



PASSPORT

A Publication of The Friendship Force of Lincoln
www.friendshipforcelincoln.org

NUMBER 164

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

AUGUST 2021

Photos from last year's Annual Meeting



Sara Stephenson introducing the Social Committee



Julie Albrecht discussing virtual Open World



President Rea welcoming the members

Friendship Force Lincoln Annual Meeting – Sept. 19, 2021 Mahoney Park, Shelter #2, 2 PM

Your Social Committee has had to work extra hard for this Annual Meeting. They had an indoor place reserved and within two weeks, COVID caused Lancaster County to be in the Orange Zone. Therefore, the Committee began again and found an outdoor site. We hope to see you at Mahoney Park, Shelter #2 at September 19, at 2 PM. Our main task is to elect the members of the Executive Committee with nominations, also taken from the floor. The board will share with you the state of the club, along with the financial report and upcoming events. Bring your mask and your lawn chair.



friendship force
LINCOLN

Agenda

1. State of Friendship Force Lincoln
2. Reports: Financial, Journeys for 2022, Be the Bridge Initiative
3. Business
*Voting for the executive officers for 2022, see pages 3 and 4 for the candidate bios
4. Pay your 2022 membership dues today. See page 12 for the membership form. Please complete and turn it in with your check to De Tonack.
5. If you have not signed up for FFI website, my.friendshipforce.org, Board members will help you.
6. Entertainment, 3 Chords and a Cloud of Dust, TENTATIVE

*According to the Bylaws, a quorum to conduct business is 10% of the membership, or 12 people. Please come to use your voice to further the direction of Friendship Force Lincoln.

Greetings from the President



by Arlene Rea, President

In my last President's Message, in the May issue, I was optimistic about our future. Because people were getting vaccinated for COVID and the number of cases were significantly de-

creasing, we began to meet in person for LEO (Let's Eat Out) and Saturday breakfasts with some limitations.

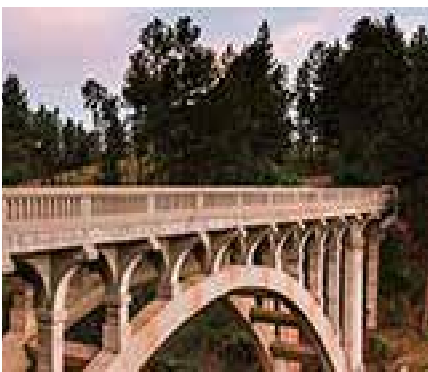
Unfortunately, at this printing, we are in a state of uncertainty again. The number of cases has significantly increased, in some cases, as high as they were in early spring. Not enough people have been vaccinated to stem the tide of the virus. Instead, we are masking up and social distancing.

But Friendship Force of Lincoln members will not be deterred. We will hold our annual meeting outdoors, as we did last year. We will mask up and social distance. Our board will continue to meet to determine the path

of our new "normal." Members will have the opportunity to meet in different ways, whether it is by Zoom, or socially distant. But members believe in the Friendship Force mission: "a world of friends is a world of peace." We members are dedicated to the principle that each person can contribute to global goodwill through personal friendships. Those friendships can happen right here in Lincoln as we have many different ethnic and social groups here who need our "friendship."

Let us not be defeated by COVID. Let us be the bridge to learn, nurture and work together to develop friendships right here in Lincoln.

Be the Bridge Initiative of Friendship Force



by Ann Quinlan

Envision the Be the Bridge initiative of Friendship Force as a follow-up of the strategic planning meeting that has guided our work for the past two years. Members could be invited to participate in the discussion of the

history and present status of the Lincoln club in light of the changes COVID-19 has brought to the traditional ways of gathering members. Friendship Force International is encouraging clubs to envision ways to foster international understanding by looking at creative ways to connect within local communities.

At the annual meeting we plan to ask members to indicate their interest in being a part of a one-hour introductory session on Be the Bridge. The ultimate goal of the Be the Bridge initiative is to raise visibil-

ity and awareness of what and who Friendship Force is and what Friendship Force Lincoln could offer locally if travel continues to be restricted. Connecting with other groups in the community is one idea we might think about. We have already made some of these connections and thinking about other ways to continue these outreach efforts will make a difference.

