



friendship force
WISCONSIN-MADISON

ffwis.org

April 2026

CO-PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

We look forward to seeing everyone at the FFWM Annual Meeting on Saturday, April 18, at the Middleton Public Library. In addition to socializing with club members, electing club officers, approving the annual budget, and voting on bylaw revisions, two speakers who have extensive knowledge of immigration issues and experience assisting immigrants and refugees resettle in the Madison area will give a presentation. This is part of our club's efforts to localize the FFI mission of fostering International Understanding through person-to-person connections, advancing Global Citizenship, and promoting World Peace. After their presentations, there will be an opportunity to ask questions. Below is information about the two speakers.

Irene Wren is an attorney who worked with UW-Madison International Students and started her own law firm where she provided legal guidance and representation to individuals and families navigating the complexities of the immigration process.

Madeline Uraneck is an author/educator who has traveled, held jobs, or studied in 64 countries. She was the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI)'s International Education Consultant, a Peace Corps Volunteer to Lesotho, and a Peace Corps Director of Programming and Training in Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan. She may invite some Madison area refugees from Open Doors for Refugees, a local organization with which she is involved. The mission of Open Doors for Refugees is to help refugees create a home in the Madison area. It was founded in 2016 and is volunteer-driven. Volunteers work closely with partner organizations to provide furniture, winter clothing, transportation, language, workforce development, childcare, and other support services to refugees and immigrants in the Madison community

Although the war with Iran and increased restrictions on international travel may make traditional Journey activities more challenging, our club can still advance the FFI mission by staying informed and engaged. We hope you will take this opportunity by joining us on April 18.

Diane and Larry



Wisconsin State Capitol – Madison, WI

Club Activities Calendar



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

2026

- April 6 Dining on the 6th
- April 18 Annual Meeting
- April 19 Book Club
- April 20 Adopt a Highway
- April 24-27 North American Regional Conference
Memphis, TN
- April 29 2nd Harvest
- May 13-19 Sacramento, CA Outbound Journey
- May 27 2nd Harvest
- June 7 Adopt a Highway
- June 24 2nd Harvest
- July 14 Club's Annual Picnic
- July 14-18 Quad Cities Inbound Journey
- July 29 2nd Harvest
- August 26 2nd Harvest
- September 8 Adopt a Highway
- September 30 2nd Harvest
- Late September Seferehisar, Türkiye Outbound Journey
- October 11 Adopt a Highway
- October 13-20 Lower Columbia (Washington State)
Inbound Journey
- October 28 2nd Harvest
- November 18 2nd Harvest



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FRIENDSHIP FORCE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

FFI 2026 Training Schedule

These workshops are designed for both new and experienced members who want to deepen their understanding of FFI programs, roles and tools.

All times are Eastern Time Zone.

April

- Journey Coordinator Training-April 6, 1:00 PM
- New Member Orientation-April 9, 2:00 PM:
- General Club & Journey Q&A-April 13, 1:00 PM

May

- Travel Insurance Q&A-May 7, 7:00 PM
- New Member Orientation-May 20, 12:00 PM

June

- General Club & Journey Q&A-June 11, 7:00 PM

July

- Open World Information Session-July 1, 12:00 PM
- Journey Coordinator Training-July 13, 1:00 PM

August

- New Member Orientation-August 3, 11:00 AM

September

- Matching Process-September 7, 8:30 PM
- New Member Orientation-September 10, 2:00 PM
- Planned Special Journeys-Date TBD

October

- New Member Orientation-October 5, 7:30 PM
- Recruiting New Members-October 22, 7:00 PM
- General Club & Journey Q&A-Date TBD
- Independent Journeys-Date TBD

November

- New Member Orientation-November 11, 1:00 PM
- Travel Insurance Q&A-November 17, 1:00 PM

December

- New Member Orientation-Date TBD

An overview of all 2026 workshops, registration links, and available recordings, can be found on FFI's website:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1hu86Sm-EcWzjXQQY6Rne5WbFsVcbA7CctfWHHeSy-Og/edit?_kx=4j7SMbWBJpbKMw6djTVJ1vEQC1LM0m8Ncr39pMtYnM.RaH2Qb&gid=1356194104#gid=13561click94104

(Control + click to follow link)

October 2026 Special Journey to Morocco Leader, Dana Jackson FFI

Members who have participated often describe Morocco as one of the most meaningful and culturally enriching experiences they've had with Friendship Force. The homestays, cooking experiences, and personal connections with local families are frequently cited as trip highlights.

