

## A WORLD OF FRIENDS IS A WORLD OF PEACE



**friendship force**  
MINNESOTA-TWIN CITIES



**2021 SPRING  
NEWSLETTER**

### ***A World of Friends is a World of Peace.***

***by Tom Scott, FFMNTC President***

My next-door neighbor recently posted this “Note to Self” on Facebook. It struck me as a good reminder of why we join together in organizations like Friendship Force

“What is my purpose in life?” I asked the void.

“What if I told you that you fulfilled it when you took an extra hour to talk to that kid about his life?” said the voice.

“Or when you paid for that young couple in the restaurant? Or when you saved that dog in the traffic? Or when you tied your father’s shoes for him?”

“Your problem is that you equate your purpose with goal-based achievement. The Universe isn’t interested in your achievements...just your heart. When you choose to act out of kindness, compassion and love, you are already aligned with your true purpose.”

“No need to look any further.”

“A world of friends is a world of peace” is the Friendship Force motto. Whether we are enjoying each other’s company at some club activity, hosting visitors or Open World delegates or on an out-bound journey, we need to remember that our primary purpose is to act out of kindness, compassion, love and commitment.

***If we keep that focus, we’ll continue to have a successful club. Without it, we’ll lose our way. Peace.***

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## **Travel Tuesdays**

The 2021 FFMNTC Board invites you to join us for a series of travel presentations to be presented on the last Tuesday of the month at 7:00 PM. Each one-hour-plus program will begin with a travel-related or international-focused media presentation followed by a Q and A and social time. We will have a special celebration of Cinco de Mayo on May 5<sup>th</sup>. All programs will be offered on the Zoom platform. Members and their friends and families are invited to participate. Potential members are welcome at all FFMNTC events.

### **Share your story:**

***The FFMNTC Board invites you to share your own adventure story with our members at an upcoming virtual Travel-Tuesday. Contact Tom Scott at [tscott1909@gmail.com](mailto:tscott1909@gmail.com) or 612-804-4102. If you would rather share your story in written form, contact [FFMinnesotaVP@yahoo.com](mailto:FFMinnesotaVP@yahoo.com).***

## Spring Travel-Tuesday Schedule

**SPECIAL EVENT! Wednesday, May 5 at 7:00 PM: Cinco de Mayo Celebration** presented by Cindy Cauble and Val Hessburg. Cinco de Mayo is a Mexican holiday celebrated annually on May 5, commemorating the victory of the Mexican Army over French forces in the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862.

**Tuesday, May 25 at 7:00 PM: “A Refugee Family's Journey to America”** presented by Faiza Mohammed, FFMNTC Member

**Tuesday, June 29 at 7:00 PM: “Travels with Bill”** A series of travel videos taken by the late Bill Cunningham presented by Mary Cunningham. The Cunningham’s first joined FFMNTC in 1980 and travelled the world together for many years including leading Journeys for FFMNTC. Mary has served as a Board Director, most recently as Journey Director.

**Tuesday, July 27 at 7:00 PM: OPEN**

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## 2021 Semi-Annual Membership Meeting and Picnic Lunch

*by Cindy Cauble, Board Director*

Being ever hopeful, in January we reserved the Oak Hill Park Picnic Shelter in St. Louis Park for **Sunday, August 8 at 12:00 Noon**. The park is located at 3201 Rhode Island Ave S, St Louis Park, MN 55426. Lunch arrangements will depend on recommended Covid-19 precautions. Details to follow as the date approaches.

**VENUE:** <https://www.stlouispark.org/Home/Components/FacilityDirectory/FacilityDirectory/32/85>

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## WELCOME TO FFMNTC!



