



friendship force
WISCONSIN - MADISON



www.ffwis.org

June 2020

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we continue life with physical distancing, Friendship Force is looking forward to 2021 and 2022. Eventually travel will resume at some level and under appropriate conditions. We anticipate that initially travel may be domestic only and may not be home-hosted.

For now, clubs are trying to find ways to connect virtually and continue the Friendship Force mission of breaking down barriers between cultures through friendship and sharing of traditions. The Friendship Force of Leicestershire UK hosted a virtual afternoon tea party and invited their friends from around the world. They reviewed the history and etiquette of a great English tea and their friends from Japan, Turkey, Kenya and Belgium and others shared their traditions. I would love to pursue something similar to this with our friends from around the world. Is anyone willing to develop a topic? Please contact me with your ideas. We are fully ZOOM capable and ready to go.

Here in Madison we have our own gatherings on the 6th of each month. Read on in the newsletter for this month's ZOOM cocktail/mocktail hour topic.

We continue to plan for the eventual reopening of travel. Normally we begin the travel planning process from 6 months to a year in advance. With so many unknowns and conditions changing rapidly, we will wait a few months before we begin discussions with other clubs about journeys. Our assignments for 2021: inbound Oita Japan (August), outbound Niagara and Toronto (October) and outbound Dallas. Our New Caledonia and New Zealand ambassadors were caught in the shutdowns and have travel vouchers that must be used, so we hope to add that journey to the 2021 mix and as well as the biking global journey. If there is a vaccine in 2021, programs may receive a green light and we will need journey coordinators, committee members, hosts and ambassadors - so be ready!

Please take care and stay safe.

In Friendship,

Sandi Wysock
President
sandrawysock@msn.com

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monthly Board Meeting

The FFI Madison Board meets VIRTUALLY the second Wednesday of the month @ 12:30 pm

Other Activities

June 6: Cocktails on the 6th. See "Activities"

June 15: Book Club. See "Activities"

June 16: Let's Walk, Let's Hike. See "Activities"

June 27: Let's Walk, Let's Hike. See "Activities"

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

In order to stay connected during these difficult times we are publishing the Newsletter on a monthly basis until we are back to our regular lives.

Since we are publishing more often and with fewer activities to report than usual, we are asking members to submit thoughts, short articles, photos so we can continue to remind each other of shared adventures and friendships that could only happen through Friendship Force. What do you hear from friends in other countries or other states?

Please send any stories and articles to Agnes Rona at: whereowhere5@gmail.com. In order to earn my keep as editor I may edit what you send but will always keep the heart of it intact.

Stay safe and healthy,

Agnes Rona
Editor

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ZOOM (AGAIN)

In order to connect FFI Madison members with each other, we've purchased a ZOOM license. Using this application, we will be able to set up member events that allow members to get together via video connections.

The requirements are a smart phone or tablet, or any Windows or Apple Macintosh computer/laptop that has a microphone and a video camera. (These may be external to the device but are commonly built into them).

When an event is scheduled, the following will happen:

1. Friendship Force will announce an event (e.g. a cocktail hour) in an email or in the Newsletter.
2. Members will RSVP stating the number of people attending and each person's email address (this is to ensure only those invited will attend). If members live in the same home, they can attend with a single email address as long as they are able to share the screen.
3. Members will receive an email with a link to the ZOOM meeting.
4. At the meeting time, members will simply click the link to join the meeting.
5. When a member clicks the link to join the meeting, he or she will be placed in a virtual "waiting room" – the screen will tell you that you are in a waiting room and that the host will admit you. You don't have to do anything else.
6. At the meeting time, you will be allowed into a "waiting room" and the meeting host will admit you.
7. To be seen and heard, members will activate their microphone and video. Instructions and icons are pretty clear on the screen. If you have a problem, the host will walk you through it.

If members want help with this ZOOM process, feel free to send us an email to: FriendshipForceWI@Gmail.com. and someone will get back to you via the old-fashioned telephone.

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JOURNEYS



OPEN WORLD WELCOMED WOMEN IN STEM - RUSSIA

Creating Residential Facilities and Support Programs for Autistic Adults & Children in Russia

Our recent Open World delegation included a delegate named Marina. Marina is a funny, energetic young woman from St. Petersburg who is also mother to a nine year old son with autism. While our program focused on Women in STEM, Marina was particularly interested in learning more about programs for autism in the U.S. We were able to connect her with local parents of four adult children, three of whom range from highly functioning to severely affected on the autism spectrum. They are very familiar with teaching methods, research, nutrition for autistic children and programs available in the U.S. for supporting parents, children and adults with autism. They also know what it is like to feel totally alone in the struggle to help their children and the issues they face as children reach adulthood with fewer support services available.

As a result of this conversation Marina returned to St. Petersburg with the hope of developing a residential facility for adults with autism. She has presented her ideas to other parents and the Women's Federation in Russia and together they are working to make her dreams become reality. Recently Kathy Speck Kemeny, Bonnie and Sandi Wysock joined Marina and three of her associates in Russia in a SKYPE call.

