

EXPERIENCE DIFFERENT VIEWS. DISCOVER COMMON GROUND



friendship force
MINNESOTA - TWIN CITIES



Making friends around the world since 1978



FFI President and CEO Jeremi Snook (left) and FFI Midwest Regional Representative Dale Moore (right) at the FFMNTC 40th Anniversary Celebration

Our 40th Anniversary Celebration on September 9 brought together FFMNTC Members and families from 1978 to the present. One hundred and nine friends attended the event in the beautiful Lafayette Club on the shore of Lake Minnetonka. President Rita Mays welcomed members and guests and presided over the program with Emcee Barry ZeVan. There were many heartfelt reunions and stories to tell. Our first Outgoing Journey (Exchange) in 1978 was a major point of connection for early members. Read the story on the next page by one of our young Ambassadors and [watch for our upcoming special issue:](#)

Facts and Faces from our celebration of:

Four Decades of Friendship

FIRST MEMORIES OF GERMANY – FRIENDSHIP FORCE 1978

By Peter McKenna (Mary McKenna's son)

That first Friendship Force trip in 1978 was my longest journey to date.

Our group took off from Minneapolis, and after a quick refueling stop on the east coast, flew throughout the short night all the way to Berlin. By the time we arrived on that chilly morning in Germany, the adrenalin that had kept me awake for about the whole week before had worn off, and I was absolutely bone tired.

I probably could have slept standing up, but my host Gisela Steinbiss kindly showed me into the bedroom she had commandeered from her seven year old son Holger for my use during the trip.

Holger was at school already so I was able to climb undisturbed into that wonderful cozy bed with those crisp clean cotton sheets and that warm comforter and...

I believe I was sound asleep within the first two minutes of lying down.

Ten minutes later -- or maybe it was ten hours -- I couldn't really tell which, I opened my eyes to find a cute little kid looking down on me and smiling.



"Hello" I said.

He kept staring.

"My name is Peter, what's yours?"

He kept staring.

I spoke a little louder: "Are you Holger? How old are you? Are you just getting back from school now?"

But he just continued to look down at me, and wordlessly kept smiling.

Oh my goodness, I realized, the poor kid is deaf. Oh, that's sad...

Finally, fully half a minute into this tableau the dim lightbulb went off in my jet-lag-muddled mind:

"Peter, you are not in Minnesota anymore – you are in Germany.

Of course, this kid speaks *GERMAN*, you dummkopf!

So using my tiny bit of "pigeon German" I was able to say "*Guten Auben, my nam-ma ist Peter!*" and sure enough my new "deaf" friend Holger immediately started chatting away a mile a minute, and didn't stop until we hugged goodbye two weeks later.

Admittedly, neither of us always understood each other's spoken words, but that didn't stop us seeing who could run up the steps to the top of the Berlin radio tower faster, or from making faces at one another behind her back when Gisela served a smelly fish dish, or from laughing at Bug's Bunny cartoons with the sound turned off.

You might say we invented our own language during that trip: We spoke "*Friendship*".



**WORDS FROM OUR
PRESIDENT,
*Rita Mays***

**WOW! What a year we've had in 2018!
Our Board has been phenomenal!**

We started the year with a fabulous Journey to Costa Rica. Rosie Foreman, Ambassador Coordinator, fearlessly lead 19 of us into West Alajuela and later into the rain forests of Costa Rica in January.

Jane Norman and John Christensen offered a variety of activities to enjoy with our community! Especially noted are the times of personal sharing: the Costa Rica review, a great summer picnic with 40 years of stories, a mini-trip to the Iron Range and recently, small dinner parties!

Barb Emer, Editor, provided an impressive newsletter. Jane Bardon sent timely emails and posts on Facebook and the web! Jane has also done an awesome job with our membership roster.

We celebrated both our 40th Anniversary Celebration and the Open World Program this past month! Ben Szyplinski updated the 40-year History of Officers and Exchanges. Cindy Cauble created Save the Date cards. Jane Bardon and Buck MacDonald provided strong leadership on the 40th Anniversary throughout the year. Buck secured the Lafayette club and stayed on top of incoming RSVPs and checks, while Jane, our detective, tracked down "lost" members, coordinated invitations, volunteers, and displays!

