



friendship force
WISCONSIN - MADISON



ffwis.org

APRIL 2021

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy Spring! We are happy to see green grass emerging, daffodils ready to burst into bloom, and lengthening sunny days to warm us inside and out! The outlook for Friendship Force is also increasingly bright as vaccination increase, and Covid-19 cases slowly decline. There is still a long way to go, but this progress gives us new hope and energy to plan future in-person club activities and journeys.

With warmer weather, we anticipate a return to more socially distant outdoor in-person club events. We also have received our incoming and outgoing journey assignments for 2022 from FFI, which will be revealed at our Annual Chapter Meeting on April 24!

To support our journey planning, the newly formed Covid Safety Committee (Martha McGregor, Magdi Sebestyen, Stephanie Sorensen and myself) has drafted recommendations to guide club events and journeys. We have taken a cautious approach to ensure your safety and comfort and continue to monitor changes in public health guidance, and update our recommendations as needed.

While still needing final board review and approval, the gist of the recommendations includes:

Follow CDC and local recommendations and requirements (see links below)

<https://publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

1. Require proof of current vaccination for inbound and outbound journey participants
2. Hold in-person events outdoors whenever possible

Of course, increased in-person activities don't mean that our ZOOM events will disappear any time soon. We are so grateful to our Activities and Program Committees for getting us through the long, dark days of winter with a wide variety of fun and interesting virtual and in-person events!

There's much more happening in our club and at FFI. We encourage you to join us at the Annual Meeting to learn more!

Kathy Speck

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monthly Board Meeting:

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

April 7: Adopt a Highway. "Activities"

April 7: Global Conversations. "Programs"

April 8: FFI Virtual Experience – Ontario. "Programs"

April 16: Live Presentation on Hmong Culture-Part 2. "Programs"

April 24: Annual Membership Meeting. "Board of Directors"

April 26: Book Club. "Activities"

April 29: Second Harvest. "Activities"

Please check 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!

MAKING FRIENDS WITH ZOOM

Now that we seem to live on ZOOM, we remind you that ZOOM training is available from FFI and from FF Wisconsin-Madison:

View the FFI Zoom training video at

<https://vimeo.com/436845540>. Or Contact Peter

Kaufman pkaufman@gmail.com

Explore • Understand • Serve®

JOURNEYS



Who Knows Where or When

We have received our 2022 Journey assignments and will reveal and discuss at the April 24 Annual Member Meeting.

* * * *

In the comfort of our 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 will find 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.

* * * *

[FFI Pen Pals](#) is another 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.

OPEN WORLD

“Just as ripples spread out when a single pebble is dropped into the water, the actions of individuals can have far-reaching effects” Dalai Lama

We have continued to maintain our relationship with our Open World delegates in Russia and to support them in their efforts to design self-administered services for people over 18 with intellectual disabilities. The efforts and diligence of 2020 Open World delegate Marina Yeroma along with Russian Graduate Women’s Federation succeeded in creating and hosting an international ZOOM conference on March 17, 2021 – one year after their return home to Russia at the beginning of the COVID pandemic.

On March 17th, Kathy Speck, Sandi Wysock, Bonnie Schoeneman-Lubet of Fitchburg and Susan Wallitsch and Mary Anne Oemichen (co directors of Home of Our Own) signed onto ZOOM and joined numerous speakers from Russia as well as Israel and Croatia. The official title of the conference was “*Learning, Comfort and Safety During Lifetime.*” Its focus was on the socialization, education and professional training for people over 18 with intellectual disabilities. The organizers hoped that the discussion would give Russian parents some ideas about steps they could take on their own and in cooperation with other parents to improve the quality of life for their adult developmentally disabled children.

Parents in Russia and around the world worry about what will happen to their developmentally disabled children as they become adults. There are often programs through the age of 18 but Bonnie Schoeneman-Lubet describes the sudden drop off of this support as children reach adulthood as similar to falling off a cliff.

