



Mountain Friends

Volume 25, Issue 10

October 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 writing to you today with a deep sense of concern and regret. I'm so sorry that an email blast regarding the September 28th General Meeting wasn't sent out. I apologize for this oversight on my part. I know that many of you were still traveling back from our Western Michigan Journey which contributed to the low attendance.

Important topics were discussed at the meeting, and I'm particularly concerned about one: a new secretary nomination. This crucial position for FFWNC in 2026 remains vacant. I understand that stepping up for a leadership position can feel daunting. I want to be honest with you—I faced challenges during the meeting, but thanks to the incredible support of my fellow members, we were able to get through it. This is exactly the kind of support you will receive if you consider taking on the secretary role. You will not be alone.

Please, if you feel an inclination at all to take on this vital role, now is the time to act. We need a secretary so that our club can function effectively in the coming year. If you're considering it or even just want to learn more, please reach out to Kay Manley. I want to make sure you know that you will have the full support of our entire group.

In friendship,
Tessa Levizon
FFWNC President

Recap of September 28th General Meeting

- Kay Manley spoke of the imminent need to fill the nomination slot for the Club's 2026 Secretary position.
- Diane Tokarski provided an overview of the FFWNC website and explained that there is a direct link to the FFI website from our Club website.
- Ivan Beggs provided a concise overview of COIL/Open World.
- Sign-up sheets were available for the 2026 Ottawa outbound journey as well as for those interested in home hosting for the 2026 inbound Peru journey. If you missed the opportunity to sign up for either of these journeys, please contact Susan Harvey.
- Tessa indicated that we will have a potluck dinner for the November 16th General Meeting. The location for this meeting is to be determined but will be announced in the November newsletter.

Top 7 Reasons to be FFWNC Secretary for 2026

Our Nominating Committee has been working hard on the slate for the Board of Directors for 2026; we've made good progress. We still have a need for a secretary. Here are reasons why YOU might consider taking on this role:

- 1. It's good for your brain health! Seriously, it's a good workout for the gray matter.*
- 2. You get to be a part of decision-making for our club's many activities.*
- 3. If you need to miss a meeting or two, no worries. Another board member will volunteer to take the minutes.*
- 4. Your term is for one year, with the option of extending if you really love it :)*
- 5. You would be contributing your time and talents to our club.*
- 6. Our current secretary, Ginger Zemp, would help with the transition at the end of this year.*
- 7. Maybe it's time to say YES.*

For more information, please contact Kay Manley.

Nominating Committee: Lisa Breton, Sue Davis, Tessa Levizon, Kay Manley

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

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. Please RSVP to Tessa by Friday, October 10th, if you plan to attend.



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

Happy Hour – Thursday, October 16th – 4:30 pm Dry Falls Brewing Company

Let’s meet at Dry Falls Brewing Company, 425 Kanuga Road, Hendersonville, NC at 4:30 pm on the 16th. This brewery typically hosts great food trucks. Hope to see you there.

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

Our next book club discussion’s host is 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 which traces the history of passports.

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.

November Club Activities

Board Meeting – Tuesday, November 11th – 10:00 am

The location is to be determined and will be announced in the November newsletter. Members are always welcome to attend.

General Meeting & Election of 2026 Officers and Directors– Sunday, November 16th – 3:00 pm

Please be sure to attend – this is the meeting at which the 2026 Officers and Directors will be elected. The location is to be determined and will be announced in the November newsletter. As noted earlier, 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.

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

Happy Hour – Thursday, November 20th – 4:30 pm

Location to be determined and will be announced in the November newsletter.

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. The FFI website should soon be posting information about how to register for the conference and other related information. Consider attending – it will prove to be very worthwhile experience.

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.

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.

Exact dates TBD, but most likely late March, 2026. Please contact Susan Harvey 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, 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

October

8 Margie Weaver
14 Karen McDonald
31 Mike Brazauskas

November

5 Ivan Beggs
9 Rob Ebert
12 Sabrina Pittillo
14 Ron Partin

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: 8/13/25

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– to be held at the Tokarski home</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>11/11 (Tues) – Board Meeting – 10am - TBD 11/16 (Sun) – General Meeting – 3pm Election of 2026 Officers - TBD 11/20 (Thurs) – Happy Hour – 1:30pm - TBD</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)