



Friendship Force

Wisconsin — Madison

ffwis.org

Mar/Apr 2024

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The **Annual Meeting** is just a month away. Mark your calendar for **April 21 at 2:00 pm** at the Fitchburg Public Library. You will be asked to RSVP to guide the planners. And, since this is an official business meeting, we must have a quorum, so we are hoping for a strong turnout. Prior to the meeting you will receive an email announcing that your vote, by electronic ballot, is requested *before the actual meeting*. You will find the biographies of the candidates in this newsletter.

We are saying goodbye to long-time Journey Manager Stephanie Sorensen with many, many thanks for her work. That position is now being shared by Kathy Speck and Tom Miller. (This is an appointed position, not elected.)

I hope that our club will have a strong presence at the **North American Conference** which will be held in **Milwaukee** on **October 7-9, 2024**. Conferences like this are for all members but provide opportunities to develop and share leadership skills. The Board has voted to provide some financial support of up to a few hundred dollars for those club members who attend and are willing to provide, or have been providing, leadership. Find more information inside and at my.friendshipforce.org.

Plans for the incoming journey from Toronto are quickly progressing. There are opportunities to be home hosts, day hosts and dinner hosts. If you are approached I hope you will seriously consider accepting one of these opportunities.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the Annual Meeting!

Doug Johnson

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE:

***Toronto Update & Form pp3-4**

***Annual Meeting Supplement pp8-16**



***MILW Conference Funding! p2**






CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mar 18:	Book Club — Zoom	p5
Mar 21:	Program: Chile — Zoom	p5
Mar 25:	<i>Sign up for Second Harvest</i>	
Mar 27:	Second Harvest service day	p6
Apr 6:	Dining on the 6th	p7
Apr 15:	Book Club — Zoom	p5
Apr 21:	Annual Membership Mtg	p8
Apr 22:	<i>Sign up for Second Harvest</i>	
Apr 24:	Second Harvest service day	p6
Apr 25:	Program: Nigeria — Zoom	p5
May 6:	Dining on the 6th	
May 8:	Program: Taiwan — Zoom	p5
May 8:	<i>Toronto Reservation due</i>	p4
May 15:	<i>May/June News deadline</i>	
May 20:	Book Club — Zoom	p5
May 27:	<i>Sign up for Second Harvest</i>	
May 29:	Second Harvest service day	p6
Jun 6:	Dining on the 6th	
Jun 6-13:	Inbound - Toronto, Canada	p3
Jun 17:	Book Club — Zoom	p5
Jun 25:	<i>Sign up for Second Harvest</i>	
Jun 27:	Second Harvest service day	p6
Late Aug:	Outbound - Ghana, Africa	Jan*
Oct 7-9:	Regional Conf : Milwaukee	p2

*Jan = Jan/Feb News

Monthly Events:

Social:	Dining on the 6th	  
Board Mtg:	2nd Thursday	
Book Club:	3rd Monday	
Foodbank:	last Wed of each month	

Calendar updates will be emailed to you directly and/or posted on our website (ffwis.org).

GREAT NEWS

for
MILWAUKEE
CONFERENCE ATTENDEES!

To encourage club participation in the upcoming

**2024 FFI North American
Conference in
Milwaukee, October 7-9, 2024**

The Board of Directors has voted to offer funds that will financially assist members who attend this regional Conference!

The entire Conference registration fee, **\$250/person, PLUS \$50/person** in additional funds (to defray misc hotel and/or transportation expenses), will be provided to *12* Madison club members who attend the regional conference.

Click here for Conference info & registration:

[Milwaukee, here we come!](#)

Wee Fine print:

Applications and details for selecting recipients will be announced in coming weeks.

Sign up before the Board changes its mind!



— Photo courtesy of the Editor's son's now-empty piggy bank

Disclaimer: no pigs (except piggy banks) were harmed in producing this column!



JOURNEYS

Inbound Journey: Toronto — June 6-13, 2024

UPDATE:

Planning is well underway for this journey. Thirteen ambassadors will arrive on June 6 with five flying in and the remaining eight driving in three separate vehicles.