Apparently in Russia there is less of a cultural tradition of community and social nonprofit networks so one of the first challenges is to create a focused network of parents and others. Our friend explained the process used by a group of parents in Mt. Horeb who are building an adult residential facility in New Glarus. We discussed funding, networking in the community and getting parents, government and others to see how such a facility might help them. Kathy and I have offered to facilitate this vital process by helping to bring other resources into the discussion.

Even the slightest thing we do has a ripple effect. If you throw a pebble into the water on one side of the ocean, it can create a tidal wave on the other side. As members of Friendship Force we know that by hosting, serving as ambassadors and welcoming people from around the world to our community, we can influence the perceptions of others. Our experiences also change us. In this instance one small meeting may change the lives of many autistic children and adults in Russia. Amazing.

Sandi Wysock

JOURNEYS

SNAKES, ANYONE?

Here's a wonderful story that we have not yet reported, but should cheer us up.....

Adventures of Sandi and George Wysock
As told by Sandi Wysock

We were greeted at the Coolangata Airport by our hosts Doug and Loreene of the Tweed Valley club and whisked off to our home in Currumbin Queensland. As it turned out, only two hosts were in Queensland and the remainder were in New South Wales.

The boundary between Queensland and New South Wales runs down the middle of one runway at the airport. Queensland does not observe Day Light Savings Time while New South Wales does so one of our first instructions from Lorrene was don't worry about the time on the schedules. We will live on Queensland time



Lorrene introduced us to the two adorable dogs and their **PYTHON**. See him smiling at the camera She explained that she selected us as ambassadors because we were fine with animals and didn't say anything about avoiding snakes. Of course, no one had asked me that question.

To be clear - I am NOT a snake lover. I am ok as long as they are waving a red flag and announcing their presence but I don't like surprises. While not enthusiastic about the python in the terrarium, it seemed innocuous enough. I don't remember its name. I think I was still registering that I was being introduced to the household snake.

JOURNEYS

During our walks in the bush Loreene was always asking us to be on the lookout for snakes. Initially I thought that this was because we might be bitten. Since snakes were just coming out of hibernation, I suppose that was possible but it turned out she really liked snakes and so did several of our hosts.

Australia has 140 varieties of snakes and 14 species of



pythons. Many of the varieties of python live in Queensland and in particular more northern Queensland where there is more of a tropical climate. Our hosts discussed the python in the attic, on the roof, on the porch... In other words, they seemed quite comfortable overall with sharing their spaces with their reptilian friends. I initially understood that the pythons discouraged the poisonous brown snakes from hanging around but apparently not. If there is enough food they are quite happy to coexist. I am glad I didn't know that at the time. Our friend Ludmilla recently shared photos of the python that lives on her roof and gardens. Apparently Monty (yes Monty Python) was out for a stroll and just enjoying the sunshine. He isn't a pet but is a frequent visitor. I am sure he is a fine specimen. Just happy he isn't hanging around my back yard.

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ACTIVITIES

UPDATE FROM ACTIVITIES CHAIR GAIL HOLMES

As we know, many of our regularly scheduled activities are not taking place now because they cannot be offered as virtual activities.

We hope to resume more activities when they are available and when members are comfortable participating. Here are the 2020 goals of the Activities Committee (hopefully):

GOALS:

1. Offer several activities each month
2. Keep members engaged when there are no journeys
3. Facilitate ways for members to get to know each other
4. Facilitate FFI goals of learning about other cultures
5. Involve potential and new members in opportunities to experience club events and meet current club members

BOOK CLUB



The next Book Club meeting is on June 15 as a ZOOM gathering at 7pm, hosted by Helen Ann Rugowski. Readers will discuss "The Bone People" by Keri Hulme. The book deals with family relationships between Maoris and Pakehas (New Zealanders of European descent). It's a long book, but hard to put down!

Helen Ann found this summary online: *"Integrating both Maori myth and New Zealand reality, "The Bone People" became the most successful novel in New Zealand publishing history when it appeared in 1984. Set on the South Island beaches of New Zealand, a harsh environment, the novel chronicles the complicated relationships between three emotional outcasts of mixed European and Maori heritage..... Compared to the works of James Joyce in its use of indigenous language and portrayal of consciousness, "The Bone People" captures the soul of New Zealand as it continues to astonish and enrich readers around the world."*

For those that would like to participate, or just listen in, Helen Ann will need to hear from you prior to June 14. Zoom invitations will then be sent out to those members via their email address. Helen Ann's contact information: haharrin@hotmail.com

Come with ideas for the next book for us to read and review at our September meeting.

ACTIVITIES

LET'S WALK, LET'S HIKE

Our Let's Hike event of May 16 was so popular that it was split into two separate hikes on May 16 and on May 19, to accommodate everybody. As a result, we will have 2 events for June

Let's Walk, Let's Hike – June 16, 2020, 6:00 p.m., and June 27, 2020, at 11:00 a.m.

