

2024 Annual Report, Friendship Force Lincoln

FFL celebrated our 44th year with FFI.

Website – <https://fflincoln.org>, includes Passport, board minutes, forms, etc

Facebook page – <http://facebook.com/FFLincoln>

Friendship Force International webpage – <http://friendshipforce.org>

Members' only webpage – <http://my.friendshipforce.org>

Link to all Passport issues - <https://fflincoln.org/newsletters/>

2024 Board of Directors

President Arlene Rea **VP** Midge Dublinske

Secretary Ann Quinlan **Treasurer** Milt Bayer

Past President Judy Keetle

Standing Committees: Breakfast and Conversation: Marilyn Watson;

COIL/Open World: Julie Albrecht and Judy Keetle; **Diversity and Community Service:** Janet Walters and Phyllis Arth; **Historian:** Phyllis Arth; **Journey Resource Chair:** Pat Novak; **San Diego Inbound Journey Coordinator:** Judy Keetle; **Java Indonesia Outbound Journey Coordinator:** Maxine Moul; **LEO (Let's Eat Out):** Bruce and Carlene Keim; **Membership:** Marilyn Watson, Gayle Bayer, JoEllen Polzien; **Passport Newsletter:** Arlene Rea, Maxine Moul; **Publicity/Marketing/Website:** Maxine Moul, Vickie McDonald, Arlene Rea, Jim Ecklund, Midge Dublinske; **Scholarship:** Midge Dublinske; **Social:** Julie Splichal.

See committee reports in another section of this report.

The first board meeting for new President Arlene Rea, Jan 8, 2024 was held on Zoom due to an anticipated blizzard. Soon after, Breakfast and Conversation plans to discuss “Your most memorable snowstorm” was canceled due to extreme weather conditions. That, it turned out, was the only snow received in Lincoln in 2024. Our Club did not experience a drought of activities! Committees were productive, operating under updated and clarified Bylaws and Policies and broadcast on our efficient internet sites. In September, 30 members attended the Annual Meeting.

Active Standing Committees reported:

Breakfast and Conversations Chair: Marilyn Watson. Continued to meet monthly, averaging eight members, on the second Saturday morning, at Stauffer's Café and Pie Shoppe. Each month

the question of the day helped us to get to know each other better. In November, the five delegates and the facilitator from Mongolia joined the discussion.

COIL (Congressional Office of International Leadership) Leaders: Julie Albrecht and Judy Keetle. FFLincoln accepted the proposal from Mongolia in March. Five delegates and a facilitator arrived in November and participated in 8 days/32 hours of rigorous learning experiences. All the delegates work for Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in Mongolia and requested to visit with and learn from NGOs in Lincoln. They did: eleven agencies! Among many similarities we learned some differences: Mongolia's tax and tax deduction structure does not support NGO's; volunteering is less active there. Julie and Judy also organized 7 home hosts and several day hosts. Julie Splichal and the Social Committee arranged a traditionally delicious Thanksgiving dinner for delegates, home hosts and Club members.

Diversity and Community Service Committee (formerly the Diversity International Service Committee): Co-Chairs Janet Walters and Phyllis Arth. In January, Mahe Naseem agreed to be liaison to the Muslim community. Mahe soon joined FFL. Janet prepared a Ramadan Facts sheet and distributed it at the March Board meeting. Under Mahe's guidance we visited Al Mustafa Market and Al Nor market and attended Eid al-Fitr. Vicki McDonald and Larry Harnisch hosted over 20 Muslim friends and Club members for friendly visiting. Janet presented "Reaching Out to Connect" for the program for the Annual Meeting. Our Club also collected home good donations for refugee families.

Historian: Phyllis Arth compiled this Annual Report.

Journey Resource Chair: Pat Novak. The inbound journey from San Diego scheduled for the week of September 30, 2024 was cancelled due to their reduced number of ambassadors.

An outbound journey to Sarasota, FL is scheduled for November, 2025. We await further information about this adventure.

March 2026 will hopefully be a reincarnation of the 2018 Sandhill Crane experience. Details to be determined.

Inbound Special Journey Judy Keetle began planning in March for eight ambassadors from San Diego. She held several productive committee meetings and organized 5 days of interesting events. The Californians were driving to the North American FFI Conference in Milwaukee. The San Diego club canceled. However, this hard work will serve as a framework for the September 23-30, 2025 in-bound journey from the Columbia-Cascade Friendship Force (southern WA and northern OR). Planning began in October for activities hosting the Columbia Cascade FF club.

Outgoing Journey Leader: Maxine Moul. The Outbound Journey to Indonesia was originally scheduled for early June 2024. It has been postponed to June 2025. Eight members anticipated being Ambassadors. The focus was on two cities on the Island of Java, Indonesia.

Efforts to meet with UNL Indonesian students were initiated yet also postponed.

An outbound journey to Sarasota, Florida will take place in November 2025. Planners are on alert.

LEO / Let's Eat Out Carlene & Bruce Keim continued as chairs. LEO highlighted ethnic restaurants, gathering about every other month. Dinners typically drew 10–20 participants. This committee consistently gathers to enjoy conversation and “discover” interesting foods.

Membership Chair: Marilyn Watson Eleven new members were welcomed! Vicki McDonald and Larry Harnisch cordially hosted the New Member Tea, in their home, February 2nd. Each new member received a New Member Orientation booklet. New members are Christine Buchholz, Prudence Coccodrilli, Midge Dublinske, Susan Grieger, Karen and Gary Heusel, Eloise Hiatt, Mahe Naseem, Pat Novak, Leslie Ryan, DiAnna Schimek, Marcia Wallen. Total 2024 membership: 68

Deaths Our club was deeply saddened by the death of faithful members: Marilue Becker, Leona Braziel, Joanna Rogers, Dal Ronnau, Mahe Naseem, Richard Spencer and Jeanne Zwieble.