We have an exciting week planned. We start with a Welcome Brunch followed by a visit to Hinchley’s Dairy Farm to celebrate June Dairy Month. New in this journey is bringing back the pontoon boat cruise on Lakes Mendota and Monona, and a visit to Circus World in Baraboo.

Other venues include a Friday Nite Fish Fry at the Dorf Haus in Roxbury, State Capitol Tour, Cedar Grove Cheese Factory, Chazen Art Museum, and International Crane Foundation. Our farewell dinner will be at Holy Wisdom Monastery.

The registration form is included on p4 of this newsletter. **Deadline is May 8, 2024.** If you have questions, contact information is on the registration form.

Donna Hussin

Carla Di Iorio

Toronto Journey Co-coordinators



JOURNEYS

A Special Invitation from FF - MN Twin Cities

To: Our Friends in the Midwest Regional Friendship Force clubs:

We would love to have Ambassadors from your Madison club join us August 1-14, 2024, in Mongolia!

The following links provide details. Please note that the **deadline for mailing** the application and deposit is **March 31, 2024.**

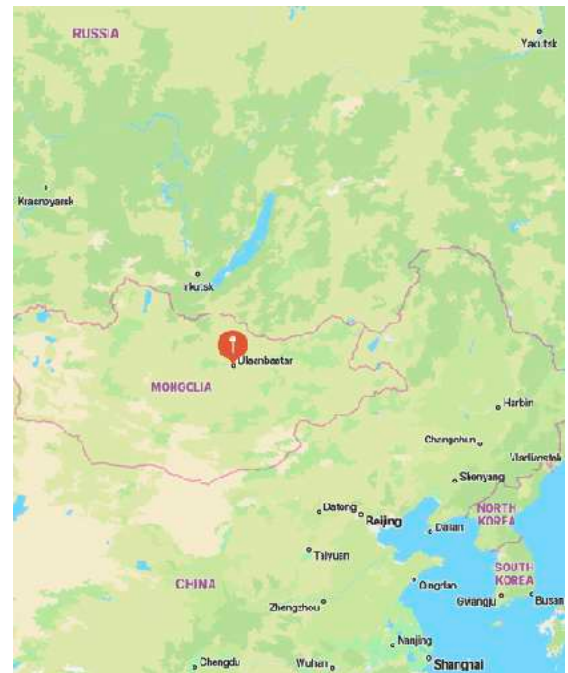
Itinerary:

https://mcusercontent.com/08d4d607e3df4554b0db9868d/files/ab3669bd-de9b-b11b-b341-a27af20c20f8/Itinerary_Mongolia.pdf

Costs, Dates, Contacts:

https://mcusercontent.com/08d4d607e3df4554b0db9868d/files/92c48cb7-beef-1391-77f8-d1d765cd8713/Mongolia_post_to_FFI_3.14.24.pdf

Questions? Contact Mary Cunningham (marycunningham909@gmail.com) for more information.



**Toronto Inbound Journey Venues Registration Form
June 6-13, 2024**

For all FFWI-Madison members, family and friends. PLEASE indicate, if also attending FREE events.

