



friendship force  
WISCONSIN - MADISON



[www.ffwis.org](http://www.ffwis.org)

November 2020

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

November is upon us, and we are appreciating the glorious fall colors that grace our landscape here in Wisconsin this time of year. It's an especially beautiful time to be outdoors, and many of you have taken advantage of our hiking and biking events. Many thanks to Magdi Sebestyen and Jan Hornback for organizing these treks and helping to keep us physically active these past several months! We've also enjoyed our driveway/backyard events and appreciate the hospitality of our hosts as well as the coordination by our Activities Chair Gail Holmes.

We are grateful for the community we have created within our Madison Friendship Force club as well as the many friends we have made through Friendship Force clubs around the world. While the unsettling events in our world and the approaching cold weather may stimulate a desire to retreat inward, we're heartened by the numerous ways we can continue to engage with each other through FFI and our club. Peter Kaufman is doing a great job posting the latest club events on our website. In addition, the Friendship Force International website continues to highlight many interesting virtual events. For example, there are virtual "Let's Paint Parties" on November 7 and December 5, and a Trivia event on November 9. We'd love to hear back from those of you who participate in these or other FFI events!

Thank you for your friendship!  
Kathy Speck Kemeny



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Monthly Board Meeting

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

November 6: Dining on the 6th. "Activities"

November 30: Book Club. "Activities"

December 3: Second Harvest Food Bank. "Activities"

Since our Newsletter comes out on the first of each month please check on our FFI Wisconsin – Madison website ([ffiwis.org](http://ffiwis.org)) for any additions, updates or corrections to event schedules during the month.



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## **EDITOR'S NOTE**

I have decided to volunteer as a day-time driver delivering meals to people who need them in Madison. I will be driving for SSM Health's Meals on Wheels program and for RSVP of Dane County.

Are any of our members considering any safely distanced volunteer activities this fall and winter? Please share your thoughts with us.

## **JOY DURING THE PANDEMIC**

From Kathy Speck Kemeny:

For my husband and me, our time in pandemic "lockdown" has created an added opportunity to connect with some four legged friends, as volunteer puppy raisers of Rory, a guide dog for the blind. While many of you know how much effort is involved in training a puppy, you're also aware of how much you receive from these lovable creatures in return!

The now one year old Labrador retriever in our care lightens our spirits with his enthusiastic greetings and comforting snuggles. His boundless energy is unmatched by even the most animated of windup toys! I have spoken with many of you who are pet owners who express similar sentiments about the joyful presence of an animal that provides unconditional love and affection, regardless of the upheaval that we may be experiencing in our lives at this time.

And raising a puppy that will eventually enrich the life of someone who is visually impaired contributes to the feeling that we're doing something that makes a difference. These tumultuous times have augmented our need for meaning, purpose, and belonging.



Kathy and Rory on a hike

Warm thoughts and wishes to each of you,  
Kathy Speck Kemeny

## **JOY DURING THE PANDEMIC**

Here is Agnes' little brown Charlie discussing the state of the world with Rory. Rory had a lot of good ideas.



Nothing cheers us up faster than our pets. We encourage members to share their pet photos with captions and stories for our Newsletter. Any and all sources of smiles are not only welcome, but absolutely necessary!

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From Gail Holmes:

From one of my Friendship Force travel companions from a western US state. Spreading the JOY! A WONDERFUL TRAVELOGUE. This is like taking a trip around the world with a smile on your face and your feet a-tapping.

There ARE happy people out there, all around the world This is one of the happiest videos that you may view this week. You will smile and your heart will grow warm.

Click on the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/Pwe-pA6TaZk?rel=0>

With a smile,  
Gail Holmes

## **JOURNEYS**

The Board is exploring options, but no decisions can be made at this point. The good news is that Niagara still wants us to come in Fall of 2021, if it is feasible.

