



GENERAL MEETING – Apr 12, 2026
2026 Location: Maitland Public Library 501 S. Maitland Ave.
Maitland, FL 32751
3:00-3:30 pm Meet, Greet, Socialize
3:30-4:00 pm Business Meeting
4:00-5:00 pm Program

PROGRAMS

A representative from Truist Bank will talk about “How to Avoid Being Scammed.”
FFGO member, Joan Flewelling will present a recap of the FFGO Journey to Oklahoma City in October, 2025.

President’s Message

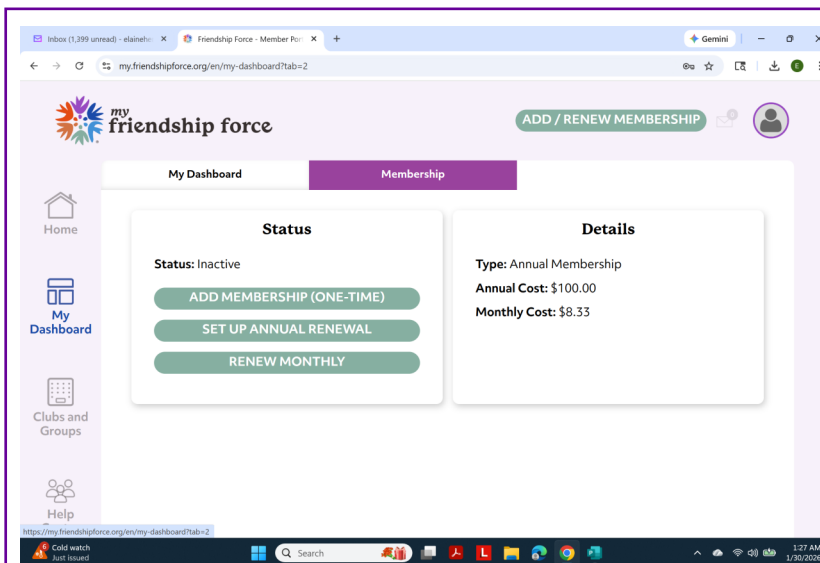
I have been monitoring the membership renewals on our club page on the Friendship Force International website. As Maggie Shoemaker reported, at the end of March our club has 40 active members whereas at the end of 2025 our membership roll totaled 75 members. Unfortunately, that means our membership dropped to about half of our December 2025 number. It appears that 2026 is going to be challenging as we start to prepare to host a Journey from Seattle.

On a more positive note, the members who did renew are those who usually step up to volunteer for club tasks. If there are any members who have not renewed on the FFI website and need help, please contact a member of the board for assistance. I will be out of the country on a Journey to Africa until after Easter and would like to thank all those members who did renew their membership and continue to believe in the Friendship Force mission.

Lewis Messer
President

See below on how to continue to support the Friendship Force mission.

a world of friends is a world of peace



It’s quite easy to make your payment and you have three choices. Simply login to my.friendshipforce.org. On the Home Page click on the Add/Renew Membership. The Membership screen pops up and you choose the payment plan that you prefer.

Option 1 is a one-time \$100 payment for the first year. A year later on your anniversary date you will have to renew your payment.

Option 2 will make your first year payment and then renew automatically every year on your anniversary date.

Option 3 allows you to pay \$8.33 a month until you decide to change your payment method or cancel your membership.

JOIN US FOR DINNER

Some of our club members go out to dinner after our General Meetings. On Sunday, April 12, we will go to Antonio’s Market & Café Downstairs, located at 611 S. Orlando Ave., Maitland. (407-645-1039)

CHANGING THE WAY YOU SEE THE WORLD

FFGO 2026 Calendar

- | | |
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| Apr 12 - General Meeting: 3-5 pm | Apr 24-27– North American Regional Conference, Memphis, TN |
| Apr 28-May 6– Festival on the Mississippi | May 4 - Board Meeting, Sue Easton’s home: 1 pm* |
| May 14 - Taste Travelers-Poblano’s Cocina Mexicana, Casselberry: 1:30 pm | |
| Jun 14 - General Meeting: 3-5 pm | |
| Jul 15 - Taste Travelers– TBD | |
| Aug 10 - Board Meeting, Shoemaker Clubhouse: 1 pm* | |
| Aug 20 - Taste Travelers – Thailicious, Longwood: 1:30 pm | |
| Aug 30 - Annual Meeting: 3-5 pm | |
| Sep 18 & 19 - Getting to Know You Dinners | Sep 25-27 - Getting to Know You Dinners |
| Sep 28 - Board Meeting, Flewelling’s Home: 1 pm* | Oct 6-12- Journey to Western North Carolina |
| Oct 15 - Taste Travelers– TBD | Oct 31-Nov 6 - Greater Seattle Incoming Journey |
| Nov 1 –General Meeting: 3-5 pm | Nov - Incoming from Greater Seattle |
| Dec 7 - Old/New Board Meeting – Lewis Messer’s Home: 1 pm* | |

