



friendship force
WISCONSIN - MADISON



www.ffwis.org

December 2020

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

What a month November has been, from Covid-19 surging throughout the world, the tumult of our country's elections, and concluding with socially distant Thanksgiving holidays!

In my meditations, I came across this poem that aligns with the mission we share in Friendship Force. It was written by Arthur Waskow, rabbi, renowned peace and justice advocate (and alumnus from UW-Madison):

We are the generation that stands between the fires:
behind us the flame and smoke
that rose from Auschwitz and from Hiroshima;
before us the nightmare of a Flood of Fire,
the flame and smoke that consume all Earth.
It is our task to make from fire not an all-consuming blaze,
but the light in which we see each other fully.
All of us different,
all of us bearing One Spark.
We light these fires to see more clearly
that the Earth and all who live as part of it
are not for burning.
We light these fires to see more clearly
the rainbow in our many-colored faces.

Blessed is the One within the many.
Blessed are the Many who make one.

– Arthur Waskow

I cherish you all and the light that you bring to our world! I wish you and your loved ones a blessed, safe, healthy holiday season!

In Friendship,
Kathy Speck Kemeny

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monthly Board Meeting

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

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2020

December 3: Second Harvest Food Bank. "Activities"

December 6: Special Cocktails on the 6th. "Activities"

December 18: Holiday Party via ZOOM. "Activities"

2021

January 7: Second Harvest Food Bank. "Activities"

TO OUR READERS: Since our Newsletter comes out on the first of each month please check on our FFI Wisconsin – Madison website (ffwis.org) for any additions, updates or corrections to event schedules during the month, and keep an eye out for email updates as well. We don't want you to miss anything!

This holiday season is focused on community and family and this year in particular we appreciate the gift of caring we offer to each other here in our smaller community in Madison and in our larger world community.

Your Editor



JOURNEYS

Sandi and George Wysock and Pete Marion were virtual hosts in November as part of a program sponsored by the International Institute of Wisconsin. Here is their experience:

Our Visit with Ruth from Venezuela

On Sunday, November the 15th we were honored to host the first virtual home visit offered by the International Institute of Wisconsin. Thirteen delegates from Central and South American are participating in a virtual program titled "Identifying and Combating Disinformation to Promote Media Literacy". The program is sponsored by Graduate School USA and supported by the U.S. Department of State's International Visitors Leadership Program. Their virtual program included visits with professionals in Madison, San Francisco and Miami.

The delegates were divided between two ZOOM sessions. Pete Marion, Sandi and George Wysock of Madison and Jenni Baez of Milwaukee hosted the Spanish speaking session. Three of the 13 delegates participated. Ruth Shaymar Lara Castillo of Venezuela was assigned to our session. Like many Venezuelans, Ruth has several positions to make ends meet. She is working as a correspondent for a Miami news outlet as well as reporting in Venezuela. She said she was fortunate to be able to work from home where she can access the internet to fact check information. She lives near a factory so she has more reliable electricity. Many areas of Venezuela have sporadic electrical service going hours to days to without service. Ruth stated that the political situation was quite confusing with two Presidents and two legislatures making it difficult for journalists to determine what is true and what is not.

We shared a very short power point showing her photos of Wisconsin, Madison, Milwaukee and our homes. Our discussion included topics such as popular foods, holidays, the impact of the virus, education, children, pets etc. Ruth described a national dish called Hallaca which is apparently very time consuming to make and is similar to Tamales. It incorporates cornmeal, meat, raisins, capers and olives wrapped in a banana leaf. It was a nice visit and an opportunity to connect.

Sandi & George Wysock
Pete Marion

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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.

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

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK

Because of the holidays the date for our group to volunteer has been changed for both November and December. **We will meet on Thursday December 3rd.** And we will meet January 7th. The Food Bank activity is 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 by the Tuesday before each date we are scheduled so she can let them know how many are coming.

COCKTAILS ON THE 6th -- A HOLIDAY SPECIAL



On the beach in Guadeloupe

Come Along and Travel With Us on Dec. 6

Lise Skofronick and Peter Kaufman have created a special program with help from David Blado's DVD records of past journeys to Moscow and Vyborg, Phoenix, and Guadeloupe. Their program will take us down memory lane to relive great adventures and stories the FF Wisconsin ambassadors enjoyed together on these journeys. Discussion is invited after the presentation. The event is scheduled from 4:30 pm to 5:30 pm. Members can join this event on the FF Wisconsin ZOOM account. Please contact Peter Kaufman @ pkaufman@gmail.com to RSVP and receive the program ZOOM link invitation.



