



Mountain Friends

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May 2025

FFWNC Club Website: www.ffwesternnc.org

FFWNC Mailing Address: FFWNC, P.O. Box 384, Hendersonville, NC 28793

FFI Website: <https://friendshipforce.org/>

President's Message

Spring has sprung! And with it comes the delightful anticipation of hosting eight ambassadors from the Fort Worth Club from Tuesday, May 13 through Monday, May 19. Many thanks to their home hosts Kay Manley, Harriett Hilton, Sarah Poppenhouse, Tessa Levizon, Mike and Ellen Brazauskus, and Ron and Jan Partin as well as the many day hosts, and hospitality members who have signed up to assist. The ambassadors are in for a treat as they explore Biltmore House, Saluda, Flat Rock, Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute, the Cradle of Forestry, and the Folk Art Museum.

Let's give them a warm Western North Carolina welcome by joining them at three different club events: the Welcome Dinner at Champa, Happy Hour at Boodas Brewing Company, and the Farewell Dinner at Middleton Place Clubhouse. Yes, your presence really does make a difference to visiting ambassadors, their hosts, and WNC club members. Check out the details in this newsletter to make plans to attend, and I'll see you there!

Nancy Wood
FFWNC President

~~An Open Letter from the FFI Board Chair~~

Dear Friendship Force Family,

In a world that sometimes feels more divided than united, our mission—to promote world peace and understanding by creating an environment where individual friendships can be established across the barriers that separate people —has never been more important.

We are living in times of political tension. But we must remember: our work is not political. It is personal. It is human. It is about meeting face to face, heart to heart, and building understanding where it may not have existed before.

Let's be clear—Friendship Force does not exist to take sides in any conflict. We exist to bring people together in spite of conflict. Political challenges may arise. Borders may grow tense. But those are precisely the moments when our work is most vital.

As we continue this work, we carry with us the legacy of our organization's founder, Wayne Smith, and our long-time supporter, President Jimmy Carter. They believed deeply in the power of citizen diplomacy—that individuals, not just governments, could bring peace and build bridges across cultural and political divides. Their vision still guides us today. Their lives remind us that just one person's commitment to peace and understanding can cause ripples across the world. We cannot let political challenges distract us from our purpose. Instead, let them strengthen our resolve.

Now is the time to lean into our mission—to continue opening our homes, sharing our lives, and extending our hands in friendship. This is how understanding grows. This is how peace begins.

Thank you for your dedication to this extraordinary organization. Thank you for standing strong for friendship, even when it's not easy. The world needs us—now, more than ever.

In friendship,

*Donna Simek
Chair of the Board*

Fort Worth Inbound and FFWNC Activities

Welcome Dinner for Fort Worth Ambassadors – May 13th – 5:30 pm - Champa Restaurant

The Fort Worth ambassadors will soon arrive, and you are invited to get to know them. The Welcome Dinner on Tuesday, May 13th will be held at Champa Restaurant, 437 N. Main Street, Hendersonville. *The total cost of the meal is on you, if you are interested in participating.* Please RSVP to Harriett Hilton by May 1st, to ensure a seat at the table.

Happy Hour - Boodas Brewing Company – Thursday, May 15th – 4:30 pm

Come join the Fort Worth Ambassadors and Hosts at Boodas Brewing Company, 120 E. Barnwell Street, Hendersonville, on Thursday, May 15th at 4:30 pm. The burgers and appetizers at Booda's are delicious. Take a look at the menu on their website <https://boodasbrewingcompany.com> under the "Kitchen" tab.



Next General Meeting – Sunday, May 18th – 5:30 pm Middleton Place Clubhouse

The May 18th General Meeting will be a combined event at Middleton Place Clubhouse. It will include a Farewell Dinner with our Fort Worth inbound journey ambassadors. *The main dish will be provided at no cost, but if you plan to attend, please be sure to bring a dish to pass, along with your own plate, cup and cutlery. Please be sure to wear your name tag.* If you plan to come, please contact Harriett Hilton, Journey Co-Coordinator, *no later than May 5th* so enough main course food is available.

Board Meeting – Tuesday, May 20th - 10:00 am

The next Board meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Tuesday, May 20th, at the Henderson County Extension Office, 100 Jackson Park Road, Hendersonville. Members are always welcome to attend. The Board will be assessing the Fort Worth inbound journey, discussing summer club social activities, and Nancy will pass the reins to Tessa, who will lead FFWNC for the remainder of the year.

Pass the Spoon – Late Afternoon - Pass the Spoon – Wednesday, June 4th – 2:00 pm

Nine hungry members attended the Pass the Spoon lunch at Biscuit Head in Asheville on April 9th, hosted by Carol Mullen. The food was delicious and the



portions were amazingly large!