Slate of Officers for next year



**Judy Allen Keetle -
President**

Friendship Force:

My husband and I joined FFL in the early 2000s and traveled with FFL to Connecticut and with FFVirginia to England and Germany. We thoroughly enjoyed staying in the homes of people who became our friends and shared with us their lifestyles and their cities/countries. I rejoined in 2018. This is my 2nd year on the Board.

Family:

Husband, Roger, was a lawyer, died in 2016; son Steve, a lawyer, and wife Amy have two daughters Mya a freshman at UNL and Sophie a junior at Millard South High School; son Christopher died in 2015; daughter Anne Fargen, a teacher, and husband Mike have a son Padraig, a 7th grader at Irving Middle

School and a daughter Finley, a 5th grader at Rousseau Elementary School.

Interests/Hobbies:

Traveling (when covid is not an issue), reading, crocheting, walking/hiking, volunteering at the library and church; watching grandchildren's sporting events; having lunch and dinner with friends.

Hopes for FFL in 2021:

Although inbound and outbound journeys may be 'on hold' because of the covid situation, there are many ways we can learn about other cultures and prepare ourselves for future travel. Hopefully we can continue to forge relationships with people of other cultures living in our own community, as well as, take advantage of the many online resources available worldwide. I have not prepared to be President of FFL the usual way by serving as Vice-President for a year, but I plan to pursue a steep learning curve to acquaint myself with the history, policies, and procedures of the Friendship Force of Lincoln, as well as, Friendship Force International. In the past, I have served as President and been on Boards of Directors of several local and state-wide organizations. I look forward to meeting and get-

ting to know more FFL members and supporting the Friendship Force motto that "a world of friends is a world of peace".



**Maxine Moul
Vice President.**

I joined Friendship Force of Lincoln in 2017. I took a journey to Morocco with the Dallas Ft. Worth chapter in November 2018. What a fantastic experience! I am a native of Oakland, NE, lived in Syracuse, NE for 17 years and have lived in Lincoln since 1988. I am a journalist and was co-publisher of the Syracuse Journal-Democrat and other publications with my husband, Francis. I have served as Nebraska's Lieutenant Governor and Director of the Department of Economic Development and retired as Nebraska State Director of Rural Development for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 2017. I have traveled to nearly 60 countries and all the states. Hobbies are reading, gardening, and genealogy.

Slate of Officers for next year continued



Ann Quinlan
Secretary

Ann Quinlan joined Friendship Force in 2015. Born and raised in Lincoln, Ann taught English at Irving Junior High and Lincoln Southeast High School where she served as English department chair and yearbook adviser. As a teacher-leader for the People to People High School Student Ambassador program she traveled to more than 20 countries including most of Europe, New Zealand and Australia (including countries that no longer exist: Czechoslovakia and the USSR). In addition, she participated in professional education study tours in Greece and China. She also spent a month in Kazakhstan as an exchange teacher for the American Councils Excellence in Education program. Her first Lincoln Friendship Force Exchange was to Guadeloupe in 2016. Her most

recent trip outside the U.S. took her to Haiti to assist in providing professional development for teachers at a mission school. In addition to traveling, Ann enjoys involvement in professional organizations, volunteering, and reading.



Milt Bayer
Treasurer

My wife Gayle and I joined Friendship Force in October 2004. I grew up in North-eastern Nebraska on a farm northwest of Clarkson Nebraska. I have five brothers and five sisters. After four years in the Navy, I went back to college and earned a Bachelor of Science degree with an emphasis in accounting. For three and a half years I worked in public accounting at a regional CPA firm. First in Hastings, then in Fremont and finally in Lincoln. From there I took a job as an accountant at Lin-

coln Electric System, where I worked for 36 years. Retiring in 2016 as a Senior Accountant. Gayle and I had traveled to all 50 of the United States and 10 of the Canadian provinces. We have traveled to 33 countries in North America, Central America, Europe and Asia. Hobbies - I used to count bicycling as one, but since retiring I rarely have time. In addition to Friendship Force my time is taken up by volunteering as an usher at the Lied Center for the Performing Arts, helping build houses for Habitat for Humanity, and babysitting our six-year-old twin grand nephews, which we have been doing since they were four-pound preemies. Life is good!

Happy Birthday to You!

Send a note, e-mail or card to someone who has a birthday between September and November. We will honor future birthdays in the next Passports. If your name is missing, send a note to Judy Keetle. Have fun giving and receiving!

