

Friendship Force



Memphis, TN

April 1, 2020

Changing the Way You See the World

<https://ffmem.com>

A Membership Meeting and Potluck is currently planned for:

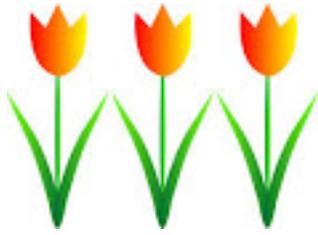
Tuesday, April 28

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Shady Grove Presbyterian

Program: We look forward to Kathy Gardner sharing her experiences during a recent tour of Eastern Europe.





President's Greeting by Carolyn Taylor

Dear Friendship Force of Memphis Members,

Well, this is different. We certainly are living in an interesting time. I hope you all are well and listening to those advising us to self-quarantine. It's not a tremendous sacrifice but it does impact our very busy social lives. Please remember that even though you are only one person, when you come in contact with maybe 3 or 4 others and then multiply that interaction times their 3 or 4 others, etc., that initial contact can affect hundreds. SO STAY HOME!!

I have changed our April meeting to **APRIL 28th**. It was originally scheduled for *April 7th*, which I thought was a little too soon to have a meeting. The Board agreed that it was a good idea to change the date. Memphis is just beginning to get more cases. I think we are a couple of weeks behind the Northeast, especially New Rochelle, NY, which has been hit very hard. Let's hope Memphis has caught it in time.

So what can we do after we sort through all our photos, rearrange our file cabinets, or alphabetize our spice rack? How about some movies! Here is a list of movies for grown-ups that AARP has recommended: The Irishman; Judy; Uncut Gems; Marriage Story; A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood; The Farewell; Knives Out; Harriet; Pain and Glory; Roma; Green Book; Linda Ronstadt: The Sound of My Voice; Bohemian Rhapsody; The Wife; Black Klansman; A Star is Born; Bird Box; Victoria and Albert; I, Tonya.

And if you get tired of watching movies, here is a website for inexpensive books (some current and some older): Bookbub.com

Hopefully we will be able to meet on April 28th. I'm sure we will be happy to get out and socialize. At our last Board meeting we discussed trying to sell our cookbooks. At \$5.00 each they make a great gift! We decided to have our September 15th meeting as a "Cookbook Dinner" where everyone will make a recipe from the cookbook. If you don't have one, then you can buy one at the April 28th meeting. See you soon and stay healthy!



The deadline for the Real ID was October 1, 2020, but that may be extended because of the circumstances under which we are currently living. I will let you know as soon as I hear anything. Meanwhile, you will need one of these licenses if you use your license as your ID when you fly. You need to bring the following with you to the Registry; SS card; passport or birth certificate; two proofs of residence such as your current driver's license and a utility bill or bank statement.

April 2020 Journey Report

Rick Thomas, Journey Coordinator

Our once full schedule of journey activities for 2020 has been dealt a major blow by the "Coronavirus Pandemic". We had planned to host the Birmingham club for a short (4-day) journey in April, but that journey has been postponed. Thank you to those who agreed to be home hosts.

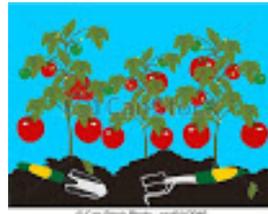
The planned journey to Chiapas, Mexico, being planned for May has been postponed indefinitely (as have all Friendship Force journeys worldwide until at least May 31). We have not made payments to Mundo Maya or FFI but most of us will lose what we paid for our non-refundable airline tickets. Thanks to Margaret Dixon for her work on planning the extension.

We are still tentatively scheduled to journey to Raleigh, NC, the second week in September, and we anticipate an extension to the Outer Banks islands off North Carolina. Rick Thomas is coordinating this journey.

In September we still plan to host the Newcastle, Australia, club as they travel to Huntsville, St. Louis, and Memphis. We need to start signing up home hosts and initiate plans for their visit. They will be here September 28 - Oct.5.

We have received word from FFI on our assigned journeys for 2021 but there are some issues that need to be addressed. Stay tuned for more information on those events.

