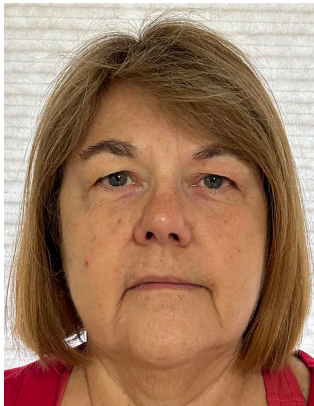




NEW LEADERS A NEW BEGINNING FOR FFCI!



President's Letter

As President, I will try to be on top of my duties. My first goal was to get everyone

logged onto My.Friendshipforce.org. If you have not logged in, please go to <https://my.friendshipforce.org/>, click on the purple "Sign Up" and follow prompts. (If you have problems, call me and I can help you walk through the steps or I can send you step by step process to log in.) If

you have signed in previously, use your email to log in and review our Central Iowa FF page. It is easy to update, so if you find something which could be improved, please let me know.

You may be asking why we should use the FFI website?

Right now, we have a website to help us keep our members aware of things our club is planning, a place for our newsletters and minutes to be posted. Our current website is <https://ffcentralio-wa.org/>, check it out, Margeret Epplin has worked hard to get it set up, and has spent hours to keep it updated and maintained. This was the only way we could spread the information about our club and get the word out to people who may be interested in our club. Friendship Force International has been working on their website and they now have launched their updated website. With the FFI website, we can put almost everything which is currently on our website onto the FFI website. We can update the website when we get new members, we can add events and meetings on the calendar, and we can post announcements. If you have said "Yes" to receive announcements, you will be notified of any new announcements.

Our current FFCI website is costing us close to \$200 per year to maintain, and that does not include any extra help which might be needed if we encounter a problem or get hacked. We have renewed the website for another 3 years, and we hope that by the end of that period we will be using the FFI website for all our needs.

My next goal is to get more members, we have 35 members which is great, but with more people

Calendar of Upcoming Events

May 13, 2024

INTERNATIONAL POTLUCK

Planned by Dorothy Dake and Marybeth
Buchele

Information inside this newsletter - Page 2

we will be able to commit to more opportunities. Joan Mathews has connected me with Paula Toms to see about giving a presentation about Friendship Force and/or our travels for OLLI. If you have an idea which might help, get the word out about FFCI, please feel free to let me or any of the officers know.

We have already started the year out with a bang. February, we enjoyed getting together for some good food and good conversation. March 1, we celebrated Friendship Force World Friendship Day at Texas Road House. April is open, consider volunteering to host something you are passionate about. On the evening of May 13, Dot, and Marybeth have signed up to host an International Potluck (watch for more information). If you have not signed up for a date to host an event, please contact Charene or Corry.

The best way to increase our numbers is to continue telling people about your Friendship Force travels and experiences. Your words are advertisement for Central Iowa Friendship Force.

Alta Byg FFCI President



FFCI INTERNATIONAL POTLUCK – MAY 13

Marybeth Buchele and Dot Dake put their heads together and came up with an FFCI International Potluck Dinner for May 13th. Think about bringing a dish that reflects your cultural heritage, or any international cuisine you would enjoy sharing.

Not be to be snobby, but Marybeth and Dot are limiting this event to 20 persons, which is the number our hostess can accommodate in her home. Details remain murky, but Marybeth and Dot are considering asking for recipes so they can put together a “Cookbook” for posterity. This will also alert diners to ingredients that might trigger allergies.

Check your calendars and keep the evening of May 13 open to attend this event. It should be a real Friendship Force kind of event.

Be among the first 20 FFCI members to RSVP and reserve a spot.

RSVP to Marybeth Buchele at

515-231-9113 or

iowahomeopath@gmail.com



MARCH 6, 2024 MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Cheers to a New Year!

The first meet up for 2024 was a LEO held on February 6 at the Village Co-op party room. (Fortunately for us, member Judy Mongin can reserve it for our use, because she is a resident.) As members entered the room that day, they paid their \$40 dues for 2024 and filled out forms with updated contact information and a list of what they would like to volunteer for.

Just when we thought it might be time to disband our club due to disinterest in foreign travel by our aging membership or an unwillingness to serve as board members. Alta Byg stepped up and said she would serve as president. Thank you so much Alta! That announcement enthused others, and Marcia Thompson volunteered to be vice president. Jerry Byg said he would be happy to continue as treasurer, and Charene, Corry and Dot agreed they would work on activities, providing other members would take turns planning monthly activities.