Judy Keetle	Sept. 21
De Tonack	Sept. 22
Cherrie Beam Callaway	Oct 1
Julie Splichal	Oct. 27
Laurie-Ann Scott	Oct. 29
Mary Bryant	Oct. 30
Gayle Bayer	Oct. 31
Sandra Zieg	Nov. 7
Loris Purtzer	Nov 16
Joanna Rogers	Nov. 23

Friendship Force of Lincoln Let's Eat Out committee member



Photo: LEO committee members Carlene Keim, Sara Stephenson and Bruce Keim display their dinner choices at the Indian Oven East. Courtesy photo by Maxine Moul

By Bruce Keim

The Lincoln Friendship Force held the August 2021 Let's Eat Out (LEO) at the Oven East. Twenty-four members and two guests enjoyed excellent ethnic Indian and Bhutanese foods. The Oven has three locations. The Oven in the Haymarket, The Cellar below the Haymarket location and Oven East.

The food is a style from Northern India cooked in a clay oven called a Tandoor. The menu had 12 different types of breads to choose from. Carlene and I had the garlic naan and it was excellent. The menu included items from the country of Bhutan, a small mountainous Asian country bordered by

India and China. Bhutanese Specialty was a mixture of vegetables, cheeses and your choice of meat. Thimphu Chicken is named after the capital of the Royal Kingdom of Bhutan. It was my choice for the evening and included large pieces of tender chicken cooked in a cauliflower sauce that was smooth and not overly spicy. Carlene had the Lamb Madras which is described as Lamb simmered in spicy coconut milk sauce. The lamb was very tender and had an excellent taste. Our waitress Tashi, a niece of the owner, did a very good job of waiting on our large group.

Owner Ngawang Rinchen migrated to the US from Bhutan in 1978. He had

cooked for the Royal Family in Bhutan, Bhutanese and Indian restaurants in New York City and Omaha. In 1988 Rinchen was hired by the Oven restaurant. 1988 was also when the Oven opened in the Haymarket. He has since purchased the Oven.

Our next LEO will be held at Villa Amore for a taste of Italian at 5253 N. 27th Street, on Thursday, October 7, 2021. Bruce and Carlene Keim and Sara Stephenson are the LEO committee members.

“Perfect Diner” is site of first post-COVID dinner .

By Bruce Keim

The Friendship Force of Lincoln (FFL) held its first in person Let's Eat Out (LEO) at the Perfect Diner on Wednesday, June 23rd. The LEO meetings are usually held at different ethnic restaurants four times during the year. With COVID-19 cancelling LEO meetings since March of 2020, it was enjoyable to be able to gather as a group in person again. We had 19 Friendship Force members attending. This allowed members to catch up on what had happened over the last year.

The Perfect Diner is located at 2855 North 27th Street, one block south of Corn-

continued on page 6

continued from page 5

husker Highway. The menu offers a varied selection of Chinese and Thai foods. Carlene had the Beef and Broccoli while I chose the Chicken and Broccoli. Both were excellent choices and came with plenty of meat and broccoli. The beef was extra tender and the flavor of both meals was excellent. We also ordered the homemade Crab Rangoon for an appetizer. It contained a large plate full of crispy dumplings filled with a creamy cheese and crab meat filling.



From left are Vickie McDonald, Larry Harnish, Susan Briggs and Gayle Bayer. Courtesy photo by Bruce Keim.

Historian's Report – First Half Year 2021



By Mary Verschuur

The first three months of 2021 could be characterized by the phrase “Reinventing Our Club”. Although we welcomed the opportunities to get vaccinated for Covid 19 and felt safer for having received the shots, we were still a long way from being out of the woods as far as travel and hosting were concerned.

FFL's board continued to meet virtually. The monthly

breakfasts and happy hours were also held throughout the quarter, online of course, while three invitations to gather in person for a stroll around Gateway Mall provided for an outing and a chance to see one another “live”.

However, overall, re-inventing became the new mantra. FFL and FFI have moved ahead in offering the membership numerous ways to connect virtually and to stay in touch with one another within our club as well as across the national organization. Virtual became the keyword. Local members at FFL have shared their past journeys on line. FFI did likewise. Trivia nights became popular, both within our club and in conjunction with other clubs. Additionally

FFI's “Stay Safe While Traveling” whetted our appetites for more “nomadic” days.

