



friendship force
GREATER DES MOINES



2020 FFGDM Activities

(dates and activities subject to change)

Late June	Road trip to Reiman Gardens in Ames
July 12	All-Iowa FF Picnic
July 14	Bastille Day Bash
Aug 23	Dinner and Tour at Italian American Cultural Center
Sep 5	Meals from the Heartland
Sep 9 – 14	Journey to FF Dayton, OH
Oct 5 - 12	FF Ottawa inbound journey
Nov TBD	Annual Meeting & Elections
Dec 1	Happy Feet Holiday Lunch



Don't forget May Day!

Have you delivered your May Day baskets to friends and neighbors?

It's not too late and a few flowers from your garden or some wrapped candy in a basket will lift your spirit and those who receive it.

We're in this together - Staying connected while staying at home

We don't know how much longer we will be doing this, but I'd like to hear from you about how you are staying connected and give you a couple of ideas on doing so with other FFGDM members. All this isolation reminds me of a saying I saw on a 2017 journey. *"Time is valuable. Waste it wisely."* Who knew we would have so much of it to waste. Who knew how creative we could get in how to waste it so well.

I emailed a Member List on April 22 to help you do these suggestions.

1. Call the person three names up from yours this week and ask how they are doing and what they are doing to be with others, virtually or otherwise.
2. Email the person eight names down from yours to check in and exchange some news about how you've passed the time and ask what they are doing.
3. If you have a yard or deck large enough, invite three to five members over for a visit, placing lawn chairs sufficiently far enough apart to be safe, but close enough to carry on a conversation. I hosted such a group today and it was great. We each brought our own lunch and drink and had a grand time.
4. Invite someone who lives somewhat near you to take a walk, wearing masks of course. Who cares how silly we look.
5. Share your own ideas with me and I'll compile a list to send out.

Enjoy,
Pat
headleypatricia651@gmail.com

President's Message



Dear Friendship Force Members,

Well, what can I write about for this newsletter after two months of NOTHING happening? I sent you a “Virtual Springfest,” a “silly quiz,” and, for our May event, you’ll be getting a heartfelt, but tongue in cheek rant about living our lives through “electronic devices.” I do know the book club planned to meet via Zoom. Did other clubs meet during this time? The April Board meeting took place through Zoom even though there wasn’t much to discuss. Journeys got cancelled. Meetings got cancelled. Events got cancelled. It didn’t take long for me to feel like life got cancelled.

And yet, we all found things to do. From some of your reports, I know your houses are so clean there’s not one crumb or speck of dirt to be found anywhere. I refused to succumb to that nonsense. Some of us took more walks than we’ve taken in the last two decades. The walking trail behind my house, has become a busy, buzzing highway. I’ve never seen so many people out walking. Some of us had picnics sitting 24 feet apart with a table of food between us like a steadfast barrier against all those evil, nasty germs threatening to kill us. I realized early on in this epidemic, the first thing I needed to do was get rid of all the junk food in my house, which I methodically did. I gained five pounds doing it, but hey, I got the job done.

In the beginning of this isolation, the weather was dishing out its own nastiness. But oh my, that first warm day with a sky full of warm caressing sunshine, found most of us basking in it like we’d been locked up in a cave for thirty years. We went outside with our pale skin exposed to all that warmth, not caring one hoot about sunscreen. This was freedom. It just felt so good to be out there. I was happy to be alive that day. How about you? Since then, the weather has waffled, but is slowly increasing our freedom, our disposition, and our outlook on life. Take what you can get when you can get it. Savor it until something else comes along.

I found a quote during all this forced isolation and thought I’d share it with you here. “The human spirit is stronger than anything that can happen to it” (C.C. Scott). Well said, and what a good time to be reminded of it. We will survive this, and I’m truly hoping we can have a June event for sure. Let’s think positive. I’m looking forward to seeing all of you in the near future. Till then.

In Friendship,
Pat Headley, FFGDM President

News from FFI – Presidents’ Meeting Report

Hi Friends,

I sent you a couple of items a few days ago, from FFI detailing the current budget process. I hope you had a chance to review them, especially the part in the video about what services are provided by FFI. Our membership dues and journey fees pay for all these services, and I was amazed at all they do for us. I hope you agree that it is just as important now as ever to keep this organization viable. I had to watch the video twice just to get all of it.