Needless to say, everyone had their fill for lunch...and then some! Ellen Brazauskas was the lucky winner of “the spoon.” Please see her message with the lunch details:



I was the lucky person to get the “Spoon.” Our next spoon event will be Wednesday, June 4th, at Three Chopt, 103 3rd Avenue East, Hendersonville. (There is parking on 3rd Ave East and also in the Azalea Parking lot off 3rd Ave East. Hendersonville uses Park Mobile app.)

Many Club members may remember that Matt, the owner, had been a Club member and has catered several box lunches for our recent inbound journeys. Unfortunately, he and his wife, Rosy, lost their home in the spring fires.

In order to support local, I selected Three Chopt for the June lunch location. It will be a late lunch, starting at 2:00 pm. Matt shared that 11:00 am -1:30 pm is the busiest time for the restaurant. He is thrilled to have us come but asked if we could arrange our lunch a bit later. Hence, the reason for the 2:00 pm reservation.

Please let me know if you are coming.

Ellen

Annual Picnic & General Meeting – Saturday, July 12th - 12:00 Noon Mills River Park Pavilion

Plan to attend the Annual Picnic on July 12th. As has been Club tradition, baked and fried chicken will be provided, but bring a dish to pass, along with your own plate, cup and cutlery...and remember to wear your name tag.

Book Club – Friday, July 25th – 1:30 pm

The FFWNC Book Club will discuss *The Storyteller of Casablanca* by Fiona Valpy, to be hosted by Diane Tokarski at her home, 115 Sugar Maple Heights, Laurel Park. The book is historical fiction set in Casablanca, during pre and post WW2 as well as in current times. For details, please contact Gerri Gurbuz, FFWNC Book Club Chair.

-- The FFWNC Book Club is held quarterly on the 4th Friday in January, April, July and October and always welcomes new members. --

—Remaining Journeys for 2025—

Western Michigan Club – Outbound Journey September 18 – 24, 2025

There are still a few slots available for this outbound journey. If you have never visited Western Michigan, this will be an excellent opportunity to experience life with locals. Please contact Ellen Brazauskas or Ginger Zemp for details.

2025 Mid Atlantic Outdoor Activity Journey Special Club-to-Club Event – October 6 – 16th

The Friendship Force Mid Atlantic Outdoor Journey with Richmond, Raleigh and WNC is happening! The dates are October 6th - 16th, 2025. FFWNC will be the last Club visited on the tour, hosting for just three nights, October 14 -16.

The hosting responsibilities will be less than usual and will be a great opportunity for new Club members to give it a try. For details about participating and/or hosting opportunities, contact Sarah Poppenhouse or Susan Harvey.

FFI News – Special Assessment

The Friendship Force International Board of Directors recently announced a temporary \$15 special assessment per ambassador when participating on journeys from May 1 to the end of 2025. Each outbound ambassador will pay the \$25 per night FFI fee, the club journey fee, plus the temporary \$15 special assessment. Know the FFI Board didn't make this decision lightly; it is necessary to cover rising costs and continue our mission.

Club Member Birthdays

May Birthdays

1 Dick Weaver

20 Gary Ader

June Birthdays

Sheila Dunn

8 Harriett Hilton

14 Teri Kayne

18 Ellen Brazauskas

Newsletter Deadline

If you have Club news for the newsletter, please submit your information to Nancy Wood *no later than* the 15th of the month.

2025 Meeting Calendar

MEETING DATE	EVENT	TIME
Sunday, Jan. 19	General Meeting	3:00 pm
Sunday, Mar. 16	General Meeting	5:00 pm
Sunday, May 18	General Meeting & Farewell Dinner	5:00 pm
Saturday, July 12	Annual Picnic-- Mills River Park Pavilion	12:00 Noon
Sunday, Sept. 21	General Meeting-TBD	5:00 pm
Sunday, Nov. 16	General Meeting	3:00 pm
Friday, Dec 12	Holiday Party	3:00 pm
Tuesday, Jan. 14	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, Feb. 11	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, Mar. 11	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, Apr. 8	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, May 20	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, June 10	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, July 8	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, Aug. 12	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, Sept. 9	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, Oct. 14	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, Nov. 11	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, Dec. 16	Board Meeting	TBD

General Meetings are usually held on the third Sunday of alternate months, starting with January. Meeting locations vary and will be announced on website posts and in the monthly newsletters.

Board Meetings are usually held on the second Tuesday of the month. Please check the FFWNC website and the monthly newsletter for Board Meeting locations.