Our friends in Oita Japan have postponed any plans for a US visit until 2023, but the Board is proceeding with the regular process of submitting incoming journey preferences for 2022 to FFI, with the understanding that no firm travel decisions can be made for some time.

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## JOURNEYS

We continue to remind members about on-going activities that allow us to reach out to new places and new people from the comfort of our own homes.

Virtual FFI journeys are always available to members by using this link:

<https://blog.friendshipforce.org/virtual-experiences/>

This link is **NOT** on the regular International website. It is a wonderful way to travel and meet people. Once you connect on this link you should definitely slowly scroll all the way down to the end. It is full of many unique and interesting opportunities to learn about other countries, foods, and on-line activities. At the bottom are also links for tutorials for using WhatsApp and ZOOM.

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Another great experience available to FFI members is the Pen Pal program. Yes - real old-fashioned pen pals, the kind you write to and who write back to you.

FFI Pen Pals is a new way to experience different views and discover common ground. Get matched up with another FFI member based on your interests – shared hobbies, common interests, a specific region or city, or a foreign language you'd like to practice. Or simply be surprised and get matched randomly! Then sit down and start writing – all you need is a pen, a piece of paper, an envelope and a stamp.

Here is how to find the link to Pen Pal.

1. On the FFI website homepage click "Virtual Experiences" link at the top of the page.
2. Click on the purple "here" link just below the 3 virtual experiences icons.
3. Scroll down the page and find [Friendship Force Pen Pals](#). Do a single click and a google document link will appear.
4. Information on the Pen Pal program and a registration link are in that document.

## ACTIVITIES

### DINING ON THE 6TH

Given the change of seasons, we are back to calling our gatherings "Dining on the 6th" even if we can't enjoy dining together.

## ACTIVITIES

### DINING ON THE 6TH



On **Friday, November 6, at 4:30**, Marjie and Pete Marion are hosting Dining on the 6th. The format will be a happy hour for cocktails or other beverages of your choice. The theme will be "family." As we plan for Thanksgiving and other holidays and wonder how we will manage to connect with family near and far, it will be interesting to hear what people are thinking. No strict agenda! Just fun to "get together" and visit.

To participate, please notify Pete and Marjie by Thursday, November 5, at their home phone (608) 233-9104 or email address [midsi@aol.com](mailto:midsi@aol.com). They will then send you the Zoom link. Looking forward to seeing you and hearing your stories.

### BOOK CLUB



Our November meeting will be on ZOOM at **7:00 pm on November 30**. Subject will be the Hmong people of which there have been about 6000 here in Wisconsin. We will discuss the "Hmong in Wisconsin" by Mai Zong Vue of the Wisconsin State Historical Society, plus any other Hmong publications you may have. Last month we had a good discussion of "The Night Watchman" with seven of us participating. Hope you will join us on Nov. 30th. Last month we had a good discussion of "The Night Watchman" with seven of us participating.

Email Reta Harring know if you will attend the November 30 meeting: at [retaharring@charter.net](mailto:retaharring@charter.net) so we can send you the Zoom key.

## ACTIVITIES

### BOOK CLUB

Peter Kaufman says that if any of you have an interest in what are phonetically called “Pawn Dow” - fine embroidery work that the Hmong do – he has a book you may borrow. Peter’s Mother had a large collection that was donated to a Minneapolis/St. Paul museum specializing in Hmong artifacts and a book was created from the collection. They are very intricately designed. The creators of many of the works are documented within the text.

If this is of interest to you, you can contact Peter Kaufman: pkaufman@gmail.com

### SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK

Because of the holidays the date for our group to volunteer has been changed for both November and December. **For November we will meet on Thursday December 3rd.** And for December we will meet January 7th. We will meet at 2802 Dairy Drive, Madison, from 12:30 till 3:30. They continue to practice social distancing, masks, hand washing, and their regular safeguards to keep everyone safe.