Date	Activity	Price /Person	# Persons	Total Cost
Friday, June 7	Welcome Brunch —Yola’s Café—Catered (Frittatas, Fresh Fruit Medley, Scones, Muffins & Kringle, Coffee, Juice & Water)-Park Glen Commons, 201 N Walbridge Ave., Madison, WI 53714 Hinchley Dairy Farm Tour Dorf Haus , 8931 Hwy Y, Roxbury, WI- Family style breaded & deep fried fish, baked, haddock, deep-fried chicken, served with German potato salad, F.F., baked potato, cole slaw, fritters, coffee, milk and water. Dessert OYO, Cash Bar	\$20.00 15.00 \$28.00 inc 20% gratuity		
Saturday, June 8	Farmers Market State Capitol Tour LUNCH MSCR Pontoon Sunset Cruise on Madison Lakes —(Limit 30) First priority is ambassadors & hosts. Cranberry Creek Box Lunch—Choices: Turkey & Provolone _____ (Focaccia, bistro mayo, lettuce, tomato) Cranberry Creek Signature Salad _____ (Chicken, mixed greens, dried cranberries, mandarin oranges, red onion, pecans, cranberry balsamic dressing) Vegetarian Hummus Wrap _____ (Roasted red pepper hummus herb flour tortilla with cucumbers, tomatoes, mixed greens, onion) <i>Inc potato salad and cookie; bring own beverages</i>	FREE FREE OYO \$10.00 \$11.50		
Sunday, June 9	Flex Day			
Monday, June 10	Cheese Factory Tour, Cedar Grove, Plain, WI LUNCH Chazen Art Museum Tour, UW-Madison Campus	FREE OYO FREE.		
Tuesday, June 11	International Crane Foundation Tour LUNCH Circus World	\$10.00 OYO \$20.00		
Wednesday, June 12	UW-Madison First Nation Cultural Landscape Tour LUNCH Farewell Dinner – Buffet Style--Choice of Braised Burgundy Beef Roast, with red wine, caramelized vegetables and fresh herbs, served with rich beef stock gravy. or Vegetarian Lasagna--spinach and mozzarella layered lasagna with house made basil marinara and parmesan cheese; roasted Yukon gold rosemary potatoes, steamed mixed seasonal vegetables, tossed salad with dressing, La Brea Bakery sourdough rolls with butter; bar cookies, coffee and water Holy Wisdom Monastery, 4200 County Hwy M, Middleton, WI 53562	FREE OYO \$23.50		
	TOTAL	\$138.00		

Name of Participants: _____ Phone: _____
_____ Phone: _____

**Make check payable to The Friendship Force of Wisconsin, Note on check for Toronto Journey.
Send form with payment to Carla Di Iorio, Journey Co-coordinator 941 Spaight St., Madison, WI 53703
Questions: Contact Donna Hussin, Journey Co-coordinator, 608-770-0980 or djhussin@yahoo.com**

Form and Payment due by May 8, 2024

ACTIVITIESBook Club

The book club met on January 22 and discussed two books by Norwegian author Lars Mytting – *Norwegian Wood*, a non-fiction examination of the all-important resource of trees; and *The Sixteen Trees of the Somme*, an historical novel of mid-20th century in which trees and forests take on a particular focus.

Then, on February 19, we discussed non-fiction books by Tim Marshall – *Prisoners of Geography* and *The Power of Geography*. In these we traveled to many corners of the world, adding to our understanding of disparate historical and political situations that have been affected by their geography.

On March 19, five people attended and we had an interesting discussion about the challenges, both physically and emotionally, of forced immigration from Vietnam to the U.S. after the war, as related in Beth Nguyen's book, *Owner of a Lonely Heart: a memoir*.

*New Selections:***April 15:**

The Poisonwood Bible (1998) by Barbara Kingsolver. A finalist for the 1999 Pulitzer Prize in Fiction, this book is the compelling story of a Baptist missionary to the Congo in 1959 as seen through the eyes of 5 narrators: his wife and four daughters.

May 20:

People of the Book (2008) by Geraldine Brooks. Inspired by a true story, this work of historical fiction traces the journey and preservation of the Sarajevo Haggadah, a rare Hebrew manuscript, down through the centuries.

ACTIVITIESBook Club (cont)

Our club meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 by zoom. Feel free to join any month, whether or not you have finished the reading. We often have connections, knowledge and opinions from personal experience that enrich our understanding of what we have read, and we welcome new ideas!

The zoom link will be sent out by email a few days before each meeting. Contact us to receive the link or to get help finding the books.

Marjie Marion midsi@aol.com
Marian Ehrenberg marianeh2014@gmail.com

PROGRAMSUpcoming Programs — March - May 2024

The UW's ISS (International Student Services) Reach Department has graciously offered to provide program presenters to us for the Spring 2024 semester.

