



April 2022

A WORLD OF FRIENDS IS A WORLD OF PEACE

President's Message



Greetings Friendship Force Members,

Our calendar is beginning to fill up with many activities. We hope we have turned the corner with this virus and can begin to fulfill the mission of Friendship Force. You are receiving emails about our activities, and I hope they are being read and that you will participate.

We are all distressed by what is happening in Ukraine, no one more so than our member Olga Dovoric. Olga's mother and brother remain in Ukraine. Her brother has signed up to fight, although he was not a soldier, and her mother continues to go to work to support the country. Our Board voted to donate \$500 from the treasury to a charity of Olga's choice. With Olga's help, we chose Revived Soldiers Ukraine. This group is providing medical help, equipment and supplies to those injured during the war. A personal article from Olga follows later in this newsletter, along with information about the two charities. If you want to send a card to Olga, her address is 713 Turleygreen Ct., Rolesville, NC 27571.

Bob and I hosted one of the participants when our club hosted civic leaders from Ukraine in 2013 under the auspices of Open World. A few months later we were in contact with him when we took a river cruise in Ukraine. Recently, we have corresponded with him and learned that he is in Odessa and his family is in Germany. This is a lot about Ukraine but there is a "kindred spirit" here since one of our members is from Ukraine and we have a special concern for her family and the country.

I do wish to welcome our most recent members, Judy and Bill Wilkes. They have extensive experience with hosting international visitors while members of Friendship Force of Western Carolina. You may have met them at our March First Sunday and they will be hosting during our upcoming inbound journey from Northern Colorado.

I leave you with "food for thought" – "You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream." C.S. Lewis

In friendship,

Brenda Gay
President of Friendship Force of Raleigh (and surrounding areas)

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

Important Dates

You can read more about these events later in the newsletter. Be sure to mark your calendars and respond when requested.

April 3 at 5 p.m. - First Sunday at Leesville Tap Room, 13200 Strickland Road, Raleigh 27613 - hosted by Judy Allen.

April 26 at 5 p.m. - Welcome Picnic at Johnson Farm during lambing season. This is our welcome event for our inbound journey from Northern Colorado. All members and their guests are invited and encouraged. \$10pp.

April 29 at 5 p.m. - Farewell Pizza Party at Fay Krapf's and Bob Wells' home. This is our chance to say farewell to our ambassadors from Northern Colorado.

May and June First Sunday events - There will not be a First Sunday in May due to the Welcome and Farewell events taking place near the end of April. June's First Sunday is being held on Saturday at the Benda's mountain cabin.

June 4 First Sunday (on Saturday) at the Benda's cabin in the mountains. Plan for the day or the weekend.

September 12-19, 2022 - Denver Outbound Journey

April 3rd - First Sunday

Friendship Force of Raleigh
Invites you to join in the fun
at our First Sunday at Five

April 3, 2022, 5 p.m.

Host Judy Allen

At Leesville Tap Room

13200 Strickland Road

Raleigh 27613; 919.870.1515

<https://www.facebook.com/thenewltr>



We hope to see you there. No RSVP needed.

IT'S HAPPENING – AN INBOUND JOURNEY FROM NORTHERN COLORADO! April 25 - 30

It has been a long time since we could say that we have an inbound journey that is actually happening. Doyle and Liz worked for a couple of years for us to host Memphis, but alas, the virus got the best of it. However, we have seven ambassadors committed to coming to NC in April. They are traveling to the Triad area first, hosted by Friendship Force of Central Carolina. We will meet them halfway on April 25 to begin their five-night stay in the Triangle.

Many thanks to all who are working to make this a fun journey for ambassadors and hosts alike: Doyle Long, Mary Louise Gray, Bill Cole, Molly Kiefer, Jan Johnson, Bob Wells and Fay Krapf, home hosts, day hosts, dinner hosts and others that I have not named. To make this journey complete, we need the participation of **all** our members in the welcome and farewell events.

April 26 Welcome Picnic (Barbecue and more) at 5 p.m. at Jan Johnson's Farm during lambing season. We were there a few years ago and had a wonderful time viewing the sheep and lambs and the beautiful grounds of her home. Plan to bring a folding chair for relaxing prior to dinner. This is a rain or shine event. In case of rain, there is shelter. \$10pp



April 29 Farewell Pizza Party at 5 p.m. at the home of Fay Krapf and Bob Wells. We've been there before and you know what a welcoming place this is. We hope to be able to enjoy the patio that surrounds their pool and expect that their azaleas will be in full bloom. \$10pp

For planning purposes, please reserve your space for each of these events by sending \$10pp per event, payable to Friendship Force of Raleigh, to Judy Wright, Treasurer, 4801 Westhall Ct., Raleigh, NC 27612. Be sure to indicate which events (hopefully both) that you are attending.

