



**President's Message**



Greetings Friendship Force Members,

Summer is rolling along and among all the seasons, it is my favorite. It is the season for relaxing and slowing down. For me, it is great relaxing on the beach in the sunshine, something I can't do year round. Also, looking at the beautiful flowers blooming and the rejuvenation of the plants and trees after the cold weather.

Did I say "slowing down?" As you read this issue, you will see the wonderful activities going on for Friendship Force. I hope that you have been able to enjoy some of these.

As you know, our inbound Northern Colorado Journey ended April 30. I would like to thank Judy Wright and Doyle Long, who served as Host Coordinators, for doing a great job along with all the members on their committees.

I encourage you once again to read your newsletter as this is a great way of keeping up with what the Raleigh Friendship Force is doing.

You can also visit us online

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

I wish for you a safe, enjoyable summer,

Brenda Gay, President of Friendship Force of Raleigh

**HOSTING OPPORTUNITY Through International Focus and Open World**

Friendship Force members Judy and Bill Wilkes are also very active with International Focus (IF). IF is hosting an Open World delegation of members of parliament from Moldova who will be in Raleigh from July 21 – 28. Judy and Bill are helping with this program and thought that our Friendship Force members might like to help.

They are looking for home hosts and dinner hosts in Raleigh. International Focus will have a van to transport the representatives to meetings. They are also using the van to take the delegation to the beach on Sunday, the 24<sup>th</sup>, so Sunday will be a free day. The program is being put together by IF and when they have all the bios, they will finalize the plans.

If you want more information or would like to help, please contact Judy at Judy Wilkes [judy126@bellsouth.net](mailto:judy126@bellsouth.net) or 828-808-5077.

Please read on to learn more about the partnership between NC and Moldova, as well as a reminder about the time our FF club hosted teachers from Moldova through Open World.

## NORTH CAROLINA – MOLDOVA CONNECTION

Pete Benda has shared the following information and video in which he and Judy were interviewed regarding their past hosting. This video was completed in April and has been shown to the Moldovan people. There are no English subtitles, but parts of it are in English. You can certainly get the message by watching. For those who participated when we hosted the teachers, there is a group picture of them here. To see Judy and Pete, go to the 23:25 time mark. <https://youtube.com/watch?v=WBCXfH-PVVQ&feature=share>

Pete's Article to accompany this story:

Judy and I were interviewed at our Raleigh home for this video at the request of Lora Sinigur, International Liaison with the NC Secretary of State's office. We have enjoyed being home hosts for Moldovans on two occasions – in 2017 for four teachers and in 2019 for two librarians. We have found our guests to be bright, appreciative, enthusiastic, and lovely representatives of their country and would strongly recommend such an experience to any of the Raleigh Friendship Force members who may have time and a guest room in their home.

Interestingly we received a FaceTime call from Victoria Isaak, one of our 2017 Moldovan guests, shortly after the program aired. She had just watched it and wanted to thank us for the portion of the program we participated in. Victoria is one of the teachers of English for whom we have also done Skype visits with her classroom of students in Moldova.



As an aid to the English teachers there (and as part of our downsizing to move from our home to the Springmoor Retirement Community), we recently shipped a full set of encyclopedia Britannica and a 52-year collection of National Geographic magazines, plus a dozen or more boxes of English language books to be used in Moldovan classrooms and libraries.

(Editor's note: Go here for a quick overview of the NC-Moldova partnership. [https://www.sosnc.gov/divisions/moldova\\_partnership/educational\\_projects](https://www.sosnc.gov/divisions/moldova_partnership/educational_projects))

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As Pete mentioned, in 2017 Friendship Force of Raleigh hosted teachers from Moldova as part of the Open World program. The teachers had partnerships with schools in NC, which they visited. They were also provided the opportunity to visit the state's textbook warehouse and select books for their classroom. This large quantity of books was shipped to Moldova and our club donated \$250 toward the shipment expense.



### Friendship Force Mountain Weekend, June 3-5, 2022

Twenty-one of us enjoyed an unusual and special “First Sunday” gathering in June. In place of the usual 5 PM Sunday dinner at a local eatery, we blew it out and spent a whole weekend in Ashe County, a three-hour drive from Raleigh. The weather was superb, the music was bluegrass, the dining was delectable, the kayaking was adventurous, and the camaraderie was just what you would expect from members of the Friendship Force! We even wished a happy early 80<sup>th</sup> to the “hostess with the mostest.”

