



friendship force

GREATER MILWAUKEE

a world of friends is a world of peace

MARCH-APRIL 2026

www.friendshipforcemilwaukee.org

president's message

Spring is near. After a long winter I think everyone is ready for spring to arrive. Make sure you have May 3 on your calendar as we celebrate with our Spring Fling. Look for details in the newsletter, along with all the other activities that you as members can participate in.

I want to express my thanks to Dorothy Kelley and her membership team for the outstanding job they did in making sure everyone was contacted to renew their membership in Friendship Force. Thanks to all of you, we have renewed our charter with 104 members as we remain one of the largest clubs in the world. Once all the renewals have been processed on an international basis, we will find out if we have retained our status as the largest club.



Dave Loosen

For this newsletter I would like to highlight programs our club has participated in for years that you may not be fully aware of — the peanut butter and jelly sandwich project and the Mitchell Food Center. These programs came into being when the leadership of the club was

looking for a meaningful ongoing community project. The result was these two projects. Originally members of our club would get together once a month to make 50 PBJ sandwiches for homeless people. The program has expanded to where members now gather twice a month to make sandwiches. Pastor Max was the individual who started a program called StreetLife to minister to the homeless, and where the PBJ sandwich making came into being. Later he would partner with four food pantries and become head of one of them, the Mitchell Food Center, near 22nd and Mitchell.

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MAY 3: spotlight on Persian/Iranian cuisine

This is one Spring Fling you will not want to miss! The highlight of the event will be a Persian/Iranian meal prepared especially for FFGM by the

chef of Gus's Deli, who is a native of Iran.

RESERVATIONS NEEDED BY APRIL 22

✓ 12:15 p.m. at Gus's Deli, 813 S. 60th St. West Allis.

✓ \$27 for members; \$36 for guests.

✓ Send reservation requests to Terry and Ty O'Dell.

Gus is going all out for us and is making numerous dishes typical of his homeland. This feast will be served buffet style and will include fesenjam (a typical Persian dish of chicken in a cream sauce with walnuts

and pomegranates), both lamb kebabs and chicken kebabs, an eggplant and tomato stew, rice with saffron, and pita bread. That's not all! There will be three different salads: a garden salad; a cucumber, yogurt, and mint salad; and a tomato, onion, lemon, and mint salad. For dessert Gus is providing special date cookies.

The cost of this Persian meal is \$27 for FFGM

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at a glance

3/11 Book Club 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. *Homegoing* (Ghana) by Yaa Gyasi.

3/18 LEO at Orenda Cafe 3514 W. National Ave., Milwaukee. R.S.V.P. to Ann Line.

3/26 10:30 a.m. tour of Milwaukee County Historical Society, 910 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Dr., Milwaukee. noon lunch at the 3rd Street Market Hall, and 1:30 p.m. tour of NPR station WUWM, 111 E. Wisconsin Ave., Suite 700. R.S.V.P. by **March 10** to Cris Reischl.

4/13 LEO at Camino, 7211 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis. R.S.V.P. to Ann Line.

4/23 Middle Eastern Day. 11 a.m. tour of Milwaukee Muslim Woman's Coalition, 5235 S. 27th St. 12:45 p.m. lunch at Taqwa's Restaurant and Bakery, 4651 S. 27th St., Greenfield. 2:15 p.m. tour of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, 4707 S. 13th St., possibly including a tour of the Salam School. R.S.V.P. to Ann Line.

05/3 Spring Fling at 12:15 p.m. at Gus's Deli, 813 S. 60th St., West Allis. \$27 for members; \$36 for guests for a Persian/Iranian feast. R.S.V.P. by **April 22** to Terry and Ty O'Dell.

2026 Journeys

April 1-7 - Setouchi Hiroshima, Japan, Outbound.

Aug. 9-15 - Tallahassee, FL, In-bound

Aug. 26-Sept. 1 - Flathead Valley, Montana, Outbound.

FIFTH @ 5: 2026 hosts needed

If you've attended a Fifth @ 5 (on the 5th of each month — or a day close to the 5th) — you know it's an easy way to entertain. FFGM members and guests bring the appetizers and desserts and their own beverages. You supply the place, a few paper plates and napkins. And we need hosts for March and April.

Contact Barbara Geck if you'd like to host.

MARCH 11: book club

The FFGM Book Club is reading *Homegoing* (Ghana) by Yaa Gyasi for its March 11 meeting at 1:30 p.m. via Zoom. Jobea Murray is the facilitator.

The Book Club meets on the second Wednesday of odd-numbered months at 1:30 p.m., usually on Zoom in the bad weather months and in-person in the good weather months. The Zoom link will be sent a day or two in advance of the meeting date.

Books may be fiction or non-fiction and need to take place in another country or deal with another culture or ethnicity.

The FFGM Book Club is open to all members and we welcome new people to join us. Come check us out even if you haven't finished the book, but do try to finish it. Stimulate your brain and meet new friends!

Here are the books we'll be reading later this year.

