

Friendship Force

Wisconsin — Madison

ffwis.org

May/June 2024

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am very happy that the Annual Meeting at the end of April was attended by nearly half of the membership. All nominees for office were elected; new officers begin their duties in July.

The ambassadors from Toronto will arrive on June 6. They'll be treated to several days of interesting and fun activities. I hope to see you at some of the activities even if you aren't hosting or day hosting, but especially at the Welcome Party on June 7 and the Farewell Dinner on June 12.

Any and all members will find something of interest at Friendship Force International's **North American Conference in Milwaukee on October 7, 8, and 9** (well, mostly just the 8th and 9th) even though it is geared to club leaders and those who aspire to leadership roles. You can find out more at the website for Friendship Force International: www.my.friendshipforce.org. An effort is being made to share rides and, perhaps, hotel rooms.

We now know what journeys we will be able to go on and to host in 2025. Look for more information inside this issue of the newsletter.

By the time you read this, several members of the Board will have spent a morning doing some strategic planning, looking for ways to strengthen and grow the club. You will learn more by the end of the summer. If you have any ideas along those lines, your input to any board member will be appreciated.

It will be great to see you at one of the several on-going club activities and/or events planned for the ambassadors from Toronto!

Doug Johnson

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Our Team needs Your Support!	,



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Register now!

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Monthly Events:

Social: Dining on the **6**th Board Mtg: **2**nd Thursday

Book Club: 2nd Thursday

3rd Monday

Foodbank: Last Wed of each month

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



Summer Picnic!



Our Summer Picnic will be held
Saturday, September 7
at the Marshall Park shelter
2101 Allen Boulevard in Madison.

Save the Date!



International Festival — June 29-30, 2024

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS!

To promote Friendship Force goals and our club's presence in the Madison community, FF-Wisconsin (Madison) is participating in the **International Festival of the Arts** at the Overture Center on **Saturday**, **June 29th** (10am to 5pm) and **Sunday**, **June 30th** (1pm to 4pm).

Volunteers are needed to staff a booth both days of the Festival. Please consider sharing our mission and your knowledge, support, and welcoming energy with Festival participants for a 2-hour time slot, or whatever will work for you.

Please email me at madcapjan@yahoo.com or give me a call at (608) 219-7479 to sign-up for dates/times that you are available to volunteer. Thank you!

-Jan Barbone, Outreach

"Celebrate the rich cultural heritage within our community and enjoy more than 30 FREE performances throughout Overture by artists who call Dane County home. Indulge in cuisines from around the world, browse stunning arts and crafts available for purchase and learn about the many local businesses with global connections."

Overture website

For more information, visit:

https://www.overture.org/tickets-events/2024-25-season/international-festival/

Overture Center 201 State Street, Madison WI

FUNDING UPDATE for MILWAUKEE CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

In order to encourage club participation in the FFI North American Conference in Milwaukee, October 7-10, 2024, the Board has agreed to offer funds that will financially assist members who attend.

The Conference registration fee of \$250, plus \$50 toward hotel and transportation expenses, will be provided to a number of Madison Club members who attend the Conference on both meeting days, **Tuesday - Wednesday, Oct 8-9.**

Members who receive funding will share what they've learned at the Conference and also volunteer to serve on the Board or become an Activity or Journey Coordinator within the coming year.

Funding priority will be given to Board members, Activity Leaders, Journey Coordinators/ Treasurers, and other highly active contributors in the Club.

If interested in receiving funding, please email Diane Mertens by July 1, 2024.

Email Diane at <u>mertensdk27@gmail.com</u>. and include "North American Conference Funding" in the email subject line.



Click here for Conference info & registration:

Milwaukee, here we come!

2024 JOURNEYS

Inbound Journey: Toronto - June 6-13, 2024

We are eagerly waiting for the thirteen Ambassadors from Toronto to arrive on **June 6**. The Journey Committee co-chaired by Donna Hussin and Carla Di Iorio have planned fun and interesting activities for the time the Ambassadors are with us.

The program kicks off with a brunch on June 7 followed by a visit to a dairy farm and a traditional Friday night fish fry. The program ends on June 12 with a farewell dinner at Holy Wisdom Monastery.