Since we now have few members with experience in planning journeys, we have requested that the staff of Friendship Force International present a training session on journey planning. Due to short staff (and now the pandemic), FFI will not be able to present an on-site workshop. Plans are underway for a teleconference with the target date now set for April. Whenever this activity is scheduled, participation should be mandatory for all board members and new club members. This will be a great opportunity to find out what goes into the production of a successful journey.



The Traveling Garden by Darlene Glisson

As I am sure you know, it is a good idea to stay home and not do much traveling these days. Most people have an itch to go somewhere and do something, especially when someone tells us we can't. I have a solution for your restless soul.

Since traveling may not be possible right now, it is a good idea to have a traveling garden. What is a traveling garden you ask? First, you must have some soil, either in several pots or in the ground. Next, you need either seeds or bedding plants, maybe some fertilizer and water. It really doesn't matter what you plant, as long as it is edible. Start now by planting enough for 6 families and in 60-90 days you will have some nice fresh fruits and vegetables. If you only plant one plant and lots of it, this exercise will be beneficial to all who participate.

The benefits of gardening are tremendous, but you already know that. Once your efforts pay off and you are ready to harvest, the traveling begins. Pack a small bag or basket with food and load up your car. You must distribute these goodies to six families you don't know, not your relatives and friends. Put a little information about Friendship Force in the container and watch as your traveling garden continues to grow. There are no down sides to a traveling garden, we all benefit. Try it—let's get started today.

A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows. Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit; Wisdom is **not** putting it in a fruit salad.

Cancelled Event Turns into a LEO!

On Sunday, March 15, a dozen Friendship Force members and friends had planned to spend the afternoon enjoying a program at Elmwood Cemetery. To commemorate St. Patrick's Day, cemetery staff were going to make a presentation on prominent Irish (and Scotch) residents of Elmwood. Due to the fear of contagion from the coronavirus, the cemetery canceled the program two days before it was to be presented.

Being the resourceful travelers that we are, we salvaged the day with a trip to Celtic Crossing with Irish food and drink. Our cancelled event was turned in to a LEO (Let's Eat Out!), and a good time was had by all!



Friendship Force Revelers at Celtic Crossing

Walking For Pleasure When You Travel by Kathy Gardner

Wherever I travel, I explore as a walking pilgrim. In 1973 (whoa, a long time ago) my husband and I went to Thailand for his United States Air Force assignment. I had no idea what to expect in Southeast Asia, but I thought it would be a great adventure and indeed it was. How thrilled I was when in 2018 I had the great joy of returning to that gorgeous country.

My first week I hit the streets of Bangkok, at once remembered and yet, quite changed. No place on earth has buildings as quirky and fanciful as the Thai Buddhist temples (wats). Nearly one fifth of the capital city Bangkok is occupied with these colorful edifices. I soon fell under their exotic spell again, as I began my walk, but I really had to watch my steps. There's a lot more traffic everywhere now.

Stepping on uneven concrete slabs, I arrived at the edge of the Chao Phraya River. Boarding a ferry, I crossed to the other side to see the Temple of Dawn (Wat Arun), the oldest temple in Bangkok, all aglow in the early dawn. Made of plaster spread over brick and featuring a central tower (prang) reaching nearly two hundred and fifty feet in the sky, it is an extraordinary creation. Embedded in the plaster are bits and pieces of broken cups and saucers as well as colored fragments and shards of pottery, which give the tower a jewel-encrusted look, sparkling and glittering. I wondered why I never thought of breaking a few cups and saucers, adding some glitter and making a little replica, when I lived there. It's never too late.

Filled with joy at such beauty I danced a bit in the sunlight. Really I just twirled around a few times. What a sight I must have made--a middle-aged woman, dancing like she doesn't seem to care, if anyone's watching. That's why I like walking alone. I might not feel quite as free surrounded by a large group of tourists.

W. Somerset Maughan said, "It makes you laugh with delight to think that anything so fantastic could exist on this somber earth. The artists who developed this temple had the courage to pursue their fantasy to the limit."

Walking nearby were saffron-robed monks collecting food before going into the temple for morning prayers and thanksgiving. I joined them and walked into the temple, breathing deeply of jasmine, that unique Thai fragrance, and sat down in the back on the cool marble floor. I meditated in quietness and prayed for continued peace and safety for family, friends and people I had known in Thailand and Southeast Asia. How refreshing and peaceful to call to mind the smiling Thai faces of umbrella factory workers in Chiang Mai from days gone by, my Thai language teacher and fellow American students, friends who walked across hills and waterfalls in Khorat with me, the NCO's who took my GED classes, and the Thai teachers in my English classes. Where were these people now? Why hadn't I kept up with them?