### Jim Backstrom

We welcome new member Jim Backstrom. Jim and his wife Beth live in Inver Grove Heights. Jim is a Duluth native. After graduating from the University of Minnesota Duluth, he attended law school at William Mitchell, now Mitchell Hamline School of Law, in St. Paul. Jim served for 33 years as the Dakota County Attorney, retiring in February of this year. In September, 2019, Jim organized a day long presentation by himself, his staff and other Dakota County officials for our Open World delegates from Ukraine. Jim is a sports fan and loves to sing. He does a pretty mean Elvis impersonation, having volunteered his time and performed at senior citizen facilities, community events and other gatherings. Jim looks forward to meeting other club members post Covid. \_\_\_\_\_ **by Tom Scott**



### Paul Vergosen

FFMNTC is thrilled to welcome back Paul Vergosen as a member of our club. Paul led a Minnesota exchange to Japan in 1999 where members participated in two back-to-back homestays, the first in Nagoya, in central Japan, and the second in Koriyama in northern Japan. The timing of our April exchange was planned to take place at the peak of the cherry blossom festival - a truly amazing sight to behold. Welcome back, Paul! \_\_\_\_\_ **by Buck MacDonald**

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## Friendship as a Way of Life

by Sam and Ava Guerrera, Life Members

**We affiliated with FFMN in 1978**, hosting a family from Germany during a time when the country selected was a secret only to be revealed five or six weeks before the function. FF felt that as "ambassadors" participants should be willing to travel anywhere. It was also a time when FF Atlanta chartered flights that brought members to the foreign country and returned with members from that host country to stay with families in the US. This required two exchange committees and a robust recruiting effort to fill planes and secure home hosts.



**Our most memorable trip was to the USSR in 1991** as members of a group of ten sent in an effort to establish FF there. We were hosted throughout by the Russian Friendship Society that we understood was symbolic in name only but we were treated very well. After a stay in Moscow, we were entrained to Minsk, Belarus where we and another couple stayed with a family whose husband had stayed with us the previous year as a part of a contingent of Soviet farmers. An apartment with 4 bedrooms was a rarity in the Soviet Union and being picked up each day by a driver led us to suspect our host was KGB but we were treated extraordinarily well.

### AVA AND SAM AT THE FFMNTC 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PARTY

His wife and two very young girls were charming and we stayed in touch for some time until learning they had been transferred to Chernobyl. While there, I was interviewed on Soviet TV and asked about my observations of life in the Soviet Union. I responded that people the world over were essentially the same; their hopes, fears, laughter, sadness, love of their children, all irrespective of the difference in politics.

From Minsk we traveled by bus to a collective farm for a four-night stay and home hosted by the farm Maintenance Manager on Minnesota Street featuring new two-story single-family homes. The farm General Manager had been in MN the previous year and he welcomed us with a tour of the facilities that were antiquated by our standards. He was very candid explaining to us that the farm had two Soviet tractors and one German. The second Soviet tractor was cannibalized for parts because of constant breakdowns whereas the German tractor functioned well. Ava had spent considerable time with a teacher who spoke some English and when we were about to board our bus to depart, she presented Ava with a gift of Russian books. And, then with tears in her eyes, hugged Ava and said, "I didn't think Americans could ever like us".

The next collective farm was on the Polish border and specialized in raising chickens and related research. The General Manager also having been in MN the previous year had ordered! million dollars of milking equipment. When I asked him how it was functioning, he replied angrily that it had not arrived and was still being held up by Moscow authorities. We handed out baseball caps from companies throughout MN that were a big hit.

We then returned to Minsk for a farewell dinner before traveling to our final destination, St. Petersburg, where we were treated as privileged tourists. Just before leaving the Minsk dinner, I was introduced to the Sales Manager of a refrigerator company in Belorussia that produced for all the Soviet regions.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 4**

When I asked about his work, he responded that a sales manager's duties there were different from ours; his function was not to sell but to allocate refrigerators. This was the Soviet era and it was obvious to see how communism had failed the Russian people by trailing the western world in economic development among other areas.

**During our years with FFMNTC, we traveled to Germany, Japan, Hong Kong, Venezuela and Great Britain** where Ava led an exchange of 80 persons. Ava functioned as President in 1986-1987 when the club numbered about 500 members. Since I was working, we hosted more than travelled welcoming families from Germany, Italy, Great Britain, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Venezuela and New Zealand.