On Tuesday, June 16 we will hike in Donald County Park. Meeting time is 6:00 p.m. (sunset will be at 8:39 p.m.).
<http://donaldpark.org/welcome/>

On Saturday, June 27 we will have a walk in the North Mendota Prairie Unit Wildlife Area, which is adjacent to the gardens of Holy Wisdom Monastery in Middleton. We'll meet at 11:00 a.m.
<https://parks-lwr.dane.countyofdane.com/WildlifeArea/North-Mendota-Prairie-Unit-Wildlife-Area>

To make these social events as safe as possible, I recommend that everybody wears some sort of face-mask in addition to physical distancing during our walk. None of these safety measures takes the fun away: we can still have wonderful conversations!

If you are interested in joining us on either, or on both, of these events, please RSVP to magdi.sebestyen@gmail.com, so that I can send you parking and meeting point information, and a map about the area, or contact you in case we have to cancel or postpone a walk.

Magdi Sebestyen
Phone: (608) 213-5768

Here are some happy masked hikers from the May hike:



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ACTIVITIES



BOARD NEWS/ACTIVITIES

FFIWIS-Madison UPDATE

In April our Board donated \$3,400 from our club reserves, which is the equivalent of FFI journey fees for 20 members. It has also agreed not to charge members' dues for 2021 and to pay the club affiliation fees of \$20 per person from reserves and also to fund Madison operations for one year using our reserves. We received this lovely thank you from FFI:

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Dear Friendship Force Wisconsin-Madison,

We want to extend a heartfelt thanks for your generous donation during this turbulent time. Just as our members have always been the driving force behind our organization, your generosity is the life force of the Friendship Force right now. Your donation of \$3,400.00 was received on April 28th, 2020.

The benefit of your donation at this critical juncture for the organization cannot be overstated. You are helping clubs to remain intact, members to stay connected, and employees to keep their jobs. Because of patrons like you, We believe Friendship Force will safely navigate the most difficult time it has ever faced. Please know that you have had a lasting effect on the organization as a whole and all of its members by contributing to our campaign. We have no doubt that with support like yours, our vision of a more peaceful world will continue to grow when we are on the other side of this worldwide crisis.

In Friendship,

*Dana Jackson
Program Finance Manager*

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BOARD NEWS/ACTIVITIES

AND --- Our **MEMBER CHALLENGE**, which ended May 30, has raised \$5,200 (including the anonymous matching) !!!

Even without the matching challenging, members can continue to donate directly to FFI by check or online. Online donations cost FFI money (credit card costs) and checks do not. However, FFI is very happy to receive your financial support in any form with which you are comfortable.

Now that the Madison Matching Challenge is completed, any checks may be mailed directly to FFI at this address:

Friendship Force International
Attn: Finance Department
P.O.Box 570
Asheville, NC 28802

LET'S GIVE OURSELVES A PAT ON THE BACK FOR OUR GENEROUS SUPPORT FOR FFI.



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BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION

Standing Committee Chairs

Membership: Helen Ann Rugowski 608-841-1087
haharrin@hotmail.com

Journey Manager: Stephanie Sorensen 608-819-1846
stevils@charter.net

Activities: Gail Holmes 608-249-1846 glholmes@wisc.edu

Outreach: Dorothy Baldwin 608-742-6493

janddbaldwin@gmail.com

Communications: Sandi Wysock 608-833-5326
sandrawysock@msn.com

Activities Committee Members:

Gail Holmes (chair) (glholmes@wisc.edu),
Audrey Liimatainen (AMCL822@yahoo.com),
Lois Schulz (loisschulz1942@gmail.com)

Leaders for specific activities are:

Adopt-A-Highway–Stephanie Vanden Bush
(sljacobs2@gmail.com)

Bike rides–Mary Mastaglio (mamastaglio@gmail.com)

Book Club–Reta Haring (retaharring@charter.net) and
Marian Ehrenberg (marianeh2014@gmail.com)

International Institutes–Helen Ann Rugowski
(haharrin@hotmail.com)

Let's Eat Out (LEO)–Bobbie Vrooman
(bobbiesque@gmail.com)

Dining on the 6th – Gail Holmes (glholmes@wisc.edu)

Let's Hike/Let's Walk–Magdi Sebestyen
(magdi.sebestyen@gmail.com)

Second Harvest Food Bank–Lois Schulz
(loisschulz1942@gmail.com)

Travel/Day trips–Donna Hussin (djhussin@yahoo.com)

WISCONSIN FRIENDSHIP
Official Publication of
The Friendship Force of Wisconsin-Madison
5809 Julia St
Madison, WI 53705
www.ffwis.org

Email Accounts:

ffwis.general@gmail.com

ffwis.meeting@gmail.com

ffwis.membership@gmail.com

ffwis.outreach@gmail.com

President:	Sandi Wysock	608 838-5326
Vice-Pres:	Kathy Speck Kemeny	608-577-4885
Secretary	Martha McGregor	608 835-8591
Treasurer:	Mary Juckem	608-661-2810
Newsletter:	Agnes Rona	781-910-1094