



friendship force  
WISCONSIN - MADISON



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

JULY 2022

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In this my last month as your Friendship Force club president, I circle back to gratitude. Many of us keep gratitude journals or find other ways to regularly focus our attention on the blessings in our lives. My journey circle group (a spiritual growth group) recently discussed a potentially more powerful approach to tap into the power of gratitude. Rather than focusing on the presence of our myriad blessings, we turned our thoughts toward speculating what life would have been like *without* the people, events, things, etc. on our gratitude list, similar to what the angel in *It's a Wonderful Life* asked George Bailey to do. For example, reflecting on what life would have been like in the absence of Friendship Force, I was able to appreciate more deeply the cultural experiences and both local and global friendships that have enriched my life, as well as my understanding of the world and my place in it.

As Friendship Force members, we are blessed with the opportunity to reach out into this complex world and make a difference through these unique global friendships. I am reminded of the words of Margaret Meade, "Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

As I leave the role as your (hopefully) one and only *pandemic president*, I have many people on the board to thank for their support during these past two years: Doug Johnson, Sandy Drew, Diana Rodum, Mary Juckem, Sandi Wysock, Stephanie Sorensen, Mike Lambert, Magdi Sebestyen, David Blado, Gail Holmes, Dorothy Baldwin, Lise Skofronick, Helen Rugowski, Agnes, Rona, Peter Kaufman and Donna Ulteig.

To all of our members: I am grateful for your friendship and our shared experiences through these challenging times! Looking forward to seeing you again soon at our upcoming club events!

Kathy Speck

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Monthly Board Meeting:

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

July 19: Trivia Night. Program Committee

July 28: Second Harvest. "Activities"

Please check our website ([ffwis.org](http://ffwis.org)) for any additions, updates, or corrections to event schedules during the month, and keep an eye out for Mail Chimp email updates as well. We don't want you to miss anything!

## NEWSLETTER EDITOR(S) NEEDED

As previously announced, Agnes Rona will be stepping down this year as Newsletter editor. The health and vitality of our club depends on maintaining our communications to support the broad variety of Club activities and opportunities offered by our Board. The Newsletter is a key factor in maintaining our connections. A periodic "changing of the guard" is also necessary to keep us moving forward, offering new ideas and perspectives.

A new editor is part of emerging from the pandemic into our new normal; this is a good time to refresh and renew. To make the renewal easier, the Newsletter can return to its former bi-monthly format. Responsibility for the 6 issues could be shared between two editors. Each editor would produce 3 Newsletters per year.

Agnes will work with the new editor(s) to assure a smooth transition. Anyone thinking about being an editor is invited to contact Agnes for more information: [whereowhere5@gmail.com](mailto:whereowhere5@gmail.com) 781-910-1094

## JOURNEYS

### WE ARE TRAVELLING IN 2023!

We have an embarrassment of riches in store for FF Journeys in 2023. Most of the canceled incoming and outgoing journeys for our club have been rescheduled for 2023. We will need a lot of participation from members to make these journeys a success.

**Incoming journeys.** While we have co-coordinators for the incoming journey from Oita, planning committee members are still needed. We also need planning committee members and co-coordinators for the incoming Tweed Valley, Australia group. Our Journey Manager Stephanie Sorensen welcomes any help, but especially from those of you who previously participated in these Journeys. Home hosts are also needed for both incoming journeys.

As of the date of this newsletter there are no schedules yet for these journeys. Both of the incoming clubs have two weeks in the US; Stephanie is working to coordinate with three clubs to organize dates.

**Outgoing journeys.** For outgoing journeys, we are assigned Christchurch, New Zealand and Toronto, Canada. Co-coordinators are needed for these journeys as well as help with planning. There is no schedule yet for the journey to Christchurch. However we expect to visit Toronto in May – our Journey Manager is working to confirm a particular week.

As soon as time frames for these journeys are narrowed down, Stephanie will send out a survey asking about members' interests in traveling or hosting at those times. If you already decided to lead any of these journeys, please get in touch with Stephanie now:

Stephanie Sorensen, Journey Manager @ 608 819-6646 / ssorensen268@gmail.com

## ACTIVITIES

### BOOK CLUB



The book club next meets in September, but that won't stop our readers from reading! With this in mind, we have put together a list of recently

published books from Ukraine. They were chosen from mentions in the New York Times, and/or suggested by librarians. All have from one to seven copies available through the library system.