This weekend was planned and executed for our Friendship Force members (and guests) by Judy and Pete Benda. The Bendas have a neat cabin built of antique logs, nestled up a narrow road above the South Fork of the New River in Fleetwood near West Jefferson. Six members stayed with them for the weekend, while others bunked in either a motel, an AirBnB, camped, or stayed in a hostel. You’ll have to ask around to see who the latter folks were. We were fortunate that PB&J (that’s the moniker they use) had scoped out the activities and had plenty of suggestions for us.





The weekend began with an outdoor concert in the Backstreet Park in downtown West Jefferson. Wayne Henderson and 3 friends picked for us and sang about the “Preacher and the Bear” – an old song which describes a Sunday morning fight and ends with the preacher declaring, “the hardest job I ever did was baptizing that bear!” After a lovely group dinner downtown at Boondocks Restaurant, members scattered to their chosen places for lodging.

On Saturday we all met at the Ashe Arts Council Building to view an eclectic exhibit by local artists, including two works by Pete. Afterwards, we spread out and toured the Cheese Factory, Honey Hole, Farmer’s Market, Catchlight Photo Gallery, Churches of the Frescoes, etc. After the sightseeing we gathered at the Bendas’ Fleetwood cabin to socialize and enjoy the fabulous mountain beauty from their back deck.

At dinner time, we moved to their lower level patio where they had set up banquet style to accommodate all 20+ of us. We enjoyed a barbeque dinner, complemented by delicious appetizers, side dishes and desserts, along with much needed liquid refreshment.



The sharing continued as we sat around the long outdoor table after dinner and exchanged stories of journeys near and far and the joy of being part of our vibrant club. To top off the evening, we celebrated Judy’s 80<sup>th</sup> birthday with cake and singing.

The nine members who remained on Sunday were treated to a near perfect day for kayaking the South Fork of the New River. The water was high enough to avoid scraping the bottom and just low enough to get under the bridges we encountered.



Thanks to everyone who participated, shared their food and drink, and made the weekend a success! Our club is very grateful for the hospitality shown to us. There was an amazing amount of organization and effort that went into this weekend, and we offer special thanks to the Pete and Judy for such a great Friendship Force experience.

## OUR FIRST INBOUND JOURNEY SINCE APRIL 2019 WAS A SUCCESS

Thanks to the wonderful participation by our members, the inbound journey from Friendship Force of Northern Colorado was a great success. Seven ambassadors spent five days with FF of Central NC, followed by 5 days here. I hesitate to name names for fear of leaving someone out. However, there are so many people who deserve recognition. If I left you off this list, please know that everything you did was appreciated and my memory fails me.



Molly Kiefer, Mary Louise Gray, and Bill Cole each planned a day's itinerary. The ambassadors were home hosted by Judy Allen, Judy and Bill Wilkes, Judy and Mark Wright (there's a Judy theme here), and Barbara Hocutt. In addition, Carole Dubber, Pat DeBoer, Jane Fellows, and Fay Krapf were day hosts during the week.

Jan Johnson put on a wonderful welcome party at her home and farm, including a chance to view the lambs; Bob Wells and Fay Krapf hosted our farewell pizza party

poolside at their home; Pat and Curt DeBoer and Molly Kiefer hosted a delightful lunch at Pat and Curt's home in Oakwood, and Pat led the group on a neighborhood walk. Liz Smith, Carol Reilly and Doyle Long, and Molly and Steve Kiefer hosted our regional dinners. Brenda Gay and Donna Steele provided appetizers at the welcome dinner and Brenda provided the farewell cake. Most everyone brought beverages to share.



Some members joined us during the daily activities and many members came out for the welcome and farewell events. In addition, there were several others who volunteered to day host or dinner host that we did not use just because we had a small group of ambassadors. Thank you, all!

