



friendship force
WISCONSIN - MADISON

ffwis.org

June 2025

A NOTE FROM THE CO-PRESIDENTS

Making and sustaining connections is a theme that came out of last year’s strategic planning session, and it was recently emphasized in a letter on the FFI website by Ken Weaver, a member of the FFI board of directors. He said, “Engaging in community and organizational partnerships and projects are important ways to extend our reach. FFI has always been more than just travel - it’s a movement. To grow and thrive, we must continue evolving, teaching what it means to be a global citizen, and forging new partnerships. Our collaboration with organizations like the Global Village Museum of Arts and Cultures, Sister Cities, and the Welcoming Cities movement demonstrates the power of these alliances in fostering a more connected world.”

Our local club’s connection to a larger international organization reminds us of the importance of being engaged and having connections. Connection and engagement with other clubs and individuals combat feelings of isolation during troubled times. People who are engaged in interlocked organizations can be a reservoir of resilience and strength.

A major strength of FF Wisconsin-Madison is its connections to other FF clubs through inbound and outbound journeys and the lasting relationships that are formed. Because of our engaged members, FFW-M has connected to like-minded organizations across the Madison metro area. Reaching out, making connections, and working cooperatively with other organizations that share similar values and goals strengthens and expands the reach of Friendship Force.

Recently, we watched a ninety-minute PBS documentary, “Free for All,” about public libraries. We learned a lot and felt uplifted after watching it. This story of American public libraries reaffirms core values that parallel those of Friendship Force.

<https://www.pbs.org/independentlens/documentaries/free-for-all/>

Diane and Larry



Club Activities Calendar



BOARD meets VIRTUALLY the second Thursday of the month at 4:00 PM

- June 6 Dining on 6th, 11:30 AM
- June 22 Open Door for Refugees
- June 25 Second Harvest, 12:30-3:30 PM
- June 28 Book Club
- June 30 Adopt A Highway, 9:00-1100 AM
- July 21 Book Club
- August 20 Annual Club Potluck Picnic, 5-7:00 PM
- October 19-24 Birmingham, AL Outbound Journey

2026

- March Sacramento, CA Outbound Journey
- July Wairarapa, NZ Inbound Journey
- August Seferehisar, Türkiye Outbound Journey
- September Lower Columbia, Inbound Journey



Annual Summer Pot Luck Picnic
Wednesday, August 20, 2025
5-7:00 PM
McKee Farms Park
2930 Chapel Valley Rd, Fitchburg, WI
Details to follow closer to the date.



Remember to 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!

WHAT'S HAPPENING at the CLUB and INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

FFW-M Program Committee Update and Recruitment

Our club has had a standing committee for planning programs. Its general purpose, as stated in our bylaws, is to "Recruit speakers, entertainment, and develop 'ice breakers' for various events and meetings held by the club." For the past several years, including the COVID years, Mike Lambert and David Blado led the committee and offered a steady flow of diverse and informative programs for club members, mostly through ZOOM. Recently, they conducted a survey of member preferences and found that members prefer a mix of ZOOM and in-person programs. Mike and David stepped down last month and shared it may be time to reexamine the purposes and operation of the program committee.

At the May FFW-M board meeting, there was general agreement that an important function of the program committee is to educate and inform club members about other cultures, especially cultures and topics connected to our journeys. After some brainstorming the Board came up with suggestions for possible revision:

Offer one program each quarter, or four programs per year.

Invite non-members to program events.

Co-sponsor a program with another organization (e.g. Returning Peace Corps, Sister Cities, Senior Centers, Rotary Clubs, area libraries).

Provide a mix of experiences and activities beyond lectures: offering cooking classes and dance lessons; setting up game nights; showing and discussing a movie; and offering visits to a cultural or religious center (e.g. the Deer Park Tibetan Buddhist Center).

Offer program events at different times and days of the week to allow participation by members who are working or who would like to bring family members or children.