FRIENDSHIP FORCE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Some helpful links can be found below:

- [Journey Marketplace Listing](#)
- [Full Itinerary](#)
- [Ambassador Application](#)

(Control + click to follow link)

The dates are **October 11 to the 25**. Members will fly in and out of Casablanca Mohammed V International Airport (CMN).

The cost is: \$3745 double occupancy. (Single supplement \$775).

Highlights that might be worth mentioning are:

- explore the famous Jemaa el-Fna square in Marrakech
- follow the Route of 1000 Kasbahs to Ait Benhaddou
- enjoy a 2-night homestay in ancient Fes
- overnight in a Sahara Desert tent with sunset camel ride
- visit the blue town of Chefchaouen
- learn Moroccan traditions at a Berber guesthouse

This will be the third year we have done this journey and it has been very popular with the members that have gone. Dana is so excited for it!

CLUB NEWS



FFWM Board Approves an Update of Bylaws' Language

At its March 12 meeting, the Friendship Force Wisconsin-Madison Board unanimously voted to approve a change in club bylaws. Before a bylaw change becomes official, it must be approved by the general membership at the Annual Meeting.

The rationale for this change is that our current practice for term of office for club Secretary deviates from the language in the club bylaws. It has been difficult to get someone to serve as Secretary, and continuity for more than two years in that office would be helpful. In addition, when someone assumes the position of club Treasurer, it may be helpful if the person knew that their length of service had a limit and was not permanent.

CLUB NEWS

Bylaws cont.

Below is the current bylaw section and proposed language to update this section. Changes to the bylaws must be approved by a majority of the club membership at the April 18 Annual Meeting. This language was also sent to all members by email.

CURRENT: Article VI, Section 1

The elected officers of The Club shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Candidates for club officers shall be members in good standing and shall be elected for a term of one year. Officers are limited to two (2) consecutive terms except for the Treasurer who may stand for re-election yearly.

PROPOSED: The elected officers of The Club shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. Candidates for club officers shall be members in good standing and shall be elected for a term of one year. Officers are limited to two (2) consecutive terms except for the **Treasurer and Secretary** who may stand for re-election yearly **for up to five (5) consecutive terms.**

Two FFWM Committees Seek Members



Our Outreach and Membership committees each need a chairperson. Each committee is composed of 2-3 members in addition to the chairperson.

Club bylaws state that the Outreach Committee will **make the club visible to the general community**, and the Membership Committee **will recruit and mentor new members.**

Please contact anyone on the Board of Directors if you have questions.

JOURNEY NEWS



Here is the latest update regarding our club's 2026 journeys.

Sacramento

On Saturday, February 28, Journey Coordinators Pat Watson and Lise Skofronick held an orientation meeting for Ambassadors who will be traveling to Sacramento from Wednesday, May 13 to Tuesday, May 19. The Sacramento Journey will include ten participants from Madison and four from Milwaukee. Ambassadors are expecting to receive their host assignments soon.

JOURNEY NEWS

Quad Cities

The Quad Cities Iowa Friendship Force Club is scheduled to visit Madison from July 14–18, 2026. A group of twelve Ambassadors is expected to participate in this journey. The welcome event will be held in conjunction with our annual club picnic on July 14 in Fitchburg. Additional details regarding the schedule and planned activities will be provided at a later date. If you are interested in serving as a home host, day host, or dinner host, please contact journey coordinators Kathy Speck or George Wysock.

Lower Columbia

The inbound journey from Lower Columbia, Washington is scheduled for October 13–20, 2026. Journey Coordinators Kristin Mathews and Tom Miller are assembling a planning team and will be seeking volunteers to serve as home hosts, day hosts, and dinner hosts. It is anticipated that ten to fourteen Ambassadors will participate in the visit to Madison. Additional information will be provided at the Club Annual Meeting on April 18 and in the May newsletter.