Tom Scott did an outstanding job as the leader of the Open World Ukraine Program. He brought together a strong committee and topnotch program on Health Care Systems and Management. Mary Cunningham coached the OW Home Hosts with pizzazz, and throughout the year has strategized on FFJourneys for 2019 and beyond. Cindy Cauble offered to lead our 2018 Incoming Journey from Russia which was cancelled due to visa problems. She then stepped right in to lead the 2019 Incoming Journey from Germany.

A special thank you to our FFI leaders, Jeremi Snook, President and CEO of Friendship Force International and Dale Moore, Midwest Regional Volunteer Representative for sharing our 40 Anniversary with us! Also to Richard Falk, Phyllis Schurz and Betty Croonquist for sharing our rich club's history.

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BOARD MEMBERS

OFFICERS

President: Rita Mays
ritamnffi@yahoo.com

Vice President: Jane Bardon
ffminnesotavp@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Buck MacDonald

Secretary: Tom Scott

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Activities Co-Chairs:

John Christensen and Jane Norman

Communications:

Jane Bardon

Journey Coordinator:

Mary Cunningham

Membership Chair

Jane Bardon

Newsletter Editor:

Barb Emer

Host Coordinator:

Cindy Cauble

Incoming Journey from

Halle-Saale, Germany

Non-Board Volunteers

Historian: Jan Lanyk

Sunshine: Val Hessburg

Webmaster: Jane Bardon

To email a board director, go to friendshipforcetwincities.org Click on "Board Contacts" on the red menu bar, then click on the person you wish to contact.

**Next Newsletter Deadline:
December 15th**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT CONTINUED

Thank you, Board members, for all you have done this year! As I prepare to pass the gavel, I am in awe of all of you! Thank you for allowing me to be President of this fine organization for the past two years. Many, many of you as members also stepped forward when we needed volunteers! Besides being home hosts, you were drivers, hosts for dinner parties, program planners, committee members, history researchers and storytellers! **Thank you, FFMNTC members!**

In Gratitude for You and a wonderful 2018 FFMNTC year!

Rita Mays, President, ritamnffi@yahoo.com

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

We welcomed seven new members in 2018. Many are already involved in FFMNTC activities.

- **David Balzotti** served as webmaster for several months until he moved to Mexico.
- **Rose Emerick and John Verby** hosted an Open World Delegate from Ukraine.
- **Louise Morgan** is a new member from Plymouth MN.
- **Marcia Novak** is a new member also from Plymouth MN.
- **Julie Sabo** arranged a visit to a medical facility for the Open World program.
- **Carla Sharpe** helped at the 40th Anniversary party and the Open World farewell dinner.
- **Barry ZeVan** was the emcee for the 40th Anniversary Celebration.

NEW 2019 MEMBERSHIP FORM

A new member form is enclosed with this newsletter. Download the form, fill it out completely (and legibly) for each person, send it to the Treasurer with your dues – and you're done. The form will become part of our permanent membership records. You can send updates to your contact information to the Membership Chair or Treasurer at any time.

2019 FFMNTC Board

We are nearing the time of year when we express our appreciation to the outgoing Board of Directions and elect new officers for the coming year. The nominating committee, Jane Bardon and Jane Norman, Co-chairs, and committee members CaRae Cayman, Heather Halen, and Ken Scherber is preparing a slate of Officers to present at the 2019 Annual General Membership Meeting on December 1, 2018. The election of the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer will take place at that time.

Other Board Directors are appointed by the President to serve in specific positions, usually as committee chairs. They are expected to carry out their duties independently and to attend monthly board meetings.

Board Committee Members share their special skills and make significant contributions to the work of the board without the necessity of attending regular board meetings.

For a list of current Board Directors, check out the sidebar on page eight. If you are interested in a Director or committee position, or want to recommend someone else, contact Jane Bardon at FFMinnesotaVP@Yahoo.com, or call me to chat at 651-484-7989

UPCOMING EVENTS

Four members have graciously volunteered to host a dinner, potluck or gathering at a local restaurant this month. Want to be a host? Contact John for details at ichristensen2@juno.com

EAST AFRICAN LUNCH AND PRESENTATION

Wednesday, November 14th, 12:00-2:00

We are expanding our knowledge of Local ethnic groups with lunch at an East African Restaurant followed by a talk about Somali culture. RSVP to Jane Norman at janeaway7@aol.com

Safari Restaurant
3010-4th Avenue South
Minneapolis (612)353-5341
safarirestaurant.net



2018 Annual General Membership Meeting

Saturday, December 1st, 12:00 - 3:00

Applewood Pointe of Bloomington
8100 Russell Avenue South
Bloomington MN 55431

- Business Meeting
- Reports from 2018 Board of Directors
- Election of Officers for 2019

Join us for our Annual Meeting and Holiday Potluck. Bring one of your favorite culinary creations to share. Beverages will be provided.

