



Past President's Letter



Grandma Sedahlia & Poppy

Letter to Membership

Dear FFCI Friends,

As I write this short greeting and message to you, the new fallen snow is beautiful outside my patio doors; snow is one of the good reasons to live in Iowa!

As I look back over the past two years when I have attempted to guide the

“ship” that is FFCI, I am pleased that I said I’d do this task to avoid dissolving the club, even if the “ship” doesn’t always move in ways you (and I) might wish it would go. But FFCI is still here and doing lots of things, considering that almost 3 years ago (2 years and 10.5 months), we were going into a “winter” of Covid, even if the calendar said it was the beginning of spring! We have a lot to be grateful for ☺!

Please let me know if you have ideas for things we (I in particular) could be doing or things you don’t like. We have a lot to celebrate! I will never forget that 2021 Valentine’s Day party! It was the best!! And 2022’s “small groups” planning and carrying out such great activities. We have not rotted on the vine; maybe we wilted sometimes, but... we do have work to do, and the following are mentions and requests related to that work:

- Reminder: It would be simply joyful if you would decide to volunteer for one of the leadership/guidance-ship positions, president or vice president/president elect for 2024. I am still offering to guide and help whoever comes forward. I remain very hopeful that you will do this. I believe our membership is ready for new leadership/guidance-ship.

- **One task of the board members, particularly the treasurers, is to collect our annual dues so our club will have resources to do activities and assist members who decide to travel to FFI conferences now that they are starting up again, and to pay our dues to FFI. On January 15, co-treasurers Jerry and Alta Byg sent us all an email, saying, “...we need to have everyone a) **complete the attached membership form** and b) **send us your dues of \$40 per person. Checks (made out to FFCI) and forms may be sent to: Jerry Byg , 2127 Coneflower Court, Ames, IA 50014 as soon as possible or by February 15.”****

Calendar of Upcoming Events

February 15, 2023

Valentine’s Day Party - Noon

Lucky Pig Pub & Grill, Ogden,

RSVP by February 8 - Corrie Bertelsen

August 14 - 19

Inbound Journey - from Long Island, NY

Dennis Dake, Journey Coordinator

First week @ Quad Cities FF, Aug 10 - 14

September 11-19

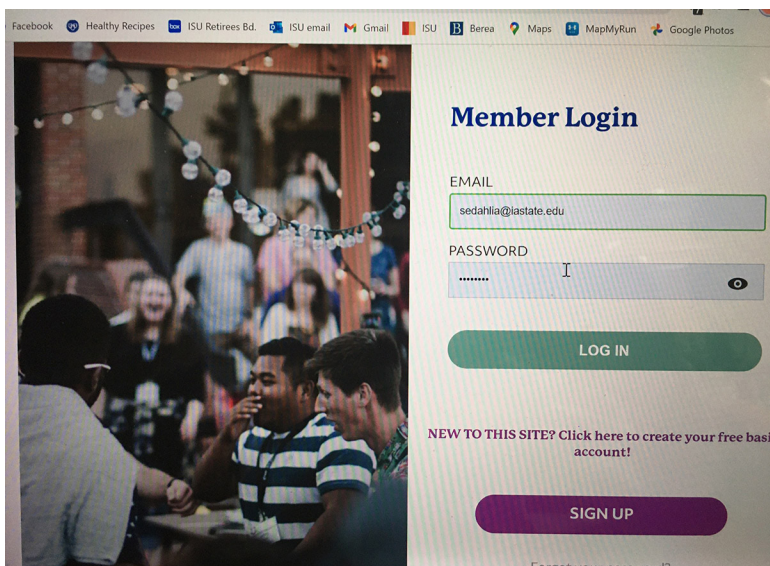
**Outbound Journey to Missoula -
Western Montana**

Second week pending in Kalispell Montana Club
Sedahlia Crase / Margaret Epplin Co-Journey Coordinators

-Once you've paid your dues, or today, or ANY TIME, would be a good time to **register yourself as a member of FFI and FFCI on the FFI Member Portal**. Remember: I am totally available to help you; but if you'd like to go it alone, here are the steps:

a. **Using whatever browser you normally use to search for things** (I use Google chrome, but there are several)-- copy and paste the following website into that area where you normally search for online things; The **website is: www.my.friendshipforce.org** and when I copy and paste it into the browser, somehow (magic??) it drops the www and takes you to the rest of the website, my.friendshipforce.org .

b. There you will **see the Member Portal (see illustration)** and on that page you can **enter your name, a password, and hit "login."** Remember that password, which means, to me, write it down in your passwords' place.