I have miles to walk before I return to the Hospitality House tonight. I slip on my shoes and exit the

temple. Walking along the riverbank, I wave to some families enjoying breakfast soups and Pad Thai. Ah, a boat, laden with melons, jackfruits, coconuts and vegetables stacked high and balanced only by a miracle, floated down the Chao Phraya River. The boat was even equipped with a stove. A lady stood at a wok, stirring garlic and spices for meals to come. Those aromas are hard to forget. Also it reminded me of the night I crossed the Mekong River on a boat filled with eggs.

Nearby I entered a small cafe, where the proprietor offered coffees, teas, fresh fruit drinks and snacks. I opted for fresh coconut milk. I watched as he took a huge butcher knife, more like a machete, and cut an opening in the coconut to pour me a glass. Umm, it was so delicious. Really better than Whole Foods.

After my refreshment, I left and walked to the river's edge. Another ferry arrived to take me to the other side, where I began my thirty-minute walk to Wat Pho. After entering that temple, I stopped and gaped at the gargantuan gold reclining Buddha. Considering the planning, skill, gathering of raw materials and the exquisiteness of the building, I'm overwhelmed with the brilliance of these ancient Thais. I remembered the old sleeping Buddha who had as William Cullen Bryant wrote, "sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust, approached his grave like one who wrapped the drapery of his couch about him and lay down to pleasant dreams." Rest on.

On these grounds of Wat Pho is a school of Thai medicine, including the birthing grounds of Thai massage, which is still taught and practiced at this temple. This reminded me to enjoy a therapeutic massage and some reflexology after my walk each day. My feet treated me good and I likewise, should take care of them. When I lived here in the 70's, I couldn't believe I never had a massage. What was I thinking?

The name Wat Pho refers to the monastery of the Bodhi tree in Bodhi Gaya, India, where Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment. Perhaps the grounds upon which I walked did imbue me with ancient depths of knowledge or maybe I'm only fantasizing. It's easy to believe in a paradise of paradoxes.

From here I walked to the Palace grounds, where I closed my eyes and envisioned the Royal Barge floating along the river, carrying the King and Queen of Siam. They waved at me as they slipped past with their entourage. My imagination was floating on my walk. What a blissful gift!

Opening my eyes and continuing my walk, I saw four young Thai dancers wearing jewel-encrusted costumes and spiked headdresses practicing their classical dancing steps. They must practice for years to

perfect the precision demanded. Many of the Thai arts come from India, especially the dancing. I had seen these beautiful dancers at dinners at the luxurious Dusit Thani hotels, folk festivals and schools, when I lived there and the performers were always lovely. They used fingers, hands, head and eyes in a complicated language of gestures which Thai audiences might understand. The movements hypnotized me, as I conjectured what the meanings were. I'm sure the hand on the heart means love. I need no more.

They continued to practice and I continued walking. I spotted a spirit house on someone's property. Most of the Buddhist Thais erect on their lawn a small spirit house on a pole for the spirits. By offering incense, fruit, flowers and rice and placing them inside the little house, the owners believe they will keep the spirits happy and they will protect their home from harm or mischief.

What a ravishing spiritual morning I've created on my walk. I had gone 20,000 steps and it was only one o'clock. I can always take tours, but walking on my own affords me the opportunity for an original private pilgrimage. I can experience the day by opening my imagination, my soul, and my heart to the adventure of life. I can strengthen my physical and spiritual self in a way that would be impossible watching from a bus window. Keep enjoying your travel walks!



Sunshine News, A Prayer

We pray for the following: our world in this time of crisis; wisdom for those in positions of leadership in countries great and small; the many doctors, nurses, health practitioners and researchers on the front lines caring for patients and seeking to find ways to combat the coronavirus; and the provision of the protective and respiratory equipment doctors and nurses so desperately need. We pray for renewed faith, health, courage, peace, wisdom, protection, common sense, and patience for us all in this time.

Reminder: Please email Shirley Kincaid if you have any sunshine news.
shirley@shirleykincaid.com