Hosts: Gordon and Mary Elscott

JOURNEY NEWS

By *Mary Cunningham*

The Big Journey news looking toward 2019 revolves around the Friendship Force of Halle-Saale, Germany coming to the Twin Cities July 3-11. Our Host Coordinator Cindy Cauble is corresponding with the Ambassador Coordinator so this Journey is feeling very real and exciting. The Halle-Saale club will extend its American journey by traveling on to the Friendship Force of Greater Omaha. Look for more information about this long-anticipated Journey at the festive December MNTC Annual Meeting and Holiday Potluck.

The Cedar Rapids Friendship Force Club has invited our club to join them on their Brazilian adventure June 24-July 9, 2019 to Ribeirao Preto and Salvador-Bahia. It is actually the winter season in Brazil, with average daily temperatures below 80 degrees (F). Both home stays will be five nights each with a two-night side trip to Iguassu Falls in between. From the Cedar Rapids Airport, the Journey price, including side trip to Iguassu Falls, is \$995 per Ambassador plus approximately \$1500 for airfare. For a detailed flyer about this colorful and tropical journey with our Iowa neighbors, contact Mary Cunningham (marycunningham001@comcast.net).

Plans for the Central Iowa Journey to Greater Kiev, Ukraine and Tbilisi, Georgia in October of 2019 are in process. More information will be available soon.

The Journey to Connecticut has been postponed until 2020. Ambassador Coordinator Val Hessburg will be working with FFCT to set dates and itinerary.

OPEN WORLD UKRAINE

By *Tom Scott*



Welcoming Open World Ukraine delegates at the Airport, (left to right) Oleksii, Ivan, Yulia, Mladena, Mykhailo, Illya



Dr. Ed Ehlinger, OW Medical Advisor, and Tom Scott, FFMNTC OW Leader

Friendship Force is all about connecting with people and learning from each other, with a good deal of fun and laughter included in the mix. By this standard, the Open World Ukraine visit was a smashing success. The club hosted five delegates, a bilingual facilitator and an interpreter from September 7th to September 15th. The topic was health care and the delegation consisted of three primary care physicians and two lawyers who work for the Ukraine Minister of Health in the areas of corruption elimination and regulatory reforms. They are all smart, engaging young leaders in their late 20s looking to learn and improve their health care system back home. The professional programming included presentations, conversations and tours at the Minnesota Department of Health, University of Minnesota, Hennepin County Medical Center, VA Hospital, NorthPoint Clinic in north Minneapolis, the State Capitol and a day trip to Winona for a very special time with doctors and administrators at Winona Health. The group met with State Senator John Marty and interacted extensively with Dr. Ed Ehlinger, former state Commissioner of Health.

Social events included a welcome potluck dinner at the home of Mary and Bill Cunningham, the 40th Anniversary Party and a farewell potluck hosted by Jane and Jack Bardon at their home.

It was truly a joint, collaborative effort and there are many people to thank: Jane Bardon, Rita Mays, Mary Cunningham and Buck McDonald who served on the planning committee; home hosts: JC Bosse, Rose Foreman and Ken Scherber, Rose Emerick and John Verby, Ed and Karen Stuart, Louise Anderson and Godfrey Peterson and Tom and Janet Scott; drivers Lois Langholz and Nellie Hofmeister. A special thanks to Mary and Bill Cunningham and Jane and Jack Bardon for opening their homes for our large group gatherings.

Finally, a special thanks for Dr. Ed Ehlinger who was an invaluable resource in planning the program, giving the opening presentation to the delegates, accompanying us on our trip to Winona, attending evening gatherings and extensively interacting with the delegates.

I have many fond memories of the eight days with our guests. One that stays with me is the sound of loud laughter coming from the back porch of my neighbors and fellow hosts, Ed and Karen Stuart, as they and their guest Mladena enjoyed each other's company. Life is short. It is the special moments that enrich our lives. Peace.