Everyone needs to register on the FFI Member Portal to be fully registered as a member of FF International.

Ask me (Sedahlia) for help in getting registered.

Illustration #1 **FFI MEMBER PORTAL** www.my.friendshipforce.org

c. My memory is that I then continued, and the process asked for my email address, but since I've already put in whatever it asked for maybe a year ago, I cannot be sure. If you don't want to receive ANYTHING from them, I have heard via the Midwest representative who speaks "for" FFI, that if you try to NOT put it in, it will still allow you to register, but I am not sure about that. This is how they count our members and we show fewer than 20 Of our 46 members now because so many have not logged on to that Member Portal. IF you have already logged in to the Member Portal, THANK YOU. Offer to help somebody if you know anybody who'd like help,

d. Email me (sedahlia@iastate.edu) about how it goes—did you have to enter your email address? When we last met with the Midwest representative, several club presidents in the Midwest region said they did it for their total membership and just put in all the members' email addresses; I will NOT do that. I feel it violates what we understand is the use we make of the email list and that's important to me more than getting every person signed in. But PLEASE go try it and feel free to call me at 515-708-4012!! We need to have everybody signed in. if there are households where spouses share an email address, previously they wouldn't allow that, but apparently, they do allow it now. GOOD LUCK!!

Whew, a lot of things to share with you. Have a great end of January and beginning of February. I hope to see a great many of you at the Lucky Pig in Ogden on Wednesday, February 15 for a Valentine's Day party! My best to you, Sedahlia Crase, President, FFCI

STEPS IN GETTING REGISTERED FOR FFCI AND FFI

1. **Send in your FFCI Membership Form with \$40 check to Jerry Byg, Treasurer**
2. **On Internet go to FFI Member Portal and register for your Individual Account.**
3. **Volunteer to help lead FFCI Activities, sign up to participate, and ENJOY YOUR CLUB!**

1st LEO (Let's Eat Out) of the Year

The Lucky Pig Pub and Grill

113 W. Walnut St., Ogden

Wednesday, February 15

12:00 noon

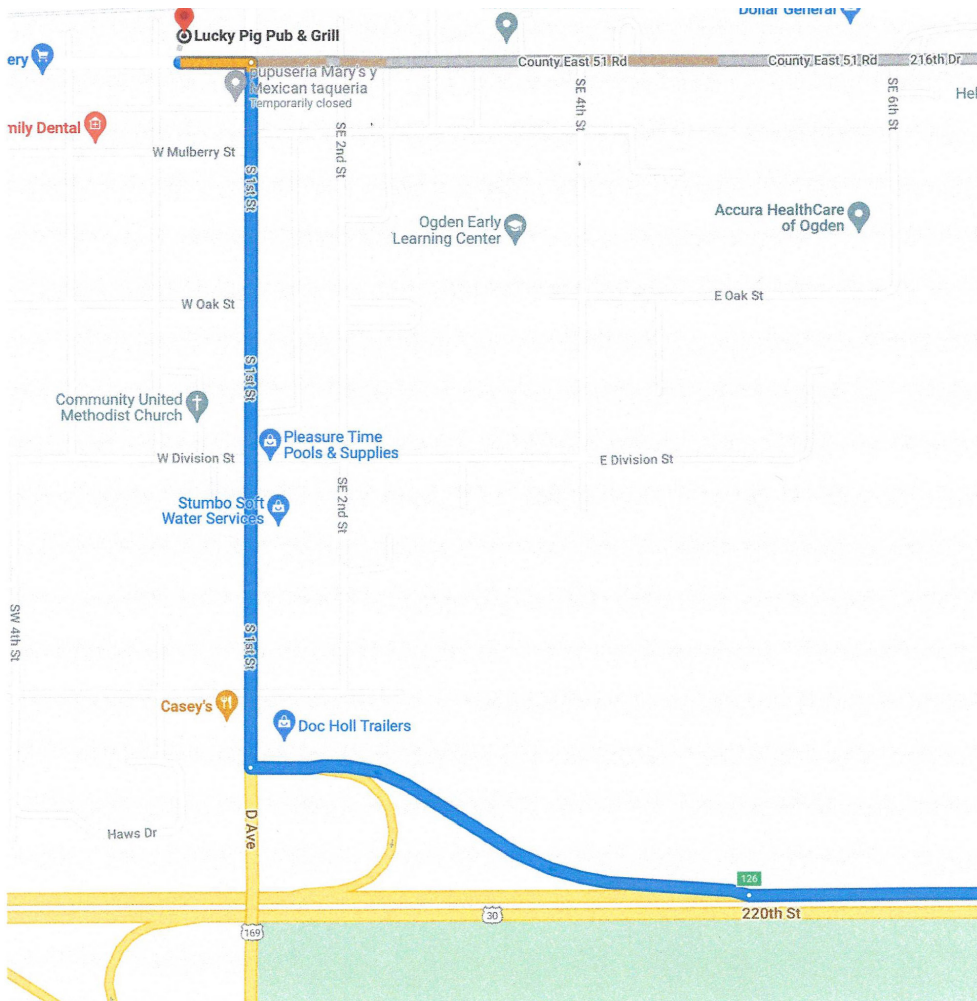
RSVP to Corry Bertelsen 515-232-3312
(Corbertelsen@gmail.com) by Feb. 8