Thanks to all the home, dinner, and day hosts who are helping to make the journey a success!



Many thanks to Sandi Wysock for putting "Toronto, Remembering the Journey" on our website (<u>ffwis.org</u>). Click on the **Photos & Slideshows** tab to watch it.

Beginning with a slide show, it features stories by our Ambassadors last June, and concludes with the hilarious "Butter Tart" song at the Farewell Dinner. Check it out!

Outbound Journey: Ghana — Aug 1-15, 2024

The outbound journey to the Lake Volta and Legon Clubs in Ghana has been scheduled for **August 1-15**.

Larry Neuman is the Journey Coordinator for the eight Madison Friendship Force Ambassadors. They held an orientation meeting on May 19 to complete visa applications and are ready for this unique and exciting journey. We can't wait to hear about their experience!



2025 JOURNEYS

2025 JOURNEYS

Outbound Journey: Brazil — Dates TBD

At the 2024 Annual Meeting, Club President Doug Johnson announced the 2025 outbound journey to two Friendship Force clubs in Brazil.

The city of Belém is in northeast Brazil about 60 miles from the Atlantic Ocean on the Para River, part of the Amazon River system. Nicknamed the "City of Mango Trees," it has an estimated population of 1.5 million with an additional 1 million living outside the city proper. From all reports there is a lot to see and do in Belém.

Belo Horizonte, population 2.3 million with over 6 million in the greater metro area, was the first planned city in Brazil. Located in the south central part of the country, Belo Horizonte is surrounded by mountains and is known for its parks and the 17 educational institutions in the area. Both cities have international airports.

We have been in contact with both clubs and are waiting for more details on tentative dates and the number of Ambassadors they can host.

Watch for more details in coming newsletters.

Outbound Journey: Birmingham — Date TBD

Our club has been assigned to travel to Birmingham, Alabama, as our domestic outbound journey next year.

The host club has 42 members and can host between 10 and 15 Ambassadors. Typical things to see are the Civil Rights Museum, Botanical Gardens, the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame, Barber Motor Sports, the Sloss Furnace from its days as an iron and steel town, plus parks and art galleries.

At this time, no dates have been set for this journey.

Inbound Journey: Olympia, WA — Dates TBD

The Greater Olympia, Washington, club has been assigned to visit our club in 2025. Olympia is about the same size as Madison and is also the state capital of Washington. It will be fun to show them our city.

For all the **2025** journeys, the Journey Managers will be recruiting not only Ambassadors, but also members to serve as Journey Coordinators and Treasurers; and for the inbound journey, Planning Committee members too.

Please seriously consider stepping up to take on one of these responsibilities. Sure, it's work but also a good way to get to know other members and show off our part of the world!

If you have any questions, please contact one of us: Kathy Speck at kspeckemeny@gmail.com or Tom Miller at tfmillerphoto@sbcglobal.net.

Kathy & Tom Co-Journey Managers



ACTIVITIES

Book Club

The Book Club met by zoom on **April 15** to discuss *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. The characters were well drawn, each one unique and fascinating, and the story that developed and led them through the Congo's historic liberation from colonial rule in the 1960's made for a real page-turner. Three of our recent book club selections have been centered in Africa and have given us plenty to discuss.

We met again on May 20 to discuss *People of the Book*, by Geraldine Brooks. One participant (Gail) wrote, "All of us found that reading it was fascinating and historically interesting as the original haggadah (traditional Jewish literature, especially the non-legal part of the Talmud) was physically moved from country to country and sequestered from book burnings and destruction over the centuries."

Club members attending were Gail Holmes, Tom Miller, Kathy Speck, and co-leaders Marjie Marion and Marian Ehrenberg.

We will skip a June meeting in consideration of the visit from the Toronto club. No meeting is scheduled for August either.

On **July 15** we plan to meet in person! The time of day and location are still to be determined, so stay tuned. Watch for an email (MailChimp); check the website; or contact us.

We will discuss *Cutting for Stone* (2009) by Abraham Verghese. This is a long book with 657 pages. There are plenty of copies available through the library system.