Bonus Activities for Members: There will be extra space for club members on two of our activities: The Raleigh Trolley on Wednesday, April 27, leaving Mordecai Park at 2:15 p.m. and a highly touted naturalist-led pontoon boat tour on Jordan Lake on Thursday, April 28 at 2 p.m. There will be no extra charge for you to ride the trolley, but the member charge for the boat tour is \$35. Priority goes to home hosts and day hosts, but there should be some space for others as well. Please let Judy Wright know if you are interested in participating in these activities. judytwright@gmail.com 919.848.3737



Judy Wright and Doyle Long – Host Coordinators

PRIME TIME IN THE MOUNTAINS

Update and Invitation to First Sunday (on Saturday) June 4 at 5

You have been reading about this special event for a couple of months now. Here is an update from Pete and Judy Benda.

- The beds at our cabin are now all taken by Doyle Long, Judy Wright, Mike and Elaine Mrakouskas, and Bob and Brenda Gay.
- A few others have already booked their hotel rooms in West Jefferson for Friday and Saturday evening: Molly Kiefer, Carol Dubber, Patricia and Curt DeBoer. Fay Krapf and Bob Wells have rented a small house in town.
- The group rate for both hotels (Holiday Inn Express and Nations Inn) have been extended to include Friday night as well as Saturday.
- We have learned that the Friday evening free Backstreet Concert Series in West Jefferson is beginning its season on Friday evening with Wayne Henderson (world famous guitar builder and player) and friends. We invite everyone coming up on Friday to arrive in time to join us at the concert which runs from 5:30 to 7 PM. Plan to arrive by 5 PM if possible and bring along your own folding chair. The concert is outdoor with limited seating. I will work on booking a private room for the Tavern Restaurant for dinner after the concert. If the weather should be bad, we will skip the concert and meet at the Tavern at 7 PM.
- We propose a group breakfast at Shatley Springs for Saturday morning at 9:30 AM, followed by a visit to West Jefferson's Farmers Market and a stroll through the town with nice shopping and 14 galleries.
- Plan to arrive at our cabin on Saturday by 1-2 PM for games, hiking and/or visiting. The BBQ dinner will be served at 5 PM. Please bring a side dish of your choosing.
- It has been suggested that some of our group may be interested in a two-hour paddle in kayaks on the New River on Sunday before departing back to Raleigh. We own two kayaks, Fay and Bob plan to bring two with them, and there are others which we can borrow from neighbors if there is sufficient interest.
- Please let us know if you plan to attend, which nights you will be staying, and if you want to be part of the Friday concert/dinner group, and/or kayaking group on Sunday.



In case you missed it, the following is the original invitation from Pete and Judy Benda:

We invite you to come to the Benda's Ashe County mountain home the first weekend in June for dinner . . . and to provide you an opportunity for a full weekend away from

Raleigh if you choose. Because it is a 3-hour drive from Raleigh, we decided to schedule the **dinner for 5:00 PM on SATURDAY, June 4**, rather than on Sunday. The planned schedule, arrangements, lodging and sightseeing options, are listed below.

After you review and make your decision, please contact Pete and Judy (pete-benda@nc.rr.com or 919-622-9134) to give us your plan to either attend or decline. We will reconfirm with everyone the month before the event and provide detailed directions to our home at 311 Forest Way Dr, Fleetwood, NC 28626.

The plan is for a mountain barbeque dinner at the Benda's cabin. The hosts will provide the main course, coleslaw, hush puppies, and beverages. Guests are invited to bring a side dish, salad, or dessert. Please plan to arrive by midafternoon for games, walking nearby trails, and visiting. If you plan to come up on Friday and/or spend Saturday in the mountains lodging options are below.

- Nations Inn Hotel, West Jefferson, NC. Mention "Friendship Force of Raleigh" and receive a 10% discount providing a rate of \$86 plus tax for Friday or Saturday evenings (a little less for weekday nights). Call 336-246-2080 to book a reservation. This hotel is about 10 miles from the cabin.
- Holiday Inn Express Hotel, West Jefferson, NC. Mention "Friendship Force of Raleigh" to receive a special rate of \$199 plus tax for Friday or Saturday (\$109 plus tax for Sunday). Call 336-846-4000 to book a reservation. This hotel is also about 10 miles from the cabin.
- Information removed regarding staying at the Bendas' since no longer available.