This list is only suggestive, and it is not exhaustive. Members who volunteer to join the committee can be creative in setting a direction for the committee.

We are looking for people who are interested in joining with others to be part of a revitalized program committee. Ideally, three or four people could share responsibility to reduce the burden on any one person. Even if you have no prior FFW-M committee experience, your commitment, energy, and creative ideas are needed! Please contact Diane Mertens with your suggestions and your willingness to revitalize our programs: mertensdk27@gmail.com

Thank you,

Diane and Larry

New Ways to Travel with Friendship Force?

If you are someone who likes to connect one-on-one with another member, our independent journeys may just be the ticket for you versus our group journeys. Whether you're traveling solo, as a couple, or with your family, these flexible experiences are available in different regions in addition to our group journeys.

The journey is coordinated between the host and the ambassador. Find independent journeys listed on the journey marketplace website.

<https://friendshipforce.myshopify.com/collections/public>

If interested in being a host for an independent journey, you need to be a member of FFI and you need to have an approved member account on my.friendshipforce.org (myFF). The application form is found on the independent journey marketplace website.

Friendship Force International Announces 3-in-1 Event Experience with the 2026 North American Regional Conference Memphis, TN.

*April 24 – April 27
Attend the FFI North American Regional
Conference in Memphis
Registration opens September 1*

*April 28 – May 6
Embark on the Festival on the Mississippi River Cruise
Memphis to New Orleans*

*May 6 – May 10 Extend your journey with our New
Orleans tour*

Details:

<https://friendshipforce.myshopify.com/products/festival-on-the-mississippi-26256-myff>

SAVE THE DATE!

April 24-27, 2026
Memphis, Tennessee

**2026
North American
Regional
Conference**



JOURNEY NEWS

Brazil Outbound – May 27 – June 6, 2025

Nine Ambassadors (Jan Barbone, Mary Crave, Matt Gazo, Deb Gunther, Gail Holmes, Margaret Harrigan, Donna and Tom Miller, and Kristin Mathews) are currently traveling in Brazil. Co-journey Coordinators are Jan Barbone and Mary Crave.



Seven of the Ambassadors are participating in a pre-journey tour of Rio de Janeiro and Iguazu Falls on the Brazil/Argentine border before traveling to host clubs, Belo Horizonte and Belem.

We wish them safe and happy travels!

Birmingham, Alabama Outbound – October 19-24, 2025

Co-Journey Coordinators Vicki and Ken Warren are busy planning a workshop for June.



Birmingham Civil Rights Institute



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ACTIVITIES

**Dining on the 6th
Friday, June 6
11:30 AM**

**Green Lantern
Restaurant
4412 Siggelkow Rd
McFarland, WI 53558**



If It's Friday, Then It Must Be Fish Fry in Wisconsin!

In Gail Holmes' absence, Larry Neuman and Vivian Norton arranged **Dining on the 6th** in June. As we did two years ago, we are combining Dining on the 6th with an optional bicycle ride.

For lunch, we will meet at the Green Lantern Restaurant on Lake Waubesa in McFarland, famous for their "Friday Fish Fry," on June 6 at 11:30 am. Our club will have a private downstairs room. The menu features, of course, baked cod, and everything from burgers to tacos to wraps. Most menu items cost about \$10.95. There is a 3.5% charge for use of credit cards.

You have two options to get to the Green Lantern Tavern in McFarland: Cycling or driving.

CYCLING

People interested in cycling have a long and short option. The **LONG OPTION** starts at the parking lot of the Wyndham Garden Hotel (2969 Cahill Main, Fitchburg). It has a B-Bike station that is located on the Capitol City Trail just before the bicycle bridge crosses over Fish Hatchery Road. The bike trail is paved and passes along the beautiful E-way (you might get lucky and see a deer or sandhill crane). There are three easy-moderate hills, and the distance to the Green Lantern is 8 miles. We will leave at 10:15 am so you should arrive by 10 am. The **SHORT OPTION** is 2.7 miles and has no hills. It is a pleasant ride along the paved Yahara River Trail across the mile long Lake Waubesa pedestrian/bicycle bridge. Bicyclists will start in the west parking lot of the Lussier Family Heritage Center, 3101 Lake Farm Rd. (near the Dane County Lake Farm Campground). Be ready to leave by 11:00 am to join the **LONG OPTION** group. All cyclists will bike the last phase of the ride together.