The club's newsletter “Passports” came out online on February 2nd and contained, among other things, a breakdown of the membership survey, conducted and collated by Maxine Moul in which about half the club's membership participated. Likewise, about half the members made up gift bags for the Center for People in Need in lieu of our holiday party. Membership for 2021 dropped off about 20% from 2020 leaving the club with 88 members for 2021.

One further innovation rolled out on March 13th, 2021 was FFI's new “my.

continued on page 7

continued from page 6

friendshipforce.com". This online tool connecting all members is intended to promote greater privacy, to make communication across clubs more fluid and uniform and complies with current privacy rules. One major benefit highlighted by our president is that this new resource will make web hosting available to local clubs. This will make having a web presence less costly than it has been up to now.

The Second quarter of 2021 saw many of the Covid imposed restrictions being withdrawn or mitigated, allowing all of us, including FFL, more opportunities for in-person events and activities. The second Saturday breakfast at Stauffer's was one of the first events to meet in-person. LEO was quick to follow with its first gathering in over a year in May. A talk was given by the owner of the Afro-Caribbean restaurant, Stur 22, then members took their meals to a nearby park to enjoy picnic together. Breakfasts and LEO gatherings have continued in-person throughout the summer.

Virtual journeys remained a staple through May when finally a journey calendar for the Midwest Region for 2022 became available. Once again members could begin planning and anticipating journeys and hosting inbound guests.

A club sponsored walk in Pioneer's Park attracted a good turn-out in May and the social justice committee, in conjunction with the Unitarian Church, sponsored a live (or Zoom) speaker in June. The club's Newsletter, full of members' stories, was published online in May as was the 2021 Membership Directory. A revised tri-fold, color brochure for our club with updated content and photographs was also made available.

The FFL board continued to meet via Zoom through September. The Annual Meeting has been set for September 19 outdoors. The board continued to urge its members to join the FFI website in order to have access to all the information regarding all of the events sponsored by and undertaken by Friendship Force. FFI also put out a call for nominations to its board of directors.t



friendship force
LINCOLN
JOURNEYS
FOR 2021 & 2022

By Wendy Horacek

The incoming and outgoing journeys for 2021 have been cancelled. However, there are some domestic journeys taking place. In our region, Wisconsin is hosting a bicycle experience. Periodically check the website to see what other clubs are doing.

Our Lincoln Club is still planning on a journey to Moscow and St. Petersburg in 2022. But we do not have dates yet. We, also, have an outgoing journey in 2022 for North Carolina and an Inbound for New Jersey. We are unable to do any planning until the COVID situation clears up.

Interested in Membership?

Dues for the 2022 Membership Year are now due. See page 11 for the details. Please contact De Tonack, recruitment and mentoring chair. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact her directly at 402-489-8097 or via email at dtonack@neb.rr.com.

Japan: Our First Friendship Force Journey



Mikimassa Doi, Yoko Doi, Miki Doi, Eiko friend of Yoko

by John & Nancy Comer

Our first Friendship Force journey was to Japan in 2004. It was a great trip. A large number of Lincoln members participated, good friends, some now deceased. Members of the Friendship Force of Lincoln were hosted by members of the Friendship Force of Aichi for a week and members of the Friendship Force of Hiroshima for a week.

We flew into Nagoya and we were picked up by our host Yoko Doi and her friend Eiko. Yoko spoke perfect English. She had spent some time in the US, in Michigan I believe, perhaps as a student. We arrived at her home to meet her two daughters and son. Her husband was working out of town and while we talked to him on the phone, we did not meet

him in person. We slept in a room off the main living area on tatami mats. We were awakened one evening by a minor earthquake. We gathered in the living area, acknowledged that indeed it was an earthquake, and returned to bed. It then registered with us why all the wall pictures were situated on the floor rather than hanging on the wall.

