



Experience Different Views

Discover Common Ground

President's Message



Happy New Year to all,

It's been hard not being able to meet face-to-face. We missed seeing each other these last months. Who could imagine what is now happening?

We did have our January board meeting and was excited to learn that several of us are getting our shots. Please, before long, all of us will be vaccinated.

There are many transitions with which to begin the new year. As a club, we have some fun things to anticipate after June 2021. Fingers crossed!

Please read below for news on upcoming planned events.

We would love to hear from you with any ideas, concerns or opinions. The deadline for next newsletter will be March 20th. Our goal is to get the newsletter out to you soon after each board meeting.

Take care. Stay healthy.

- Molly Kiefer

GET CONNECTED, STAY INFORMED

We want to encourage all of our members to subscribe to communications from Friendship Force International. It's the best way to know what is going on with the organization and what to look forward to in the future. And while we may not be physically traveling, FFI is offering a number of virtual experiences. At the same time, the organization is making plans to come back stronger with more diverse offerings in the future.

- For starters, go to <https://www.friendshipforce.org/>, scroll to the bottom of the page and enter your email address next to Subscribe.
- Secondly, at the top of the page click on News & Updates. This will take you to the FFI Blog. Be sure to scroll to the November 18 entry and take 15 minutes to watch the video from CEO Jeremi Snook.
- Next, go to the December 11 entry "Your Questions Answered." While you might not want to watch those rather lengthy videos, scroll to the end of the entry and read the pdf summary.
- Beyond that, just explore the website to learn more about our umbrella organization.

Visit us online: <https://www.facebook.com/friendshipforceraleigh/>

2021 FFR Board of Directors

Officers

President: Molly Kiefer
Vice-President: Brenda Gay
Treasurer: Diana Moore
Secretary: DeAnne Dotson

Directors

Scott Cappelluti	Diana Moore
Olga Dovoric	Subir Mukherjee
Carole Dubber	Mike Rakouskas
Mary Louise Gray	Liz Smith
Jan Johnson	Donna Steele
Patricia Jones	Carol Winner
Doyle Long	Judy Wright

Everyone, meet Brenda and Bob Gay



We joined the Rocky Mount/Wilson, N.C. Friendship Force Club in the late 1980's at the invitation of a local friend. Our first Journey was to Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas, in southern Mexico. A few years later, we transferred to the Raleigh Club where we lived. Since then, we have both served on the local Board of Directors, both as officers and members over the past years. Brenda is currently serving as Vice President of the Raleigh club.

We have been international and domestic exchange directors. We have travelled on numerous international and domestic journeys with the Raleigh Club and other clubs in the U.S. We have served as a host family for both international and domestic journeys many times.

We feel that the Friendship Force has been one of the most interesting, educational, and enjoyable activities in

which we have participated during many years.

- *Brenda & Bob Gay*

My Love of Friendship Force

I enjoy and appreciate Friendship Force for many reasons but let me share with you how we tend to keep up with our friends.

In 2004, my husband Joe and I took our first FF trip (exchange then, journey now) to New Zealand. It was in mid-September and we had only four from Raleigh to go. Ray Nell Pearsall, Nancy Shugart and Joe and me. We joined with the Cherry Hill New Jersey

Friendship Force to have enough to make the trip. It was beautiful and wonderful! I'd never seen so many sheep in all my life. They had a lot to offer us and we took it all in.

We enjoyed two different home stays in the North Island then traveled to Christ Church in the South Island to begin 10 days on a bus tour. We were joined by the Friendship Force of Sweden and still didn't have a bus full, but they gladly took us anyway. It was a lovely trip, unlike anything I'd ever seen. The Sweden Friendship Force was headed up by Tex and Ethel Kjellberg, a very friendly couple who were easy to get to know. Tex and Joe really had a great time and became very close. We parted at the end of our stay saying good bye and please come to see us.

Tex and Ethel did come, several times, usually on the front end or the back end of an exchange. We never did have their entire group come to Raleigh, not sure why but were always glad to see them. We'd always have a dinner for them and invite as many of our club as we could accommodate. Tex was a great entertainer who thoroughly enjoyed visiting in the U.S. He was called Tex because he loved Texas when they visited there. Fact is, he dressed like a Texas cowboy in jeans and a plaid shirt and cowboy boots, of course (perhaps his given name was very difficult to pronounce is the reason he adopted the name of Tex).