Book Club (cont)

From the publisher:

"...an enthralling family saga of Africa and America, doctors and patients, exile and home. Twin brothers...orphaned by their mother's death in childbirth and their father's disappearance, bound together by a preternatural connection and a shared fascination with medicine, they come of age as Ethiopia hovers on the brink of revolution. Moving from Addis Ababa to New York City and back again, this is an unforgettable story of love and betrayal, medicine and ordinary miracles – and two brothers whose fates are forever intertwined."

Please join us! We would love to share our conversation with you, and the reading is not required.

Let us know if you would like to be added to our email list, and whether you want to participate in the conversations or not. It is a good way to hear about what we are reading.

Marjie Marion <u>midsi@aol.com</u>
Marian Ehrenberg marianeh2014@gmail.com

Very Special Book News!



Club member Tom Miller revealed recently that he has written and published his first book, a memoir entitled *Farm Boy: Growing up in Rural North Dakota*, and is already working on his second book. Congratulations, Tom!

Tom also writes a travel blog and includes some of our FF Journeys in it, both inbound and outbound. If you haven't had the pleasure of reading his blog, here's the link:

https://travelingwithtom.com/

Second Harvest Foodbank

Friendship Force volunteers have made a significant impact on the food security of people in southwest Wisconsin as FF members have dedicated hours of volunteer time at the Second Harvest Food Bank on the east side of Madison.

Second Harvest is not only a distribution center, but a community-based service organization collaborating with more than 300 food pantries, schools, after school programs and other non-profit organizations across a 16-county region.

Hundreds of volunteers have worked tirelessly for almost 50,000 hours during the past year to prepare boxes of food to be delivered to the above organizations. This last year, almost 22 million pounds of food was distributed.

But statistics don't tell the whole story:

Friendship Force volunteers have found camaraderie and purpose as they gather at Second Harvest on the **last Wednesday** of each month from **12:30-3:30pm**. They have reaped the rewards of knowing that their time is well spent to make a difference in the lives of people in need. Our "jobs" can include sorting, labeling, and packing food into family-sized portions. We are often joined by other dedicated volunteers as we work together in a committed and joyful atmosphere.

Won't you join us? It's a fun and welcoming group! Join forces with other volunteers, help your neighbors in need, and become friends with fellow Friendship Force members!

To volunteer, please contact Judy Thorpe (<u>jthorpe12@charter.net</u> or (608) 772-5438) by **May 26 and/or July 28.** June has been canceled

Thank you for your help!

- Judy Thorpe, Activity Leader

ACTIVITIES

Our next volunteer times are:

May 29 12:30-3:30pm July 31 12:30-3:30pm

Second Harvest 2802 Dairy Drive Madison WI 53718

Recent Second Harvest Service Days

March 27: The happy crew (pic below) packaged, sealed, and boxed enough ears of frozen corn to fill over a skid, and then labeled cups of peas when they ran out of corn. They even worked overtime until the staff begged them to stop!

April 24: Hal, Larry, Diane, and Gail returned, along with Vicki Warren and Vivian Norton, and filled yet another 1.5 skids of boxed ears of corn! (One skid holds 3,600 ears, per Gail!)

May 29: Vicki, Vivian, Larry, Diane, Donna, and Gail taped and labelled cardboard boxes of pinto beans, after placing product labels on empty 2# plastic bags, filling and packing eight bags into each box, and then closing and sealing the boxes. Our industrious team packaged 1,360 pounds!!



L to R: Hal Wissink, Maureen Kind, Diane Mertens, Gail Holmes, Judy Thorpe, Donna Hussin, and Larry Neuman

-Photo courtesy of Donald Kind 3/27/24

Dining on the 6th

Upcoming: There will be no Dining on the 6th in June due to the arrival of the Toronto ambassadors and my arranging for their homehosted dinners that evening.

In July, the holiday weekend includes the 6th; and in August, the Activities Committee will host the club's Summer Picnic as a dining activity that month. We'll be back in September!

- Gail Holmes, Host

Recent Dining: Touch of Ukraine

April: Dining on the 6th was a new adventure as we gathered for dinner at 5:30 on Saturday, April 6, at Touch of Ukraine, which was appropriately decorated with blue or yellow placemats and blue and yellow vases of flowers on each table.