Bonnie was able to share her experience in identifying what is possible, and developing micro enterprises to engage her son in employment, using video modeling to break down tasks. Susan and Mary Anne were two concerned Wisconsin parents who organized a community of parents that worked over a period of 6 years to establish an apartment complex with one quarter of the apartments set aside for those with developmental disabilities and the remainder for affordable housing.

The apartment complex in New Glarus recently opened. The hope is that their adult children will be able to have a measure of independence and live in a safe supportive environment. This is a link to a WPR article about their project. <https://www.wpr.org/wisconsin-parents-team-build-housing-their-adult-children-disabilities>.

OPEN WORLD

As we moved through the conference program the theme became "Never Give Up!"

All of the participants in the March 17 ZOOM conference have expressed an interest in continuing to share experiences and ideas. The conference generated a long list of questions from parents and others. It is amazing that all of this started with a hastily arranged meeting between Bonnie and Marina in Bonnie's kitchen one year ago!

ACTIVITIES

ADOPT A HIGHWAY

Please join us **Wednesday April 7th at 10 am** for our next highway clean up event. I look forward to working together to make our highways more beautiful while enjoying some fresh spring air. Please meet at the Middleton park and ride off Hwy 12 exit 249. Direct questions to Stephanie Vanden Bush sljacobs2@gmail.com or 920-676-1441

BOOK CLUB



The next meeting of the Book Club will be **April 26 at 7:00 pm** via ZOOM. We will discuss "The Lost City of the Monkey God" by Douglas Preston.--

Since the days of Cortés, rumors have circulated about a lost city of immense wealth hidden somewhere in the Honduran interior, called the White City or the Lost City of the Monkey God. In 1940 journalist Theodore Morde claimed to have found the Lost City-- but then committed suicide without revealing its location. In 2012 author Preston joined a team of scientists using classified technology to map the terrain under the densest rainforest canopy. They found evidence of not just an undiscovered city but an enigmatic, lost civilization-- and returned carrying a sometimes lethal-- and incurable-- disease.

Please Email Reta Haring at retaharring@charter.net if you wish to attend the meeting on April 22.

On March 22, 12 people met on ZOOM to discuss "The Other Americans" by Laila Lalama. Part mystery, part a story of the inter-relations of complex cultures, a basis for great conversation

ACTIVITIES

SECOND HARVEST FOODBANK



Our service project at the **Second Harvest Foodbank** will be on **Thursday, April 29, from 12:30 to 3:30 pm at 2802 Dairy Drive.** Our jobs may involve packing merchandise and fresh foods provided by grocery stores and farms to distribute to individuals and families who live in sixteen counties in southwestern Wisconsin. While we enjoy fun, fellowship, and laughter with each other, we also derive deep satisfaction by knowing that our efforts play an important role in filling basic food needs of many members of our community. We are in this together.

Let leader Lois Schulz (loisschulz1942@gmail.com) know of your interest by April 27.

Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin is a hunger-relief charity organization whose goal is to make sure people in southwestern Wisconsin have enough of the right kinds of food to live a happy and healthy life. They do that three ways:

- **Food distribution** - They distribute millions of pounds of food each year through their network of partner agencies and programs.
- **Promotion of government programs** - They help people in our community understand and apply for government programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which is called FoodShare in Wisconsin and used to be called the food stamp program. Through the FoodShare Outreach they help thousands of people receive FoodShare benefits each year; providing millions of meals!
- **Promote hunger awareness** - They believe that building awareness of the thousands of people in southwestern Wisconsin who don't always know where their next meal will come from is the first step to ending hunger.

Explore • Understand • Serve®

ACTIVITIES

BIKING

During April we'll venture out for some weather-permitting biking. Rides will be approximately 10-12 miles and in the Madison area. We'll likely stop for an outdoor "bite to eat!" Helmets and masks are required. If you are interested in being contacted for a pop-up bike ride, please let Jan Hornback know. Include your phone/text number and email.

Jan Hornback @ 608-216-4454

jhornback@wisc.edu

Additional biking opportunities with other groups:

Sports for Active Seniors (SAS), to which many of our members belong, already have a couple rides set for April.

