



Mountain Friends

Volume 25, Issue 9

September 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

Action for Club Members

Your Help Is Needed to Keep Our Club Alive!

I am writing to you today not just as your president, but as someone deeply invested in the future of our beloved club. Right now, we are at a crossroads—your action and involvement is critical.

Volunteering with our club isn't just a wonderful way to connect and grow; it is the foundation on which everything we do depends. Our continued success, the friendships we build, and the impact we make in our community are only possible if each one of us steps up. The energy and passion you bring are what keep us moving forward.

At this year's Annual Picnic, we voted for Nomination Committee members, and I am honored to work alongside Kay Manley (Chairperson), Lisa Breton and Sue Davis. Despite our dedication, the reality is clear: too few are carrying too much. New faces and seasoned hands alike, we need you now more than ever.

We cannot run our journeys, meetings, events, happy hours, and communications without more hands-on deck. If we do not fill critical roles soon, our ability to accept and process annual journeys, plan gatherings, and maintain our vibrant club life may be at risk. The club's lifeblood depends on every member contributing—no one is too new or too experienced; every effort matters.

Here's what's needed:

- President-Elect: **open for 2026**
- Secretary: **open for 2026**
- Treasurer: **open for 2026**

- Club Directors: **need 2 in 2026**
- Standard Committee Leaders:
 - Membership Chairperson – filled
 - Journey Committee – filled
 - Communications: **(one person currently serves 3 roles)**
 - Newsletter – filled
 - Publicity – **open now and for 2026**
 - Directory – filled
 - Website – filled
 - Sunshine – **open for 2026**
- Hospitality – **open for 2026**
- By Laws & Procedures – filled
- Grant Fund Committee – filled

Many roles are covered, but several key positions remain vacant. If no one steps forward, our club’s viability is in jeopardy.

Please do not wait to be called—take initiative! Whether you can lead, organize, host, drive, or shape policy, we need you urgently. The Nomination Committee will be reaching out to members, but your proactive response will make all the difference.

Remember, every contribution—big or small—is essential. This is your moment to make a difference, ensure our club survives, and continue its legacy. Let’s pull together and show what makes our community strong, resilient, and extraordinary.

Thank you for reading and for acting now.

With Friendship and Hope,
 Tessa Levizon
 FFWNC President

September Club Activities

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

The next Board meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Tuesday, September 9th at 10:00 am at the Henderson County Extension Office, 100 Jackson Park Road, Hendersonville. Members are always welcome to attend.

Next General Meeting – Sunday, September 28th – 5:00 pm Guidon Brewery – 415 8th Avenue E, Hendersonville

Due to the timing of the Western Michigan outbound journey, the *next General Meeting will take place Sunday, September 28th, at 5:00 pm, in the building next to the brewery, on Guidon's property.* The brewery has a kitchen, so you can order your dinner there. Looking forward to seeing you then.

October Club Activities

Board Meeting – Tuesday, October 14th – 10:00 am

The October Board meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Tuesday, October 14th, at 10:00 am at the Henderson County Extension Office, 100 Jackson Park Road, Hendersonville. Members are always welcome to attend.

Pass the Spoon – Wednesday, October 15th – 1:00 pm Papa's and Beer – 1000 Brevard Road, Asheville

Eleven club members participated in the August 6th Pass the Spoon lunch at Papa's and Beer in Hendersonville. The food, the company and discussions were enjoyed by all. Thank you, Harriett, for this selection.



Club President, Tessa Levizon, was the lucky member to hold “the Spoon” for the October 15th luncheon and has chosen Papa’s and Beer in Asheville, which will be a nice change for our Asheville members to attend a lunch in their home area.



For those who attended the August luncheon at Papa’s and Beer in Hendersonville, I dare you to remember what you ordered, so that you can order the same dish for comparison!

Congratulations to all who have been participating in Pass the Spoon—August marked our one-year anniversary!

--Submitted by Ellen Brazauskas

Happy Hour – Thursday, October 16th – 4:30 pm **Location to be determined**

There will not be a Happy Hour in September, due to the timing of the outbound Western Michigan Journey. We will resume Happy Hour on Thursday, October 16th. Details will be provided in the September Newsletter.

FFWNC Book Club – Friday, October 24th – 1:30 pm **Southern Streams Coffeehouse – Laurel Park**

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 An Irreverent History of Travel* by Shahnaz Habib.

The Book Club meets quarterly (January, April, 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.

—Remaining 2025 Journey—

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

Co-Journey Coordinators – Ellen Brazauskas & Ginger Zemp

Ten FFWNC ambassadors are preparing for this journey and are looking forward to the many activities prepared for them by the Western Michigan Club.

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
- Outbound domestic to Sonoma, Napa, California. Dates TBD, tentatively March
- Outbound international to Ottawa, Canada. Dates TBD, tentatively June
- Inbound domestic Orlando. Dates TBD, tentatively in August

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, if you have an interest in participating.

Outbound 2026 Journey to Ottawa, Canada

FFWNC is matched with FF Ottawa for a 2026 journey. Co-Journey Coordinators Ellen Brazauskas and Nancy Wood are now in the process of working with Ottawa to arrange for a JUNE, 2026 journey, ten months for now.

Sign up for this journey at the September 28th General Meeting at Guidon Brewery. If you cannot attend and wish to sign up, please contact Ellen directly. *Note - even if you thought you had signed up for this journey at the summer picnic- the signup list available at the September General Meeting is the "official" list. Our apologies for any confusion.*

Once the details are available (i.e., dates, cost, number of ambassadors that Ottawa will accept and mobility requirements) we will send an email to those on the list. An Ambassador Application & Agreement is required to be completed and can be found on the Friendship Force Western North Carolina website:

<https://ffwesternnc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-Ambassador-Application-and-Agreement.pdf> and on the <https://friendshipforce.org/site>. We encourage interested members to complete the application ASAP and forward it to Ellen by email, text, mail or in person. The Ambassadors will be selected on a first-come, first-served basis, based on the date the application is received.

Club Member Birthdays

September

2 Debbie Francis

10 Marti Wilmering

October

8 Margie Weaver

14 Karen McDonald

31 Mike Brazauskas

Newsletter Deadline

If you have Club news for the newsletter, please submit your information to Tessa Levizon at: teza2zon@outlook.com *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: 8/13/25

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 – Henderson County Extn Office 9/18-9/24 - OUTBOUND JOURNEY – Western Michigan 9/28 (Sun) - General Meeting – 5-7pm – Guidon Brewery, Hendersonville	10/14 (Tues) - Board Meeting – 10am – Cty Ext Office 10/15 (Wed) Pass the Spoon – 1:00 pm - Papa’s & Beer, 100 Brevard Road, Asheville 10/16 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm - TBD 10/24 (Fri) – Book Club – 1:30pm – <i>Airplane Mode An Irreverent History of Travel</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)