Three events stand out in our week with Yoko. She took us to a coffee group, maybe a book group, where we met six or seven Japanese women, all spoke English, and we had a lovely afternoon. It is the only time I have been to an all-women's discussion group. A second event was the evening Yoko left us with Eiko who drove a short distance to a Buddhist shrine. We spent the evening with Eiko, who

spoke some English and the resident monk who spoke no English. We shared a bottle of wine and muddled through the evening as best we could. Somehow, it worked. The third event found us on a metro-train by ourselves going to meet the rest of our group for a day trip to Nara noted for its Buddhist architecture and artifacts. Yoko instructed us to sit in the front train car and when it stops, exit and climb the nearby stairs to the ground level. We were told the group will be waiting for you. We somehow missed the stairs and started walking through the underground tunnel and made it to the next train stop some distance away. There we asked an older Japanese man for directions. He gave us a blank stare. We pondered our situation for a moment when a young Japanese girl, maybe college age, said "You look lost" in perfect English. We said, "Yes we are" also in perfect English. She got us started in the right direction. We walked back and now took the stairs to the ground level. The group was not there. We started walking, somewhat in a panic until we heard a shrill voice coming from behind, "Mr. and Mrs. Comer." We were found and joined the group and made it to Nara. Yoko had a good

continued on page 9

Japan continued

continued from page 8

laugh when we returned—a stop at a local mall and a trip to the rest room. American toilets have one lever, and we know what it is does. Not so in Japan. A push of the alarm button brought the security people running to rescue my wife who really didn't need rescuing. From Nagoya, it was on to Konu Village in Miyoshi City by train.

Konu, population 3000 in the center of Japan, believe it or not has a Center named for President Jimmy Carter. Carter has been to Konu several times and is responsible for returning a sacred temple bell removed by the Japanese military during WW II and later donated to the Carter center in Atlanta. Carter returned the bell to its rightful place and the citizens of Konu established a museum and education center in his honor.

We arrived in Konu to find the streets lined with Japanese and American flags. Our first stop was the Carter Center where we were introduced to our host for the week, Sachio Fujiwara. Sachio was a businessman involved in manufacturing Japanese folding screens used to separate spaces or simply for decoration in Japanese homes. They often have elegant artistic designs. Before leaving Konu we were



Wife of Hiromi Fukushima, John Comer, Hiromi Fukushima, Shirley Doherty, Marilyn Paoline, Elizabeth McCormick, Meiki Fujiwara, Sachio Fujiwara, Nancy Comer. All non-Japanese were members of FFL.

presented a small screen as a gift to help us remember our host and visit to this small Japanese community. Sachio also imported and sold fine furniture chiefly to China.

Nancy and I and fellow traveler Marilyn Paolini were housed in a home close to the Center that Sachio made available on occasion to his business clients. It was a full house with three bedrooms upstairs. On the edge of the village, a bubbling spring ran near the property lulling us to sleep each night and waking us quietly each morning. As we had the house to ourselves, Sachio's wife arrived every morning to prepare a delicious breakfast. It was from there that we began our explorations each day.

Sachio would drive. His employee Minako, a young college-aged woman, helped with the translation. We would be talking with Sachio and he would suddenly call for Minako. He knew some English. She was better but still carried a dictionary just in case. Again, we muddled through.

One day we visited a Buddhist monastery and met the priest, the husband of Sachio's housekeeper. One day we visited Sachio's factory. On another day we visited his showroom, and a resident artist created a small remembrance of the day. Each of us received a small piece of screen that bore the date 9/11. Each was

continued on page 10

continued from page 9

different, trimmed in the colors we were wearing that day, and each with an artistic rendition of our name. Yes, it was the anniversary of the 9/11 attack on the US.

The highpoint of the trip was a visit to Hiroshima where the leader of our group placed a wreath at the memorial to the lives lost in the atomic blast. Sachio's mother was one. We visited several on-site museums and walked the grounds near the Atomic Bomb Dome that in spite of being near the center of the blast was not completely destroyed. It was a solemn and prayerful occasion.

Before departing we managed to have dinner with our friend Katsuko, who ferried over from her home across the Inland Sea. Then it was the long flight home and recovering from jetlag. It was fun to relive the trip through the logs of each day's activities provided by those who joined us on the trip.



Virtual Happy Hour

By Dorina Mahler

As the reality of the pandemic with its social isolation sank in, Friendship Force of Lincoln looked for new ways to help its members to keep in touch. That is when the FFL club President, Arlene Rea, came up with the idea of a virtual happy hour and reached out for a volunteer to host them. Dorina Mahler came forward to be that host.

It was decided that the Club would host a monthly virtual happy hour via the video conference platform Zoom on the first Thursday of every month, beginning in December, 2020. The format of the meetings was consistent: the members would introduce one another and they would discuss a topic suggested by the host in advance. Invariably, the discussion geared towards the current events in the club or in the community. The group ended the evening by talk-

ing about their dinner plans, then ended the call with a toast.