April 1st, (Thursday): 12 noon from Olin Park boat landing parking lot
Riding to McDaniels Park in McFarland for a snack and then return.
Approximately 11 miles.

April 7th (Wednesday) 12 noon at Cottage Grove, Glacial Drumlin trailhead
Riding the Glacial Drumlin Trail to Deerfield for a snack and then return.
Approximately 13.5 miles

Questions about these rides should be directed to Bob Brooks at 608-658-2016. You do not have to let him know that you are coming. Just show up at the meeting spot at the given time. They too require helmets and masks.

This group typically has weekly rides very similar to those our group has had in the past. Nonmembers are welcome to try a ride or two and if interested in continuing, are required to join SAS. Membership is \$20 per membership per year and includes all club activities: hiking, biking, camping, golf, tennis, skiing, dance and bowling.

ACTIVITIES

LET'S WALK / LET'S HIKE



On March 4th we had a nice walk again, this time in Verona. It was a balmy, sunny day, with the remaining snow-piles melting rapidly. Eight of us walked about 4 Miles along a section of the Verona Ice Age Trail and Bike Trail. We greatly enjoyed the sun and each other's company!

Due unpredictable Spring weather and road/trail conditions, walks will be organized only when the short-term weather forecast looks favorable. Event announcements will be emailed 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

PROGRAMS

GLOBAL CONVERSATIONS

Global Connections is a volunteer-driven non-profit organization affiliated with Pennsylvania State University. Their mission is similar to that of FFI: to foster intercultural understanding, and to build a strong, inclusive community across cultures.



Our members are cordially invited to their next event on **Wednesday, April 7, 2021, at 6:00 p.m. CST / 7:00 EST, via Zoom.** Duration: approximately 1 hour

This installment of the Global Conversations series will be a panel discussion focused on what family means in different cultures. Learn how they welcome friends as family, and how they care for their fellow kin.

Speakers will be: Manar Salamah, Farnaz Tehranchi, and Sojung Jung

In order to receive your Zoom invite to the event please register at the following link:

<https://globalconnections.wildapricot.org/event-4194342>

HMONG CULTURAL EVENT PART 2

Live presentation by invited speakers: Houa Vang and Xue Vang

Cousins Houa and Xue will talk about their long and tragic journey from the mountains of war-torn Laos, through crossing the Mekong River to escape into Thailand, their experiences in a refugee camp in Thailand, and then finally transferring to the US, where they were able to establish a new life.

Date and time: **Friday, April 16, 2021, at 4:30 p.m. CST (5:30 p.m. EST)** Duration: approximately 1 hr. 30 min.

In order to get the Zoom link to this event, please RSVP to Magdi Sebestyen, at magdi.sebestyen@gmail.com

PROGRAMS

The March 17 Hmong Cultural Event Part 1 was a great success. Over 30 members of our own club and our invited guests from Global Connections attended.

Speaker Lopao Vang gave a fascinating talk about the traditional way of life in Hmong villages before the Vietnam War. We learned about the history of Hmong people going back to their roots in China many centuries ago. Lopao is very well versed about all aspects of traditional Hmong life, including farming methods; the structure of clans and rules for courtship and marriage; why Hmong have large families; how families support each other in daily chores; how healthcare is provided by shamans, and who can become a shaman; festivals and traditional costumes; climate and housing, and so much more. He also described the role of Hmong in the Vietnam War as allies of the United States, and how the war affected his people. With the help of lots of photos, we took a virtual tour of Hmong villages in mid-20th century Laos.

This beautiful embroidered "Story Cloth" made by Hmong artist Xao Yang Lee tells the detailed story of Hmong refugees escaping across the Mekong River to escape Communist soldiers after the exit of the United States from Southeast Asia.



Minnesota and Wisconsin have large Hmong communities. Lopao finished his presentation with an impressive presentation of the success of Hmong people in establishing themselves as leaders and professionals in their adopted country.