If you come to enjoy a full weekend in the beautiful NC mountains, here are a few things you may wish to consider:

- Ashe County Farmers Market meets on Saturday from 8 AM to 1 PM in downtown West Jefferson.
- The Ashe County Cheese Factory and Store are popular to visit as is the Honey Hole, a unique shop featuring bees, honey, gifts, etc.
- There are 14 art and photography galleries in West Jefferson including the Ashe County Arts Center and the Florence Thomas Art School.
- The two "Churches of the Frescos" are wonderful and inspiring to visit. One is in West Jefferson and the other in nearby Glendale Springs.
- Nearby Shatley Springs would be a great choice for a Saturday breakfast; the River House provides elegant (and expensive) dinners in an old country home (with live music on Sunday afternoons), and the Tavern Restaurant in West Jefferson is popular for casual dining indoor or on their patio.
- The Blue Ridge Parkway provides stunning long-range views and short scenic hikes at places like the Cascades.

This will be a fun weekend away and we hope to have a good crowd to add to the fun.

Outbound Journey to Denver in September

Hello All,

It looks like our Denver journey will be for five days during the week of September 12-19. They think they will have space for 12-15 guests. They require vaccinations and they want people to be aware that the mile high city sometimes causes breathing difficulties. Their club is meeting April 5 and they would like to know how many of us will be going.



Please let us know of your interest as soon as possible. Denver will confirm with us
Photo by [Andrew Coop](#) on [Unsplash](#)
on April 5. Thank you.

Carole Dubber and Judy Allen, Ambassador Coordinators



I would like to thank you our Club and members for your support, for your generous donation of \$500, for all your emails and cards. Your kindness and care mean so much to me and my family. Thank you so very much. *Olga*

Here are the two organizations that you can donate to:

<https://www.rsukraine.org> - They are helping in Kyiv. You can find them on Facebook and see the latest things that they have done recently and for the past 8 years in Ukraine. I have met the founder here in Raleigh when we collected funds for wounded warriors in the past. Irina Vashchuk Discipio is the president of Revived Soldiers Ukraine. She posts on Facebook what they are doing and what they need.

<https://www.sunflowerofpeace.com> - The founder of this organization is Katya Malakhova. She is Ukrainian and lives in Boston. She has been helping Ukraine for the past few years with many amazing projects.

As co-editor of this newsletter, I (Judy) asked Olga if she would like to write an article about her personal experience during this war in Ukraine. Next is her personal account and story of life during the first 30 days, an experience that continues. These are her words.

LIFE BEFORE AND AFTER

What day is today? If you ask me, I will not be able to answer you if it is Monday or Tuesday or March 23rd or March 24th ...All I know that today is the 30th day of Russian aggression, 30th day of nightmare, 30th day of the war that took lives of 139 innocent kids and wounded 205 (per March 26rd). February 24th, 2022 is a turning point which divides life as “before” and “after” for many Ukrainians.

This day created two realities for me. One – American and two – a Ukrainian during war time. I still remember that February evening sitting at home and browsing through Facebook at 11 pm. Suddenly, I saw my friend’s post (Yuliya is from Kyiv and lives in Apex) saying “The war has begun. They are bombing Kyiv, Kharkiv and other cities.” Tears started falling down my face and my hands started to shake. My husband and I started looking for more information in disbelief. How is that possible? What’s happening? We have tickets to visit our family in Ukraine on March 15th. How’s mom and brother? ...and million other thoughts went through our minds. Still in shock, I dialed my mom’s number asking if they are ok, only to find out that the single military airfield in our city, Ivano-Frankivsk, has been bombed.

I cried and cried feeling helpless, being thousands of miles away from my homeland and not knowing how I can help. My heart was aching for my Ukraine and my people.

On February 26th our Ukrainian community organized the March in downtown Raleigh to support Ukraine and each other. There are so many Ukrainians in North Carolina that come from all over Ukraine. I guess that day was more than a day to support Ukraine. It was a day to support each other and find out if our family members are still alive in Ukraine. That day we had so many people to come and support us. There were people from the US, Japan, Vietnam, Portugal, Georgia, Russia, and Belarus.



I will always remember that Saturday. That’s the day when my younger brother went to the military office and volunteered to serve and defend Ukrainian sovereignty. I think I hit the breaking point that day. I just couldn’t stop crying. I had to do something. I had to do something here and somehow support Ukrainians.



It is amazing how quickly our Ukrainian community with the help and support of our friends in the United States got together to figure out what and how we can help. Many of us were operating on anger and coffee, sleeping 4 hours per night. We collected medical supplies, supplies for Ukrainian defenders, baby formula, diapers, just within few days. In the beginning of March two trucks headed to Delaware from NC. It went to Poland, from there to the Ukrainian border and then to Ukraine. Within the next week we collected, packed, and shipped close to 200 boxes of life saving supplies. We learned very quickly what is a tourniquet, an Israeli bandage, what a military first aid kit contains, and benefits of quick clot gauze.

