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### 2026 Journeys

#### Important Dates

Outbound to Tallahassee: Departed March 1  
 Inbound from Connecticut: April 17 - April 22  
 Outbound to Taupo and Southland, New Zealand  
 Nov 1-15

**FFK Website:** [www.friendshipforceknoxville.org](http://www.friendshipforceknoxville.org)

**Facebook:** Friendship Force of Knoxville

**E-mail:** FriendshipForceKnoxville@gmail.com

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



*Upcoming Presentation Tuesday,  
March 24 at 6:30pm @ TVUUC*

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. Join us at 6:30pm for a 7pm start at TVUUC.



## Upcoming events for April, May and June, 2026

**April** FFK will be hosting the inbound group from Connecticut April 17-22, so no formal meeting. **Please contact Leslie if you can volunteer to serve as a day host or driver**

**May 26** Journey coordinator Carol Ann and fellow Ambassadors will present their report on their journey to Tallahassee, FL in March at TVUUC at 6:30pm for a 7pm start

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

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### Friendship Force Journeys, 2026



#### **RETURNED: March FF Knoxville to Tallahassee**

We look forward to learning more about this trip from the group on May 26th! Here's a preview of their journey - thank you Ellen Greenwood for the photos; Four Knoxville ambassadors and two Des Moines, Iowa, ambassadors spent five days as guests of the Tallahassee Friendship Force Club. We enjoyed wonderful fellowship, learned about the flora and fauna of northern Florida, as well as the history of the area. Dave and Sonya got acquainted with sea creatures in a touch tank at the Marine Speciman Lab. We also got to see both gators and manatees on our boat ride at Wakulla Springs. More to follow at our May meeting!



## **Inbound: April 17-22 - FF Connecticut to FF Knoxville**

**Journey # 26136 FF Connecticut to FF Knoxville:** Arriving April 17-departing April 22. Nine ambassadors plan to visit us from Connecticut. **Note: We are still in need of day hosts/drivers for this group. Please contact Leslie Badaines or Joan Turbyville if you are willing to assist.**

The committee for this incoming journey met to set the itinerary, which will include: a welcome dinner at Highland Point Clubhouse with southern fried chicken to be provided by the club and club members asked to provide **sides, salads or desserts**; a city tour and visit to the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame; a free day; Oak Ridge Tour (with the possibility of an afternoon at the Museum of Appalachia); a visit to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; and a Farewell dinner at the Abbey in Townsend. Members are invited to attend all events. Information regarding member costs will be available at a later date. Members have received an invitation to the Welcome dinner via SignUpGenius.

Host assignments have been set. Small group dinners will be hosted by Bill Cherry, Gary and Paulette Anderson, and Courtney Shea. Thanks to all those who have volunteered to assist!

## **Outbound journey # 26244 FF Knoxville to FF of Southland and Taupo New Zealand. November 1-15, 2026**

Currently, the official dates of the journey will be **FF Southland:** arriving November 1 and departing November 7 and **FF Taupo:** arriving November 9 - departing November 15. Leslie has contacted the travel agent used by the Greater Atlanta Club to discuss the possibility of a 6-day optional pre-tour of the South Island from October 26-November 1 (with transportation to the Southland club on November 1). This optional tour would not be a requirement, but might be a nice opportunity to see more of the country. The host clubs can accept 12 Ambassadors. The Taupo club on the North Island is willing to meet ambassadors in Rotorua, and provide a tour of sites in that area and transportation to Taupo.

Estimated costs at present, depending on oil/gasoline prices, are: Taupo \$750 NZ (approximately \$440 US); and the Southland club \$400 NZ (approximately \$235 4US). Air transportation, and required NZ entry fee of \$117 ( approximately \$68 US), is at your own cost as is lodging in Rotorua. FFI nightly fees for 12 nights also apply (\$300 US). Total Club and FFI costs **excluding** airfare, and required NZ entry: approximately \$975 US (plus the 6 day pre-tour of the South Island if selected).

Please let Leslie know if you are interested in this journey ([badainesL@aol.com](mailto:badainesL@aol.com)). Ambassador Applications can be found through this link: <https://helpcenter.friendshipforce.org/help/where-can-i-find-an-ambassador-application-and-agreement-form/>. You can print and manually complete and forward to [BadainesL@aol.com](mailto:BadainesL@aol.com), or you can fill it out as a fillable form. Please forward to [BadainesL @aol.com](mailto:BadainesL@aol.com).