Explore • Understand • Serve®

PROGRAMS

FFI VIRTUAL EXPERIENCES

The FFI website offers several virtual experiences each month. One of their upcoming programs will be on Thursday, April 8, 2021, 2:00 p.m. EDT / 1:00 p.m. CST

Faces & Places: Ontario, Canada – Yours to Discover!

Hosts: Representatives from Ontario's nine FF Clubs

Located in east-central Canada, the province of Ontario is home to the nation's capital, Ottawa, as well as its largest city, Toronto. Ontario offers something for everyone: history, nature, culture, food, adventure, fun ... and lots of friendliness.

Representatives from each of the nine Ontario Friendship Force clubs are excited to share a moment of friendship with you as they showcase their region. Meet their enthusiastic members and discover what adventures and fun await you.

Duration: about 1 hour. You can register for the event at the following link:

[https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJwuc-2hpzwpHNbuqFLpaRM2esFI4pdRncrS](https://zoom.us/join/zoom/register/tJwuc-2hpzwpHNbuqFLpaRM2esFI4pdRncrS)

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Committee Lise Skofronick (Chair), Mary Lindquist, Helen Ann Rugowski are pleased to announce that this month we have reached 101 members thanks to the efforts of Dorothy and John Baldwin.

Membership of 100 and over is a landmark. Successful member recruitment is a sign of a healthy, vibrant club. Our club has reached this over 100 mark before but is has been a while. We are particularly happy to have reached this number during the difficult times of this pandemic.

With that introduction, we warmly welcome Vicki and Ken Warren who live in Wisconsin Dells, and we hope to be able to meet them in person soon as we can again move outside to enjoy socially distanced gatherings.

While 101 members is a great number, the real barometer of a strong club is the number of **active** members. Everyone has a part to play even in small things. *COVID* did not stop us from being engaged in many activities. In fact, it energized us to be creative in finding ways to stay connected and keep focused not only our local community but also on the larger world. Let's keep it going.

FFI UPDATES

"Members-Only" Website from FFI

FFI is making significant changes to its website in the coming weeks and months. These changes were in the works well before the pandemic began, and are just now beginning to come to fruition. They are part of a larger goal supporting FFI's efforts to more effectively connect with members and prospective members, and to make FFI more relevant in today's technological environment.

As part of this initiative, FFI recently launched a members-only website: **my.friendshipforce.org**. In the first phase of the rollout, the site will offer members a secure, password protected account with access to news, blog posts, event and journey information, and associated financial transactions. Going forward, the website will include searchable member resources, a global event calendar, an interactive journey catalog where members can express interest in journeys that have open spaces, and much more.

To set up your account, go to **my.friendshipforce.org**. Click on the purple "*Sign Up*" button and follow the prompts. Once you have completed your registration, you will be able to access more information about the exciting future plans for the site!

Explore • Understand • Serve®

FF WISCONSIN-MADISON

ANNUAL MEETING

It is annual meeting time again. We will elect our Officers, catch up on what's new and remember our past experiences. We will ZOOM into our new year, thriving as an organization and as a community. Let's attend and connect and energize ourselves for the coming year.



IT'S SPRING!

**TIME FOR OUR ANNUAL
FRIENDSHIP FORCE CHAPTER MEETING**

2022 JOURNEY ASSIGNMENTS

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

WHAT'S NEW AT FFI

SPECIAL GUEST: DALE MOORE, FFI REGIONAL REP

SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2021 on ZOOM

SOCIALIZING AND PHOTOS OF PAST FUN STARTS

AT 3:30 PM

BUSINESS MEETING BEGINS PROMPTLY

AT 4:00 PM – ENDS AT 5:00 PM

Please RSVP to: Djohnson44@ameritech.net

Please include "FF RSVP" in the email subject line

You will receive the Zoom link in advance of the meeting

Need help with Zoom? Let us know in your RSVP!

Explore • Understand • Serve®

BOARD OFFICER CANDIDATES

The following slate of candidates for FFI officers have been submitted by the Nominations Committee of Marjie Marion, Sandi Wysock, and Sandy Drew (Chair).

