



In This Issue

- * Note from Acting President
- * Journeys for 2026
- * Upcoming Dates--Mark Your Calendar
- * Club Officers & Chairpersons

2026 Journeys

Important Dates

Outbound to Tallahassee: Departing March 1
Inbound from Connecticut: April 17 - April 22
Outbound to Taupo and Southland, New Zealand
Nov 1-14

FFK Website: www.friendshipforceknoxville.org

Facebook: Friendship Force of Knoxville

E-mail: FriendshipForceKnoxville@gmail.com

FFI Website: <https://my.friendshipforce.org>

Note from FFK's Acting President

As acting president for Friendship Force Knoxville, I am pleased to wish you all a very Happy New Year! As you know, we had some difficult discussions last year concerning the future of our club. The majority decided that we were not yet ready to call it quits and the new leadership, which just met this week, is committed to doing all we can to not only survive but to thrive. Of course, the leadership cannot do it on their own and we will be calling on every member to be engaged in club activities to the fullest extent possible.

Our top priorities right now are 1) growing our membership and 2) member engagement i.e., getting all members to contribute in whatever way they can to the club's success. Most of us, of course, joined Friendship Force for the travel. But that core activity cannot happen without journey coordinators. Many of us would like to do day trips or have more social events but those local activities cannot occur without someone taking the lead to make them happen. The elected leadership can only do so much and we need the support of all members to not only assist but to be willing to take the lead in some areas.

So, as we move into 2026, we will all need to do all we can to help ensure that FFK remains viable for many years to come.

In Friendship, Bill Cherry

Friendship Force Journeys, 2026



Outbound: March 1st FF Knoxville to FF Tallahassee, Florida

Delora Cook is serving as Ambassador Coordinator to the Tallahassee club, which was originally part of a Florida State University group but joined FFI in 2021. Seven Ambassadors will travel to Tallahassee and, in the past, have spent one day south of Tallahassee visiting Wakulla Springs at either the St Marks Refuge or Gulf Specimen Lab. Another day may be spent in South Georgia visiting a Plantation home and the beautiful city of Thomasville, Ga. In Tallahassee, ambassadors tour the Goodwood Plantation, Mission San Luis, The Grove, and Maclay Gardens. We wish the group a wonderful journey and look forward to hearing about it upon their return.

Inbound: April 17-22 — FF Connecticut to FF Knoxville

Leslie has been in touch with the Ambassador coordinator from Connecticut and confirmed that they will be sending 7-9 Ambassadors from April 17-April 22. Thanks to those who have already volunteered to host. **However, additional hosts, small dinner hosts, and drivers are still needed.** Please contact Leslie or Joan if you are willing and able to assist. Thank you.

Outbound: November 1-14 – Southland and Taupo, New Zealand

Leslie recently attended a presentation by the Greater Atlanta FF club on their journey this past November to the same clubs in New Zealand and came back with useful information and suggestions. We will be visiting New Zealand in the Spring with daytime temperatures ranging from 50 degrees Fahrenheit to the mid the 60's on the South Island, and highs in the low 70's on the North Island.

Taupo, a town near the center of New Zealand's **North Island**, is distinguished by its lakefront setting and outdoor sports ranging from fishing to jet-boating. The vast waters of Lake Taupo, a volcanic caldera, drain

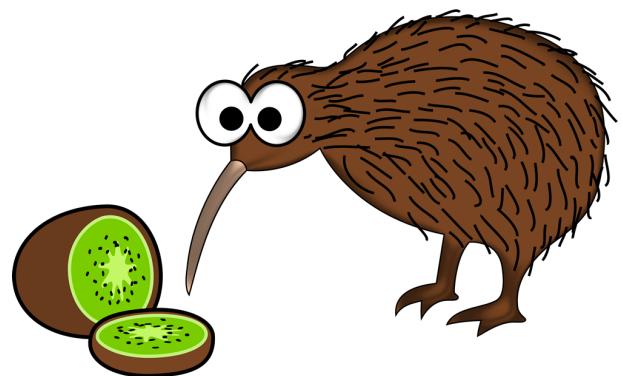
into the Huka Falls, dramatic, crystal-blue cascades reachable by hiking and biking trails. Surrounding Taupo are hot springs.

The Southland club is located in the southernmost part of the **South Island**. The Southland region has some unique scenery including beaches on the south coast, typical native bush with waterfalls and a petrified forest on the Catlins Southern Scenic route, wonderful views along the coast in several directions including Stewart Island.

The estimated cost is approximately \$4500 - \$5000 including airfare. The clubs can host 12 ambassadors. Approximate dates are the first two weeks in November.

If you are interested in going on this journey please let Joan Turbyville or Leslie know. Leslie has agreed to serve as the Ambassador Coordinator for this journey.

Leslie Badaines, Journey Chair



Upcoming monthly programs - mark your calendar!

Please note the following dates for our monthly programs which will be held the fourth Tuesday at 6:30pm for a 7pm start at TVUUC. However, please note that the February program will begin at 11:30am (for a 12 noon presentation) due to potential unpredictable weather. Please bring your brown bag lunch or a snack. Water, iced tea and lemonade provided by FFK.

January No program.

February 24 @ 11:30am. Presentation will begin at 12 noon.

Bruce and Janis Robinson will share videos of their trip last summer through the red-rock canyons and wild trails around Moab, Utah.

“Jeeping Through the Wilds of Moab!” An Armchair Adventure You Won’t Forget 

Fasten your seatbelts (or grab your chair seats)! Join Bruce Robinson and his wife for a thrilling ride through the red-rock canyons and wild trails around **Moab, Utah**—all without leaving the comfort of the TVUUC. You’ll splash through **37 creek crossings on Onion Creek**, peer over the dizzying edges of **Shafer Canyon**, and rattle along **Long Canyon, Gemini Bridges, Hurrah Pass**, and more. There will be stunning videos, jaw-dropping photos, and a few stories that might make you glad *you’re not the one driving the Jeep*. Come along for the bumps, laughs, and breathtaking scenery—no helmet or insurance waiver required!



March 24 Journey coordinator Karen Scott, along with the other Ambassadors, will give their report on their trip to Stratford - St. Mary's in Canada, September, 2025

April FFK will be hosting the inbound group from Connecticut at this time, so no formal meeting. **Please contact Leslie if you can volunteer to serve as a host, driver or small dinner host**

May 26 Journey coordinator Delora Cook and fellow Ambassadors will present their report on their journey to Tallahassee, FL in March

June 6 A Saturday visit to the Flatware Tales storytelling festival in Oak Ridge. More details soon



2026 Upcoming Dates Mark your Calendar

Board Meetings (2nd Tuesday, 2 p.m.)

Feb 10 March 10 April 14 May 12
June 9 July 14

NOTE: If you are interested in attending the Board Meetings virtually (or in-person when they take place) please e-mail Bill Cherry. FFK Members can also request a copy of Board meeting minutes from Secretary, Phyllis Driver.

Host and Ambassador Coordinators are listed on the FFK *About Us* web page

2026 Club Officers & Chairpersons

Officers:

President Open Position
VP/Acting President Bill Cherry
Secretary Phyllis Driver
Treasurer Marsha Mitchell

Committee Chairpersons:

Program Chairperson Dave & Ellen
..... Greenwood
Membership Chairperson Bill Cherry
Journey Chairs Joan Turbyville
& Leslie Badaines
Communications Chairperson Liz Gregor
Club Concerns Paulette Anderson
Historian Karen Swander