Our ambassadors seemed to enjoy the activities that were planned. These included the Vollis Simpson



Whirligig Park tour in Wilson, Tobacco Farm Life Museum in Kenly, welcome dinner; NC Museum of Art docent tour, Holy Name of Jesus Cathedral tour, Raleigh Trolley tour, regional dinners; WRAL Gardens walk, Farmer's Market stroll and lunch, Jordan Lake Pontoon Boat Nature tour; Bennett Place tour, Stagville Plantation tour, Cedar Creek Gallery, farewell pizza party.

We hope that you enjoy the photos and we look forward to "next time."

Judy Wright and Doyle Long, Host Coordinators



## THANK YOU FROM FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF NORTHERN COLORADO

At our Farewell Pizza Party, the ambassadors from NoCo presented a check to our club for \$50 to go to the charity of our choice. At our next board meeting, the board voted to donate the money to Ukrainians in the Carolinas, a group that is working hard to support the soldiers and families in Ukraine. Our member, Olga Dovorac, is a member of this group as well. Read below about Olga's goodwill mission to Ukraine on behalf of this organization. If you would like to make a personal donation, go here: <https://www.ukrainiansinthecarolinas.org/donate>

FFNoCo's president, Susan Mathre, sent special thank you notes to Brenda Gay, President, and Judy Wright, Host Coordinator. Just part of what she said: "Wow! What a great host your club was for our visit. You did a wonderful job, shared gracious hospitality, and totally stuffed us with good southern food." Our hosts certainly appreciated the ambassadors, their enthusiasm, and their flexibility to just go with the flow.

### FOCUS ON UKRAINE - WE CAN'T FORGET

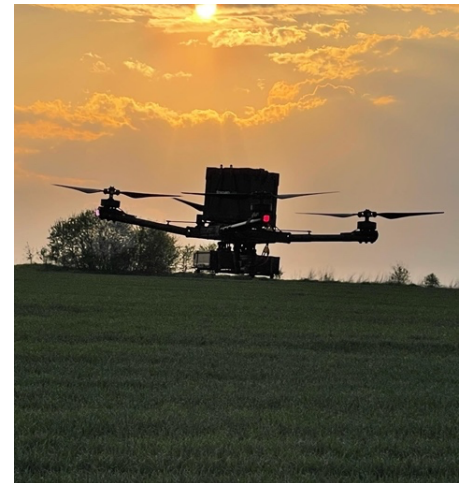
Members Judy and Bill Wilkes received an email from Open World, suggesting that we share this insightful journalism covering the horrific war in Ukraine. This link will take you to the Forbes Ukraine April issue, free of charge. [https://issuu.com/online.magazine-forbes/docs/slen18oorkfbs\\_22\\_smlmk](https://issuu.com/online.magazine-forbes/docs/slen18oorkfbs_22_smlmk)

From Olga:

There are no words to express my gratitude to the club for donating \$500 in my honor to "Revived Soldiers of Ukraine." This organization that has been doing so many incredible things for Ukraine and Ukrainians. Just to name a few – they bought ambulances for field hospitals and military medics to evacuate wounded soldiers and civilians from war zones to nearby hospitals.



They bought medical drones that are equipped with a storage box that can adjust the temperature of cargo. These drones can deliver the necessary medicines to hot spots in Ukraine and occupied cities that are inaccessible.



Thank you, Friendship Force of Northern Colorado, whose \$50 donation to the Raleigh club was then donated to Ukrainians in the Carolinas. We were able to deliver 460 pounds of necessary medical supplies to Ukraine with the support from our local community. My friend and I traveled to Poland to meet volunteers there and then we took a train to Kyiv to visit Bucha and Irpin – cities that were hit the closest to the capital of Ukraine. I have just returned from this two week trip.



-Olga Dovoric

## Board and Officers Elected for the 2022 Club Year

### 2022 Friendship Force of Raleigh Board of Directors

#### Officers:

President: Brenda Gay  
Vice President: Molly Kiefer  
Treasurer: Judy Wright  
Secretary: DeAnne Dotson

#### Directors:

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

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](mailto:olganc9@gmail.com)) and Judy Wright ([judywright@gmail.com](mailto:judywright@gmail.com))

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.



**THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF RALEIGH 2022 MEMBERSHIP**

Today's date:

**APPLICATION/RENEWAL**

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

\_\_\_\_\_

**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.