Seferihisar, Türkiye Pronunciation seh-fed-ree-he-sar)

The journey to Seferihisar, Türkiye is planned for late September 2026. Because of ongoing uncertainties in the Middle East, staff at Friendship Force International and the Journey Managers are monitoring the situation with input from the host club. Meanwhile, recruitment continues for two Ambassadors to volunteer as Journey Coordinators.



Urla, Türkiye



Seferihisar, Türkiye

Where is Seferihisar, Türkiye?

It's a city in the northwestern province of Izmir and is located on the Aegean coast. Our club had a journey in 2011 to Urla, which is north of Izmir Center and less than a hour drive from **Seferihisa**. Six individuals who went on that journey are still members of the club: Marian Ehrenberg, Gail Holmes, Mary Mastaglio, Helen Ann Rugowski, and Sandi & George Wysock. Gail has graciously shared her travel journey which provides a window into what you might experience on this journey.

FFWM Urla, Türkiye Outbound Journey 2011

We flew into Izmir and then took a 45-minute bus ride to Urla, where my host lived right on the Aegean Sea. Awakened at 6:00 a.m. with mosque call to prayers. Delivered books we brought to a library, visited quarantine island where emigrants were removed from ships if they had cholera and were disinfected in showers and clothes washed. Visited an olive oil factory, botanical garden, vineyard and tour of wine factory with tasting. Ate baklava dripping with honey at Welcome Dinner.

Visited a government run high school where students wore uniforms and the Mayor of Izmir's office. A local guide explained Izmir's 8,500 years of history. Shopping at historic bazaar, visit to mask museum, and game and toys museum. Took a ferry across the Aegean Sea to a small port and another ferry to Urla.

Tour to Selcuk, home of Temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. and church and tomb of St. John (one of Jesus' disciples). On to Ephesus dating back to 6,000 B.C. It was the capital of the Asian State of the Roman Empire. Saw stone carving of Nike, Celsius Library, Temple of Hadrian, Grand Theater which seats 24,000 people. Then to a carpet factory using silk thread and watched as the girl's fingers flew in weaving. House of the Virgin Mary where Jesus asked John to care for his mother. She lived and died here in Ephesus. Last to a leather factory for a fashion show and opportunity to purchase.

Shopped at Sigacek Village market with many homemade products produced by the local people. During the Ottoman Empire, their navy used their harbor and city wall was 4-6 feet thick. I walked on top by climbing steep steps (no railing). Dinner was fresh fish purchased by a few male ambassadors and the restaurant prepared them for our meal and Reki (like licorice) for many toasts.

Visit to a grade school which was partially destroyed by an 2006 earthquake. I distributed the many school items and Friendship Force balloons. Then to a preschool where the children sang a song for us. On to the Castle of Cesme fortified by Sultan Beyazit (1481-1512) to counter attacks by both pirates and the Knights of St. John, who operated from bases on the island of Rhodes. Then to Izmir Institute of Technology and a stop at the theater for a short folk dance show.

Cruised among the Urla islands and got off boat to swim in salty, beautiful blue Aegean Sea. The Farewell Dinner was a buffet at a restaurant in Urla and dancing. A week full of new adventures, history, great food, fun, and welcoming new Turkish friends.

After seven days, our group left on a pre-arranged bus tour going south and east from Izmir for ten more days and ending in Istanbul.

Gail Holmes

Adopt a Highway Clean Up Monday, April 20 1:00-3:00 PM

Our first Adopt a Highway clean up for the season is on Monday April 20th, 1-3pm. Come help our environment while enjoying some fresh spring weather. 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 Road 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 google maps, which is at the same intersection.



https://www.google.com/maps/@42.9186274,-89.1515839,15z?entry=ttu&g_ep=EgoyMDI1MDQxMy4wIKXMDSOASAFAw%3D%3D

These are the dates for the rest of 2026:

- Sun June 7, 6-8 pm
- Tues Sept 8, 10am-12pm
- Sun Oct 11, 2-4pm

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

Book Club Sunday, April 19, 2026 3:00 PM 5901 Mayhill Dr, Madison



On March 16, seven of our members participated by zoom in a good discussion of *Orhan's Inheritance*, by Aline Ohanesian. It followed two families, one Turkish and one Armenian, connected with each other in early 20th century Ottoman Anatolia, through the carpet trade. The families' connections are broken during WWI with the horrific Armenian expulsion and genocide, and the story picks up in the 1990s as the mystery of an unusual inheritance is explained. The novel was complicated but well told, illuminating, along with the tragic history, the power of art to educate and bring peace, and the determination and resilience of the human heart. We especially enjoyed the proverbs sprinkled throughout.