**In 1991 we moved from MN to Santa Rosa CA** where we affiliated with a young Napa-Sonoma chapter. However, in 1990 we had purchased a vacation home in Tuscany that we visited from four to six months each year until we sold it in 2009. Nevertheless, we did find time to travel with FF to India, Australia, New Zealand and a groundbreaking visit to Cuba cosponsored by FF, the US Dept of State and The Hope Foundation. Communism there as in the Soviet Union had taken its toll but Cuba was fascinating with mostly poor but seemingly happy people driving in American 50s vintage cars. We stayed in hotels and were required to bring 25 pounds of OTC medications and school education materials that we distributed throughout our tour of the country. Since then, our travels have only been personal trips within the US, mainly family visits. *We are now 91 and 93, so our travel days are behind us, but remain with us in our memories. Because of health reasons we now live in a life-time care community, however, we still remain members of both clubs and continue to support the concept that a world of friends is a world of peace.*

**NOTE: AVA GUERRERA SERVED AS FFMNTC PRESIDENT 1985 -1986.**

**Thank you, Rita Mays, Board Director, for inviting Sam and Ava to share their Friendship Force story.**

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## **JOURNEY PREVIEWS**

**by Cindy Cauble, Journey Director**

It's exciting to be able to report on upcoming journeys. Because contact information has not been received yet, all dates are tentative.

### **2022 Domestic Outbound – February/ March: Central Arizona Club**

This club is part of metro Phoenix on the Sonoran Desert.

### **2022 International Outbound – September/October**

The Germany-Turkey journey is one of our assignments again, with a change. Cottbus, Germany remains the same. To refresh your memory, it's located in the state Brandenburg between Berlin and Dresden. In Turkey the Urla of Greater Izmir club will be our host. Urla is located on the Karaburun Peninsula and holds typical Aegean characteristics. Former assignment, Cankaya, chose not to host in 2022.

### **2022 Inbound – May: Los Angeles Club**

The LA Club is still excited to be able to come to the Twin Cities. They are coordinating another host week with Winnipeg, Canada. That's why FFI considers this an international inbound.

### **2023 International Outbound – Taipei, Taiwan**

Unfortunately, conditions are not as safe in Taiwan as they were earlier. A 10–14-day quarantine is required even for vaccinated visitors. The board decided to cancel this journey and we hope to re-schedule for 2023. Taipei is very receptive to 2023 and looking forward to meeting us.

**Watch for further information about our upcoming journeys as the details unfold.**

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## FRIENDSHIP or AMISTAD – es lo mismo\*

### Spanish Conversation via Zoom

by *Marcia Novak*

***Hola Amigos!***

***Have you heard about the Spanish Conversation Group?***

It is a fun way to improve your Spanish Conversation skills and connect with friends!!

In January when the Board wanted suggestions for ways the FFMNTC community could stay connected during this time of social distancing, the idea of having language conversation groups – Spanish, French, German - was proposed. As seasoned world travelers, Marcia Novak suggested members might be interested in honing their language skills while connecting and talking to friends in language conversation groups.

I've been studying Spanish for some time using the Duolingo app. But I felt I needed to find a conversation group where I could practice conversing in Spanish and improve my comfort level with the language. FFMNTC seemed to be a perfect place to start a Spanish conversation group.

*Ole!* The Spanish conversation group was born. The call for members went out initially in February and the group currently has eight participants. The initial organizational meetings were held in late March and conversation practice began in April.

The group has been meeting weekly via Zoom on Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm. The curriculum is still evolving, but the group focus is to improve conversation skills. Conversation topics for April included: Useful Phrases + Verbs/Vocabulary, Eating Out - Foods/Restaurants, Shopping -Groceries/Clothing, and Pronunciation Tips.