We have had two Midwest president's meetings, via Zoom, with our regional representative Dale Moore, who in turn is meeting with FFI staff and board members. I will try to summarize here some the things we talked about during those meetings. Rather than a narrative I've put it into a bulleted list for easier reading.

❖ **Finances**

- Fundraising campaign is going well – as of today (4/22/20) \$104,000 has been received by FFI. Midwest clubs have given anywhere from \$200 to \$9,000. FFGDM gave \$1,300. So far, the Midwest region has given about \$25.8K. However, that is not counting all the individual donations.
- If the current fundraising campaign is successful, it will get FFI through to January 2021, at which time membership dues will keep it going to summer. After, or during that time, future journeys will again be generating income.
- All expenses other than essential operations have been frozen.
- All part time staff are on furlough.
- All five full time staff have been reduced to 80%, enough to maintain benefits.
- The fundraising campaign is ongoing. Please give if you can, and only in the amount you can.
- FFI has applied for the government stimulus funds, but all that takes time.
- FFI has asked for a forgivable loan under the CARES Act, but we must recognize that this particular program is grossly underfunded.
- FFI has no endowment or savings or anything else to fall back on. Board conversations are focusing on that issue for the future.

❖ **Journeys**

- We can reschedule any cancelled journeys on our own, club to club, with no need to go through FFI. Journey Coordinators and Ambassador Coordinators should talk to each other to make these arrangements.
- Upcoming journeys for the remainder of 2020 which have not been cancelled by FFI, should also be negotiated between Journey Coordinators and Ambassador Coordinators, or club presidents if a coordinator has not been assigned.
- FFI is expecting all Journeys and Open Worlds to be cancelled well into the 3rd quarter. Currently, 240 journeys are still on the books.
- Some clubs are considering shorter journeys of 3-4 days in addition to the usual longer ones.
- Some clubs are considering offering 1-2-night stays so ambassadors from other clubs can attend one of the many festivals offered in their own areas.
- For cancelled journeys, FFI will send an email to the Journey Coordinator, announcing that fees will be returned. It will be automatic, with no action required on the part of the ambassador. This may take some time, because of so many cancellations and reduced staff hours. If you would like to donate some or all of your journey fee, please let your Journey Coordinator know.

❖ **Other Facts**

- This issue has opened the door to other ideas about fundraising, e.g. how to make FFI more viable in the future, and how to create other kinds of programming. The crisis has generated lots of creative ideas for the future. As Dale says, "never let a good crisis go to waste."
- FFI had already abandoned the idea of having a physical office, going to a global model, whereby all staff work from home. The office in Atlanta is being subleased to another renter, and FFI is negotiating to get totally out of that lease.

❖ **Future Communications**

- The Midwest presidents' meetings will continue and I will try to keep you informed.

- If you want to get communications such as news and journey catalogs directly from FFI, but aren't currently doing that, CTRL+CLICK the link [here](#) or follow these instructions:
 - Go to the FFI website at <https://www.thefriendshipforce.org>
 - On the home page, scroll all the way to the bottom where you see a place asking for your email address and the word "subscribe." Do that.
 - A screen will come up requiring you to complete some information. When complete, click on "subscribe."
 - Confirm that you are not a robot and click on "subscribe" again.
 - That's it.

Thank you for hanging in there with us.

Pat Headley

FFGDM President

Club Activities



Book Friends

During this social distancing time, we will meet virtually via Zoom. Same date and time - 4:00 pm on the 4th Monday of each month. Members need to watch for an email invitation and save it to click on the link and join the rest of us. If you're new to Book Friends and want an email invitation, contact Nikki Hubbard nihubbard@aol.com or Connie Walters yourfriendconnie@gmail.com and we'll add you to the list.

Reading selections are often cultural or travel oriented. Both contemporary and historical, fiction and non-fiction genres are included. Book Friends can locate selections on their own through their friends or favorite online sources.

Join in when you can, don't worry about it if you can't. We are a busy bunch, so it's hard to get us all online at the same time. But, there's always a stimulating discussion among readers.