In 2009 the Raleigh Club journeyed to Leuven, Belgium, for a week, then to Braunschweig-Peine, Germany, for a week and next on to Berlin; but wait, I'm ahead of myself. When Joe got to Leuven he was a sick guy!! His back and knee were killing him. It was a long flight and lots of walking in the airport in Leuven, up and down steps, not sure where the elevators were, but he couldn't get to the car to go to our hosts home by himself. That night they called a doctor and he came and gave Joe a shot and pills. He was better the next day but unable to go to Brussels with the rest of us. He just couldn't make the trips that week so we decided he'd have to go back to Raleigh. The following Sunday he returned to Raleigh and I continued on with the planned journey. The club's journey ended after a few days in Berlin.



Joe and others meet hosts in Leuven

Nancy Shugart and I flew to Stockholm where we stayed with a friend of Tex and Ethel's whom we'd met on the New Zealand trip. She showed us all over Stockholm and then we took a bus to Helsingborg to visit Tex and Ethel. He was so disappointed Joe couldn't make the trip, but we had forewarned him Joe had to go home. After 5 or 6 days in Helsingborg, Nancy and I took a bus to Copenhagen and spent four days there before finally returning to Raleigh.

We didn't see Tex and Ethel again but did stay in touch. Joe was having back problems and Ethel was having knee problems. I took several more trips, but due to health issues, Joe decided his traveling was done. Eventually, we decided it was time to downsize and make a

move. Together we chose Waltonwood Lake Boone to be our next home. We made our plans, gave away furniture, cleaned out and started packing, but before we could complete the move, Joe passed away on October 11, 2018. I completed the move myself on October 31, 2018.

Tex lost track of us and when he called our number, he received a recorded message that the phone had been disconnected. Before the holidays he called Winona Lock in Tennessee who emailed Ray Nell Pearsall in Wilmington and she emailed me. I immediately sat down and wrote a long email to Tex and Ethel thanking them for continuing to try to get in touch and explaining everything to them. He called me Sunday a week ago and I wrote to him again. It's a good feeling to have friends in such far away places to continue staying in touch.

- *Doyle Long*

Journey to Toulouse, France September 10-17, 2021



Basilica of Saint Sernin in Toulouse

We continue to have the Journey to Toulouse, France on our schedule for September 10-17, 2021. Serious planning for the trip will begin in the March - April timeframe as we continue to monitor the Covid-19 pandemic situation. Follow this link to see the current FFI guidelines regarding vaccine policy <https://blog.friendshipforce.org/ffi-and-coronavirus-vaccines/> We certainly hope that we can follow through with plans and later this spring will have some sense as to whether we can move forward.

Mike Rakouskas and Stephan Kiefer are Ambassador Coordinators for this outgoing international journey.

We are glad to hear that some members have been able to get their first shots. We encourage you all to hold on to whatever documentation you are provided regarding having received the vaccine if you are hoping to take part in this trip as an Ambassador. Stay tuned for further information as this evolves.

- *Mike Rakouskas*

Memphis Journey to Raleigh, NC #20400 October 18 - 23, 2021

With people getting their vaccinations, we are feeling hopeful and thinking about hosting our friends from Memphis this fall. It seems more like a reality to us now and we do look forward to it. We're not asking AGAIN for Hosts just yet, but we do have the list from last fall and might be pulling that out in March and April and getting our ducks in a row. This is a reciprocal journey after our club visited theirs in 2019. If you are a newer member, this will be



FFR with Elvis in Memphis

a good opportunity for you to home host, day host or be a small dinner host. We have a program planned but need to get more volunteers to carry it out. Be thinking about this for fall but our planning begins in the spring. Contact Co-host Coordinators, Liz Smith 919 437-3611 or mary.elizabethsmith@icloud.com or Doyle Long 919 618-0208 or doylejlong0831@gmail.com.

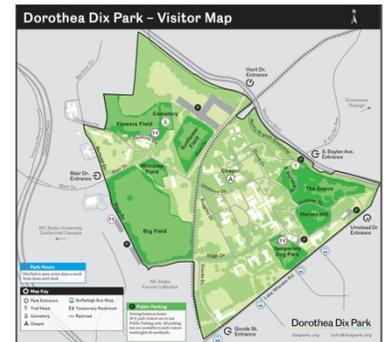
We look forward to hearing from you!