Membership/Directory Chair: Arlene Rea. The Directory was updated and emailed to membership early in February.

- a. **Courtesy Chair:** Gayle Baye. Sixteen cards were sent to members achieving something noteworthy, experiencing illness or the death of a loved one, etc.
- b. **On-line Birthday Greetings:** JoEllen Polzien sent out birthday greetings to those who volunteered their birth dates. She also sent email cards to members to celebrate several holidays, including Spring and winter solstices, Fourth of July, Halloween, Christmas and New Year's.

Passport: The Passport was emailed to members in February, April, June, August and November. One more issue than a quarterly report!

Editors: Arlene Rea, Midge Dublinske, Judy Keetle.

Feature Articles: Phyllis Arth and Pat King interviewed new members.

Formatting: Maxine Moul.

Photographers: Judy Keetle, JoEllen Polzien.

Publicity/Marketing/Website

- a. **Neighborhood Extra:** Maxine Moul.
- b. **FaceBook** Vicki McDonald, Arlene Rea.
- c. **Website Maintenance** <https://fflincoln.org> Arlene Rea, Pat King, Jim Ecklund. Jim Ecklund conducted training, via Zoom, in January. Arlene Rea became webmaster.

- d. **Maintenance** of <https://my.friendshipforce.org>, our members' only website, was done by Midge Dublinske and Arlene Rea.
- e. **Updating** <https://fflincoln.org> was updated by Arlene, Rea, Midge Dublinske, Pat King, Judy Keetle, Jim Ecklund, Vicki McDonald and De Tonack. The last update had been done before COVID.

Scholarship Chair: Midge Dublinske; Milt Bayer. The application forms for Needs-based Dues, Travel, and Diversity and Community Service grants were clarified, developed and updated.

Social Chair: Julie Splichal New member reception Committee members: Carolyn Harp, Wendy Horacek, Judy Keetle, Vicki McDonald, Jacque Scholtz, Jan Sibal, Kathy Spahr, Marcia Wallen. Committee chairs shared the many different activities of FFL. The Social Committee served assorted halal treats from Almustafa Market to 30 members at the Annual Meeting. A traditional Thanksgiving feast was catered to accompany the Mongolian ambassador's presentations. Forty-two people were served. Twenty-eight members enjoyed warm drinks on the Holiday Party Luxury Bus to view residential holiday light displays.

AD HOC Committees

Audit: Pat Novak, De Tonack Their Audit Report was accepted at the March meeting.

Budget: The Executive Committee reviews the income/dues and creates the budget based upon income.

Day Trips Chair: Judy Keetle This active committee scheduled two road trips. Five travelers attended the April Winnebago Pow Wow: the 158th Annual Homecoming Celebration at the Winnebago Veterans Memorial Park. In October, in Brownville, NE a docent from the Brownville Historical Society showed seven FFL members several buildings on Main Street. The entire town of Brownville is a National Register Historic District.

FFI Liaison: Laurie Ann Scott Joins FFI conference calls to hear of their thoughts and decisions. Our new FFI Field Representative is from Cedar Rapids IA.

Game Day/Night: Marilyn Watson Not active

Nominations Committee: The members of the committee, appointed by the President: Julie Albrecht, Bruce Keim, Julie Splichal (chair), Betty Starr, Kathryn Neyens. The committee nominated and submitted to the membership: Arlene Rea for President; Midge Dublinske for Vice President; Ann Quinlan for Secretary and Milt Bayer for Treasurer.

Bylaws and Policies Committee: Chair: Midge Dublinske; Judy Keetle, Arlene Rea, Brian Ridenour, Ann Quinlan. They completed numerous meetings of detailed work. In March Midge and Arlene met with Brian Ridenour to get legal advice on updating the bylaws. Policies were cross-referenced and merged for clarity. The last review had been in 2018. Updates were approved at the Annual Meeting in September.

Speakers Bureau: Wendy Horacek, Judy Keetle, Arlene Rea. Arlene Rea spoke to a Kiwanis Club, the evening of January 23. She addressed the South Rotary Club, June 7.

Trivia Night: Chair: Midge Dublinske, Phyllis Arth assistant. Not active.

Thursday Afternoon Club Not active.

ALSO ...

The Midwest Leaders (representatives) from Central Iowa/Ames, Cedar Rapids/Iowa City, Chicago, Des Moines, Lincoln, Madison Wis, Milwaukee, Northern Ill, Omaha, Quad Cities, St. Louis, and Twin Cities meet monthly by Zoom.

FFI provided their handbook:

<https://helpcenter.friendshipforce.org/help/where-can-i-find-the-ffi-handbook/>

Pat Novak joined FFI on a spring trip to Cuba. Many Lincoln businesses contributed supplies she carried, toward the theme “Service to the Cuban People.”

Susan Grieger learned Holiday gifts for older children were needed by the Center for People. She collected gift cards from members and delivered them to the Center for People in mid-December.

The Georgian ambassadors whom Vickie McDonald and Larry Harnisch hosted in Lincoln in 2023, returned the favor and invited Vickie and Larry to Georgia in 2024. As a result of the visits, Vickie and Larry were invited by Open World/COIL (Council of International Leadership) to attend the 25th Anniversary in Washington, D.C. to speak about their reciprocal visits.

To note: the consistent and efficient work of The Executive Board: The agendas and minutes were emailed before monthly meetings. The Treasurer’s report was timely and accurate, committee efforts were regularly recognized. President Rea thanked VP Dublinske for taking over some responsibilities while Jim was undergoing cancer treatments. Updating the Bylaws and Policies was a major accomplishment.

December the board met at Arlene and Jim’s home for a holiday potluck and board meeting.