*To-dos Son Bienvenidos!* All FFMNTC members are invited to join the Spanish conversation group. Contact Tom Scott: [tscott1909@gmail.com](mailto:tscott1909@gmail.com) to have your name added to the Spanish Conversation Group email list.

***\*It's the same thing.***

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## Did you notice anything new?

FFI has adopted a modified logo with some color changes and a different type face. FFMNTC got a new logo too! See if you can spot the differences. FFI has also reverted to a previous theme:

**A world of friends is a world of peace**



### The FFI Member Portal (MyFFI)

Friendship International (FFI) is now offering individual members the opportunity to have their own accounts through the FFI website. To take advantage of this, you will need to sign up and create a password. Later, as this service evolves, you will be able to sign in to manage your Journeys and other FFI activities.

To sign up, go to: [https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign\\_in](https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign_in)

This is also the link to use to access the member portal after you create your account.

## Travel Bytes

by **Buck MacDonald**, Board Director

Travel will be making a comeback, but things will be different. Masks will not disappear this year. In planes, masks will be required for years and will be preferred by travelers in the future.

Many nations are still having trouble receiving vaccines due primarily to logistics of storage and distribution. And as new variants keep popping up, it is highly unlikely that borders will fully re-open in the short-term.

Vaccine hesitancy is also a problem with nearly half of those questioned worldwide saying they would not get the vaccine at all or not immediately. With numbers like these, herd immunity might be a long way off and so expect some sort of vaccine requirement to travel. Even with the vaccine, Covid-19 tests will still be needed and expected upon entering and/or exiting a country. Plenty of providers' offices, labs, hospitals and public spaces will have kiosks or rapid testing available. Some airports are beginning to install rapid-testing labs where antigen results are delivered in less than 30 minutes.

Looking ahead, travelers will be more health conscious with many getting travel health insurance for the first time. The importance of hygiene and improved facilities at restaurants, airlines and hotels are all positive steps that emerged from the pandemic. As you step into hotels now, the QR codes, contactless check-in and plastic wrap on remotes will remain well past 2021. Cleaning processes have changed and will hopefully stay at the very highest level. Expect hand sanitizers, mask wearing and temperature checks for possibly years to come.



### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT APRIL 2021 MEETING**

The Board has been meeting virtually via zoom since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

## **BOARD of DIRECTORS**

### **2021 ELECTED OFFICERS**

**President: Tom Scott**  
[tscott1909@gmail.com](mailto:tscott1909@gmail.com)  
612-804-4102

**Vice President: Max Harris**  
[xharris26@comcast.net](mailto:xharris26@comcast.net)  
952-938-2101

**Secretary: Louise Anderson**  
[louisemarieanderson17@gmail.com](mailto:louisemarieanderson17@gmail.com) 612-354-0927

**Treasurer: Rose Emerick**  
[rose3689@comcast.net](mailto:rose3689@comcast.net)  
612-723-6202

### **BOARD DIRECTORS**

**Jane Bardon – News Editor, Webmaster, Membership**  
[ffminnesotavp@yahoo.com](mailto:ffminnesotavp@yahoo.com)

**Cindy Cauble – Journey Director, Zoom-master**  
[cindyc219@msn.com](mailto:cindyc219@msn.com)

**Buck MacDonald – Member-at-Large**  
[jbmcd11@hotmail.com](mailto:jbmcd11@hotmail.com)

**Rita Mays – Member-at-Large**  
[ritamnffi@yahoo.com](mailto:ritamnffi@yahoo.com)

### **Non-Board Volunteer**

**Jan Lanyk – Facebook Admin**  
[janlanyk@gmail.com](mailto:janlanyk@gmail.com)

### **WEBSITE**

[FFTwinCities.org](http://FFTwinCities.org)

### **NEWSLETTER**

Published quarterly during the COVID-19 pandemic by the FFMNTC Board. Email submissions to:

[FFMinnesotaVP@yahoo.com](mailto:FFMinnesotaVP@yahoo.com)



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