- *Liz and Doyle*

Initiative Petitioning Raleigh for a Peace Pole and Peace Garden at Dix Park

As we trust all of you know we initiated a petition to the City of Raleigh to consider designating one of the gardens at Dix Park as a Peace Garden and permitting a Peace Pole to be installed as a central feature of the garden. The results of our petition were sent to Mayor Mary-Ann Baldwin on January 12th with about 100 signatures. The mayor also has received letters of support and endorsement from several of the Global Peace and International Organizations that we contacted about our initiative. The petition listing that we provided listed the affiliation of those who signed the petition showing which organizations they are associated with. We are now waiting for any reaction from the City of Raleigh regarding this initiative and are hopeful that they will consider our request.

- *Mike Rakouskas*



FDix Park Map

Committees Serving Our Club

At our board meeting on January 12th, we updated our committee chairs as well as our committee members. PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING one that might be of interest to you. The more members that are involved, the more fun we have, the more we get to know one another, and the more we can accomplish.

The committees and committee chairs are as follows:

Activities - Liz Smith (chair), Brenda Gay, DeAnne Dotson, Donna Steele, Jan Johnson

Facebook Page - Judy Wright

First Sunday Get-Togethers - Jan Johnson (chair)

Member Concerns and Calling - Elaine Rakouskas (chair), Carol Reilly, Carol Winner, Carole Dubber, Brenda Gay

Membership - Mike Rakouskas (chair), Jan Johnson, DeAnne Dotson, Doyle Long, and Scott Cappelluti

Overall Journey Coordinator - Judy Wright

Newsletter - Olga Dovoric, editor, and Judy Wright, assistant and proofer

Peace Pole - Mike Rakouskas (chair), DeAnne Dodson, Subir Mukherjee, Brenda Gay

Website- Jorge Montoya (chair), Mike Rakouskas

ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Greetings from your Activities Committee! Even though you have heard very little from our committee, we have been working behind the scenes attempting to arrange some social events. However, due to COVID and restrictions for social gatherings, all of that has been on hold. Discussions were held to celebrate with a Christmas party that had to be canceled. Then we had high hopes for a Valentine's Day gathering and of course, you all know the drill by now and that thought was abandoned.

Once again we are looking toward Spring or early Summer before we can all gather and see each other's beautiful faces and smiles.

In the meantime, if any of you are aware of an outside venue that the club might use for a gathering, please reach out to one of the Committee Members.

New members are welcome to join our committee, just reach out to one of us! We would love to have your ideas!

Stay Safe!

In friendship,

Liz Smith, Chair email: mary.elizabethsmith@icloud.com

Jan Johnson

Brenda Gay

DeAnne Dotson

Donna Steele

New members are always welcome. The application form is at the end of this newsletter. Out of the dues, we pay \$20 per member to Friendship Force International to help support the operations of the organization.

THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF RALEIGH 2021 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

<https://www.facebook.com/friendshipforceraleigh/>
<http://www.friendshipforceraleighnc.org/>

Choose one:
New application _____
Renewal _____

Today's date:

A. INDIVIDUAL DATA

Last name _____ First name _____ M.I. _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Primary phone (____) _____ Secondary phone (____) _____

E-mail _____ Employer _____

Profession (or former prof.) _____

B. SECOND ADULT - Family Membership

Last name _____ First name _____ M.I. _____

Primary phone (____) _____ Secondary phone (____) _____

E-mail _____ Employer _____

Profession (or former prof.) _____

C. TALENTS OR INTERESTS YOU COULD SHARE WITH FRIENDSHIP FORCE

Foreign languages spoken _____

Countries visited or have knowledge _____

Talents and skills _____

Countries you would like to visit _____

D. MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR CALENDAR YEAR JAN. 1 TO DEC. 31, 2021

_____ \$50.00 Family membership (Two adults living in
same household with or without minor children)

_____ \$30.00 Individual membership

_____ \$10.00 Student membership

Please make check payable to Friendship Force of Raleigh and mail to:
Friendship Force of Raleigh, P. O. Box 21022, Raleigh, NC 27609

Information about ordering name badges can be found here:

<https://www.thefriendshipforce.org/wp->

[Content/uploads/2019/05/NameBadgeOrders-3.pdf](https://www.thefriendshipforce.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/NameBadgeOrders-3.pdf)