VOTED "Best Tenderloin in IA
'2014'
Rated 4.5 by customers.



Directions to Lucky Pig Pub & Grill in Ogden:

Take US-30 West toward Ogden. Take exit 126 from US-30. Turn right onto S 1st Street. After about 0.6 mi., when you reach Walnut St./County East 51 Rd, turn left. You'll see Lucky Pig Pub & Grill on your right at 113 W. Walnut St.



JOURNEYS

INBOUND FROM LONG ISLAND

OUTBOUND TO MONTANA

Inbound Journey: FFCI Hosting Ambassadors from Long Island, NY – August 14 - 19

After nearly four years, we're welcoming our 1st inbound club journey, this one from New York. A group of **12 to 15 Long Islanders** will begin their Iowa stay **first with the Quad Cities Friendship Force Club arriving on August 9**. Following 5 days of exploring the Mississippi River and Quad Cities attractions FFCI hosts will meet their assigned Long Island visitors transported by their Quad Cities hosts to a joint **handoff picnic lunch somewhere midway on Monday August 14**.

WE WILL NEED VOLUNTEERS FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP TO PROVIDE HOME HOSTING FOR THE LONG ISLAND AMBASSADORS. CONTACT DENNIS DAKE (ddake@iastate.edu or call (515-292-1145) to Volunteer.

On the **evening of August 14 all FFCI members will be invited** to the **official welcoming reception**, probably at the First Christian Church. (We'll let you know the details as summer gets closer.) You'll each be asked to bring a potluck appetizer.

Our guests will barely get settled in before their much anticipated and requested **day at the Iowa State Fair, Tues. Aug. 15th**. Any adventurous volunteers who can be day hosts on the 15th should get a medal. Seriously, **we will need day hosts** as much as we need home hosts **for that day**. Wouldn't you love to spend a day at the state fair showing a bunch of big city New Yorker's how interesting the state of Iowa can be?

The agenda for the rest of the ambassador's week with FFCI is in the planning/brainstorming stage. Some Ames and vicinity activities currently being considered are a **visit to the ISU Horticulture Farm where we'll have a box lunch picnic, an ISU campus art walk, and a trip to Reiman Gardens**. One out of town trip might take us to **Winterset, the John Wayne Museum, the town square, Covered Bridges, and the restaurant where Clint Eastwood ate in the movie "The Bridges of Madison County."** This would be a full day trip and **DAY HOSTS WOULD BE NEEDED**.

On their last evening with us it is typical to throw a fare well meal with entertainment – any suggestions for location or activities? Most ambassadors will be **flying back to New York from Des Moines** on the morning or afternoon of Saturday, August 19th, full of Iowa memories, sweet corn, and rhubarb pie.

Journey Planning Committee:

Dennis Dake, FFCI Journey Coordinator,

Dorothy Dake, Stu and Ginny Huntington, Corrie and Roger Bertelsen. Diane Oppedal

PS. Hosting this Inbound Journey will require a whole FFCI Membership effort. Volunteer and help us make a success of this first Friendship Force Journey.