— Leslie and Joan

## In Fond Memory of Mike McDonough



Sadly, Mike passed away in Knoxville on Thursday, March 12th. Mike and Jayne became East Tennesseans in 1992 when they left Dayton, Ohio, and moved to LaFollette, TN. They have lived in Knoxville since 2016. Mike grew up in Dayton and graduated from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio with an undergraduate degree in management and a master's degree in education.

After college, Mike served for four years at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida. He returned to Preble County, Ohio, outside Dayton, where he had an organic farm and worked as a community organizer. He then became a federal grant writer with the City of Dayton. When they moved to E.TN, Mike became a reporter for the weekly LaFollette Press.

Mike wrote a book in 2024 about the life and times of Henry Knox for whom Knoxville is named. The book was entitled, *Why is My City Called Knoxville?* In July 2024, Mike and Jayne gave an interesting presentation about their travels to 8 locations on the East Coast and the significant connection each place had in Knox's life. We enjoyed following their travels and learned more about the life and career of Henry Knox, who apparently never visited our fair city!

As a member of the West Knox Lions Club, Mike supported service projects, such as monthly vision screenings and volunteered with the Knoxville Family Promise program through their church. Mike's hobbies included travel, writing, landscaping the yard and observing and rescuing wildlife. In recent years Mike and Jayne visited Malaysia, Singapore, England and Croatia. Back in 1991-2, they took a 17-month tent camping trip to all 50 states.

Mike and Jayne's first ambassador experience was in 2019 when they traveled to Des Moines, Iowa and attended the Iowa State Fair. Mike's highlight was eating a piece of the award-winning cake at the Fair--chocolate with a wild cherry jam filling!

Jayne and Mike hosted many ambassadors from domestic Friendship Force clubs. FFK journeys included visits to the Napa/Sonoma Friendship Force Club in California and the Lower Columbia Club in Washington.

Their international hosting experiences have been with Open World when they hosted an attorney from Uzbekistan and a mayor from Poland. Mike served as FFK secretary for two years, and Jayne was the club president for three years. Mike often gave interesting downtown Knoxville walking tours for visiting ambassadors sharing interesting and fascinating stories with visitors.

Thank you Mike for all your hard work, participation and enthusiasm with FFK over the years. You will be missed. A celebration of Mike's life will be scheduled at a future date.

Photos courtesy of Betsy Tonkin: July 2024 a history lesson on Henry Knox; the face of FFK as we welcomed the Polish mayors in September 2024; Metcalf Bottoms, Gt Smoky Mtns in April 2022; Assisting Jayne with an explanation of the suffrage vote by Harry Burn



*Mike was a valuable member of Friendship Force Knoxville. I always enjoyed his presentations, be it on the City of Knoxville or historic figures. His wry sense of humor was fun to witness. I especially remember the look of shock when he would tell ambassadors that they were about to meet Dolly Parton. Little did they know that it was her mural at Strong Alley. Mike was a kind and good man who will be greatly missed* - Leslie Badaines

*We enjoyed Mike's laid back ways and wry sense of humor. We especially enjoyed his and Jayne's presentation at Art and Marsha's regarding their 18 month adventure across America in their youthful days. This trip resulted in a book that told their tale.*

*Their adventurous ways continued on into recent years with Jayne and Mike touring New England as they researched the life of Knoxville's namesake, Henry Knox. The fruit of this trip was a wonderfully informative book entitled "Why Is My City Called Knoxville?" I remember telling Mike this book should be in every school library, and he replied that he was working on that.*

*I first met Mike and Jayne several years ago on a frigid December day at a trailhead in in the Smokies. That was the first of many hiking adventures with our Thursday Hiking group. Years later we enjoyed his enthusiastic and knowledgeable walking tours of downtown Knoxville with Friendship Force.*

- Paulette and Gary Anderson



### **A reminder on how to access FFI's Member Portal**

If you are new to FFI or have not yet set up your personal account, please click on the link below to access the **Member Portal video**. It will talk members through the process of setting up an account. We encourage all members to log in to the FFI website on some frequency to stay up to date on activities and resources.

**CLICK on this link below for the video....**

**[Signing up or Logging in to the Member Portal](#)**

