



Mountain Friends

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November 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 Members,

I'm excited to invite you to our upcoming November 16th Thanksgiving General Meeting, when we will vote on the 2026 slate of FFWNC Officers and Directors. Additionally, we will share a potluck meal, so please bring a dish to share, along with your own plates, cups and cutlery.

Prior to jumping into our Nomination Committee's 2026 slate, we will begin the meeting with time for the potluck and socializing. After voting on the slate, there will be a presentation highlighting our club's recent outbound journey to Western Michigan.

Have you seen the email and link to a video from Jeremi Snook, FFI's CEO? If not, please reach out to me so that the email can be forwarded to you. FFI is in a period of transition, and changes will be effective January, 2026. FFI is in the process of focusing on the inclusion of countries that have not previously been part of the organization as well as exploring ways to sustain itself in a challenging world. Look for a separate email regarding the 2026 FFI dues which will be sent to all members on November 14th.

During the November General Meeting, handouts and additional information will be available. Our January General Meeting will be dedicated to FFI's renovated website. Details will include the FFI budget. There will be full transparency regarding the changes. These are exciting times for FFI.

Thank you for all you contribute to our community. I look forward to celebrating, planning, and growing together!

In friendship,
Tessa Levizon
FFWNC President

November Club Activities

General Meeting & Election of 2026 Officers and Directors– Sunday, November 16th – 3:00 pm First United Methodist Church – 204 6th Avenue West – Roy Johnson Room

Please be sure to attend – this is a very important meeting at which the 2026 Officers and Directors will be elected. As mentioned in Tessa’s message, this will be a pot luck meeting, so please bring a dish to share (appetizer, main course, salad, or dessert) along with your own plates, cups and eating utensils.

For those who would like a shorter walk to the Roy Johnson Meeting Room, a small parking lot is available on the south side of the building. Enter off 5th Avenue, using the driveway between the Masonic Lodge and the Church Day Care Building. Park in the lot, and a club member will be at the door to let you in and direct you to our meeting room.

Please note: the meeting will start at 3:00 pm, due to the time change that will be in effect.

2026 Slate of Officers and Directors

Officers

Past President - There is no listing for Past President, as Tessa Levizon is the current President and is on the slate to continue as President in 2026.

President - Tessa Levizon

President Elect - Vacancy

Secretary - Kay Manley

Treasurer - Susan Harvey

Directors

2026	2026-2027
Susan Gaston	Sue Davis
Marti Wilmering	Larry McGaughy

Board Meeting – Thursday, November 13th – 10:00 am

The November Board meeting will be held at 10:00 am on Thursday, November 13th, at 10:00 am at the Henderson County Extension Office, 100 Jackson Park Road, Hendersonville.

Happy Hour – Thursday, November 20th – 4:30 pm Johnson Legacy Vineyard, 33 Fred Orr Drive Hendersonville, NC 28792

The November 20th Happy Hour will be at Johnson's Legacy Vineyard, a new winery that opened in May. It is located just up the street from St. Paul Winery. The vineyard was planted in 2018, and if you enjoy Cabernet Franc wine, they have a great one.

This small winery has ciders, white and red wines and canned beers, along with soft drinks. Although there won't be a food truck, charcuterie boards will be available, and you are welcome to bring your own snacks.

Our October 16th Happy Hour at Dry Falls Brewing Company was enjoyed by twelve members. The fall weather was so pleasant, and we had a brew or a soft drink together, along with some vittles.



December Club Activities

Save the Date – Holiday Party – Friday, December 12th - 3 – 6 pm

Plans are underway for a Club Holiday Party. Please save the date -- details will follow shortly.

December Board Meeting – Tuesday, December 16th 10:00 am

The Board Meeting location will soon be determined. Details will be available in the December Newsletter. Members are always welcome to attend.

Pass the Spoon

A Happy Group of FFWNC members met on October 15th for the Pass the Spoon Lunch at Papa's and Beer in Asheville. The food and service was just as good as at the Hendersonville location. It was a nice change for Asheville members to be close to home.



Gerard Stamm was the lucky person to “hold the spoon.” The next Pass the Spoon Lunch will not be until February 2026, in order to avoid General Meeting months as well as winter holiday plans.

More information regarding the date and location for the next Pass the Spoon will be announced in the January 2026 newsletter.

--Ellen Brazauskas

Western Michigan Journey Recap

The Journey to Western Michigan began September 18th with a potluck welcome dinner at one of the member's lakeside homes. It was a lovely time to reconnect with friends who visited FFWNC in 2024, as well as an opportunity to make new friends.

It was a busy week, starting with a visit to see a miniature railroad set-up at one of the Western Michigan club member's homes.

We also saw the largest covered bridge in Michigan, followed by a delicious Amish lunch prepared by an Amish family. The family was very gracious and discussed their lifestyle with us. Then a visit to the Menno-Hof Museum.



The following day, we enjoyed a sand dune buggy ride and learned about the shifting dunes, which was followed by a sail on a tall ship on Lake Michigan. On Sunday, we met in Grand Rapids for a personal tour of the Art Prize Festival, hosted by a local Western Michigan club member who shared highlights of the city.

The **Highlight** of the journey shared by all of us ambassadors was volunteering at the Gleaners. We prepared over 6,000 pounds of potatoes for dehydration to send to countries in need. On the final journey day, we toured the Meyer May house, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and went on a tram tour of the Meijer Gardens, which was filled with sculptures and unique gardens.

The journey ended with a farewell breakfast and an impromptu musical event by Diane Tokarski (mountain dulcimer) and Paul Franklin, a fiddle player and member of the Western Michigan Club.

--Ellen Brazauskas & Ginger Zemp, Co-Journey Coordinators

Save the Dates – 2026 North American Regional Conference April 24 – 27, 2026 – Memphis, Tennessee

Interested in learning more about FFI and meeting member/friends from Canada and Mexico? Look into attending the FFI 2026 North American Regional Conference in Memphis, Tennessee. Visit the FFI website to learn about how to register for the conference and other related information. You will need to log on to the website at: my.friendshipforce.org with your password. Consider attending – it will prove to be a very worthwhile experience.

2026 FFWNC Journeys

We have four journey matches 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: October 6 – 12, 2026

Questions? Please contact Susan Harvey, Journey Committee Chair for information/interest on hosting (home, day or dinner hosting) for the 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.

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.

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.

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, nine months for now.

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 who signed up 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>

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

November

5 Ivan Beggs

9 Rob Ebert

12 Sabrina Pittillo

14 Ron Partin

December

2 Nancy Wood

11 Diane Tokarski

22 Susan Neil

25 Nancy Gaughy, Gerard Stamm

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	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. 13	Board Meeting	10:00 am
Tuesday, Dec. 16	Board Meeting	10:00 am

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: 10/18/25

January	February
<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>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>
March	April
<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>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>
May	June
<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>6/10 (Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am – Cty Ext Office 6/19 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm – Stone Ashe Vineyard, Hendersonville, NC</p>
July	August
<p>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</p>	<p>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</p>
September	October
<p>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</p>	<p>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 – Dry Falls Brewing, Hendersonville 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</p>
November	December
<p>11/16 (Sun) – General Meeting – 3pm 11/13 (Thurs) – Board Meeting - 10 am Henderson County Extn. Office Election of 2026 Officers - TBD 11/20 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 4:30pm – Johnson Legacy Vineyard - Hendersonville</p>	<p>12/12 (Fri) – Club Holiday Party – 3-5pm - TBD 12/16 (Tues) – Board Holiday Party - TBD</p>