For March and April, the Program Committee will schedule speakers from ISS as follows:

On Thursday, **March 21st**, Francisca is presenting a program on Chile; while Maxwell will focus on Nigeria on Thursday, **April 25th**. (For those going to Ghana later this year, Maxwell's program should be of great interest!)

On **May 8th**, club members Diane Mertens and Larry Neuman will present a Global Journey to Taiwan.

Many thanks to all of our speakers!

To sign up for the zoom presentations, contact Mike Lambert at lambertmichaelj@gmail.com or David Blado at david-blado@sbcglobal.net.

ACTIVITIES

Second Harvest Foodbank

“Many hands make light work!” This saying could not be more true when volunteering for the Second Harvest Food Bank on the East side of Madison.

Between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, 22.9 million pounds of food were distributed by Second Harvest to food pantries, shelters, meal sites, and mobile pantries in the greater Southern Wisconsin area. Most of those boxes for distribution were prepared by volunteers just like you!

Through the ongoing support of volunteers and donors, Second Harvest continues to adapt and innovate to ensure that everyone in our community has enough nutritious food to survive.

Want to help? Great! Come to the Second Harvest Food Bank the last Wednesday of each month between 12:30-3:30pm. Join forces with other volunteers, help your neighbors in need, and become friends with fellow Friendship Force members!

To volunteer, please contact Judy Thorpe [jthorpe12@charter.net] or (608) 772-5438] by **noon on March 25, April 22, and/or May 27.**

Come join us on our volunteer service days:

Mar 27	12:30-3:30pm
Apr 24	12:30-3:30pm
May 29	12:30-3:30pm



Second Harvest Foodbank
2802 Dairy Drive
Madison WI 53718

ACTIVITIES

Recent Second Harvest Service Day

On Wednesday, February 28, five of us volunteered at the Second Harvest Foodbank. Gail Holmes, Donna Hussin, Maureen Kind, Lise Skofronick, and Vicki Warren began by checking freshness in 5-pound bags of apples, and then packing five bags per box.

We completed two skids of boxes for almost 2,000 pounds (a ton!). Then we joined a group of SSM employees in putting eight pizza slices in a plastic bag and double-sealing them



L to R:

Lise Skofronick, Donna Hussin, Gail Holmes, Vicki Warren, and Maureen Kind.

—Photo courtesy of Maureen Kind

ACTIVITIES*Dining on the 6th*

Saturday, April 6, 2024
5:30 p.m. for dinner

Touch of Ukraine
 2438 Winnebago Street
 Madison, WI

Time for a new adventure, this time with traditional Ukrainian dishes prepared by hand and made from scratch. The owner is a sponsored Ukrainian refugee from the Dnieper River region. Nine months after the invasion began, she packed one suitcase and one backpack and left, along with two of her business partners.

To reach Touch of Ukraine, drive down East Washington Avenue past East High School. At the Sixth Street stoplight, turn right and follow the street, then turn left into the parking lot behind the UW Health Center. In front of you is the restaurant's entrance.

Join with your Friendship Force friends for Saturday dinner at 5:30 p.m. The spacious restaurant is appropriately decorated with yellow and blue placemats and small vases of yellow and blue flowers on each table.

Their menu has the usual entrees but with a Ukrainian touch: appetizers/shareables, soup and salads, a chicken sandwich, and entrees. The entree selection includes a variety of chicken dishes, salmon, BBQ ribs, pork, and a vegan Ukrainian dish. Entrees are served with a side house salad and your choice of potato or seasonal vegetable. Most entrees are \$17 to \$20. You might want to save room for desserts and drinks from the full-service bar. I tried an Upside Down Ukrainian Flag drink.

Please register by Thursday, April 4, with host Gail Holmes: phone (608) 249-1846, or email glholmes@wisc.edu. We will be in a separate room connected to the main dining room.

ACTIVITIES*Recent Dining Experience*

Twas the day for wearin' o' the **green** on Wednesday, March 6, for Dining on the 6th. Kathy wore her green sweater with shamrocks purchased in Ireland and others wore green. Gail shared a couple of limericks she had written in the motorcoach while touring in Shannon. In fact, over half of those in attendance had traveled to Ireland.