You will receive an email ballot the week of April 12 and must complete and send your votes electronically. Please send your votes in as soon as you can. Election results will be reported at the April 24 annual meeting.

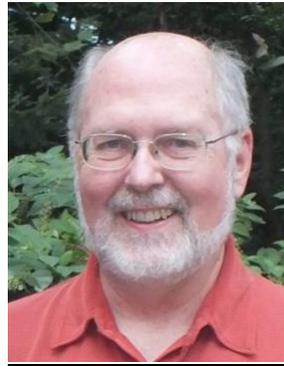


PRESIDENT CANDIDATE: KATHY SPECK

I have been an active member of Friendship Force for the past six years and have served on the board since 2017. I am currently club President. My husband and I have enjoyed hosting numerous FF clubs from India, New Caledonia, Canada, and Indonesia, as well as Open World delegates from Ukraine, Republic of Georgia and Russia. I've thoroughly enjoyed participating in outbound journeys to Australia, Guadeloupe and Japan (as co-coordinator).

I previously chaired the Membership Committee and the club's 40th anniversary event. Professionally, I have an MBA and a Master's Degree in Social Work, and spent my career in managerial roles in healthcare organizations as well as consulting. In addition to traveling, I enjoy music, art, reading, hiking and other activities in nature. I greatly appreciate the many opportunities that Friendship Force has provided to learn about other cultures and make new friends here and around the world!

BOARD OFFICER CANDIDATES



VICE PRESIDENT CANDIDATE: DOUG JOHNSON

Now retired, Doug was the first physics teacher at newly opened Memorial HS; Kathy began teaching at Orchard Ridge Elementary School. They have two grown children and three grandchildren.

Doug has dedicated his career to teaching science: as convention chair and president of the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers (WSST); on committees for the National Science Teaching Association; on the manuscript review panel for the NSTA journal; as presenter at national conventions; and as reviewer and contributing author for three textbooks. He has led summer workshops for elementary and secondary science teachers. He recently received the Lifetime Achievement award from WSST.

Doug and Kathy both work at polling places on election days and as proctors for Advanced Placement exams and are active in their church and enjoy ushering at the Overture Center.

Explore • Understand • Serve®

BOARD OFFICER CANDIDATES



TREASURER CANDIDATE: MARY JUCKEM

I joined Friendship Force in 2017 and have served as our chapter's treasurer since 1918. I've joined journey's to Japan and Niagara, and have served as a home host, day host, and a dinner host for incoming journeys. I worked at the VA Hospital as a medical social worker. I am a member of Plato and Sports for Active Seniors. My favorite activities include hiking, biking, winter sports, cooking, gardening, and spending time with my children and grandchildren.



SECRETARY CANDIDATE: SANDY DREW

Sandy has been a member of the Friendship Force for nearly 15 years, traveled to Russia with the group, has hosted several incoming guests, coordinated Open World Programs for both Friendship Force and the National Peace Foundation and participated in other Friendship Force activities. She previously served on the Board as Vice President. Sandy is retired but previously worked for the WI Retirement System. She currently tutors immigrants with English and citizenship and, until the pandemic hit, had international students who were studying English as a second language live with her. She is an active AARP advocate and works on behalf of homeless individuals and with other social justice causes.

BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION

Standing Committee Chairs

Membership: Lise R. Skofronick 608-274-7732

liskofronick@gmail.com

Journey Manager: Stephanie Sorensen 608-819-6646

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

Leaders for specific activities are:

Let's Hike/Let's Walk–Magdi Sebestyen

(magdi.sebestyen@gmail.com)

Winter Snow-Shoeing/Cross-Country Skiing--Tamas

Gaal (tgaal@wisc.edu)

Second Harvest Food Bank–Lois Schulz

(loisschulz1942@gmail.com)

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

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: Kathy Speck
608-577-4885

Vice President: Doug Johnson
608-238-1785

Secretary Diana Rodum
608-203-5711

Treasurer: Mary Juckem
608-661-2810

Newsletter: Agnes Rona
781-910-1094