OUTBOUND TO MONTANA IN SEPTEMBER

Outbound Journey to Friendship Force of Missoula—Western Montana. Sept. 11 - 19

Our journey to Missoula – Western Montana is moving along well but slowly. Although we have a date, September 11-19, and the number of ambassadors we can take is 11, we have not received a journey number from FFI as yet but I'm sure we will hear soon. Other Midwest clubs have theirs, but the FFI staff have been cut down to an extremely small staff. Rita Cheek, Missoula's journey coordinator and I are in close communication and will discuss the program and prices on February 1.

On 1/29 I finally heard from the Friendship Force of Flathead Valley – Kalispell, Montana, referring me to the current leadership as of 2023; I suspect I will now hear from someone soon. It is relatively close (about 90 miles) to Missoula but farther north near Glacier National Park. When we had the show of hands at the holiday party, several of you indicated that you might not like another week in that area. It will not be mandatory that it be a week nor is it required that you do both clubs. Missoula is offering to accommodate us with transportation if Kalispell says yes. I will continue to look for another club to visit in Montana or Idaho if Kalispell says "no."

Margaret Epplin has joined me as the co-journey coordinator. As soon as we get the journey number and the price of the Missoula leg, we will ask you to submit your application for the journey so we can have an idea of how many we'll have from our own club and determine if we should advertise among the Midwest clubs and / or FFI. Margaret and I will work on reviewing the applications and get back to you very quickly after you submit your application to us so you can make plans for your time as well.

We will have a full journey, I am sure. This is a beautiful location! I hope many of you are excited about this domestic journey! I know I am.





2023-2024

FFCI Leaders Needed

Let's keep FFCI Going and Growing

For this year FFCI needs:

1. President
2. President - elect
3. Membership
4. Publicity
5. Historian

Contact Sedahlia Crase to volunteer.

Phone: 515-708-4012

email: sedahlia@iastate.edu

help lead FFCI into the future

To have a club we need leaders. Join these continuing leaders.

Past President: Sedahlia Crase

Secretary and Information Technology:

Margaret Eplin

Co-Treasurers: Jerry & Alta Byg

Newsletter: Dennis Dake

Next Newsletter lets
put ***YOUR*** name in
this space

Member Editorial

Looking Back and Heading Forward

I must admit there were times during the past few years when I worried about Friendship Force of Central Iowa. Would we survive the pandemic? Would members hang in there when social activities were mainly on ZOOM? After all, Friendship Force was an organization set up for traveling to other states and countries and for hosting folks from other states and countries.

Thanks to Corry Bertelsen and Charene Starcevic, we survived the lean years, and now we are back on track. They got so many activities organized with so many of our members volunteering their creativity, hard work and energy to picnics, potlucks, and nature activities. They were well attended. Remember the creative Valentine's variety show on ZOOM: And who could forget the Cruise down the Iowa River, taking in the gorgeous Fall colors! Members also let their hair down for games and a sing-a-long at Moore Park.

Recently Judy Mongin hosted the Annual Holiday Party and White Elephant swap reviving a tradition we'd nearly forgotten. (That Frosty the Snowman hat sure made the rounds. It's now being worn by my Massachusetts grandson. He even wore it on the plane trip to Iowa in December and for our annual family Christmas caroling excursion to NorthCrest. (But I digress.)

It seems my worries were all for naught. Look at us now, I say, while chastising myself, "Oh yes ye of little faith." We're busy planning activities for an in person inbound Journey from Long Island in mid-August and an Outbound Journey to Montana in September.

These are big plans but don't forget our first LEO on February 15. We're headed to The Lucky Pig restaurant in Ogden. Send your RSVP to Corry Bertelsen ASAP. She'd love to hear from you.

Yes, it seems that FFCI is alive and well, and I for one am breathing a sigh of relief.

Dorothy Dake

(Returning to Activities Committee to join Corry and Charene for 2023 to help plan more exciting FFCI adventures.)