Lunch was at Erin's Irish Snug Pub at noon and most people ordered Irish entrees. We celebrated Lise's birthday with a cake from Maureen, signed a card, and sang. As always at meal's end, our candy treat was a York chocolate mint.



The nineteen participants were Jan Barbone, Carla & Michael Di Iorio, Patrick Fleming & Margaret Anundson, leader Gail Holmes, Donna Hussin, Kathy & Doug Johnson, Maureen Kind, Vivian Norton, Julie Pretell & Allan Rieland, Mary & Dennis Ray, Lise Skofronick, Vicki & Ken Warren, and George Wysock.

— Gail Holmes, Host



2024 Annual Meeting

April 21, 2024

Invitation

*Annual Meeting
of the
FF Wisconsin-Madison*

April 21, 2024 2-4pm

*Fitchburg Public Library
5530 Lacy Rd
Fitchburg, WI 53711*

The Board of FF Wisconsin-Madison invites all members to attend the 2024 Annual Meeting on **Sunday, April 21, from 2:00-4:00 pm** at the Fitchburg Library.



In addition to the business meeting, there will be a talk by Tom Miller about his visits to Ghana, including his most recent visit in March 2024. Members will enjoy conversation and refreshments and learn about upcoming activities and journeys. There will also be a remembrance for members who passed away since the last meeting.

Please email your RSVP to Diane Mertens by April 14. Include “FF RSVP” in the email subject line. Diane’s email address is: mertensdk27@gmail.com.

The FF bylaws require a quorum of 25% of the membership in attendance to hold the annual business meeting. The Board hopes to see you on April 21st!

2024 - ANNUAL MEETING**Agenda**

The Friendship Force of Wisconsin-Madison, Inc.
Annual Business Meeting
Sunday, April 21, 2024

Welcome Doug Johnson –
 President

Refreshments & Conversation

Learning about Ghana Tom Miller

Introductions Doug Johnson
 Board of Directors
 Standing Committee Chairs
 New Members/Special Guests

Business Meeting Doug Johnson
 Secretary's Report Vicki Warren
 Treasurer's Report Mary Juckem
 Annual Report Doug Johnson
 Election of Officers Lise Skofronick
 Journeys Tom Miller &
 Kathy Speck
 North American Conf. Larry Neuman &
 Sandi Wysock
 Activities Gail Holmes
 Historian Donna Hussin

Remembrances Lise Skofronick &
 Mary Lindquist

Steven Babcock
 Rita Bloomfield
 Tom Herman
 Gerry Fuller
 Jan Hornback
 Dan Eggerding

Let There Be Peace on Earth

Adjourn

2024 - ANNUAL MEETING**2023-2024 Board of Directors**

President Doug Johnson
Vice Presidents Diane Mertens &
 Larry Neuman
Secretary Vicki Warren
Treasurer Mary Juckem

Additional Board Members

Member at Large Donna Ultieg
 Member at Large Dorothy Baldwin
 Newsletter Editor Angie Garrison

Standing Committee Chairpersons

Activities Gail Holmes
 Journey Managers Tom Miller &
 Kathy Speck
 Programs David Blado &
 Mike Lambert
 Historian Donna Hussin
 Electronic Communication Sandi Wysock
 Membership Lise Skofronick
 Outreach Jan Barbone

Journey Coordinators

Donna Hussin and Carla Di Iorio are the Co-Ambassador Coordinators for the Toronto Inbound Journey in June of 2024.

Larry Neuman is the Ambassador Coordinator for the Aug 2024 Ghana Outbound Journey (exact dates pending).



2024 - ANNUAL MEETING

Minutes: 2023 Annual Meeting

The Friendship Force of Wisconsin-Madison
2023 Annual Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2023

Fitchburg Library, 5530 Lacy Rd,
Fitchburg, Wisconsin

President Doug Johnson welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting at 2:14 pm.

Mike Lambert from the Program Committee started off the meeting with a Trivia Contest with a Canadian theme since several members are travelling to Toronto on a journey in May of 2023; as well as questions on New Zealand culture as a group will be travelling there in September of 2023.