Crafts Class in Vyborg

ACTIVITIES

COCKTAILS ON THE 6th REVISITED

On Friday, November 6, at 4:30 pm, Marjie and Pete Marion hosted a Zoom gathering. The normal **Dining on the 6th** format was a happy hour for cocktails or other beverages of your choice. The theme was "family" as we plan for Thanksgiving and other holidays and wonder how we will manage to connect with family near and far. In attendance were Lois Schulz, Doug and Kathy Johnson, Sandi and, briefly, George Wysock, Magdi Sebestyen, Mary Juckem, Reta Harring, Helen Ann Rugowski, and Pete and Marjie Marion. Several of us missed the visit due to enjoying other activities on a beautiful day! Who would have guessed that November would turn so warm when this was planned in cooler October?



Drinks in the Driveway



Drinks in the Driveway

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Introducing the Programs Committee

The idea of forming our club's new Programs Committee was originally conceived in October 2019, as part of our strategic planning for 2020 and beyond. Our President, Kathy Speck saw this as an opportunity to offer a variety of cultural contents that would complement the social gatherings and community service events organized by the Activities Committee.

Due to the current pandemic, real-life journeys are unlikely to happen for an extended period of time. Thus, the number one goal of our Programs Committee is to keep you engaged by offering cultural experiences that do not require traveling. During the upcoming months, we anticipate that all events will be virtual. However, if circumstances change in 2021, we may be able to hold meetings in person, as well. We hope that you will find some of our offerings enticing, interesting and enjoyable! We appreciate your feedback, recommendations, and your new ideas to pursue for future improvements.

Mike Lambert and Magdi Sebestyen – Co-Chairs
lambertmichaelj@gmail.com (608)-577-1057
magdi.sebestyen@gmail.com (608)-213-5768

FF Madison HOLIDAY PARTY

The Holiday Season is Coming!

Thirty years ago, in February 1990, the spacecraft "Voyager 1" took a picture of Earth from about 6 billion kilometers (3.7 billion miles) away, and on that historic image, our Planet Home appears as an almost invisible, pale blue dot. On that little pale blue dot, almost 8 billion human beings with vastly different cultural and religious background will celebrate some sort of end-of-year holidays during the coming months.

To properly reflect on this diversity, the Programs Committee will present - via Zoom - a **Virtual Holiday Party on Friday, December 18, between 4:30-6:00 p.m.** We plan to assemble a brief presentation about Winter Holidays Around the World. After the presentation, we would also like to give our participating members an opportunity to show and tell something about a favorite holiday memory. Prior to the party, we would like to collect some photos from you, and assemble them into a slide-show. The photos can be decades old or taken just last year. We are looking forward to hearing your little stories about each photo and learning why they are important and cherished.

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If you are interested in joining our Holiday Party celebration, please RSVP to magdi.sebestyen@gmail.com

We wish you all a happy and safe holiday season!

Magdi Sebestyen and Mike Lambert (Programs Committee Co-Chairs)



Wisconsin's Gangster History



Al Capone immediately after his arrest in 1931.
Bettmann Archive/Getty Images

A Fun History Lesson: Wisconsin Gangsters During The Prohibition Era

On the evening of November 13, our members had a chance to join an online event hosted by the Dunn County Historical Society in Menomonie, WI. Chad Lewis, author of the book "The Wisconsin Road Guide to Gangster Hot Spots", gave a 60 minute presentation about Wisconsin's Gangster Past. Lewis is a professional lecturer on various topics of the "strange and unusual". His slide-show brought alive the odd atmosphere of the 1920s, not only with great insight and interesting historical facts, but also by telling fascinating stories, showing old photos, and tracking down how the Gangsters' Era affected the state of Wisconsin in so many ways.

We – the **17 listeners from our club, who all joined via Zoom** – spent 60 minutes in the company of Al Capone, John Dillinger, Baby Face Nelson, and their gangs as well as other less famous gangs. We witnessed the Valentine's Day Massacre, bank robberies and shootouts. We learned about the deep corruption that made St. Paul/Minneapolis a safe haven for these gangsters, who shuttled between Chicago and Northern WI, to do their lucrative, though deadly, business.