DRIVING

From the beltline get onto Stoughton Road/Hwy 51 and go south. Take the first exit, just before the bridge on to Terminal Drive. Follow Terminal Drive to Siggelkow Road. The Green Lantern is visible when turning on to Siggelkow. You can also put Green Lantern Restaurant, 4412 Siggelkow Rd, McFarland, WI 53558 in your GPS system.

Please contact Vivian Norton by email, vjoan@icloud.com or text, 563-508-1323, by **Tuesday, June 3** if you are interested. Let her know whether you will be driving or biking, and if biking, whether you will bike the **LONG** or **SHORT OPTION**. We're looking forward to seeing you in McFarland on June 6.

ACTIVITIES

Adopt a Highway Monday, June 30 9-11:00 AM

Our next cleanup is Monday June 30, 9-11am. We'll take a break until fall then to avoid the summer heat. Come help our environment while enjoying some sunshine (hopefully). Meet up on Highway 51 (Parking on Highway 51 at the intersection with Tower Drive – there is a large gravel shoulder to park on. See map link below. Note, there is a Tower Rd that intersects with Highway 51 near McFarland that could be confused with our location. Another way to find it is to search for “Altemus Corners House Bed and Breakfast” in maps, which is at the same intersection:



https://www.google.com/maps/@42.9186274,-89.1515839,15z?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI1MDQxMy4wIKXMDSoASAFQAw%3D%3D

Please contact Stephanie Vanden Bush (sljacobs2@gmail.com or 920-676-1441) to commit or with questions.



•A World of Friends is a World of Peace

ACTIVITIES



2802 Dairy Drive, Madison,
Wednesday, June 25, 2025

It's that time again! Our next Second Harvest Foodbank volunteer day is Wednesday June 25, 2025 from 12:30 to 3:30 p.m at 2802 Dairy Drive in Madison. Gail Holmes reported that there was a wonderful response on April 30th with nine volunteers: Mary Crave, Judi Dilks, Margaret Harrigan, Donna Hussin, Maureen Kind, Diane Mertens, Vivian Norton, and Lise Skofronick. She said they peeled fresh bunches of Delmonte bananas from Guatemala, double sealed them in plastic bags and placed them in boxes to be frozen and shipped off immediately to meal sites. We'll see what's in store for the volunteers on June 25!

To volunteer contact Julie Pretell at 608 628 0550 or jopretell.rieland@gmail.com.

Book Club

June 28, 2:00 PM
Home of Maureen Kind
5901 Mayhill Dr., Madison,
WI



15 of us met by zoom on Monday, May 19, for a wonderful presentation and discussion of The Mockingbird Next Door by Marja Mills. We were delighted that the author was able to join the zoom from her home right here in Wisconsin, answering our questions and further enriching our understanding of Harper Lee, her family and friends, and the southern culture in general. We were pleased to get to know her, and so glad that Tom Miller reached out to his friend and invited her to speak with us, and that she agreed to do so. Several members were moved to read To Kill a Mockingbird for the first time after finishing the Mills book, myself among them. So glad I finally did that!

Previously, on April 21, and also via zoom, the novel The Glass Chateau by Stephen P. Kiernan was discussed. This book, inspired by the life, times and art of Marc Chagall, concerns a group of people who come together to create stained glass windows for France's damaged cathedrals in the immediate aftermath of World War II. Secrets are shared, and psyches are repaired as they work together and learn to trust

ACTIVITIES

each other. A lively discussion was held, with six members participating including leader, Marian Ehrenberg.