A buffet lunch of Saucy Southerners and smoked turkey from Hickory Park, roast pork, buns, baked beans, pasta salad, potato chips and assorted bars were served for the price of \$5.00 (subsidized by our treasurer and Charene and Corry prepared side dishes and bars the day before to save on the catering bill and enjoy the comradery of cooking together. During the meal, Cheryl Binzen graciously allowed herself to be talked into serving as secretary. All the usual positions of leadership were thus filled on this day! If anyone would like to serve as club photographer and take pictures of our events, contact Dennis Dake, FFCI Newsletter Editor.

A business meeting was run by Alta Byg. Alta and Jerry had recently traveled to New Zealand with Friendship Force and were happy to talk about that trip. Charene Starcevec, Activities Co-Chair / Coordinator talked about some possibilities for places our club could travel within Iowa. Currently the following people have signed up to plan a monthly activity/outing in addition to the ones already planned. Thanks to all the generous members who continue to give their time and talents to keep FFCI going strong. So far our planners include Alta and Jerry Byg, Marybeth Buchele, Dot Dake, Lynn Avant, Lynne Van Valin, Cheryl Binzen, Marcia Thompson, Ginny & Stu Huntington, Charene Starcevic, Corry Bertelsen and Judy Mongin. No doubt they will need some help.

The chart following shows activities and trips planned thus far. Watch the Friendship Force of Central Iowa Calendar in future Newsletters and emails for more information about the following events.

IMPORTANT NOTE: There are several additional opportunities for something to be planned for the months of April, September, and November. To be a vital part of the revival, reenergizing, and renewal of FFCI, let's get creative!

1. Get together with other members, for a musical event, a picnic or service project.
2. plan a LEO or a trip to a town nearby.
3. volunteer to help organize one of the planned events. Contact FFCI Activity Co-Chair Coordinators; and make an offer.

Corry Bertelsen
corbertelsen@gmail.com
515-232-3312

Charene Starcevic
larcha1623@gmail.com
515-231-3686

Dot Dake
dotdake42@gmail.com
515-292-1145

By Corry Bertelsen and Dot Dake



Many hands make the work lighter - Volunteer to Organize, Help plan a monthly event. Watch the Friendship Force Calendar, and emails for more information about the following events. There are opportunities for something to be planned in April, September, and November.

**To volunteer to organize a get together contact
Corry Bertelsen at corbertelsen@gmail.com,
or Charene Starcevic at larcha1623@gmail.com.**

Month	Organizer/s	Date/Time	Event
March	Alta & Jerry Byg	March 1, Pop-up LEO	Great fun & Great food
April			
May	Dot Dake Marybeth Buchele	May 13 in the evening	International Potluck at Marybeth's home for the first 20 people who sign up
June	Lynn Avant Lynne VanValin	Tues., June 11	Tunes in the Trees at Iowa Arboretum
July	Dot Dake & Corry Bertelsen	To be determined	Clear Lake trip
August	Cheryl Binzen Marcia Thompson	Tues., Aug. 27 2:00-4:00	Chair Yoga/ Socializing
September			
October	Ginny & Stu Huntington FFCI BOARD	To be determined OCTOBER 26	ANNUAL MEETING
November			
December	Charene Starcevic Corry Bertelsen Judy Mongin	Sat., Dec 7 12:00-3:00	Holiday Party



Are you interested in a new nametag?

I have had a request for a different style of nametag. We will continue to provide the lanyard type nametags to new members. If you would like a nametag with the magnet back, you can email Sherri at Cyclone Awards and request a Friendship force of Central Iowa nametag. Sherri has the layout and your nametag should only take about a week. You will just need to give her your name and city, State. The cost should only be \$7.50 plus tax. Sherri's contact information is Sherri Keigan ~ owner, Cyclone Awards & Engraving Inc., 512 East Lincolnway, Ames, IA 50010, cycloneengraving@aol.com, email.

2024 - 2025

Additional FFCI Leaders still needed



FFCI OFFICER NOMINEES For 2024

1. President: Alta Byg
2. Vice President: Marcia Thompson
3. Secretary: Cheryl Binzen
4. Treasurer: Jerry Byg
5. Newsletter: Dennis Dake
6. Activity Committee: Charene Starcevic, Corry Bertelsen, **Dorothy Dake**
7. Membership: OPEN
8. Publicity... OPEN
9. Historian **Diane Oppedal**
10. Communications: OPEN

Contact President Alta Byg to volunteer.

Phone: (515) 450-8397
altajerbyg@gmail.com

Help lead FFCI into the future!!!

