with Milwaukee. Midwest connections and past contacts provided us with two domestic opportunities. In April we went to San Diego and in June we hosted the Phoenix, AZ club. Many members took advantage of global exchanges and opportunities to travel with other clubs such as biking in Iowa, traveling to Estonia, Romania, Hungary and Costa Rica to name a few. These opportunities are especially popular with members who want the Friendship Force home stay experience but whose travel window is different than our clubs exchanges, or who want to visit particular countries or who seek more active experiences. FFI adopted a fill the seat policy and as a result we are sending you many opportunities to join in exchanges with open seats. Filling all exchanges helps FFI cover their expenses without raising our dues.

**Activities Standing Committee** led by Nancy Brown and Stephanie Sorensen is responsible for picnic, WHA (Reta Harring), Highway Clean Up( Sarah Rankin) International Institute of Wisconsin hosted dinners (Stephanie Sorensen), LEO's (Chris Manke), Ride the Drive, Book Club, potlucks and other special events— basically any activity/function that involve membership participation. Marian Ehrenburg is also serving on the committee. Activities focus on providing social connections for our members and providing opportunities for our members to have educational opportunities within the club. This year we donated personal items to Catholic Multicultural Center. Book Club consistently has from 7 - 14 attendees. Books were - Patti Loewe, Seventh Generation Earth Ethics, Underground Girls of Kabul (Pete Marion shared his experiences in Kabul), Cuba Diaries, Daughters of the Samauri, and upcoming to prepare for our India exchange, several selections related to India. International Institute of Wisconsin hosted guests from around the world here to study Youth Development, Financial Literacy,

Social Justice —The Mary Bergin Wisconsin Supper Clubs” event was attended by 35. Mary talked about Wisconsin’s unique supper club culture. We made recipes from her book. New activities are attracting a mixture of older and newer members and allowing people to get to know each other in smaller group settings.

**Outreach Standing Committee:** Led by Lise Skofronick, Sandy Drew, and Lucy Lasseter.

Renewed effort to connect to community, build our presence in the community, build partnerships with like-minded groups, and hopefully along the way attract new members. They are working hard to get us on the programs for various groups in the community. There are opportunities for anyone who is willing to provide short presentations. The committee has talking points prepared.

**Technology & Social Media:** Under the Outreach committee. Dave Dohler manages the web site and keeps email lists. Added Alan Rieland as back up this year. Facebook continues to add followers. Mary Lindquist and Julie Pretell are taking photos and updating Facebook. Eventbrite added in September to allow electronic registration for free activities. Our more tech savvy members simply expect to be able to sign up on line.

**Membership** Standing Committee chair, Mary Lindquist assisted by Mary Lou Martino are holding events for new & potential new members several times during the year. As the Outreach/Activities committees identify potential new members, we take contact information and then invite them to the membership events. We have added 38 names to our contacts and six members since January. We have another event scheduled for June. If you are talking to people about the Friendship Force and they simply want to learn more, give Mary their contact information and we will invite them to a meeting.

**Challenges:** We will continue to experience changes as FFI and FFWS-M make, add, and transition new generations. We are competing in a world where technology offers easy access to many travel options and that alone drives us to change how we communicate and travel. FFWS-M’s goal is to increase our membership by 20% this year. As we add new members, we will also need to provide exchange activities as well as social activities that our newer members find attractive and of course, we will need to develop new leaders. Finally, thank all of you for sharing your wisdom, your passion for our mission, your support of our programs, and your financial support.

### **Exchange Recognition:**

We completed the following exchanges since our last meeting:

June 2014 Arizona inbound: Donna Hussin ED will be given a certificate of appreciation.

July 2015 Guadeloupe Inbound: Exchange Directors, Maureen Kind & Lise Skofronick were recognized and will receive certificates of appreciation

2016 Orland Outbound Nancy Brown ED who will also receive a certificate of appreciation.

All members involved with inbound exchanges in any capacity in 2015 were asked to stand and be recognized.

Exchange Directors for Exchanges to be completed in 2016:

May 11-18 Cleveland County, England: Stephani Sorensen & Nancy Brown Co- ED’s

July 8-15 Nashik Riverside India: Helen Ann Rugowski & Jerry Fuller: Still looking for home and day hosts.

Ambassadors in 2016 for Orlando and Cleveland Co. UK were asked to stand and be recognized.

**Exchange Announcements:**

New 2016: Costa Rica incoming cancelled, board has approved an incoming Winnipeg/Santa Barbara September 13-September 20. George Wysock and Patrick Fleming approved as CO-ED's for this exchange.

January/February 2017 Outbound Guadeloupe. Lise Skofronick and Maureen Kind approved as CO-ED's for this exchange.

May 2017 Inbound Noumea New Caledonia ED or CO-EDs open

August/September: 2017 Outbound Medicine Hat Canada & Vancouver - 1 week each ED or CO-EDs open

Possibilities: San Diego, Denver, and Orlando TBA depending on calendar and hosting capacity

**Election of Officers:**

Nominating Committee: Chair: Margo McKnight, announced the slate of officers: Sandi Wysock president, Gail Holmes vice president, Judi Taylor treasurer, Stephanie Sorensen secretary. After the ballots were counted, all were voted into these positions starting in September 2016.

**REMEMBRANCES:**

We wish to acknowledge 10 members which we lost from May 2015 – January 2016

Kenneth Barr

Thelma Rasmussen

Joan Shropshire

Jane Dohler

Marilyn Lindau

Don Kind

Ben Sowaske

Mary Babula

Bill Knickmeyer

Margo Lindi

The Remembrance pictures and yellow roses of honor were on the tables with voting, exchange signups, club pins and luggage tag sales, and registration.

There were 53 in attendance. Menu selections were New London Bridge fish fry, Mad City Mama's BBQ meatloaf, and Inner Warmth peanut stew.

Prior to adjournment, those present participated in a mixer and the singing of the Beatles song "A Little Help from my Friends"

Motion made and seconded by George Wysock and Mary Lindquist to adjourn. Passed!

Respectfully submitted,

Lois Schulz, Secretary