Coming up, we have another southern classic for June, and then we head back to France for July. Pencil in the dates, but please be aware that they are likely to change. In summer it can be nice to gather in daytime and in person rather than with zoom, and possibly at members' homes. Times, dates and locations might be changed from the usual "third Monday at 7:00 pm via zoom." Watch for adjustments on the website calendar. Or add your name to our email list (contact Marjie Marion) if you want to be notified of any changes.

Saturday, June 28, 2:00 pm - IN PERSON at the home of Maureen Kind, 5901 Mayhill Dr, Madison

The Optimist's Daughter - Eudora Welty (1972), 180 pp. 15 copies in the library system.

"The people of Mount Salus, Mississippi always felt good about Judge McKelva. He was a quiet, solid reassuring figure, just as a judge should be. Then, ten years after his first wife's death, he marries the frivolous young Wanda Fay. No-one can understand his action, not least his beloved daughter, Laurel, who finds it hard to accept the new bride. It is only some years later, when circumstance brings her back to her childhood home, that Laurel stirs old memories and comes to understand the peculiarities of her upbringing, and the true relationship between her parents and herself. *The Optimist's Daughter* is a reflective, poignant novel of independence and love, for which Eudora Welty, one of America's greatest contemporary Southern writers, was awarded the Pulitzer Prize."

Monday, July 21 – tentative date, location TBD

The Hundred-Foot Journey - Richard C. Morais (2008), 245 pp. 10 copies available through the library system.

If you can't read the book then see the 2014 movie - or do both! Film is also available from the library.

"A New York Times Bestseller; now a major motion picture starring Helen Mirren and Om Puri. Born above his grandfather's modest restaurant in Mumbai, Hassan Haji first experienced life through intoxicating whiffs of spicy fish curry, trips to the local markets, and gourmet outings with his mother. around the world before settling in a small village in the French Alps. There they open an inexpensive Indian restaurant opposite the esteemed French *relais* of chef Madame Mallory."

Again, watch for changes to the calendar this summer. If you want to receive emails from the book club, get in touch with Marjie to be added to the list. There is never a reading or participation requirement, of course! Our messages can keep you apprised of what we are up to.

Marjie Marion (midsi@aol.com) and Marian Ehrenberg (marianeh2014@gmail.com)

"Reading is a means of thinking with another person's mind; it forces you to stretch your own." Lionel Trilling

ACTIVITIES

FFWM Can Support and Connect with Friends



Open Doors for Refugees invites you to their Free Community Picnic on June 22. You can join a potluck picnic at the Olin Park Pavilion from 12pm-4pm on Sunday, June 22, 2025. This free community event will feature family-friendly activities, delicious

food, live music by Gloria Hays and Yid Vicious, and a performance of the Attan, Afghanistan's national dance. This is a perfect opportunity for resettled refugees and long-term Madison residents to come together and build community. Read more about what is planned on the Open Doors for Refugees website. <https://opendoorsforrefugees.org/>

There are lots of ways you can contribute to this annual celebration:

- RSVP on the Open Doors for Refugees Facebook page and share the event with your network.
- Bring a food dish to share! No signup needed, but feel free to get in touch if you have any questions: picnic@odfr.org
- Volunteer your time! Lots of help is needed with setup, cleanup, leading kids' activities, and more.

[Sign up here](#)

Sincere Condolences

Reta Harring

July 14, 1928 -May 8, 2025

Reta has been a member since 1982. She has participated in many Journeys, both in and outbound. She loved to travel and in her lifetime visited over 30 countries and 49 states. Most recently she was one of our book club leaders. She also hosted for Open World.



A memorial service will take place at 12 PM on Friday, August 1, 2025 at Cress Funeral Service, 3325 E Washington Ave., 53704. A visitation will take place from 10 AM until the time of service. A burial will take place later that day at Cottage Grove Cemetery. Please share your memories at www.cressfuneralservice.com where you can also find a complete obituary.

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Second Harvest Foodbank

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