Past events since our last Newsletter

Dec 3, 2022: Annual Holiday Potluck Party & White Elephant Gift Exchange

Village Co-op, 2525 Bobcat Drive, Judy Mongin, Chair, Jemongin50@gmail.com

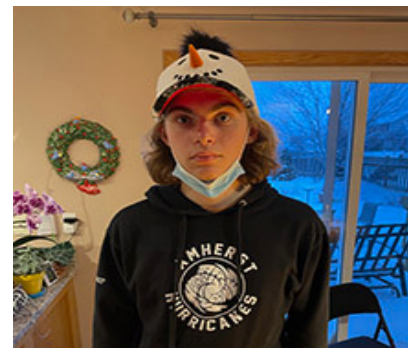


All the precious White Elephant gifts were auctioned off, stolen one or more times and then taken home to be treasured forever. Many thanks to Judy Mongin, Charene Starcevic and all the other helpers (like all the people who brought all the yummy food) for another FFCI wonderful Holiday tradition continued.



Some of the crowd of FFCI party goers waiting for their White Elephant.





The traveling snowman hat ‘stolen’ from person to person, regifted to Dot’s grandson, Niko - now his prized possession.



Membership Statement by Dennis Dake

When I was young, I had no opportunity to travel outside the boundaries of Iowa. My life centered around Lamont, a very small town in northeast Iowa where I grew up as well as other Iowa towns where relatives lived within 60 miles. As a young adult

serving four years in the US Air Force, duty assignments in England and Germany gave me sustained exposure to and interest in other countries and cultures for the first time. Later as a university professor traveling extensively to professional conferences within the United States and Canada and meeting fellow professionals throughout the world intrigued me. These experiences made me want to know more about the lives and forces that had shaped others. There was so much more I wanted to know about. As I neared the end of my teaching career, the organization called Friendship Force came into my life.

My wife Dorothy and I first joined FFCI in 2008 and began attending local activities. My understanding of the importance of Friendship Force, however, deepened and took on meaning with more active participation beginning in 2010. In that year we home hosted two Australian ambassadors for a week, during an incoming international exchange. The more Dorothy and I hosted and became actively involved in international journeys (to Germany, England, New Zealand and Manitoba,) the more it became clear that Friendship Force was much more than a travel club.

The warm initial feeling upon arrival at a journey destination far from home, being welcomed and knowing that our arrival had been eagerly awaited and prepared for was overwhelming. We received greetings from our assigned home hosts and a whole club of very open individuals committed to sharing their lives and culture with us. It is a travel adventure like no other. More than visiting as a tourist, being greeted, accepted as fellow seekers of international understanding, meant so much more.

Dorothy and I are still in touch years later, with past home hosts and those we have hosted. We truly consider them life-long friends. We will always freely welcome them into our home, should they make a trip to Iowa.

Serving many years as FFCI Newsletter Editor, organizing four inbound journeys and two outbound domestic journeys (Long Island and Ft. Worth, Texas) and serving on the FFCI board for years have proven to be meaningful for me. The more I got actively involved in home hosting, traveling on journeys and taking on leadership roles in the club, the more I gained from membership and making a contribution to world peace and understanding.

Dennis Dake

Editors Note: Last year I started a new series in the FFCI Newsletter, after taking a break as editor for a few years. As I resumed the editor's duties and thinking about how the Newsletter could better serve the needs of our organization, I decided one way might be to publish the several biographies of members that Joan Mathews had solicited, collected and sent to me. I thought, "What a great way to help the members share the reasons they joined Friendship Force initially and now continue to participate each year!" At the time I published the first group of stories and pictures I requested every active member who was not yet published to submit a photo of themselves and a story of their Friendship Force journey of discovery and submit for publishing. I appeal again for your contribution. Above you will find my story. Can I put yours in the next Newsletter? Please send to ddake@iastate.edu



Name: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Street

City

State

Zip Code

If CHANGE in email or phone please complete:

E-mail Address: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Telephone (H) _____

(C) _____

Telephone (H) _____

(C) _____

Membership: \$40.00/adult _____

Donation: _____

I would like a replacement name tag for \$5.00. Name on tag _____

Total Enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to: The Friendship Force of Central Iowa and send along with this form to:

Alfa and Jerry Byg, Co-Treasurers
2127 Coneflower Ct
Ames, IA 50014

I am interested in involvement with the following FFCI activities:

Club Activities _____

Transportation _____

Newsletter _____

Officer _____

Publicity _____

Activity Planning _____

Membership _____

Other _____

Inbound Journey _____

Hosting _____

Music _____

Outbound Journey _____

Photography _____

Food _____

Thank you!

If you have not already sent in your check along with this form - **PLEASE DO IT NOW**