Contact Lois Schulz at 608-243-9761 or [loisschulz1942@gmail.com](mailto:loisschulz1942@gmail.com) by the Tuesday before each date we are scheduled so she can let them know how many are coming.

Below is a copy of a letter FF received from Second Harvest President and CEO Michelle Orge thanking us for our monthly volunteer service:

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*Dear Lois and Friendship Force,*

*As the President & CEO of Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin I am proud that we have earned your trust and confidence to know that your recent gift of time – the most precious gift you can give – will be used to feed those facing hunger in our community. In fact, the 6 hours your group spent with us on Thursday, September 24, 2020 has an equivalent value of up to 1,386 meals!*

*The reality is it's not Second Harvest that is feeding those we serve...it's YOU. Through monetary gifts, or gifts of time, you are providing nutritious food to your friends, family, and neighbors in need. Last year alone thousands of Second Harvest supporters provided more than 14 million meals to the most vulnerable families, kids and seniors in southwestern Wisconsin.*

Michelle Orge

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## ACTIVITIES

### LET'S BIKE

Larry Neuman and Diane Mertens invited us to try out a portion of the Glacial River State Trail in Jefferson County on October 8. Glorious weather, 65°, blue sky; a perfect fall day for a ride! Our group of 7 rode about 18 miles, (some did more), on the asphalt and mostly flat trail. Interesting statues are along the trail in Fort Atkinson where we also found Jones Meat Market and where we enjoyed sandwiches and ice cream. This complete trail cuts into Rock, Jefferson and Dodge Counties as well as being a connection to other state trails.



Our October ride was our last organized ride until Spring 2021, but we may continue to ride on a spur of the moment basis, depending on weather and availability of riders. If you want to be notified about any impromptu rides, please let Jan Hornback know so she can contact you when a ride pops up.

Jan Hornback  
608-216-4454 (phone or text)  
[jhornback@wisc.edu](mailto:jhornback@wisc.edu)

### LET'S WALK / LET'S HIKE

Our last scheduled walk for 2020 was on Sunday, October 11. We explored the Southern section of the UW-Arboretum on a beautiful autumn day. We walked through colorful prairies and deciduous forests, and pine forests that retained most of their green color. There were still a lot of flowers blooming! We found their "optimism" amazing! When, and how, their seeds will have a chance to ripen? Apparently, plants do not worry. They do not question their chances. They just bloom, and the pollinators, still flying around in mid-October, make that miracle happen.

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## ACTIVITIES

### LET'S WALK / LET'S HIKE

Sunday October 11, 2020



From now on, there will be no more walks scheduled, due to the growing unpredictability of weather and road/trail conditions. Walks will still be organized on an ad hoc basis, when the short-term weather forecast looks favorable. Events will be announced by email to interested members. If you would like to join these walks, please sign up to the "Ad hoc walkers" email list by sending a message to [magdi.sebestyen@gmail.com](mailto:magdi.sebestyen@gmail.com). Being on the list does not require any commitment; it just means you might get an occasional email that is not sent out to the entire membership. You can either respond and participate, or you can simply ignore them.

We will resume our regular, pre-scheduled Let's Walk/Let's Hike events in the spring of 2021.

## FF WISCONSIN-MADISON

It's annual membership renewal time! We have attached a letter at the end of this Newsletter to update members on the timing and the process.

## FFI NEWS

FFI has created a broadcast list on WhatsApp, the world's most popular free messaging app, in order to communicate more quickly and directly with members.

If you join, you'll receive occasional short messages, directly to your smartphone or tablet. These messages, sent in English, will contain important news from FFI, reminders, or updates about Virtual Experiences and Journeys.