Month	Title	Author	Notes
May	Red at the Bone	Jacqueline Woodson	Tale of family legacy
June	Beneath a Marble Sky	John Shors	A novel of the Taj Mahal
July	Midnight in Chernobyl	Adam Higginbotham	World's Greatest Nuclear Disaster
August	The Red Umbrella	Cristina Diaz Gonzales	Child's journey from Cuba to America
September	In the Woods	Tana French	Mystery set in Dublin
October	This Tender Land	Wm Kent Krueger	Native American – coming of age story
November	Cross Currents	John Shors	Love and families in Thailand
December	The Warmth of Other Suns	Isabel Wilkerson	African American Migration to the North



Wine Friends and Table of Friends



Both clubs will resume once we can gather in person. If you are interested in either, please contact:

Wine Friends – Shirley at shirleytreanor@yahoo.com

Table of Friends (dining out) – Marla at marlakcarr@yahoo.com

Road Trip to Reiman Gardens in Ames

The Activities' Committee would like to schedule a road trip to Reiman Gardens in late June but it's difficult for us to make plans that far in advance under COVID-19 restrictions. Once we know when the garden will be open then we can start planning. Look for an email in late May-early June with more information.

– Marla Carr, Activities Committee Co-chair

Membership News



New member
Pat Hipple

I got to meet and visit with our newest FF member Pat Hipple. She'll be a great addition to our club.

Member List Change

Don't forget to notify me if you have a change in your phone number or other contact information. I've had a change myself, so please make a note on your copy of the Member List:

Ken and Alice Rasmussen
1159 SW Hardwicke Lane
Ankeny, IA 50023
515-865-6331
off4ever@aol.com

- Alice Rasmussen, Membership Chair
Charlotte Buttin, Membership co-chair

2020 Member List

Pat Headley sent an email to all members on April 22 with the 2020 Member List attached. Please keep a copy online or print it for your use.

2020 FFDGM Board and Committee Chairs

Board Members

Pat Headley – *President*
Ginny Renda – *Vice-President*
Janette House – *Secretary*
Marla Carr – *Activities Committee Co-Chair*
Mike Davis – *Journey Director*
Cookie Major – *Community Service Coordinator*
Mary Marshall
Gail Sheridan Lucht
Connie Walters

Term ends

Email

2020	headleypatricia651@gmail.com
2020	grpbears@aol.com
2021	j.house@mediacombb.net
2022	marlakcarr@yahoo.com
2021	mjdavisconsulting@gmail.com
2020	cookster50@gmail.com
2021	dpmmgm@msn.com
2022	gail.lucht@gmail.com
2022	yourfriendconnie@gmail.com

Other Committees and Tasks

Barbara Bailey – *Treasurer*
Shelley Bain – *Newsletter Editor*
Nancy Lundstrom – *Activities Committee Co-Chair*
Lenne Orona – *FF Ottawa Journey Coordinator*
Alice Rasmussen – *Membership Chair*

dcblbailey@gmail.com
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nancylundstrom@mchsi.com
leorona@aol.com
off4ever@aol.com

Great Lakes, Midwest, and Southwest Super Regional Conference

The conference, scheduled for September in Minneapolis, has been cancelled. The Minnesota Planning Team will notify those who have previously registered and any registration fees that have been paid will be returned. If you booked a hotel room for the conference, you'll need to cancel your reservation.

Journey News

FF Dayton and FF Ottawa Canada

At this time, the outbound journey to FF Dayton (scheduled September 9-14) and inbound journey from FF Ottawa (scheduled October 5- 12) have not been cancelled. If you have questions, please email me.

-- Mike Davis, Journey Director
mjdavisconsulting@gmail.com



About May Day

Throughout the years and decades, there have been different meanings, festivities, and representations of May Day. The meaning of seasonal change has been the most significant one amongst different countries.

May Day is one of the four ancient Celtic cross-quarter days, making it an astronomical holiday as it falls between the March equinox and June solstice. Originating from its Celtic name, "Beltane," Beltane was a spring celebration that included dancing, singing, special bonfires, and house doors and animals would be decorated with yellow May flowers and ribbons. During this time, people would visit special wells and the Beltane dew was believed to bring beauty and youthfulness to those around it.

In the Middle Ages, English villages had homes with maypoles from rejoice and celebrations of May Day. Villagers would go into the woods to find maypoles set up from towns and cities. Because maypoles came in different sizes, villages would compete to see who had the tallest one. People would dance around them because the pole symbolized male fertility as baskets and wreaths symbolized female fertility.

In the 19th century, a new meaning of May Day came about. May Day also became known as International Workers' Day for labor rights and an eight-hour workday in the United States.

As time went on, different cultures created their own traditions in alignment with their beliefs. Europeans and Americans celebrate May Day with flower crowns, maypole dancing, and by making flower baskets to share with loved ones. What better way to celebrate than with the people you love!

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