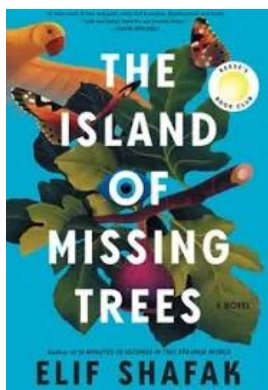
“You know what the trees said when the axe came to the forest?” “The handle is one of us.”

ACTIVITIES

Book Club cont

Our book for April is *The Island of Missing Trees*, a novel by Elif Shafak (2021); 353 pp. Eight copies currently available through the library system.

We will meet in person, at the home of Maureen Kind. Sunday, April 19 at 3:00 pm. 5901 Mayhill Dr. in Madison. **There will also be a laptop set up for zoom, so let us know if you want to participate that way, and the zoom link will be provided.**



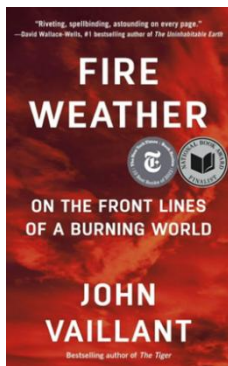
“Two teenagers, a Greek Cypriot and a Turkish Cypriot, meet at a taverna on the island they both call home. In the taverna, hidden beneath garlands of garlic, chili peppers and creeping honeysuckle, Kostas and Defne grow in their forbidden love for each other. A fig tree stretches through a cavity in the roof, and this tree bears witness to their hushed, happy meetings and eventually, to their silent, surreptitious departures. The tree is there when war breaks out, when the capital is reduced to ashes and rubble, and when the teenagers vanish. Decades later, Kostas returns. He is a botanist looking for native species, but really, he's searching for lost love.

Years later a Ficus carica grows in the back garden of a house in London where Ada Kazantzakis lives. This tree is her only connection to an island she has never visited--- her only connection to her family's troubled history and her complex identity as she seeks to untangle years of secrets to find her place in the world

A moving, beautifully written, and delicately constructed story of love, division, transcendence, history, and eco-consciousness, *The Island of Missing Trees* is Elif Shafak's best work yet.” – from the library site.

In May we will read *Fire Weather : a true story from a hotter world* by John Vaillant (2023); 359 pp.

"In May 2016, the city of Fort McMurray in Alberta, Canada, burned to the ground, forcing 88,000 people to flee their homes. It was the largest evacuation ever of a city in the face of a forest fire, raising the curtain on a new age of increasingly destructive wildfires. This book is a suspenseful account of one of North America's most devastating forest fires--and a stark exploration of our dawning era of climate catastrophes"- from the publisher



Let us know if you want to be added to the email list for Book Club.

Happy reading!

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

ACTIVITIES

Dining on the 6th

**Monday, April 6
12:00 PM for lunch
Great Dane Brew Pub
2980 Cahill Main
Fitchburg, WI 53711**



The menu at the Great Dane Brew Pub is a mix of Wisconsin classics and internationally inspired dishes that have become staples at the Pub.

Their variety of menu options include starters like cheese curds, nachos, Bavarian pretzel, Yakitori chicken skewers, and grilled chicken wings (\$11 to \$18); four salad choices (\$13 to \$18); three bowls including Korean rice, and Mediterranean falafel (\$15 to \$18); chicken wings with sauce choice; cup or bowl of soup with salad or a sandwich; wraps and sandwiches like pork gyro, pastrami reuben, or cajun turkey (\$13 to \$17); and four kinds of burgers (\$16). Finally, there are Pub Favorites: grilled steak and frites, Baja fish tacos, chicken pot pie, Thai chicken linguin, Pilsner-battered haddock fish fry, Caballero chicken enchiladas, beer-braised salmon, and Wisconsin-style cheddar mac (16 to \$20).

For beverages, there is soda, milk and tea, cocktails for \$10 to \$14, mocktails for \$8 to \$12, wine, and a wide variety of two dozen beers on tap.