Prohibition did not eliminate the demand for alcohol but instead created a black market for booze, which gave powerful gangs the opportunity to organize bootlegging

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Wisconsin's Gangster History

and speakeasies for a steady flow of cash. Police and local law enforcement agencies were often complicit with the criminals. Either out of corruption, or concern for their own safety, law enforcement often looked the other way while gangs operated in Northern Wisconsin, as long as they weren't creating problems, or committing crimes in the local communities. The general public was also somewhat sympathetic to the criminals. Dillinger, in particular, was seen as somewhat of a hero. We are all relieved that those days are over, and that we could enjoy this captivating lecture about these criminals with a glass of (legally obtained) wine in hand.

The lecture was followed by a lively 30 minutes Q&A session, which revealed how much we Wisconsinites are interested in the history of our state. The entire presentation was truly a great experience, which eventually had to be cut short by the host, simply because we ran out of time!

If you are interested in learning more about the history of the Prohibition era, and the hotbed it created for organized crime and corruption, follow this link:
<https://www.history.com/news/prohibition-organized-crime-al-capone>

To look up and visit historical sites and properties in WI from the Prohibition era gangster culture, follow these links:
https://midwestweekends.com/plan_a_trip/history_heritage/historic_houses/gangsters_wisconsin.html
<https://theculturetrip.com/north-america/usa/wisconsin/articles/a-glimpse-into-wisconsins-gangster-past/>

For more information about author Chad Lewis, please follow the link below. His website has several videos about other topics of the "strange and unusual" that you may find interesting.
<https://www.chadlewisresearch.com/>

Thanks to all of you who participated in this event!

The Programs Committee

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ACTIVITIES

LET'S BIKE

Friendship Force Riders were still on the move November 4. Maureen's friends, Richard and Margaret, joined Diane, Larry, and Helen Ann on the Badger State Trail between Madison and Belleville. We had a beautiful day, blue sky and 76° temperature! Lunch was picked up at the Corner Cafe to be enjoyed at the city park.



November 4 Riders on the Badger State Trail

* * * *

These hardy folks, Larry, Diane, Maureen, Margaret, Andrea and HelenAnn rode portions of the Southwest Commuter Path, Capital City State Trail, Arboretum, Lake Monona Loop and the Cannonball Path on Thursday, November 11. We took a lunch break at Ian's Pizza in the historic Garver Building.



November 11 in Madison

Future rides this year are weather dependent. 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

ACTIVITIES

LET'S WALK / LET'S HIKE



On November 5, a small group of our members visited the Southern part of Donald County Park, near Mount Vernon. We had an amazingly warm and sunny day, making it possible to walk in short sleeve T-shirts. We enjoyed a pleasant forest-walk along Mount Vernon creek, which lead us up to the two springs feeding it. At Big Spring, we paused to watch the water bubbling up from beneath the sandy bottom. At Little Spring, read about the history of early settlers of the area (Native Americans inhabited this land more than 10,000 years ago), and about the archeological and restoration work done at the historical Foye Cabin. The apple orchard adjacent to the Cabin still had apples on them, so we could do a little “apple-tasting”, as well. With the views of the spring, the orchard, the neighboring meadows and forests, this certainly looked like a beautiful spot to settle and build a home!

During the winter we will not have pre-scheduled walks, due to the 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. 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.

BOARD ACTIVITIES

The Membership Committee thanks all the members who have already sent their renewal forms.

It was a pleasure to read your comments. Members showed that they want to participate in the numerous activities and events our club offers even if we can't travel at the moment.

Just a friendly reminder that the deadline for submitting your membership the renewal form is:

December 15, 2020.

With appreciation for your participation,
The Membership Committee.

BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION

Standing Committee Chairs

Membership: Lise R. Skofronick 608-274-7732
liskofronick@gmail.com

Journey Manager: Stephanie Sorensen 608-819-1846
ssorensen268@gmail.com

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

Program :

Mike Lambert (608)-577-1057
lambertmichaelj@gmail.com
Magdi Sebestyen (608)-213-5768
magdi.sebestyen@gmail.com

COMMITTEE MEMBERS & ACTIVITY LEADERS

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 – Jan Hornback (jhornback@wisc.edu)

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)

COMMITTEE MEMBERS & ACTIVITY LEADERS

Leaders for specific activities are:

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)

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Secretary Diana Rodum	608-203-5711
Treasurer: Mary Juckem	608-661-2810
Newsletter: Agnes Rona	781-910-1094

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.

You should have received your renewal form in the mail. You must return the form in order to renew for 2021 even if you don't owe dues for 2021, in order 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 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