New Officers for 2024 - Elected and Appointed at March 6, 2024 LEO/Membership Meeting



(front row) Sedahlia Crase, Past President, Charene Starcevic, Activities Coordinator Co-chair, Margaret Epplin, Electronic communications, (Middle row) Marcia Thompson, vice president, Alta Byg, President, (back row) Dennis Dake, Newsletter, Carole Magilton, name tags, Cheryl Binzen, Secretary, Jerry Byg, Treasurer. Missing from photo: Corry Bertelsen and Dot Dake, Activity Co-Chair Coordinators



Sedahlia Crase was presented with a bouquet of lovely flowers in thanks

for her long, dedicated service as our FFCI President. A well deserved thanks for representing us and in leading us through the pandemic years and out on the other side to renewal and revitalization. Thank you you Sedahlia!!!



Renew your 2024 FFCI Membership if you missed the March 6 LEO.

If you paid these fine folks your 2024 dues of \$40 at the March 6th Membership meeting you are currently a member in good standing for this coming exciting year.

If you missed this meeting and wish to renew your members PLEASE SEND YOUR DUES TO :

JERRY BYG, TREASURER
2127 Coneflower Ct
Ames Iowa 50010

If we don't hear from you soon this FFCI Newsletter will be the LAST ONE you will receive from us. Don't delay - to hear about all the exciting news, activities, trips. planned for FFCI.

Past events since our last Newsletter

World Friendship Day - March 1, 2024



Our pop-up LEO lunch at Texas Roadhouse was an opportunity for members to celebrate our desire to keep our club growing and united. Sixteen FFCI enthusiasts chowed down on southern food and discussed plans for our future. Members present shared stories and photos of Friendship Force friends they have made on past journeys in the U.S. and abroad.

Thanks to Alta and Jerry for planning this rowdy time together. We needed that! Who knew that Friday noon at the Texas Roadhouse was such a big community destination spot? !

Pictured find the 16 dedicated FFCI members who showed up and sat together and ate together.



Don't miss out on the next big FFCI Event.

Here is the completed schedule for the board meetings for the rest of the year.

FFCI SCHEDULED BOARD MEETINGS

1. Tuesday, **March 19** from 4 to 5
2. Tuesday, **June 18** from 4 to 5
3. Tuesday, **September 17** from 4 to 5

All FFCI members are invited to sit in on Board meetings and help us shape the future of our organization. Check with Alta to see how to connect.

We also need to set up an Annual Meeting and I am suggesting October 26th. I think this would be a good one to have as a LEO, but not necessary.

Alta Byg, FFCI President

2127 Coneflower Ct

altajerbg@gmail.com

Friendship Force of Central Iowa Treasurers Report October 21, 2023

Since July 8, 2023, deposits were made in the amounts of \$10.00, and \$100.00 for welcome dinner and farewell dinner and \$75.00 from Quad Cities for banquet room rental at the Amanas. Disbursements were made to Cory Bertlesen (\$494.79), Marcia Thompson (\$238.10) and Ron Mowers (\$58.75) for expenses for the welcome dinner and farewell dinner; Journey checks to FFI (\$2200.00) and Missoula Western (\$3025.00) were sent. Debit card transactions were made to John Wayne museum (\$300.00), Iowa Quilt Museum (\$120.00), State fair tickets (\$275.00), room rental at Amana (\$191.00), Copy works (432.10), Madison County (\$472.01), Dorothy Dake (\$334.36) and Lynn Avant (\$278.20). Journey payments for Missoula were received from Marsha Novak (\$500.00) and from Richard Schroeder (\$500.00) and a donation payment of \$110.00 was made to Missoula club. With all this activity, the Journey checking account balance is \$2,368.58.

The July 8, 2023, the General account check book balance was \$4789.09. There have been no activities requiring payments from the General Account since July 8 and the August 30 General checking account balance remains at \$4789.09.

As of August 30, 2023, 41 membership dues have been received.

So far receipts from the Long Island exchange total \$3127.00 and expenses submitted to date are \$3208.42

Sarasota, FL Friendship Force Journey, February 1-6, 2024

Ambassadors from 8 states were welcomed by Friendship Force of Sarasota, FL, February 1-6, 2024, to get a sense of life along the FL Golf Coast, their homes, people and environment.

Day 1. After receiving several friendly emails from my Sarasota host, Sue Gordon, who lives in the Pelican Cove Community, (The name sounds like the setting for a Miss Marple mystery!) Sue and I finally met upon my arrival at the airport. While waiting for another arrival, we headed to “The Ringling” to tour the small but gorgeous pieces in the Glass Museum. We then stopped at the museum gift shop before heading back to the airport to pick up Rose, a longtime travel friend of mine from Arkansas, who was also staying with Sue.