*All FFGO members are welcome to attend any Board Meeting; however, please RSVP to the host. Time : 1:00 PM

FRIENDSHIP FORCE INTERNATIONAL MESSAGING GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The messaging most often used by Friendship Force International to communicate who we are and why we exist. Varying levels of detail are created to suit different use cases.

- 1. Taglines / One-Liners:** **FRIENDSHIP FORCE INTERNATIONAL** **Building Global Unity**
- 2. Social Media Bio** (Max 140 characters): **We’re building global unity – one friendship at a time.**
- 3. Elevator Pitch** (Plain language): Friendship Force International helps everyday people build authentic friendships that remove barriers and create global unity and understanding. Since 1977, we've shown that when people connect personally — sharing meals, stories, and experiences — prejudice dissolves and unity grows. We're growing a worldwide unity movement of global citizens – one friendship at a time.
- 4. Short Description** (1–2 sentences): Friendship Force International is building a movement toward global unity, helping everyday people make authentic connections across cultural divides — one friendship at a time. **Cont’d on page 5**

>>>>> **“General Data Protection Regulation”** <<<<<<

In compliance with the European Union’s regulation on data protection and privacy (which FFI complies with), you will need to use your Membership Directory when you need to contact a member to RSVP for an event, respond to requests for help, or other requests or inquiries to other members, because email addresses and phone numbers will not be published in our newsletter. Your information will never be shared outside of FF with third parties and FF is committed to handling your data with care.

Sunshine

Please contact Maggie Shoemaker, Membership Chair, if you would like to volunteer to make calls to members who have missed two general meetings in a row. We are doing this in an effort to make sure that our members know that we care about them. With several volunteers, this means that you may only have to make a couple of calls in a year.

We are providing a little bit of “Sunshine” to our club members who have become ill, have had surgery, or have had a death in the family. If you know a member who is experiencing any of this, please contact **Mary Ann Lynn**. Contact information is in the Membership Directory. She will send them a card on behalf of our club.



Where In the World Have You Been?



In early March, **Linda Piantieri** went to the Philadelphia Flower Show, which is the oldest, biggest and most prestigious flower show on earth.



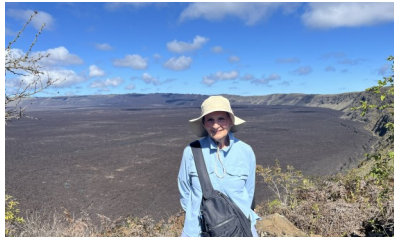
In January, **Mary Jane DeVault** met her granddaughter in Baltimore, Maryland. The weather was cold, and frozen snow covered the city. Their goal was to find a wedding dress for her granddaughter's October wedding which they did.



Elaine Henrich visited Quito, the Galapagos Islands, Cotopaxi Volcano, and stood on the equator in January. It was amazing how close you could get to all the animals, birds, and reptiles. They had no fear of humans. The animals that we got to see on the tour were sea lions, iguanas, Red-Sallie Crabs, tortoises, many types of birds including the Red-footed and Blue-footed boobies.



Bartolome Island-Sullivan Bay



Sierra Negra Volcano-Isabella Island



Cotopaxi Volcano



Nazca Boobie
Showing the way
On Genovese Island



Red-footed Boobie



Blue-footed Boobie

New FFGO Store Merchandise

This little notebook with stickies and a pen will be sold for \$2.00.



Great little gifts when you host an Ambassador or are an Ambassador.



The pins will sell for \$3.00 each and the sports bag, which is made out of nylon will sell for \$4.00.

If you wish to purchase any merchandise before we have an in-person meeting, please use your Membership Directory to contact Fred Shoemaker.





Join fellow members from around the world for an unforgettable **Festival at Sea** as we explore one of the most remote and biologically rich regions on Earth — the breathtaking Great Bear Rainforest.

This exclusive 7-day Friendship Force cruise sails roundtrip from Seattle, WA, to Ketchikan, Alaska, offering dramatic coastal scenery, incredible wildlife viewing, and meaningful connections with your global Friendship Force community.