In December, 2020, the participants discussed things they were thankful for that year. In January, 2021, the members shared their New Year resolutions; in February, 2021 we discussed good and bad omens, traditions, and superstitions; during March, 2021 we talked about memorable parties and in May, 2021 the members shared vacation plans for the remainder of the year.

As the weather warmed up and some of the social distancing regulations have been eased, the Club paused the virtual happy hours with the intention to resume them in September, 2021 should the situation warrant it. The members hope to hold more in-person events outdoors where there are plenty of opportunities to socialize while maintaining a safe distance among the participants.

Courtesy

If you know someone who is ill, hospitalized or needs an uplifting card and note, please contact Gayle Bayer at bayergayle@gmail.com or 402-486-1415.

Getting to Know a New Member



Gretchen Olberding

My love of nature compels me to photograph and paint the landscape, capturing the light, shadows and colors that move me. Growing up in Nebraska, I loved the wide-open land and rivers, and began painting those magical moments that caught my attention. Retired in Arizona for 12 years, I have hiked in most deserts and mountains

in Arizona & Utah, taking thousands of photos.

Recapturing those scenes in soft pastels is my main passion. I have recently returned to my home roots in Nebraska and have begun capturing the landscape of the prairie that I love.

I grew up in McCook, Nebr. before attending UNL. Upon graduation, I received a teaching position at Culler Jr High in Lincoln. I taught American history and Asian African World Cultures. I also taught at a private school in Gainesville, FL and a Catholic school in Ord, NE. My husband and I traveled when we could, embarking upon a student travel jog to seven countries in Europe in five weeks, on our own-
-Before Kids.

I have visited Madrid and Barcelona, Spain, Cuenca, Ecuador, Wine tour of Chile and Buenos Aires, and Cancun, Mx. Now single, I have been in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico and Glacier National Park on my own. My Brittany spaniel, Bella, travels in the states with me and is a superb traveling companion.

My journeys and love of challenges has led me to earn my pilot's license and fly a Cessna 182, fly a powered parachute, hike over 350 miles throughout Arizona, and zip-line down Big Mountain in Whitefish, Montana. I am working on getting my golf handicap down into the teens.

I won't jump out of an airplane, though.

The Friendship Force of Lincoln Membership Form

_____ Family-\$75 _____ Individual-\$40

Date _____ New Member _____ Renewing Member _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Number _____ Cell Number _____

E-mail _____

New members receive a complimentary name badge:

Check your choice. prefer _____ pin or _____ magnetic closure.

Name(s) on badge _____

Make check payable to:

Friendship Force of Lincoln

Send to: Friendship Force, PO Box 30334, Lincoln, NE 68503. Dues are for the calendar year (January-December)



friendship force

LINCOLN

CALENDAR September through November

September 9	FFL Board Meeting.....	1:00 PM	Via Zoom
September 11	Breakfast with Linda Kistler	8:30 AM	Stauffer's Café & Pie Shoppe
September 19	Annual Meeting/elections	2:00 PM	Mahoney Park, Shelter #2
October 4	FFL Board Meeting.....	1:00 PM	TBA
October 7	LEO.....	5:30 PM	Villa Amore, 5253 North 27th
October 9	Breakfast with Linda Kistler	8:30 AM	Stauffer's Café & Pie Shoppe
November 8	FFL Board Meeting.....	1:00 PM	TBA
November 10	Newsletter articles due with flexibility		
November 13	Breakfast with Linda Kistler	8:30 AM	Stauffer's Café & Pie Shoppe
December 4	Annual Holiday Party.....		TBA

FFL Board of Directors

- Arlene Rea..... President; Passports; email communications
 - Maxine Moul
 - Ann Quinlan..... Secretary, ToBeTheBridge Coordinator
 - Milt Bayer
 - Julie Albrecht..... Past President; Open World
 - Linda Kistler
 - Wendy Horacek
 - Bruce and Carlene Keim
 - Gayle Bayer
 - Judy Keetle.....
 - De Tonack
 - Nancy Comer
 - Sara Stephenson.....
- (Carolyn Harp is representative to the board)

Ex Officio Members

- Mary Bryant
- Laurie Ann Scott
- Mary Verschuur
- Jim Ecklund.....
- Sara Stephenson.....