## ACTIVITIES

### BOOK CLUB



We can each choose from this list or select another Ukraine-related title. When we come together in September, we will discuss our

impressions of the Ukraine experience as perceived through the books, including but not limited to the perspective of their geography, their history, and the cultural connections and disparities in the region. Here are some suggested titles:

#### **History**

*Borderland: A Journey Through the History of Ukraine* – Anna Reid. 2015 (originally published in 2000; the update includes coverage of the Euromaidan Revolution of 2014)

*The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine* – Serhil Plokhly 2015

#### **Fiction**

*I Will Die in a Foreign Land: a novel* – Kalani Pickhart 2021

*Grey Bees* – Andrey Kurkov 2022

*The Orphanage* – Serhiy Zhadan 2021

*Good Citizens Need Not Fear* – Maria Reva 2020

*Lucky Breaks* – Yevgenia Belorusets 2022

#### **Poetry**

*Apricots of Donbas* – Lyuba Yakimchuk 2021

*Words for War: New Poems from Ukraine* – Oksana Maksymchuk and Max Rosochinsky, editors 2017

#### **Anthology**

*Love in Defiance of War* – scheduled for release on Sept 13, 2022, so not yet available from library.

A collection of work by some twenty Ukrainian authors. Profits from the sale of this book will go toward humanitarian aid to Ukrainians affected by the war. It can be pre-ordered from the publisher, Deep Vellum ([store.deepvellum.org](http://store.deepvellum.org)), or from Powells or amazon. Price from the publisher is \$19.91 plus \$3 shipping. If you pre-order from the publisher, you will immediately be sent a download link for the eBook, so that you can start reading right away. Hopefully, the library will have copies after the release.

Next meeting is September 19. Hope you can join us – all are welcome!

Please contact us with questions or suggestions,

Marjie Marion: [midsi@aol.com](mailto:midsi@aol.com)

Marian Ehrenberg: [marianeh2014@gmail.com](mailto:marianeh2014@gmail.com)

## ACTIVITIES

### FF MADISON PICNIC WAS A SUCCESS

Thirty-four friends and guests attended our Friendship Force annual summer potluck picnic on Wednesday, June 22, at the Tenney Park Shelter on a perfect sunny day. The company was great and as always, the food was delicious and second helpings were enjoyed!

Special thanks to everyone who helped with setting up tables, chairs, tablecloths, and food arrangement and then cleaning up the shelter afterwards. It was a very pleasant time for us to be together and visit with each other in person.

### SECOND HARVEST FOODBANK

Our next Food Bank volunteer day is Thursday, July 28 from 12:30 to 3:30 at 2802 Dairy Drive in Madison. This is a safe working environment with precautions in place.

Let Lois Schulz know by Tuesday noon, July 26, if you want to participate. [loisschulz1942@gmail.com](mailto:loisschulz1942@gmail.com) / 608-243-9761

### BIKING



Just to remind you that in order to not duplicate activities Co-Bike Leaders Vivian Norton and Jan Hornback would like to suggest:

Members interested in biking can join Sports for Active Seniors Club (SAS) for bike rides and other activities. SAS offers group rides, many of which are the same as those the Friendship Force Bike Group has done, often in the same week or even day. Many of the Friendship Force riders are also members of SAS. For an annual dues of \$20 members can take part in numerous activities in addition to biking.

The SAS website (<http://sportsforactiveseniors.org/>) includes schedules and a membership form. If you have questions about this, contact Jan Hornback.

Vivian and Jan will also try to have a few pop-up rides during the season. If you were not on the pop-up ride list in the past, please let Jan know your name and contact information.

Vivian Norton: [vjoan@icloud.com](mailto:vjoan@icloud.com) 608-497-0397

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

## PROGRAMS

### TRIVIA NIGHT

The next trivia night will be on Tuesday July 19<sup>th</sup> via ZOOM. The fun is scheduled from 4:30 to 6:00 pm. The zoom meeting will open at 4:00 to allow people to chat before the contest and sign in by 4:30.

Anyone interested should contact Mike Lambert ([lambertmichaelj@gmail.com](mailto:lambertmichaelj@gmail.com)), or David Blado ([david-blado@sbcglobal.net](mailto:david-blado@sbcglobal.net)) by July 18.

### UKRAINE: FOCCUS PRESENTATION

On June 23 Donna Ulteig presented an in-depth, informative and personal presentation about her experience of twenty years as Vice President of FOCCUS (Friends of Chernobyl Centers US), a Madison-based humanitarian connection to support victims of the nuclear reactor accident in Chernobyl, Ukraine in 1986. The program was impacted by the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2014 and is currently no longer functioning.