We were able to transfer funds to a group of volunteers in Southern Ukraine. They then used those funds to buy groceries. They went to feed the elderly and those who were left without any localized efforts where we know our help, however small, can make a huge difference. My friend, Slava, just flew to Poland a few days ago for two weeks. She plans to work with volunteers in Ukraine and send them necessary items and medical supply. No words can describe how grateful we are for all the support we received from our families here, our friends and our local communities.

The scariest part is that 70% Russians support their president and agree with this war. Russia stole our history, twisted, and keep twisting many facts, tried to destroy our identity for many centuries. Right now, since Russian military are met with opposition, they are destroying and bombing whole cities, killing kids and civilians. Russian troops are not allowing for Ukrainian humanitarian convoy to enter cities occupied by Russian soldiers. People are just left without food, water, and any medical assistance. People are starving, dying in the center of Europe in 2022. My friend cannot locate her elderly brother who lives in Mariupol. She hasn't heard from him since March 12th. We pray that he is alive and not dead and buried somewhere in the yard next to the road or playground, because that's how people are buried there nowadays. Millions of people had to become refugees and leave their home. Many still decided to stay behind. Some of them are defending sovereignty of Ukraine. Some of them are saying how are we going to leave the home where my parents and I were born, where our grandparents are buried. You see, we know our history, we treasure our heritage, we respect our Motherland, and we will fight occupants for our freedom and for the bright future that our grandparents fought for in World War II.



I cannot complain much about my reality. I stay up till 1 a.m. until I receive a message from my mom saying, “Good morning, all is good, I am getting ready to go to work.” You see, she still goes to work, because she is an accountant at the emergency room. When we spoke in January, she was excited about this year. She planned to retire once she turns 60 in August and come to the USA for a few months.

Then I text my brother “Hey bro, all good? How are you?” I wish I could ask him more, where he is exactly, what is he doing...Some days I just wish I was there with him or at least I could hug my mom and my brother.

As soon as I wake up in the morning, I text my mom and my brother making sure they are ok, read the news, check on my friends, listen to President Zelensky's latest update and off to my American reality I go.

- *Olga Dovoric*

Member Cares and Concerns

If you know of a member who has a care concern or needs help, please notify a member of the Member Concerns Committee: Carol Winner, Chair, 919-601-5834 cbwinner@bellsouth.net; Carol Dubber, 919-302-0409 cedubber@aol.com or Brenda Gay, 919-763-7117 bmgay82@gmail.com. Members of the committee will send a card, make a phone call, or take appropriate steps to let the member know that our club is available to help.

Friendship Force International Opportunities

The **FFI Journey Catalog** lists journeys that have openings. Currently, the Northern Colorado journey to North Carolina is one of the listings, but you can browse to see if there are journeys that you might want to join. Here is the link to the catalog and you can also access it through the FFI Member Portal, my.friendshipforce.org:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Tf2cX72YdZtTgsGjGr-JaafTPMXxoGL-WI8G2nuMvIA/edit?usp=sharing>

Do you like to talk? FFI is offering online conversational English classes, meeting once per week for eight weeks. As part of the curriculum, the students will be going to chat rooms to practice conversations. The teacher is looking for English speaking volunteers to participate in these conversations. You would not have any teaching responsibilities, nor would you have to meet every week. Let Judy Wright know if you are interested and she will pass your name on to the proper people.

Friendship Force of Raleigh Board of Directors

Officers:

President: Brenda Gay
Vice Pres.: Molly Kiefer
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Secretary: DeAnne Dotson

Directors:

Carol Dubber
Bob Gay
Mary Louise Gray
Doyle Long
Jan Johnson
Liz Smith
Donna Steele

New members are always welcome. The application form is at the end of this newsletter. Out of these dues, we will pay \$30 per member to Friendship Force International to help support the operations of the organization.

Friendship Force of Raleigh newsletters are published every other month, with the first one in February of each year. Articles for the newsletter should be sent to Olga (olganc9@gmail.com) and Judy Wright (judywright@gmail.com).

**THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF RALEIGH 2022
MEMBERSHIP
APPLICATION/RENEWAL**

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

Today's date:

Choose one:

New application _____

Renewal _____

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, 2022

_____ \$65.00 *Family membership (Two adults living in
same household with or without minor children)

_____ \$40.00 *Individual membership

* Note that \$30pp of your dues will be paid to Friendship Force International as dues for the umbrella organization.
Please make check payable to Friendship Force of Raleigh and mail to:
Judy Wright, 4801 Westhall Court, Raleigh, NC 27612.