Twenty people enjoyed specialty Ukrainian drinks ordered from the bar, entrees made from scratch, and over two hours of conversation across the two tables in a separate room reserved for us.





Dressed for Spring in Ukrainian colors is our Hostess with the Mostest, Gail Holmes!

ACTIVITIES

Recent Dining: Touch of Ukraine



Participants seen in the photos are John & Dorothy Baldwin, Jan Barbone, Mike & Carla Di Iorio, Angie Garrison, Deb Gunther, Gail Holmes (host), Donna Hussin, Doug & Kathy Johnson, Maureen Kind, Kristin Mathews, Margo McKnight, Diane Mertens & Larry Neuman, Tom & Donna Miller, Agnes Rona, and Stephanie Sorensen. Four more who had hoped to attend had to cancel.



Dessert from host Gail was a dark chocolate

Dove with caramel and sea salt.



ACTIVITIES



Recent Dining: Prairie Cafe

May: We gathered for Dining on the 6th at Prairie Café and Bakery in Middleton for a variety of delicious breakfast selections at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, May 6. Ten of us (with two absent for health reasons) dined and enjoyed visiting with each other.



Awaiting dessert of *two* Reese's peanut butter cups were attendees Carla & Mike Di Iorio, Angie Garrison, Deb Gunther & Matt Gazo, leader Gail Holmes, Maureen Kind, Marjie & Pete Marion, and Vivian Norton.



Don't tell Gail, but I snitched three Reese's when she wasn't looking! — Anonymous

<u>Bike/Run/Walk Fundraiser</u> -

July 20, 2024

For the second year in a row, our Club will field a team in the annual fundraiser for the Boys & Girls Clubs of Dane County.



Join FF Team Leader Larry Neuman and choose any of the following activities:: a 2-mile walk, a 5k run, or one of 3 different bike rides. You can also just come and groove to the band at the postevent party at McKee Farms in Fitchburg. There will be cold drinks, great food, family games and activities, and LIVE MUSIC!

And the best part? You can sponsor our team! All proceeds raised go directly to the local Clubs to promote programs serving our local youth.

Saturday July 20, 2024 — 7am-2pm

McKee Farms Park

2930 Chapel Valley Road Fitchburg, WI

Advance registration for Team members is \$55 thru May 31, and then increasing \$5/month until July 19. Same day registration is \$70.

For more information, or to sign up for the Team or **to pledge your support**, click on this link:

https://move4bgc.rallybound.org/

Last year's Team taking a little break in Paoli...



IN MEMORIAM

Adopt-A-Highway

There was a large group for the Adopt-A-Highway cleanup on Monday, **May 27**. Luckily the rain held out, but the grass had not been mown so it was a bit long and difficult to walk through.



L-R:

Back row: Tom & Donna Miller, Katie Martinson, Vivian Norton, and Magdi Sebestyen.

Front row: Leader Stephanie Vanden Bush, with daughters Hazel and Evelyn.

-photo courtesy of Dean Vanden Bush

More opportunities coming!

Please join us for our next highway cleanup events. Our community appreciates your effort to make our roadsides look clean and beautiful!

Sunday, July 7 at 6pm Friday, Sept 13 at 10am

Please meet at the Middleton Park and Ride off Hwy 12 exit 249. Contact Stephanie Vanden Bush at sljacobs2@gmail.com or (920) 676-1441 with questions and/or your RSVP.

David Dohler 1938-2024



Dave and his wife Jane were members of the Madison Friendship Force from 2001 to 2019. They were active in our club as hosts and ambassadors, and Dave was our website manager and email guru for years. Jane passed away in 2015.

Their first trip with Friendship Force was to Irkutsk, Russia. They boarded a train in Vladivostok and traveled 3 days to arrive at their host city.

Dave also sang in various local choirs and volunteered his time and talents with other community organizations, including the Wisconsin Youth Symphony Orchestra.

Funeral services were held on May 10, 2024, followed by burial at Roselawn Memorial Park in Monona. Memorials may be made to St. Stephen's Lutheran Church in Monona.

