



Mountain Friends

Volume 25, Issue 7

July 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

Dear Fellow Travelers and Ambassadors of Friendship,

In a time when the paths between nations feel more like lines of division than open invitations, it is easy to feel discouraged. But as members of *Friendship Force International* we know that the true borders of a country are not drawn on maps—but in minds and hearts left unopened.

Our mission has never been more important than it is today. We travel not just to see—but to *understand.* We enter homes, not hotels. We sit at unfamiliar tables. We share meals, laughter, stories, and, yes, sometimes tears. In doing so, we come face-to-face with the truest reflection of a place: its people.

Even when nations hesitate to reach out, we must continue to extend our hands. This is not merely about tourism. It is about *building bridges*—about keeping conversations alive when silence threatens to settle in. Our friendships—deliberately cultivated across cultures—are the antidotes to isolation. They remind us that while governments shift and policies fluctuate, humanity's need for understanding and compassion remains constant.

Let us continue, with courage and humility, to see the world not only for its famous cities or tranquil country sides—but for its *whole stories.* Let us honor the differences we encounter—not as threats to our identity, but as expansions of it. To travel in this way is a radical act of hope.

In friendship,

Tessa Levizon
FFWNC President

July Club Activities

Journey Coordinator Training - Monday, July 7th – 2 pm Henderson County Extension Office

Please come and learn what you need to know to serve as a Journey Coordinator for both inbound and outbound journeys. You will receive materials needed to guide you, checklists and references on the "how to's" and "what if's" to prepare you for this most important role. Journeys do not happen without someone to plan and organize them.

Please consider serving in that role. Join us Monday, July 7, 2025, 2-4 pm at the Henderson County Extension office, 100 Jackson Park Road. Please RSVP to Susan Harvey.

Board Meeting – Tuesday, July 8th - 10:00 am

The next Board meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Tuesday, July 8th, at the Henderson County Extension Office, 100 Jackson Park Road, Hendersonville. Members are always welcome to attend.

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

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

Happy Hour – Thursday, July 17th - Southern Appalachian Brewery – 4:30 pm

Southern Appalachian Brewery is located at 822 Locust Street, Hendersonville, NC 28792. If there isn't a food truck on the premises this day, there are plenty of nearby restaurants to visit after Happy Hour. White Duck Taco at 500 7th Avenue East, is within walking distance of the brewery.

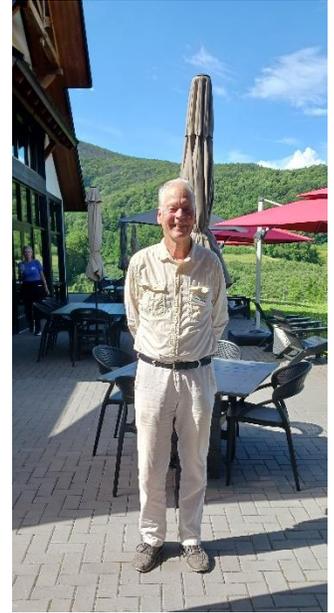


At our Happy Hour on June 19th, sixteen of us met at Stone Ashe for a lovely afternoon of socializing and enjoying delicious wine in this beautiful mountain

setting.

Our newest member, Gerard Stamm, joined us at the winery, and we had an opportunity to get to know him a bit. Gerard lives in Candler and spent his early years in New Orleans. He mentioned that he was very impressed with Jimmy Carter’s book, *The Virtues of Aging* and encourages all to read the book.

Please make a point to say hello to him and welcome him into the Club when you see him.



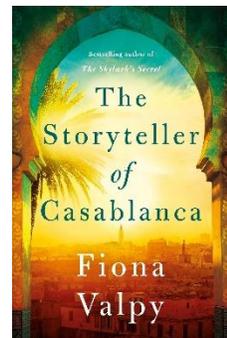
Gerard Stamm at Stone Ashe Winery

Friday, July 25th – Book Club - 1:30 pm – at the Tokarski home

The FFWNC Book Club will discuss *The Storyteller of Casablanca* by Fiona Valpy, to be hosted by Diane Tokarski at her home.

The book is historical fiction set in Casablanca, during pre and post WW2 as well as in current times. Please RSVP to Diane by Friday, July 18th, if you plan to come.

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.* –

August Club Activities

Pass the Spoon - Wednesday, August 6th – 1:00 pm - Papa's and Beer



Harriett Hilton was the lucky winner of “the spoon” on June 4th and is our host for the upcoming August 6th lunch. We will dine at Papa's and Beer at 1:00 pm on August 6th. Papa's and Beer is located at 1821 Asheville Highway, Hendersonville, NC 28791. Please RSVP to Harriett by August 4th if you will be attending.

Tuesday, August 12th – Board Meeting

At this point in time, the meeting is tentative. More information will be available in the August newsletter.

Thursday, August 21st – Happy Hour

Location to be determined. More information will be available in the August newsletter.

Call for Journey Coordinators – Susan Harvey

We have FOUR, yes four journey matches for 2026!!! We need coordinators to organize and plan those journeys to make them happen.

