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2026 Journey Assignments

Inbound: FF Connecticut..... TBD
 Outbound: FF Tallahassee, FL March 1-6
 Outbound: FF Southland & Taupo, New Zealand
 Oct./Nov. TBD (2 weeks)

Club Website: www.friendshipforceknoxville.org
FFK on Facebook: Friendship Force of Knoxville
Club E-mail: FriendshipForceKnoxville@gmail.com
My Friendship Force: <https://my.friendshipforce.org>

Renew 2026 FFK Membership

Friendship Force International's new project called "Membership for All" has changed the dues structure for the organization. Because of this, the FFK Board has voted

- to waive the local club dues for 2026,
- to subsidize 50% of the 2026 \$100 FFI membership dues for all FFK/FFI members and
- to waive the FFK dues and provide the same 50% subsidy to new members who join before the payment deadline.

In order to receive this benefit, renewing members and new members must pay \$50 of the FFI dues to **NO LATER THAN Jan 15, 2026. This payment must be received by the FFK Treasurer on that date or by mail postmarked no later than January 15, 2026.**

Your check will be your renewal application and receipt and you can:

- mail your check to the address below,
- drop off at her house or the drop box,
- arrange to meet and hand the check to her.

Don't wait until the last minute to get your \$50 check in to the Treasurer:

Marsha Mitchell
 407 Doublehead Lane
 Knoxville, TN 37909
 Phone: 865-335-3875



If your address, phone number or email address have changed since the last FFK member directory was printed, please send Marsha Mitchell an email with your new information at globalmarsha@gmail.com

FFK 2026 Journeys

FF Knoxville to FF Tallahassee, Journey #26195: Five FFK and 2 FF Greater Des Moines ambassadors will be heading to Tallahassee Florida March 1, 2026. This will be our first club journey of the new year and looks to be an interesting one. **If you have signed up for this journey, your payment of \$375 is due by Saturday, December 20th** (\$250 for Tallahassee plus \$125 for FFI fees of 5 nights). Send your check for this journey to:

Marsha Mitchell
407 Doublehead Lane
Knoxville, TN 37909
Phone: 865-335-3875
globalmarsha@gmail.com



FF Connecticut to FF Knoxville, Journey # 26136: no specific date has been set yet for this incoming journey, but Leslie has been in touch with the President of the Connecticut club. A suggested date of April 17-22 (five nights) has been offered to the incoming club. Stay tuned and **please volunteer to assist!**

FF Knoxville to FF Taupo, New Zealand, and FF Southland, Journey # 26244: the dates of this journey should become available sometime in January. Based upon other clubs' trips to the area, mid -October through early November are likely dates.

Leslie Badaines, Interim Journey Chair

North American Regional Conference



Experience the spirit of Friendship Force in Memphis—networking, discovery, and community at the 2026 Regional Conference, from April 24 - 27, 2026, at the Hyatt Centric Hotel in Memphis, TN.

The things that need to change in Friendship Force are changing, but the things that truly matter – our core mission, values, focus – remain constant.

For much of the world, 2025 has been a year of turbulence — from rising U.S. trade measures and corresponding responses, to intensifying conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, to the rapid rise of AI reshaping how we connect. So where is Friendship Force in this moment? FFI is evolving its structure to meet these challenges, yet our mission and focus remain steadfast. This is our time to listen, learn, and act together. Welcome to the 2026 North American Conference.

More information about the conference is available on the MyFF Website at <https://my.friendshipforce.org> where you can see an agenda, the speakers, information about the hotel location, registration information and cost. You will need to sign in to My FF to see the information provided in the rotating carousel on the main page. Click on this image when it rotates around to be directed to a page about the conference.



Member Profile: Bill Cherry



I grew up in Montgomery, AL, but left the state after college and lived in many places while pursuing career opportunities. These places included; South Carolina low country (5 years), Central North Carolina (1 1/2 years), California bay area (6 months), Mexico City (2 1/2 years), California bay area (14 years), Alberta, Canada (5 years), Northern Illinois (1 1/2 years) and then Knoxville since 2000. From here, I commuted to D.C. for 3 years before retiring in 2007. Note that a number of these moves were with the same company so I was not a complete vagabond.

I graduated from Troy University with a degree in biology and chemistry and my first job was as a formulation chemist making large volume parenterals. After a year, I moved from the bench to management, developed skills in quality and regulatory compliance and later worked with biotech start-ups and blood product companies. My last career position was as Sr. VP of Quality and Regulatory Compliance with the American Red Cross blood products division.