Here are the steps to join:

1. Visit the Google Play Store (Android) or App Store (Apple) and search for WhatsApp
2. Click on "Install" to download WhatsApp on your phone or tablet for free
3. Open WhatsApp and add the number +1 404.965.4336 to your phone's list of contacts

## FFI NEWS

4. Name this number "FFI Messages"
5. Send us a "Hello" with your name and club name so we can add you to our broadcast list
6. You are ready! You will start to receive our updates directly on your phone or tablet



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## **BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **Standing Committee Chairs**

**Membership:** Helen Ann Rugowski 608-841-1087  
[haharrin@hotmail.com](mailto:haharrin@hotmail.com)

**Journey Manager:** Stephanie Sorensen 608-819-1846  
[ssorensen268@gmail.com](mailto:ssorensen268@gmail.com)

**Activities:** Gail Holmes 608-249-1846 [glholmes@wisc.edu](mailto:glholmes@wisc.edu)

**Outreach:** Dorothy Baldwin 608-742-6493  
[janddbaldwin@gmail.com](mailto:janddbaldwin@gmail.com)

**Communications:** Sandi Wysock 608-833-5326  
[sandrawysock@msn.com](mailto:sandrawysock@msn.com)

**Program :** Mike Lambert (608)577-1057  
[lambertmichaelj@gmail.com](mailto:lambertmichaelj@gmail.com)  
Magdi Sebestyen (608)577-1057  
[magdi.sebestyen@gmail.com](mailto:magdi.sebestyen@gmail.com)

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## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS & ACTIVITY LEADERS**

Leaders for specific activities are:

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

Second Harvest Food Bank–Lois Schulz  
([loisschulz1942@gmail.com](mailto:loisschulz1942@gmail.com))

Travel/Day trips–Donna Hussin ([djhussin@yahoo.com](mailto:djhussin@yahoo.com))

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS & ACTIVITY LEADERS**

### **Activities Committee Members:**

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

Leaders for specific activities are:

Adopt-A-Highway–Stephanie Vanden Bush  
([sljacobs2@gmail.com](mailto:sljacobs2@gmail.com))

Bike Rides – Jan Hornback ([jhornback@wisc.edu](mailto:jhornback@wisc.edu))

Book Club – Reta Harring ([retaharring@charter.net](mailto:retaharring@charter.net)) and  
Marian Ehrenberg ([marianeh2014@gmail.com](mailto:marianeh2014@gmail.com))

International Institutes–Helen Ann Rugowski  
([haharrin@hotmail.com](mailto:haharrin@hotmail.com))

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

Dining on the 6<sup>th</sup> – Gail Holmes ([glholmes@wisc.edu](mailto:glholmes@wisc.edu))

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## **Friendship Force Wisconsin Madison Membership Renewal for 2021**

Dear Members:

Your membership renewal is due on December 15, 2020.

However you may have heard this already – that for the 2021 renewal, there is no dues payment expected from existing members. The board discussed renewal for existing members and the decision was made your club would absorb the fees for 2021.

A renewal form is in the mail. You must return the form in order to renew for 2021. Even if you don't owe dues for 2021, the reason for returning the form is to confirm your information and interests.

A note on a couple of items to verify:

- We would like to verify your Primary Phone Number. The Primary Phone Number is the number you wish us to contact you with. You also may list a secondary number. For example, one number may be your land line and one may be your mobile phone number.
- Verify your email address – this is the main contact for communication of newsletter and upcoming activities.
- We have included the full list of activities. Please check at least one box to indicate how you will support your club.

We thank everyone for being prompt with your renewal forms. We appreciate it very much.

For those of you who are not renewing, please call me or send me an email that you are not renewing. Otherwise you will receive reminders of past due renewals. We will begin making calls or sending individual emails in January to those that have not renewed.

If you are not a member yet and would like to become a member, visit [www.ffwis.org](http://www.ffwis.org) and complete the New Member Application form. You may give me a call or email me and I will send you a "Membership Application" to complete and send in. The fee for a new members in 2021 is the FFI Fee of \$20.00. Become a member and start enjoying the many activities and sharing your experiences with what Friendship Force is all about.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

In Friendship,

Mary Lindquist

Membership – 608-233-9351 marylindquist@charter.net