- Inbound international from Tarapoto, Peru. Dates TBD, tentatively in May.
- Inbound domestic Orlando. Dates TBD, tentatively in August.
- Outbound international to Ottawa, Canada. Dates TBD, tentatively September.
- Outbound domestic to Sonoma, Napa, California. Dates TBD, tentatively March.

Coordinating a journey is a great way to learn about the people and places we are exchanging with. You are the point person in determining the content of the journey. It is challenging but fun and a great way to experience a journey. Plus, as an incentive, there is a stipend of \$250 for inbound coordinators and \$500 for outbound international journey coordinators. If there are co-journey coordinators for a given journey, the stipend shall be shared equally.

The Ambassador/ Host Coordinator is one of the most important Friendship Force leadership roles. It is also one of the most rewarding. As an Ambassador or Host Coordinator, you are the “face” of FFI. As Coordinator for a Journey, you are responsible for planning the Journey, recruiting ambassadors/hosts, and leading the experience. Haven’t taken the Journey Coordinator training? No problem, we will be scheduling one soon. Plus, there are plenty of “veteran” coordinators to help you.

If you are interested, please apply to Susan Harvey, Journey Committee Chair. [Click on this link](#) to access the Journey Coordinator application.

—Remaining Journeys for 2025—

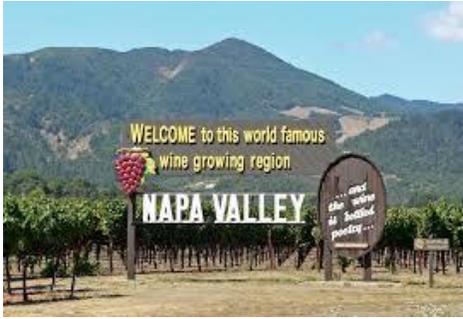
Western Michigan Club – Outbound Journey September 18 – 24, 2025

All slots for the Western Michigan outbound journey are full. If there is a cancellation, Club members will be notified.

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

FFWNC will be the last Club visited on the journey, hosting for just three nights, October 14 -16. The hosting responsibilities will be less than usual and the journey 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.



2026 – Our 1st Outbound Journey for the Year – Napa Valley and Sonoma

Our first journey in 2026 will be outbound to Napa/Sonoma, CA. Want to visit wine country in the spring? It's a beautiful time of year and the weather will be delightful!

Napa is the largest city and county seat of Napa County located in the heart of the Napa Valley wine region. Its downtown is known for late-1800s and early-1900s architecture, a riverfront promenade with shops and restaurants, and an arts scene anchored by the Napa Valley Opera House. The Oxbow Public Market houses a farmer's market and cheese shop,



Sonoma is a historic city in northern California at the heart of the renowned Sonoma Valley winemaking region. It's known for its art galleries and the colonial-era Sonoma Plaza. Surrounding this plaza are significant 19th-century adobe buildings including Mission San Francisco Solano and the Sonoma Barracks, once used by the Mexican military. Seasonally, the square hosts a popular weekly farmer's market.



The Sonoma County city of Sonoma is most popular for its rich wine history, award-winning wineries, and top-notch pairings of local wine and farm-to-table food.

Exact dates TBD, but most likely late March, 2026. Sign up at the annual picnic on July 12th.

Club Member Birthdays

July

4 Larry Harvey

5 Sarah Poppenhouse

23 Marlene Beggs, Susan Harvey

28 Larry McGaughy, Chuck Tokarski

August

7 Betty Doll

25 Bill Hogan

Newsletter Deadline

If you have Club news for the newsletter, please submit your information to Tessa Levison *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. 28	General Meeting	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. 21	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: 6/27/25

January	February
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>	2/5 Wed – Pass the Spoon –12:30 pm – Taco Fiesta – Horseshoe 2/11 Tues – Board Meeting – 10am – Community Foundation, 3 rd Floor, 401 N. Main St, H’ville. 2/20 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm – St. Paul Winery, Hendersonville
March	April
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	4/8 (2 nd 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
May	June
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 (3 rd Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am – Henderson Cty Ext Office	6/10 (Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am – Cty Ext Office 6/19 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm – Stone Ashe Vineyard, Hendersonville, NC
July	August
7/08 (Tues) - Board Meeting – 10am - TBD 7/12 (Sat) – Annual Picnic & General Meeting – Noon –Mills River Park 7/17 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm – Southern Appalachian Brewery, Hendersonville 7/25 (Fri) – Book Club – 1:30pm – <i>The Storyteller of Casablanca</i> by Fiona Valpy– to be held at the Tokarski home	8/12 (Tues) - Board Meeting – 10am – Cty Ext Office (Tentative) 8/21 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm - TBD
September	October
9/9 (Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am - IAM 9/18-9/24 - OUTBOUND JOURNEY – Western Michigan 9/18 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm - TBD 9/28 (Sun) - General Meeting – 5-7pm – Guidon Brewery	10/6-10/16- INBOUND &OUTBOUND JOURNEY – Mid Atlantic Outdoor Activity 10/16 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm – TBD 10/21 Board Meeting – 10:00 am – Cty Extn. Svs. 10/24 (Fri) – Book Club – 1:30pm – TBD
November	December
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	12/12 (Fri) – Club Holiday Party – 3-5pm - TBD 12/16 (Tues) – Board Holiday Party - TBD



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)