Doug thanked Larry Neuman for preparing the power point for the meeting and Sandi Wysock for handling the technical issues for the individuals who were joining the meeting via zoom.

Sandi Wysock announced that there was a silent auction of Friendship Force items, shirts, luggage tags, bags, etc. These could be paid for with a credit card using Square.

The members were encouraged to indulge in the desserts from various countries that members prepared to share.

Board members were recognized: Doug Johnson-President, Mary Juckem-Treasurer, Vice Presidents-Larry Neumann and Diane Mertens, Secretary Pro tem-Martha McGregor, Past President-Kathy Speck Kemeny, Member at Large-Donna Ulteig, Newsletter Editor-Angie Garrison, Activities Committee -Gail Holmes, Journey Coordinator - Stephanie Sorensen,

Historian-Donna Hussin, E-Communications-Sandi Wysock, and Membership-Lise Skofronick.

There is an open position for the Outreach committee, and a member at large position is also open.

Magdi Sebestyen asked for volunteers to home host for the incoming journey from Japan and Australia. She still needs two pet-free homes for guests.

Doug Johnson called the business meeting to order at 2:55 pm.

The minutes of the 2022 annual meeting were published in the newsletter. A motion was made to accept the minutes as published, seconded, and approved unanimously.

Treasurer's report. A motion was made to accept the treasurers report as submitted to the members by email and submit for audit, seconded, and unanimously approved.

Election of Officers. The slate of officers was presented: President – Doug Johnson, Vice Presidents – Larry Neuman and Diane Mertens, Secretary – Vicki Warren, and Treasurer – Mary Juckem.

Doug called for any nominations from the floor. There were none. A motion was made to close the nominations, seconded, and approved unanimously. A motion was made to accept the slate of officers as presented, seconded, and approved.

Journey Manager. Stephanie Sorensen presented future incoming and outgoing journeys for 2024. In March we will host the Toronto club who we will visit in May 2023. There are two outbound journeys planned: Harrisburg PA in May and Ghana in September. The trip to Ghana will be centered in the capitol of Accra. Stephanie called for more volunteers for all journeys.

2024 - ANNUAL MEETING

Minutes: 2023 Annual Meeting (cont)

Activities Committee. Gail Holmes reported that Donna Hussin has been working on day trips. Donna prepared a list of 12 options and asked members to vote for their interests. Rita Herring has resigned her position on the Book Club, Marjie Marion will work with Marion Ehrenberg on the book club. Book clubs meet on the third Monday of the month via Zoom. Adopt a Highway is still active in spring and fall, watch for notices in the newsletter. The bike rides will be coordinated by Vivian Norton and Larry Neuman. Dining on the 6th is coordinated by Gail. Notices are posted in the newsletter or sent by email to all members. Sandi Wysock is the contact person for International Institute Dinners. The Walk-Hike group will be coordinated by Maureen Kind. The service volunteer opportunity at Second Harvest still meets on the last Thursday of the month. Gail asked for a volunteer to lead this group.

Programs Committee. Mike Lambert and David Blado lead this activity. Please read the newsletter and your email about up-coming events.

Membership Committee. Lise Skofronick would like to recognize Mary Lindquist for her outstanding work maintaining the records, collecting dues, and sending the welcome packet to new members.

E-Communications. Sandi Wysock recognized Dan Eggerding, Al Reiland, Tom Miller, and Peter Kaufman for their continued support. She also thanked the group who worked on the Open World program for Kazakhstan which includes 32 hours of program and home hosting.

Doug thanked Peter Kaufman for the zoom set-up that he does for all meetings.

Recognition of Long-Term members. Lise Skofronick recognized Milly Peterson, who was one of the founders of our Madison club and a member for 45 years. Kay and Steven Babcock were also recognized. All three members were given certificates for lifetime membership.

Lise introduced new members, Chris Miles and Margaret Amundson.

The Boys and Girls club will have a Move and Groove fundraiser in the summer. Friendship Force members can register and join as a team by signing up on their website.