Festival at Sea: The Great Bear Rainforest

Journey #: 26434 (MyFF)

Dates: 4–11 October 2026

Departure: Roundtrip from Seattle, USA

Spots Available: 80

Costs: Cabins start at \$1,084 per person plus additional \$225 FFI program fee.

Oceanview, verandah, and suite options are available.

Your Festival at Sea Experience Includes

- Your stunning cabin onboard the Noordam ship
- Friendship Force onboard welcome
- Scenic cruising through the Great Bear Rainforest
- Wildlife viewing opportunities
- Grenville Channel and Bella Bella
- All onboard dining
- Shipboard entertainment
- Friendship Force group activities and workshops
- Overnight stay in Prince Rupert
- FFI-sponsored farewell cocktail party
- Festival at Sea gift bag and souvenir shirt
- Souvenir photo book from Friendship Force International



Copy & paste the link below for more information and to sign up.

<https://friendshipforce.myshopify.com/products/festival-at-sea-the-great-bear-rainforest-26434-myff?variant=50888175157554>

Taste Travelers

Thursday, May 14 1:30 PM

Poblano’s Cocina Mexicana

908 State Road 436, Casselberry

Host: Anita Nimmo

RSVP by Tuesday, May 12

Contact information in your Membership Directory



HELP WANTED

Two or three volunteers to set up some tables and 40-50 chairs prior to our General and Annual Meetings. April 12 is our next meeting of 2026. Time commitment: about 30 minutes (2:30-3:00). Great way to support the club. Contact Lew Messer if you can help out.

BENEFIT

Read “Selection Guidelines for Over-Subscribed Journeys,” page 29-31 in the 2025 Membership Directory. Pay particular attention to the first bullet point on page 30.

FRIENDSHIP FORCE INTERNATIONAL MESSAGING GUIDELINES

Cont'd from page 2

5. Brand Story

Friendship Force International helps ordinary people transform into global citizens — people who seek connection and collaboration beyond borders and biases.

We build unity through authentic cross-cultural connections. A world where humanity comes first. Where curiosity replaces fear, understanding outshines division, and differences become sources of discovery rather than conflict.

We started with home stays — being hosted by members abroad, sharing meals and daily life across cultures. We've evolved into a global movement with multiple ways to connect: through homestay experiences, global citizenship education, and digital platforms that make meaningful relationships accessible to anyone, anywhere.

Founded in 1977 with President Jimmy Carter's support, we've always chosen connection over division. Today, we remain non-political, non-religious, and non-discriminatory because real friendship needs no ideology — just open hearts and curious minds.

Every connection creates ripple effects. One person's transformation influences their family, friends, and community. That's how we're building a worldwide movement — by proving that friendship can unite the world.

Tagline: **Building Global Unity**

Mission Statement: **Building Global Unity Through Human Connection**

Vision Statement: **We envision a more united and peaceful world built on friendship.**

City Pho & Grill Taste Travelers Recap

Our host, Anna Beck reported that six people attended and got a chance to talk and get to know each other. There was lots of conversation and great food.

**REPLACEMENT NEEDED**

After fifteen years as Newsletter Editor, Elaine Henrich is retiring, effective September 30, 2026. Starting October 1, Microsoft Publisher will no longer be available to users, not even for viewing. All files must be converted to PDF if you wish to be able to read them. The last FOGO newsletter she will create is the September-October addition,

A new editor will be needed to create the November-December newsletter edition in whatever software program the new editor chooses to use.

If you're interested in being creative and stimulating your brain, while pulling your hair out, please contact either Elaine or Lew Messer.

FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF GREATER ORLANDO BOARD OF DIRECTORS for 2026

President: Lewis Messer

Treasurer: Anita Nimmo

Vice President: Sue Easton

Secretary: Erica Johnson

Director: Vickie Bentham

Director: Joan Flewelling

Web Manager: Kurth Chin Fatt

Newsletter Editor: Elaine Henrich

2026 Cape Town, South Africa & Nairobi, Kenya: Outgoing, Ambassador Coordinator– Wanda Messer

2026 Western NC: Outgoing, Ambassador Coordinator-Deb Martel

2026 Greater Seattle: Incoming, Host Coordinator-Annie Sanders

Chair people:

Membership: Maggie Shoemaker

Programs: Annie Sanders

Communications: Deborah Martel

Activities:

For more information about Friendship Force of Greater Orlando, visit our website at www.friendshipforceorlando.org or contact us at ffgomail@gmail.com

Members should consult their FFGO Membership Directory for contact information of any Board Member or Chair Person.

Elaine Henrich, Editor



a world of friends is a world of peace

TO:

**CHANGING THE WAY YOU
SEE THE WORLD**
thefriendshipforce.org