- ▶ May 13: *The Glass Palace* (Burma) by Amitav Ghosh. Facilitator: Kathy Buenning
- ▶ July 8: *Mountains Beyond Mountains* (Haiti) by Tracy Kidder. Facilitator: Iva Richards
- ▶ Sept. 9: *Girl at War* (Croatia) by Sara Novic. Facilitator: Linda VanDyne
- ▶ Nov. 11: *Mona's Eyes* (France) by Thomas Schlessler. Facilitator: Mary Hauser.

KNOW ANYONE WHO NEEDS CHEERING UP?

Did you know that FFGM has a sunshine club that will send out get well and sympathy cards to members? If you know a member who is ill, hospitalized, had a death in the family, or could use an expression of caring from our club, email the information to Cris Reischl.

APRIL 23: middle eastern day

Clear your calendars for Thursday, April 23. FFGM has planned a culture-filled day in the Middle East. Eid? Ramadan? Hijab? Halal? Come learn what these all and more mean.

We will start off the day at 11 a.m. at the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition (MMWC) located at 5235 S. 27th Street. Please note that both men and women are welcome. The MMWC staff will present background on what they do and resources available, a little about Islam, and a Questions & Answers session.

Following will be various hands-on activities. They will do our names in Arabic calligraphy and explain about the hijab and how to tie one. You are invited to bring your own scarf (28" x 73"), and they will also have scarves to use.

Next it's a five-minute drive to Taqwa's Restaurant and Bakery at 4651 S. 27th St. where we will have lunch at 12:45 p.m. Taqwa's has received acclaim for the authenticity of its Middle Eastern cuisine. You will order whatever you wish off the menu. The restaurant will do separate checks, and there is no extra charge for credit cards.

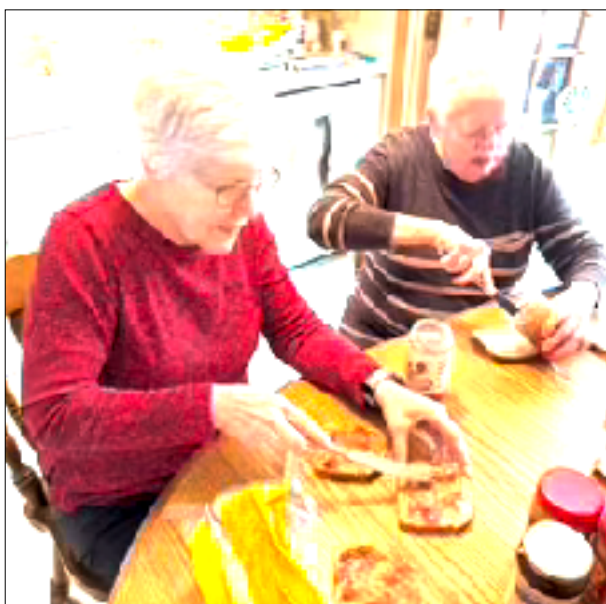
We will finish the day by visiting the Islamic Society of Milwaukee, located nearby at 4707 S. 13th St. There will be a 2:15 p.m. tour of the facilities as



well as a possible visit to the K-12 Salam School which is on the same site.

That ends the official FFGM Middle Eastern Day. Those attending will receive information on other Middle Eastern businesses to check out in the area if they wish to continue exploring on their own (Paradise Roastery, Bread House, Amanah, Al-Yousef, Holyland).

Come immerse yourself in another culture and learn about others in our world. The only cost to you is your lunch at Taqwa's. You must R.S.V.P. to Ann Line **by April 20** as we need the count for the MMWC and Taqwa's.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER, *from page 1*

We have members help on a weekly basis at the Food Center. Special thanks go out to Dave Kalan and Gayle Best for providing leadership for this effort. If you would like more information on either of these programs, please call Dave or Gayle, whose contact information is in the directory. Note that carpooling can be arranged if needed. Upcoming dates for the PBJ sessions are March 9, April 6, and April 27. A huge THANK YOU goes out to all of our members who have helped with either of these worthwhile activities.



These (usually) lunch gatherings continue to be popular. If you haven't tried a L.E.O., please consider it. It's a great way to try a new restaurant. At left, 13 people gathered for Thai-Mexican fusion at Su Plus 2 in West Allis in January.

UP NEXT: ORENDA CAFE AND CAMINO

Join your FFGM friends as we continue to explore local dining establishments, especially the hidden gems, for our Let's Eat Out (L.E.O.) gatherings.

We have been doing this since January 2025. Normally, we meet at 12:30 p.m. for lunch and the day of the week will vary. Isn't it time for you to venture out in winter and try someplace new? R.S.V.P. to Ann Line.

We'll lunch at Orenda Cafe, 3514 W. National Ave., Milwaukee, on Wednesday, March 18.

Orenda Cafe serves breakfast, brunch, and lunch items that are unique, creative, and fresh. Among their offerings are omelettes, bowls, sandwiches, salads, and four different kinds of egg benedicts.

We'll visit Camino at 7211 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis, on Monday, April 13.

Camino's Monday special is a cheeseburger (8 oz.) for only \$5. Yes, you read that right: \$5! And it is good. You don't have to order a cheeseburger, but why not at that price? Camino is also known for its pierogis and crispy Brussels sprouts.