To join in this dining adventure with other Friendship Force members, register by **Saturday, April 4**, with host Gail Holmes, phone 608 249-1846 or email glholmes@wisc.edu. Please plan to wear your name tag

JUST A LITTLE
Reminder

Remember to check Wisconsin-Madison website (ffiwis.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!

ACTIVITIES



Friendship Force WI-Madison Contributes to Second Harvest Food Bank.

Thanks to Larry Neuman, Diane Mertens, Gail Holmes, and Donna Hussin who joined other community volunteers on March 25, 2026, at Second Harvest Food Bank to cut up and package the 40-pound blocks of cheese entered in the World Championship Cheese Contest held at Monona Terrace on March 3-5, 2026. We were told to keep an eye out for the 40-pound world champion Gouda from the Netherlands but our group of volunteers did not pull it from the pallet leaving it for another group to cut up and package.

Join us April 29, 12:30-3:30 on Dairy Dr. or any other last Wednesday in the month to represent Friendship Force. Contact Mary Crave at mary.crave@wisc.edu to get your name on the list.

If you are unable to join in April, these are the remaining dates in 2026:

- May 27
- June 24
- July 29
- August 26
- September 30
- October 28
- November 18



Club's Annual Picnic
July 14, 2026

WITH DEEPEST Sympathy



Gloria Stange
August 20, 1943 – March 1, 2026

Gloria Jean Stange passed away Sunday, March 1, 2026. She was a longtime member from 1982 through 2021. She opened her home to the many inbound ambassadors we hosted from all over the world. She participated in several club outbound journeys that took her to many places in the world including those of her heritage Germany, Scotland, and Africa.

Gloria's memorial service and celebration of life were held on Thursday, March 12, 2026 at Westminster Presbyterian Church, 4100 Nakoma Road, Madison.

Gifts in memory of Gloria Stange can be sent to Westminster Presbyterian Church, or to any charity of your choice.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Co-Presidents & FFI Liasons

Diane Mertens (608) 271-8657
mertensdk27@gmail.com

Larry Neuman (608) 271-8657
wlneuman@yahoo.com

Vice-President

Kathy Johnson (608) 238-1785
kjohnson44@ameritech.net

Secretary

Vicki Warren (608) 617-2213
kenvic1@gmail.com

Treasurer

Deb Gunther (262) 422-0176
debgunther@gmail.com

ADDITIONAL BOARD MEMBERS

Journey Managers

Kathy Speck Kemeny (608) 577-4885
kspeckemeny@gmail.com

Tom Miller (608) 334-3327
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Members at Large

Donna Ulteig (608) 335-0639
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Dorothy Baldwin (608) 742-6493
janddbaldwin@gmail.com

Newsletter/Historian

Donna Hussin (608-770-0980)
djhussin@yahoo.com

Past President

Doug Johnson (608) 238-1785
djohnson44@ameritech.net

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Activities

Gail Holmes (608) 249-1846
glholmes@wis.edu

E-Communications

Sandi Wysock (608) 833-5326
sandrawysock@msn.com

Membership

Lise Skofronick ((608) 274-7732)
liskofronick@gmail.com

Outreach

Vacant

Program

Committee of 5

Mary Crave (mtcrave@gmail.com)
Patrick Fleming (pfleming@edgewood.edu)
Margaret Harrigan (margaret.harrigan@wisc.edu)
Ken Warren (ken04271948@gmail.com)
Pat Watson (cc2ss@yahoo.com)

ACTIVITIES LEADERS

Gail Holmes, Chair glholmes@wisc.edu

Adopt-A-Highway

Stephanie Vanden Bush sljacobs2@gmail.com

Bike Rides

Vivian Norton vjoan@icloud.com
Larry Neuman wlneuman@yahoo.com

Book Club

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

Dining on the 6th

Gail Holmes glholmes@wisc.edu

Let's Walk/Let's Hike

Maureen Kind dmkind@sbcglobal.net

Second Harvest Foodbank

Mary Crave (608) 575-9847
mtcrave@gmail.com

WISCONSIN FRIENDSHIP FORCE

Official Publication of

The Friendship Force of Wisconsin-Madison
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2026 Annual Meeting Documents