As with most of the former Soviet republics, there was (and mostly still is) not very much focus on professional mental health services for their populations and no tradition of volunteer support. The mission of FOCCUS was to provide training and support to existing mental health professionals in several cities and towns where Chernobyl refugees settled, particularly training in trauma support services. For years, FOCCUS participated through a children's' and families' program that brought children from Ukraine to Madison through a local church group and sent some host families to Ukraine to visit the families of the children who visited us. Donna made several trips to the Ukraine to support children, families and mental health workers in their endless and tireless work.

### WHY FOCCUS MATTERS

- FOCCUS gave more than \$500,000 to the Community Centers that delivered needed social and community development services. These contributions developed the local capacity for community building and coping with crisis.
- It provided training sessions in Ukraine for Center staff and community mental health leaders to expand treatment methods.
- It provided training in Madison for Center staff.
- As part of its commitment to increase public awareness and understanding about the scope and long-term effect of Chernobyl, FOCCUS organized a university course, public forums,



## PROGRAMS

### UKRAINE: FOCUS PRESENTATION

presentations and an international study tour of the Chernobyl-affected areas, including the "dead zones" where people returned to farm and to live in contaminated conditions.

- It provided information about personal and community recovery strategies following catastrophic disasters, including suicide hotlines.
- It supported respite programs for children affected by Chernobyl. In the process it connected US children with young people from Ukraine in new and mutually enriching ways.

Tragically, the established Help Centers in Ukraine were converted to centers to support veteran survivors of the first Russian invasion in 2014. The need has continued and has resulted in the apparently permanent conversion.

Here is a photo of Ludmilla, director of the Help Center in Borodyanka before 2014.



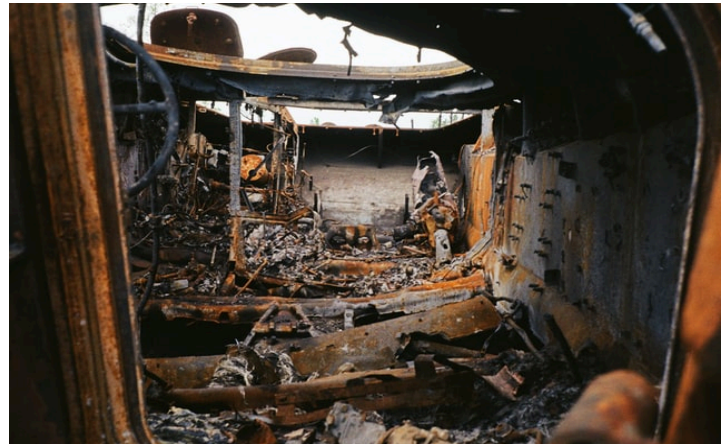
Here is Ludmilla today in 2022, comforted by an NPR reporter (from Madison) while waiting for first responders to pull the bodies of her family members from a building bombed by Russia.



### UKRAINE FOCUS PRESENTATION

Anyone who wants contribute support to the people of Ukraine may look at: [go.madison.com/project-ukraine](http://go.madison.com/project-ukraine) website to find out how he or she or they can help.

Here is a photo of Borodyanka today:



## **BOARD CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **Standing Committee Chairs**

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

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

**Journey Manager:** Stephanie Sorensen 608-819-6646  
[ssorensen268@gmail.com](mailto:ssorensen268@gmail.com)

**Membership:** Lise R. Skofronick 608-274-7732  
[liserskofronick@gmail.com](mailto:liserskofronick@gmail.com)

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David Blado 715-341-8308  
[david-blado@sbcglobal.net](mailto:david-blado@sbcglobal.net)

## **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))  
Vivian Norton ([vjoan@icloud.com](mailto:vjoan@icloud.com))

Book Club – Marian Ehrenberg  
([marianeh2014@gmail.com](mailto:marianeh2014@gmail.com))  
Marjie Marion ([midsi@aol.com](mailto:midsi@aol.com))

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

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

International Institutes – Sandi Wysock  
[sandrawysock@msn.com](mailto:sandrawysock@msn.com)

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

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

Winter Snowshoeing/Cross-Country Skiing--  
Tamas Gaal ([tgaal@wisc.edu](mailto:tgaal@wisc.edu))

Let's Walk/Let's Hike  
Maureen Kind ([dmkind@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dmkind@sbcglobal.net))

**WISCONSIN FRIENDSHIP FORCE**  
**Official Publication of**  
**The Friendship Force of Wisconsin-Madison**  
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