

The Friendship Force of Wisconsin-Madison Annual Meeting

Alicia Ashman Library, 733 N High Point Rd, Madison, Wisconsin

Saturday, April 26, 2025

Co-Presidents Diane Mertens and Larry Neuman welcomed 25 FFW-Madison Club members to the Annual Meeting at 2:05 and invited all to a table of enjoyable desserts made with Brazilian flare, and a time of sharing. Thank you to Vice President Kathy Johnson for planning this event!

The Co-Presidents recognized the current Board of Directors and Standing Committee Chairs:

Diane Mertens and Larry Neuman, Co-Presidents
Kathy Johnson, Vice President
Deb Gunther, Treasurer
Co-Journey Managers, Tom Miller and Kathy Speck
Vicki Warren, Secretary
Activities, Gail Holmes
Membership, Hal Wissink
Programs, David Blado and Mike Lambert
Outreach, Jan Barbone
Newsletter Editor, Donna Hussin
E Communications, Sandi Wysock
Members at Large, Donna Ulteig and Dorothy Baldwin

The Co-Presidents offered a heartfelt Thank You! to the Programs Committee Co-Chairs, David Blado and Mike Lambert. Mike and David have retired from their position, hoping new eyes will look at the work of this committee. Thank you to both of you for your long time working at this, for the excellent programming through UW, members, and other sources, for your long efforts at this important work of the Club. There is now an open position on the Board awaiting committed leadership.

April is Volunteer Month Committed hands were raised again and again in recognition of the work that FFW-Madison Club Members take part in: Hosting, Planning Committees, Open World, Welcome and Farewell Gatherings, Activities, Book Club, Highway Cleanup, Dining on the 6th, Second Harvest outreach, FFI and Regional events, Ad Hoc Committees. Thank you for your time and talents!

FFI Wayne Smith Medal This Friendship Force International recognition of outstanding leadership and fostering of global friendship was given to two FFW-Madison Club Members, Sandi Wysock and Mary Lindquist, for their optimism and commitment to world peace, respect, diversity and humanitarian service.

Sandi served four terms as Club President, and planned and administrated six Open World programs, among many other responsibilities. Sandi said this: "Friendship Force Wisconsin-Madison has been a significant part of my life, and my life's mission."

Mary has held numerous positions, hosted many Ambassadors, welcomed and mentored many new members, developed and continues to update the Club Manual and our member database for FFW-Madison and FFI. She has been on seven dental mission trips to Haiti, and lives a positive global outlook, serving and assisting people in their life struggles.

A Moment of Silence in Remembrance of the loss of President Jimmy Carter, a longtime supporter of Friendship Force.

Business Meeting

2024 Annual Meeting Minutes Following a motion, a second and with no discussion, the Annual Meeting 2024 Minutes, printed in the latest newsletter, were approved unanimously.

2024 Annual Meeting Treasurer's Report Following a motion, a second, and with no additional questions, the Annual Meeting 2024 Treasurer's Report, printed in the latest newsletter, was unanimously accepted and placed into audit, noting the one-time large expenditure for the North American Regional Conference held last fall.

Co-President Report Diane M. and Larry N. highlighted these events and good work during the last year: the Strategic Planning meeting and the Ad Hoc Committee work resulting from that meeting, the Inbound and Outbound Journeys, the Picnics, the Regional Conference, the Holiday Party and the Kosovo Open World.

2025 Board Member Election Results Sandi W. collected the 48 ballots submitted. All were unanimously in favor of the proposed slate of officers. Thank you to all who ran, and we look forward as a Club to working together during the coming year.

Co-Presidents, Larry Neuman and Diane Mertens
Vice President, Kathy Johnson
Secretary, Vicki Warren
Treasurer, Deb Gunther

Membership FFW-Madison gained 10 and 2 new Club members this past year. With the loss of 6 past members, the Club has experienced a gain in membership this year. Several new members attended this meeting, welcoming Mary Crave, Margaret Harrigan, Lola Barrientos Marquez, and Judi Dilks.

Six Past Members: Remembered and Honored

Dave Dahler, Betty Fuller, Ivan Gruetzmacher, Richard Hayden, Marvin Sherrill,
Virginia Mae (Farwell) Zwickey

Historian: Donna Hussin talked about the history of Friendship Force International, launched in 1977 by Wayne Smith and supported by Jimmy Carter. Simultaneous exchanges operated from 1977 -1982 with individuals paying a \$250 induction fee. FFWI-Madison chartered in 1982 with FFI web site showing involvement beginning in 1978. Donna showed us the 1982 Charter

document. The first Journey was simultaneous, in 1997 between Atlanta and the UK. The Club system began in 1980 with 33 states and 5 initial Clubs. FFW-Madison first Club exchanges were with Zurich, Korea, France, and Germany. FFW-Madison Club Members have traveled on or hosted 176 Inbound, Outbound and Mission Journeys, including traveling behind the Iron Curtain. FFW-Madison hosted the International 2000 conference at Monona Terrace and was elected Club of the Year in 1989. Ten members who joined between 1978 and 1999 are still members. One of our members served on the FFI Board in 1977. FFW-Madison would like to gather our Club copies of the book about FF, The Other Side of the Mountain: Bridging the Great Divide, author Charlene Terrell, with a forward by Jimmy and Rosalind Carter. These could then be loaned to new members.

After many years of preparing and archiving paper copies of all business matters, the current practice is saving all digital documents onto a flash drive every 5 years that is turned over to the WI State Historical Society Archives. All documents are available to anyone for viewing by simply asking the archivist.

Activities Gail H. highlighted these regularly occurring activities: Dining on the 6th, the 3rd Monday Book Club, the last Wed of the month Second Harvest service, the two sites for Highway Cleanup (please come help!), Biking, Hiking and the Summer Picnic Potluck.

Journey Report

Mary C. reported on the Outbound Brazil trip, leaving May 22nd, with nine Ambassadors. Five of them will take part in an additional early tour.

Ken and Vicki W. talked about the Outbound Birmingham AL October 19-24 trip, with 16 applications, interviews happening soon, and additional tour options, perhaps before, perhaps after the Birmingham Club hosting.

Journeys in 2026: Two Inbound and two Outbound Journeys are scheduled for 2026.

Inbound in July from Wairarapa New Zealand, a rural area an hour north of Wellington

Inbound in September from Lower Columbia, USA. This is a combined Club from Portland, Oregon and Vancouver DA

Outbound Journey in March 2026 to Sacramento, the Capitol of CA

Outbound Journey in August 2026 to Seferihisas, Turkiye, a new Club in the 3rd largest city, a resort area by the Aegean Sea.

Co-Journey Managers, Tom M. and Kathy S., will be looking for coordinators and committee members.

Upcoming Events

See Activities listing above.

North American Regional Conference in Memphis, TN in March 2026

Submitted by Secretary Vicki Warren

Annual Meeting 2025: Attendees

Diane Mertens

Larry Neuman

Kathy Johnson

Doug Johnson

Deb Gunther

Matt Gunther

Vicki Warren

Ken Warren

Gail Holmes

Hal Wissink

Donna Ulteig

Sandi Wysock

George Wysock

Dorothy Baldwin

John Baldwin

Donna Hussin

Mary Lindquist

Ariel Ford

Pat Fleming

Margret Anundson

Maureen Kind

Patricia Watson

Margaret Harrigan

Judi Dilks

Lola Barrientos Marquez