April 18, 2026



Promoting global understanding across the barriers that separate people



FFW-M Annual Meeting, Saturday, April 18, 2026

WHEN: 1:10 pm to 3:45 pm
WHERE: Middleton Public Library
7475 Hubbard Ave., Middleton, WI

RSVP to Vice-President Kathy Johnson (kjohnson44@ameritech.net) by **Tuesday, April 14**

AGENDA

1:10-1:25 pm	Check in
1:30-2:00 pm	Business Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approval of Last Year's Minutes & Annual Budget• Election of Officers for 2026-27• Vote on proposed Bylaw Change• Announcements
2:00-2:45 pm	Presentations by Guest Speakers, Irene Wren (immigration issues) and Madeline Uraneck (Open Doors for Refugees)
2:45-3:00 pm	Q&A Session with Guest Speakers
3:00-3:45 pm	Informal conversation and confections from Hubbard Avenue Diner

Donations to Open Doors for Refugees are welcome. Items listed below and/or a monetary donation can be brought to the meeting.

Items needed:

Kitchenware (e.g. dish sets, soup bowls, mixing bowls, pots and pans, cutting boards, colanders, kitchen knives, and eating utensils)

Household Linens (e.g. bath & hand towels, washcloths)

Sewing items (e.g. sewing machines, accessories, fabric, and shears)

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 18!

BOARD ELECTIONS

Propose Slate of Officers 2026-2027

We present these Nominees for election
to the following offices:

- President: Kathy Johnson
- Co-Vice Presidents: Mary Crave & Tom Miller
- Secretary: Vicki Boardsen Warren
- Treasurer: Deb Gunther

Respectfully submitted
Nominations Chair Stephanie Sorensen



Kathy Johnson
President



Mary Crave
Co-Vice President



Tom Millar
Co-Vice President



Vicki Boardsen Warren
Secretary



Deb Gunther
Treasurer

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 programing 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 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 Dohler, 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, Switzerland, 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 documents in PDF format onto a flash drive and every 5 years the materials are 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 dates 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 22, 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
Margaret Anundson
Maureen Kind
Patricia Watson
Margaret Harrigan
Judi Dilks
Lola Barrientos Marquez

**Friendship Force of Wisconsin-Madison
2025 Financial Summary
Treasurer's Report for Annual Meeting April 2026**

2025 Income

Membership Dues (\$2280 FFI, \$705 Club)	\$2,985.00	Dec24/+25
Donations- General	\$160.00	
FFI Medals	\$1,000.00	
Net effect of 1/2025 Holiday Party	\$50.28	
Funds from Open World inbound journey	\$1,328.86	
Funds from Birmingham outbound journey	\$60.00	
Lapel Pins/Luggage Tags/Totes	\$151.50	
Miscellaneous	<u>\$0.00</u>	
Total Annual Income	\$5,735.64	\$5,735.64

2025 Expenditures

Dues paid to Friendship Force International	\$2,280.00	
Activities Committee	\$393.80	
Membership Committee	\$350.00	
Outreach Committee	\$130.00	
Program Committee	\$0.00	
Electronic Communicates/Website	\$402.33	
Administration	\$44.15	
Annual & Gen Membership Mtgs	\$21.08	
Mission Focused - Seminar	\$442.30	
FFI Medals	1,000.00	
Lapel Pins/Luggage Tags/Totes	\$0.00	
FFI Donations	<u>\$0.00</u>	
Total Annual Expenditures	\$5,063.66	\$5,063.66

Income over Expenses in 2025 \$671.98

Net Checkbook Balance 12/31/24	\$5,529.67
Net Checkbook Balance 12/31/25	<u>\$6,746.65</u>
Difference	\$1,216.98

Friendship Forced of Wisconsin- Madison
Club Value as of 12/31/2025

Checking Account Balance 12/31/2025	\$ 6,746.65	
subtracting Committed Funds Below:		
Uncleared checks	\$ _____	
Checking Account Funds available for Operating Expenses:	\$ 6,746.65	\$ 6,746.65
<u>Other Funds</u>		
2 CD's @ BMO	\$ 13,105.58	
4 Journey Accounts at BMO	<u> \$ 100.00</u>	
Total Other Funds	\$ 13,205.58	
Club Value 12/31/25		\$ 19,952.23

Respectfully submitted by:
Deborah Gunther, Treasurer
2/7/2026