Monthly Calendar of Events

Third Thursday – Happy Hour at a local brewery/winery – Chuck Tokarski
 Fourth/last Friday, Quarterly – Book Club – Gerri Gurbuz
 “Pass the Spoon” Lunch/Dinner – Bi-monthly, dates and hosts vary

FFWNC 2025 Full Year Calendar at a Glance
(Subject to change, as year progresses)

Updated: 5/25/25

<p style="text-align: center;">January</p> <p>1/14 (Tues) - Board Meeting – 10am - IAM 1/16 (Thurs) - Happy Hour – 4:30pm – Trailside Brewing Company, Hendersonville 1/19 (Sun) - General Meeting – 3-5pm – First United Methodist Church 1/24 (Fri) – Book Club – 1:30pm – The Buzz - - <i>Man's Search for Meaning</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">February</p> <p>2/5 Wed – Pass the Spoon –12:30 pm – Taco Fiesta – Horseshoe 2/11 Tues – Board Meeting – 10am – Community Foundation, 3rd Floor, 401 N. Main St, H'ville. 2/20 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm – St. Paul Winery, Hendersonville</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">March</p> <p>3/11 (Tues) - Board Meeting – 10am - IAM 3/20 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm – Dry Falls Brewing Company, Hendersonville, NC 3/16 (Sun) - General Meeting – 5-7pm –First United Methodist Church</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">April</p> <p>4/8 (2nd Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am – Henderson Cty Ext Office 4/9 Pass the Spoon – Biscuit Head – 11:30am Asheville 4/25 (Fri) – Book Club – 1:30pm — <i>11/23/63 by Stephen King</i>, Southern Streams Coffeehouse – Ellen Brazauskas, Host</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">May</p> <p>5/13-5/19 (Tues – Mon) - INBOUND JOURNEY – FORT WORTH 5/15 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm Boodas Brewing Company, Hendersonville 5/18 (Sun) – Fort Worth Farewell and General Meeting – 5-7pm – Middleton Place Clubhouse 5/20 (3rd Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am – Henderson Cty Ext Office</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">June</p> <p>6/10 (Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am – Cty Ext Office 6/19 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm - TBD</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">July</p> <p>7/08 (Tues) - Board Meeting – 10am - IAM 7/12 (Sat) – Annual Picnic – Noon – Mills River Park 7/17 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm - TBD 7/25 (Fri) – Book Club – 1:30pm – <i>The Storyteller of Casablanca</i> by Fiona Valpy– to be held at the Tokarski home</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">August</p> <p>8/12 (Tues) - Board Meeting – 10am – Cty Ext Office (Tentative) 8/21 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm - TBD</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">September</p> <p>9/9 (Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am - IAM 9/18-9/24 - OUTBOUND JOURNEY – Western Michigan 9/18 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm - TBD TBD (Sun) - General Meeting – 5-7pm - TBD</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">October</p> <p>10/14 (Tues) - Board Meeting – 10am – Cty Ext Office (Tentative) 10/6-10/16- INBOUND &OUTBOUND JOURNEY – Mid Atlantic Outdoor Activity 10/16 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm - TBD 10/24 (Fri) – Book Club – 1:30pm – TBD</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">November</p> <p>11/11 (Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am - IAM 11/16 (Sun) – General Meeting – 3pm Election of 2025 Officers - TBD 11/20 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 1:30pm - TBD</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">December</p> <p>12/12 (Fri) – Club Holiday Party – 3-5pm - TBD 12/16 (Tues) – Board Holiday Party - TBD</p>



friendship force
WESTERN
NORTH CAROLINA

Membership Application / Renewal

Send to: Treasurer, FFWNC, P.O. Box 384, Hendersonville, NC 28793
(Separate Application per person)

PLEASE CHECK ONE:

- ☐ New Membership w/badge \$65 **per person** \$ _____
- ☐ Renewal Membership \$50 **per person** \$ _____
- ☐ Associate (if you are a member of another FFI club and pay that club's full dues) \$15 **per person** \$ _____

Name: _____ Date of Application _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Year joined FFWNC _____ Birthday - Month _____ Day _____

How did you hear about Friendship Force of Western North Carolina? _____

Friendship Force is a volunteer organization. Our success depends upon member participation.

AREAS YOU ARE WILLING TO SERVE:

____ Board of Directors or Officer

____ Committee Chair (i.e., Hospitality, Membership, Publicity, Newsletter)

____ Journey Coordinator

____ Hosting – home, dinner, day *

**Please visit the FFWNC website at: <https://ffwesternnc.org/being-a-friendship-force-host/> to learn about home, dinner and day hosting opportunities.*

(REV 9-22-24)