The meeting was closed with the club anthem, Let There Be Peace on Earth.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:33 pm.

Respectfully submitted
Martha McGregor, Secretary Pro Tem



2024 - ANNUAL MEETING**Financial Reports: Fiscal Year 2023**

Friendship Force of Wisconsin-Madison
2023 Financial Summary
Treasurer's Report for Annual Meeting 4/21/2024

2023 Income

Membership Dues (\$2490.00 FFI; \$635.00 Club*)	\$	3,125.00	
Donations - General	\$	630.00	
Friendship Force International	\$	50.00	
Silent Auction	\$	63.64	
Luggage tags/totes pins/lanyards sold	\$	308.00	
Transfer excess funds from Toronto Journey	\$	<u>16.46</u>	
Total 2023 Income	\$	4,193.10	\$ 4,193.10

2023 Expenditures

Dues Paid to Friendship Force International	\$	2,490.00	
Activities Committee	\$	182.59	
Outreach Committee	\$	50.00	
Membership Committee	\$	183.88	
Website/Domain/Security	\$	221.59	
Summer Picnic	\$	109.00	
Annual/General Membership Meeting	\$	168.59	
Administration	\$	167.47	
Journey Coordinator	\$	113.40	
Copyright violation & foreign funds transfer fee	\$	205.60	
Transfer of dues intended for Milwaukee club	\$	<u>40.00</u>	
Total 2023 Expenditures	\$	3,932.12	\$ <u>3,932.12</u>

Income over Expenses in 2023 **\$ 260.98**

Checkbook Balance 12/31/23	\$ 9,558.64
Checkbook Balance 1/1/23	<u>\$ 9,297.66</u>
	\$ 260.98

2024 - ANNUAL MEETING

Financial Reports: Fiscal Year 2023

Friendship Force of Wisconsin - Madison							
Club Value as of 12/31/2023							
Checking Account Balance 12/31/2023						\$	9,558.64
Subtracting Committed Funds Below:							
Estimated Payment to FFI for 2024 Affiliation Fees (90x\$30)						-	<u>\$ 2,700.00</u>
Checking Account Funds available for 2024 Operating Expenses						\$	6,858.64 \$ 6,858.64
Other Funds							
2 CD's @ BMO						\$	12,059.50
4 Journey Accounts at BMO						\$	100.00
Total Other Funds						\$	12,159.50 \$ 12,159.50
Club Value 12/31/23							\$ 19,018.14
Respectfully submitted by,							
Mary Juckem, Treasurer							
3/2/2024							

BOARD ELECTIONS**Proposed Slate of Officers 2024-2025**

We present these Nominees for election
to the following offices:

Co-Presidents: Diane Mertens &
Larry Neuman
Vice President: Kathy Johnson
Secretary: Vicki Boardsen Warren
Treasurer: Deb Gunther

Respectfully submitted
Nominations Chair Lise Skofronick

**BOARD ELECTIONS**

Co-Presidents:
Diane Mertens and Larry Neuman

Diane and Larry are retired educators. Diane taught English at Edgewood High School, and Larry taught sociology and Asian Studies courses at UW—Whitewater. During their teaching careers, both organized and led multiple student tours overseas.

In 1994-95, Diane and Larry lived and taught in Sendai, Japan, and they have returned to Japan many times for personal and professional reasons. Many of their trips to Asian countries were with groups of educators and funded by government and university grants. In addition to visiting most of the countries in Pacific Asia, they traveled extensively in Europe and visited several Latin American and African countries.

Favorite experiences when traveling include visiting schools and businesses, savoring local foods and culture, and meeting families. They have hosted international visitors in their home on several occasions. Diane and Larry enjoy biking and have taken bike trips in the U.S., Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy, and Croatia. They helped organize the in-bound FF-W bike journey in September 2021. Diane and Larry were delighted to discover FF and join others who share their love of experiencing other cultures, connecting with people across the globe, and seeking ways to advance world peace.

