



Mountain Friends

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August 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

As we embark on an open world (*now known as COIL, Congressional Office for International Leadership*) inbound journey, our Club stands at the forefront—demonstrating true leadership in making our planet a better place. By sharing the expertise and success of local agricultural agencies in Western North Carolina with partners across the globe, we are planting seeds of progress that will flourish far beyond our own fields.

In these times when government services are being scaled back, it is especially meaningful that our nation still extends a helping hand to others, supporting countries as they strive for success. This spirit of generosity and determination is woven into our identity as an institution, and these are the days in which we will shine the brightest.

Now more than ever, partnerships matter. People matter. Each connection we forge is a testament to our commitment to both local and international communities. Working side by side—with each other, with our government, and with friends near and far—we reaffirm a timeless truth: the American way of doing things endures. Our values of cooperation, support, and innovation remain strong, guiding us as we build a brighter, more connected future for all. Let us continue to lead, to serve and to inspire. The world is watching, and together, we rise.

As a club, we need to apply for this opportunity, and there is no one better than Ivan Beggs, who has volunteered to take this on.

In friendship,
Tessa Levizon
FFWNC President

July 12th General Meeting & Annual Picnic

Twenty-three members and friends attended the picnic/general meeting and enjoyed chicken, along with delicious side dishes prepared and shared by all in attendance. Tessa highlighted upcoming FFWNC events, and the Nominating Committee for 2026 Officers and Club Directors was confirmed.



Left to right: Marti Wilmering, Sarah Poppenhouse and Lisa Breton at the July 12th picnic.

The Nominating Committee members are:

Kay Manley, Chair

Tessa Levizon

Lisa Breton & Susan Davis--

(Both Lisa and Susan were elected by the General Membership present at the picnic/general meeting)

If one of these committee members contacts you with a request to consider a 2026 leadership roll, please give serious thought to serving the Club in such a manner.

New Member Spotlight

At our July 12th Annual Picnic and General Meeting, Mike Adkinson became our newest member. Mari Lynn Cheatham also attended the picnic and plans to join a Friendship Force Club in south Florida.

Mike shared that he spends half time in NC in the Lake Toxaway area and half time in Florida. He is a former Army Ranger and is happy to join the FF community. When you see Mike and Mari Lynn, please extend to them a warm welcome!



Mari Lynn Cheatham & Mike Adkinson

FFWNC Book Club

On July 25th, the FFWNC Book Club met to discuss *The Storyteller of Casablanca* by Fiona Valpy. Our next book club discussion will be hosted by Gerri Gurbuz at Southern Streams Coffeehouse, 1628 5th Avenue W, Laurel Park, NC on Friday, October 24th, at 1:30 pm. The book selection for October is *Airplane Mode* by Shahnaz Habib.

The Book Club meets quarterly (Jan., Apr., July, and October) on the fourth Friday of the month. Please contact Gerri Gurbuz, FFWNC Book Club Chair, if you would like more information. The Book Club 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 plan to attend.--

Board Meeting – Tuesday, August 12th - 10:00 am

The next Board meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Tuesday, August 12th, at the Henderson County Extension Office, 100 Jackson Park Road, Hendersonville. Members are always welcome to attend.

**Happy Hour – Thursday, August 21st -
St. Paul Mountain Vineyards – 4:30 pm**

St. Paul Winery is located at 588 Chestnut Gap Road, Hendersonville, NC 28792. Currently there are no food trucks at the winery, but bringing small snacks is allowed. The winery does not allow coolers.



Hope to see you there!

September Club Activities

Board Meeting – Tuesday, September 9th – 10:00 am

The location is to be determined. Details will be available in the September newsletter.

Happy Hour – September 18th – 4:30 pm

Chuck Tokarski, our Happy Hour Chair, will be participating in the Western Michigan Journey, so if you have an interest in organizing a Happy Hour for September 18th, please let Tessa know *no later than August 15th*, so that details can be published in the September newsletter.

**Next General Meeting – Sunday, September 28th – 5:00 pm
Location to be determined**

Due to the Western Michigan outbound journey, the *next General Meeting will take place Sunday, September 28th, at 5:00 pm*. The location is to be determined. Details will be available in the September newsletter. Stay tuned...

—Remaining 2025 Journey—

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 Club-to-Club Event – POSTPONED FOR POSSIBLY 2026

Please note: This journey will not take place this fall and might be rescheduled for 2026. Under consideration is restructuring the journey to be less physically demanding. Stay tuned for updates in future newsletters.

2026 FFWNC Journeys

We have four journey matches and a potential COIL (*Congressional Office for International Leadership*) delegation scheduled for 2026:

- Inbound international from Tarapoto, Peru. Dates TBD
- 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

Questions? Please contact Susan Harvey, Journey Committee Chair, for information/interest on hosting (home, day or dinner hosting) for the COIL delegation and inbound journeys as well as for interest in participating in the outbound journeys.

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 a 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. Please contact Susan Harvey if you have an interest in participating.

Club Member Birthdays

August

7 Betty Doll

18 Mike Adkinson

25 Bill Hogan

September

2 Debbie Francis

10 Marti Wilmering

Newsletter Deadline

If you have Club news for the newsletter, please submit your information to Tessa Levizon 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-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 – (Jan., Apr., July, Oct.) - 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: 7/23/25

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 – Cty Extn Office 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	8/6 (Wed) – Pass the Spoon – Papa’s & Beer, 1821 Asheville Highway, Hendersonville, NC 8/12 (Tues) - Board Meeting – 10am – Cty Ext Office 8/21 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm – St. Paul Winery, Hendersonville, NC
September	October
9/9 (Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am - TBD 9/18-9/24 - OUTBOUND JOURNEY – Western Michigan 9/18 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm - TBD 9/28 (Sun) - General Meeting – 5-7pm - TBD	10/14 (Tues) - Board Meeting – 10am – Cty Ext Office (Tentative) 10/16 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm - TBD 10/24 (Fri) – Book Club – 1:30pm – <i>Airplane Mode</i> by Shahnaz Habib - Southern Streams Coffeehouse, Laurel Park - Gerri Gurbuz, Host
November	December
11/11 (Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am - TBD 11/16 (Sun) – General Meeting – 3pm Election of 2026 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)