A full-length obituary may be found at:

https://www.gundersonfh.com/obituaries/David-Edward-Dohler?obId=31202812



PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS

A Global Journey to Taiwan presented by Diane Mertens and Larry Neuman

Late last November, Larry and Diane met 19 other Global Ambassadors and several Journey Coordinators from Hsinchu at the train station in Taipei, Taiwan. It was the beginning of an 11-day, memorable Journey, first to Hsinchu, where they met their hosts and spent a day, then to sites along the western length of Taiwan. They stayed close to the coast, stopping at urban areas, at times diverting to parks or mountain villages, everywhere savoring the people, the landscape, and the cultural richness.

And what a cultural feast it was!

They enjoyed a folk opera, visited an ancestor-worshipping temple, explored a Buddhist temple complex, listened to traditional music, and learned about Hakka oil paper umbrellas and dragon dance masks. There were ample opportunities to participate—activities like acting on stage in Taiwanese folk opera, mixing up a special kind of Hakka Lei Tea, donning traditional costumes, and dancing at an indigenous village.

Taiwan (cont):

Along the way came some unusual sights—a valley teeming

with millions of wintering, purple butterflies, their flutters filling the air with color; and seaside oyster beds being harvested in a very traditional way— with oxen. (After their ox cart ride, Larry and Diane couldn't resist an opportunity to sample the oysters.)

On Day 10 of their trip—almost the end—their bus took them to an indigenous village close to Hsinchu. There Diane related her favorite activity—touring an elementary school and then listening to a special performance by the school choir. (Music courses were recently introduced, she was told, so that the students could rediscover their traditions and appreciate their ancestral songs.) To top it off, everyone ate lunch with food grown by the students themselves.

Among the 14 or so intent listeners at this zoom session was a surprise guest from Pennsylvania, Barbara Blakistone, NE Field Representative for FFI. Alerted by Harrisburg Ambassador, Lise Skofronick, Barbara gave the program a "great" thumbs up.

-review by David Blado, Program Committee



**Larry & Diane's program is now a click away on our website (ffwis.org), under Photos & Slideshows

POLICY UPDATES

POLICY UPDATES

Editor's Note: The Board discusses and revises Club policies as needed. In order to keep the membership apprised of these revisions, the Newsletter will print policy updates from time to time.

Here are two such policy updates to be added to the Board Manual and the Journey Coordinator Manual. They were approved on March 14, 2024

Annual Club Picnic Policy

The Board clarified and passed a policy regarding the Annual Club Picnic responsibilities. There had been some confusion, and this clarification should help things run more smoothly.

- 1. If there is an Incoming Journey in the summer, the relevant Journey Committee will schedule, plan, and organize all aspects of an FF Club Picnic. That includes inviting all Club members to a picnic where the Ambassadors will be present.
- 2. If there is no summer Incoming Journey picnic planned, the Activities Committee will schedule, plan, and organize all aspects of an FF Club Picinic (targeting July/August) and will budget appropriately for this possibility.

Please respond and be willing to help whenever the Committee reaches out requesting help with various related tasks - especially if a potluck option is chosen for the food.

Journey / Members Subsidy

The Board approved a new monetary policy to provide a small gift to those who are actively participating and doing the work of making the Journeys run well. Here are the details of that policy:

- 1. A sum of \$300 will be given to every Incoming Journey Committee. This amount is to be reviewed every two years and is contingent upon the financial status of the Club. This money is to be used to reward FF members who are actively contributing to the functioning of the Club. Suggestion of ways to use this would be to partially or fully subsidize a Home Host's meal such as at the welcome or farewell events; reimburse drivers for gas; pay for tickets of a Host one day; reimburse people who contribute food to an event; etc. This is NOT to be used simply to pay the cost of renting a room or a picnic shelter which then benefits Ambassadors and Club members equally.
- 2. Journey Coordinators should be charging the Incoming Ambassadors \$25 each beyond the established budget, and that amount would be shared between the JC's. Therefore, they are not to receive a part of the \$300 (mentioned in Section 1 above).

At the moment our bank account is very healthy and we can afford to help make this aspect of contributing to our work just a bit less of a financial issue. It does cost money to Host as you are expected to attend events and activities with your Ambassador. On the other hand, you receive that kind of benefit from your Hosts when you travel. This is the essence of Friendship Force.

 Submitted by Stephanie Sorensen Journey Manager, March 2024

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Second Harvest Foodbank

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