MARCH 26: county historical society and WUWM tours

Join us for a downtown Milwaukee experience. First, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., we will have a behind-the-scenes tour of the Milwaukee County Historical Society, 910 N. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive, Milwaukee.

We will then walk (with decent weather, we hope) to the 3rd Street Market Hall, for lunch at about noon.

MARCH 10 DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS

✓ \$13 pay at the museum

✓ Register by emailing Cris Reischl.

After lunch (and perhaps a free shuffle board game) we will proceed to the seventh floor of the Chase Tower building a few blocks away for a tour and presentation at Milwaukee's NPR station WUWM-FM (89.7) from 1:30 to

2:30 p.m.

At the Historical Society (milwaukeehistory.net) we will tour behind the scenes and learn about the archives, research library, collections and preservation efforts. The society's research library contains county records and manuscript and photograph collections. A visit to current displays is included.

The 3rd Street Market Hall (3rdstmarkethall.com) was voted second best food hall in America by *USA*



Today! There are 20 different vendors to choose from — and many different cuisines. This is a very relaxed, self-serve venue.

Have you ever wondered how WUWM brings radio to your ears each and every day? On our tour we will learn about the station and perhaps meet some of the people that bring you the local news and information you rely on every day.

Parking note: The Historical Society has an agreement with Power Parking on the corner of Plankinton and Kilbourn (kind of kitty corner from the museum) — up to five hours of parking for \$10. Additional details will be sent to those who register.

SPRING FLING, *from page 1*

members and \$36 for guests. This includes everything except the beverages. Gratuity is included. There will be a cash bar for alcoholic beverages. For non-alcoholic beverages you need to bring cash to buy what you wish: \$1.50 for soft drinks, \$1 for bottled water, \$3 for coffee with unlimited refills.

There will be surprises and prizes, as well, and a short program of fun activities.

We have the entire venue to ourselves.

Spring Fling 2026 will be at 12:15 p.m. Sunday, May 3 at Gus's Deli, 813 S. 60th St., West Allis. Drive way

in to the rear and look for Gus's Deli on the right (north). There is ample parking. Please note that 60th Street/Hawley Road is closed for road construction. You can access the restaurant via Greenfield and then north on Hawley Rd. From the freeway, exit on 70th Street and go south. At Main Street go east until Hawley Rd. and then turn south to the restaurant.

Your R.S.V.P. should be sent to Terry and Ty O'Del. Please provide your email as you will be invoiced by the new treasurer Tony Igl. The **deadline for reservations is Wednesday, April 22**. Please respect the deadline date.

INTERESTED IN FLATHEAD VALLEY, MT, OUTBOUND JOURNEY NEXT FALL?

FF of Flathead Valley Montana, will host FFGM Aug. 26 – Sept. 1, 2026. Preliminary plans for the visit include a Red Bus tour of Glacier National Park and hiking in the area.

Because the host club is very small, our journey will be limited to eight or nine total ambassadors. If interest in this journey exceeds capacity, a lottery will be used to decide who goes.

An optional extension trip into Calgary, Alberta, Canada and Alberta's Banff National Park could be planned by participants.

To be added to the list, please contact ambassador coordinators Mary Wacker or Sharron Ronco before March 8.



MADE IN MILWAUKEE

After lunch at Mexiboracua (Mexican and Puerto Rican), 17 FFGM members enjoyed a Jan. 14 tour of The Milwaukee Pretzel Company, which has grown from one kitchen to a large building with 150 employees who make pretzels sold in 49 states. Of course, there was a fresh-baked pretzel at the end.



FIFTHS @ 5

A January gathering at Dave and Lynne Loosen's home and a February gathering at Linda Epperson's home drew many members.



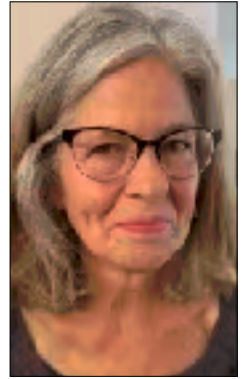
WANT TO JOIN US?

We welcome new members! Click here for the [New Member form](#).

Or visit www.friendshipforcemilwaukee.org/uploads/1/7/2/9/17291124/ffgm_membership_application_2025.pdf.

NEW MEMBER:

Diane Cohen



2ND POSSIBLE INBOUND JOURNEY

Although the Toulouse, France FF club canceled its planned inbound journey to Milwaukee this summer, it's possible we'll need hosts for a journey from European clubs. That's in addition to needing hosts, dinner hosts and day hosts for the inbound journey from Tallahassee, FL, Aug. 9-15. Watch for more information and dates!

HAVE YOU TAKEN THE SURVEY?

Thanks to everyone who has filled out a survey prepared by our club's vice president, Stephanie Freier. If you haven't yet filled it out, you can find the survey at:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfikjn0flVdRq2OGO8kTkTnDQSyVYo8mnOfQZCr60nwQLgdZw/viewform?usp=sharing&ouid=102579978152053099500>