I first heard about FFK from Don and Caroline Dougal. They had invited me to dinner at their home when they were home hosting an ambassador from Calgary, AB. Later, Don invited me to a membership recruiting event at TVUUC and I joined that evening. I believe that was May 2018. As I recall, I had an opportunity to go on the Chile journey but had a scheduling conflict.

My current interests include volunteering at TVUUC where I support the Little Food Pantry, serve on the Endowment board and the Strategic Planning Committee. I like making home brew and doing a seemingly endless list of projects around the house. My only grandkids live in Nova Scotia so I go there twice a year. I am still interested in other travel though, quite candidly, I find aspects of it to be more and more tedious.

That said, I am hoping to go to New Zealand this year. While I have not been on a lot of journeys, I have thoroughly enjoyed those I have been on (Western Colorado, Tuxtla/Guiterez, Mexico, Central North Carolina, Spokane) and especially enjoy the ongoing connections with those I met on those journeys.

My career took me to a lot of interesting places including places where I lived (Mexico, Canada, Northern California) as well as business related travel to Germany, Sweden, Southern France and China. Perhaps my most memorial visit, however, was a personal trip to Cuba in 2002.

As for FFK, I enjoyed serving as treasurer for two years and will be the Vice President in 2026. As you all know, we are facing some challenges and I look forward to working with the Leadership Team to explore all ideas and to determine how we can best serve our membership in the years to come.

“Sometimes, you realize that travel isn’t just about taking a break – it’s a way to heal. It’s a chance to step away from routine, clear your mind, and reconnect with yourself. Those free sunsets by the ocean, the fresh sea breeze, and the simple joy of living in the moment can be exactly what you need to recharge. So give yourself that gift – travel, escape, heal, and create memories that will last a lifetime. “

travelmorewithsimon from Instagram



FFK Holiday Dinner Memories

On December 2nd, 25 FFK members and friends met at the Gourmet's Market to enjoy good food and fellowship at our annual holiday dinner. Enjoy the photos below and see a few more on the FFK Facebook page (address on the first page).

L to R around the table: Art Mitchell, Layla Michu, Mark Pierce, Dee Pierce, Kristine Notte, Liz Gregor, Marsha Mitchell, Tom Michu



L to R: Carol Ann Johnson, Kathryn Atkins-Roberson, Karen Scott



L to R: Ron Mayer, Jean Mayer, Paulette Anderson, Gary Anderson, Ellen Greenwood, Dave Greenwood, Sonja DuBois

L to R: Sonja DuBois, Delora Cook



Mark Pierce, Dee Pierce, Kristine Notte



L to R: Karen Swander, Leslie Badaines

L to R: Phyllis Driver, Betsy Tonkin, Cynthia Headrick





FFI “Membership for All” Video

Below is a link from FFI including more discussions with FFI executives regarding the Membership for All initiative. The club leadership has been asked to get this to our club's membership. <https://tinyurl.com/2tb2u67e>

2026 Upcoming Dates Mark your Calendar

Board Meetings TBD

Upcoming FFK General Events..... TBD

Check the FFK Newsletters and Webpage about each event for date, time and place details.

These dates and more are on the
FFK *Event/News* web page.

2026 Club Officers & Chairpersons

Officers:

President OPEN POSITION
Vice President..... Bill Cherry
Secretary Phyllis Driver
Treasurer Marsha Mitchell

Committee Chairpersons:

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

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



A Note of Thanks from Janis Robinson

As this is my final newsletter for FFK, I wanted to take a moment to say thank you—to the club and to so many of you who have made this work worthwhile.

I’ve attended FFK Board meetings since 2017—missing only a few—and over the years have worn several hats, including Secretary (briefly), Program Chairperson, and Communications Chairperson. Along the way, I had the good fortune to work closely with Ray Simko on the club’s webpage beginning in 2017. Our regular conversations and meetings helped keep us both connected to what was happening in the club and made the work far more enjoyable.

I’ve truly appreciated the support and encouragement of the Board members I’ve worked with, including five presidents who consistently backed the webpage and newsletter and supported Ray and me. The stories, photos, and updates contributed by Board members and fellow club members have always been what brought the newsletter to life. When I started, I knew very little about webpages or newsletter formatting, but thanks to your patience and contributions, I learned more than I expected.

Now it feels like the right time to pass this role along. I’m delighted that Liz Gregor has stepped up to continue the work, and I know she’ll do a wonderful job.

Friendship Force Knoxville has been—and can continue to be—a wonderful club thanks to the dedication of its volunteers. This is an exceptional group, and I deeply appreciate your support over the years.