Day 2 began with a welcome brunch at Mellow Mushroom for delicious breakfast pizzas. Our guest speaker was no other than Mabel Ringling, wife of John Ringling, resplendent in



Home Host Sue with Diane along FL coast.



Rose, Diane, Mabel Ringling and home host Sue

period costume and with the scoop on John, his family and their life together. Her presentation was a super preview for our then visit to the Ringling Museums and Ca' d'Zan, the historic mansion of John and Mabel Ringling.

Rose and I took Sue out for dinner that evening at The Brine Seafood and Raw Bar.

Day 3 was a performance of Hermann's Royal Lipizzans in Myakka City, FL. This is the only place in the US that you can see these beautiful horses perform. “They are a small European breed of riding horse developed in the 16th century. Their rescue during WWII by American troops was made famous by the Disney movie, “Miracle of the White Stallions.” As I was watching from the bleachers, I received a text saying, “We’re sitting across from you...” Surprise! It was Margie and Phil, Northcrest Apartment neighbors, who happened to be in FL!

In the afternoon we ambassadors hiked on a trail through the Old Miakka Preserve with an informative botanist as guide. Did you know FL has more lightning strikes than any other place in the US?

Dinner that evening was a pizza party at the Friedman home. The Friedman's were fairly new members who enjoy hosting pizza parties. He bakes the pizzas in a domed clay oven outside by



Hermann's Royal Lipizzans horse show.



the pool. While the pizzas were baking, we had another exciting speaker, Bertha Palmer, of Chicago's famous Palmer House, the longest running hotel in America. "Palmer House was built as a wedding gift from Potter Palmer for Bertha Honore Palmer. It was the first to incorporate the electric light bulb, the telephone and the vertical stem lift (elevator) as well as being the creator of one of the world's most adored confections, "the brownie." Bertha was a strong, influential woman and with her money bought up and then developed thousands of acres of FL swamp land.

Sunday, Day 4. Rose and I were with day hosts, Dan & Hilda. The Eco Boat tour and water show was cancelled because of 3-4' waves. So, a change of plans. Dan drove us far north on the



Preparing pizzas for baking.



Day hosts, Dan and Hilda.



Manatees

narrow intercoastal highway. We ate lunch on the beach before arriving at the MOTE Marine Laboratory & Aquarium. We got to see the manatees, the tank of sting rays people could touch ("Their skin feels velvety, like the nose of a horse," said Rose) and tanks of rescued Kemp Ridley turtles.

That evening, we attended a small group dinner party in a gorgeous 12 story apartment retirement facility called Bay Village, where our hostess lived. We were served dinner in their main dining room. Because I live in a life care community, it was especially fun for me to see and learn about a similar one.

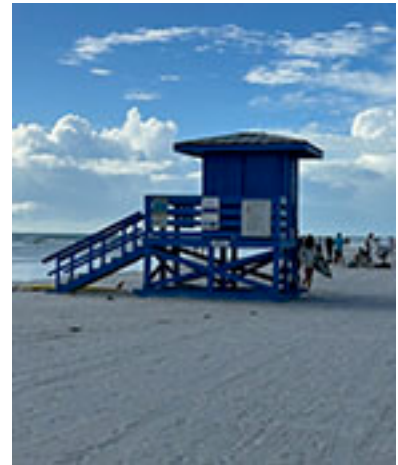
Day 5 was still rainy but we were able to take the boat tour at Myakka River State Park and search for alligators, who were not out sunning themselves on the banks (no sun). On the way



Rainy day boat ride.



Kemp Ridley Turtles



Siesta Key beach

home we stopped at Florida's beautiful Siesta Key beach.

The **Farewell Happy Hour and Heavy Hors d'oeuvres** event was scheduled for 5 PM at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation Church. Ambassadors had a chance to express thanks to their hosts and tell their favorite part of the week's journey.

Day 6, departure day, was a free day with no activities planned. I had arranged to spend the day with a niece and nephew who lived in Fort Myers. They picked me up at 7 AM for breakfast, a wonderful catch-up visit, more sightseeing and then lunch at the condo of my Northcrest neighbors, the Scholtens.

With fond farewells, my family left me at the airport for the 7 PM Atlanta/Des Moines flight home. It was the end of another memorable journey with Friendship Force of Sarasota, FL.

Diane Oppedal, FFCI

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