BOARD ELECTIONS**Vice-President: Kathy Johnson**

My husband and I have lived in Madison since 1967. We came here for our teaching jobs, knowing very little about the city. It was the best decision we ever made.

We don't remember how we came to be involved in the Friendship Force, but someone must have invited us. I remember serving on a planning committee for an incoming journey and how much I enjoyed that. Home hosting, going on journeys and planning for these as well as leading as Journey coordinators several times have also been great experiences.

I especially remember planning the winter experience for the club from Indonesia who wanted to experience winter in Wisconsin. It was a very interesting time and one I won't forget.

I have had many experiences leading other groups in this area. They include 5 years leading the planning group at our local elementary schools for their fundraising carnival.

BOARD ELECTIONS

Vice-Pres (cont): I was the local president of the League of Women Voters of Dane County on three different years, the state League of Women Voters president for 4 years and co-president of a national genealogy group based in Minnesota.

Although I find it harder to travel these days, I know that having a strong board of directors is important to the overall functioning of Friendship Force and would do my best to provide the necessary leadership.

**Treasurer: Deb Gunther**

Deb Gunther joined Friendship Force a few years ago. She is a resident of Fitchburg (formerly from Cudahy, Glendale, Fond du Lac and Pewaukee), and has been married over 30 years; she is a mother of two and grandmother of two.

A retired Quality Manager and Project Manager, she has an Executive MBA from Marquette University and enjoys travel, scuba diving, genealogy and chocolate (history, biology, and tasting).

She was a home host for two Guadeloupe ambassadors on behalf of the Milwaukee group when she lived in Pewaukee, before she was a member. She was also a home host for a Japan ambassador in 2023.

BOARD ELECTIONS**Secretary: Vicki Boardsen Warren**

My name suggests part of my biography. I was born Vicki Boardsen, oldest daughter and child of Einar Boardsen and Phyllis Kemmer. My mom was a US mix, an only child who worked in the County Clerk's office when she was old enough; my dad, a twin and an immigrant at three years old in the bowels of a big ship from Norway, an accountant for a trucking company in our hometown of Clinton, Iowa.

My four siblings and I were raised in a Midwestern median income neighborhood, close to our Norwegian aunts uncles and cousins, and my mom's parents, our close grandparents, 14 miles away just across the Mississippi.

I was a kind of shy kid, happy and what felt like safe in my unconsidered white privilege, until I was in 7th grade Social Studies class one day and a car drove slowly by our junior high school blaring the news that President Kennedy had been shot. I know better now, 60 years later.

BOARD ELECTIONS

I have been married for 52 years to Ken Warren, husband, dad, Special Ed teacher of kids with emotional and behavior disabilities, my partner in the life that has come our way. We have three grown adult children, two -in-law adult kids and 6 grandchildren we love beyond all understanding and heartily spoil when we have the chance.

I have been a homemaker, a good cook (not excellent), a bread baker, a canner of food (not raised by me for the most part, I am awestruck by gardening folks), a college student for too many years, a Special Ed teacher for over 20 years, full and part-time, with kids who have a visual impairment (I enjoyed all flavors of VI kids but especially the tiny early braille kids on my caseload), and a liberal-minded minister in a small United Church of Christ for 16 years.

I am/we are retired now, and Ken and I live north and a bit east of Wisconsin Dells in a small home in a small piece of woods with our human and Earthly neighbors. It is for me/us a sanctuary filled with too much work sometimes, but we are, nevertheless, daily and seasonally invited, from every window, to live with and among woods and trees and birds and bugs of every sort.

I enjoy many things. Quiet times, reflection, conversation, loud and noisy times with kids and family. Reading, church stuff, playing games of about any sort (Wingspan!), snowshoeing, walking/hiking (shorter not loooonngg treks), camping in out-of-the-way places and in off-seasons. I carefully write letters to the editor and record radio ads as one small part of a progressive political rural messaging team in Adams County. I enjoy travel and exploring new places different from what is familiar, learning about different cultures and peoples.

I am very much looking forward to exploring the world with Friendship Force folks. Thank you Friendship Force International!

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