

March 2024 News and Notes



friendship force
RALEIGH

Upcoming Activities – Journeys and Daytrips in 2024

- April 12-13 – Outbound
→ Bath & Washington, NC
- June 17-29 – Outbound
→ Winnipeg, CN – June 17-23
→ Saskatoon, CN – June 23-29
- September 12-18 – Outbound
→ Lansing, MI
- October 15-21 - Inbound
← The Villages, FL

Bath & Washington, NC

- April 12-13, 2024
- **Contact Jan Johnson – john115@bellsouth.net**
for detailed information and itinerary
 - Hosted by Carol and Steve Persche
 - April 12 – meet for lunch in Bath @ 11:30
 - Walking tour with local historian
 - Wine, cheese and cookout at the Persche's on Bath Creek
 - Return to Raleigh or stay overnight in Washington (Jan can provide list of motels)
 - April 13 – morning visit to the Estuarium in Washington – boat trip optional
 - <https://www.partnershipforthesounds.net/nc-estuarium>
 - Enjoy the waterfront and shops
 - Lunch in Washington before returning home to Raleigh



- Check out this link to an article about Bath that is in this month's *Our State Magazine*.
<https://acrobat.adobe.com/id/urn:aaid:sc:VA6C2:e8577225-7c74-41f7-8863-eafc5df3c>

Canada

June 17 – 23 – hosted by Manitoba FF in Winnipeg, Manitoba

June 23 – 29 – hosted by Saskatoon FF in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

Our outbound international trip for June is shaping up with our hosts in Winnipeg, Manitoba and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The dates are June 17-23 in Winnipeg and June 23-29 in Saskatoon. In searching for flights, the least expensive option seems to be a one-way flight from

Raleigh-Durham (RDU) to Winnipeg (YWG), a one-way flight from Winnipeg to Saskatoon (YXE) and one-way return to Raleigh. If anyone prefers just to go for one week, that is an option. During our week in Manitoba, there will be some ambassadors from Manchester England as well as our group.



Possible activities in Winnipeg are:



be seen from a boardwalk trail north of the city.

Assiniboine Park Zoo to see the polar bears; Canadian Museum of Human Rights; Manitoba Museum; Lower Fort Garry, Winnipeg Art Gallery; St. Boniface, the largest francophone community in Western Canada; National Aboriginal Day and Winnipeg Jazz Festival coincide with our trip so are possible options; June is peak season for native orchids that can



Possible activities in Saskatoon are: Wanuskewin Heritage Park tells the story of the indigenous people and hosts a herd of bison; The Western Development Museum; A historic walking tour of the city; Boat trip on the Prairie Lily; Remai Modern Art Gallery; Synchrotron Canadian Light Source a huge microscope used by researchers world-wide; The Ukrainian Museum of Canada; Day trip to Manitou Beach; Dance Land; Batoche National Historic site; Saskatoon was developed as a temperance colony but now there are many microbreweries, distilleries and a cidery located on beautiful properties with lovely gardens just minutes outside the city. There is something for everyone! Please let us know if you are interested or have any questions.



Your Ambassador Coordinators:

Jane Fellows
 jane.fellows2014@gmail.com
 919-949-9090 for text or call

Leanne Richbourg
 lrichbourg@gmail.com

Outbound to Lansing, MI

- September 12 - 18
- Contact Bill & Judy Wilkes at judy126@bellsouth.net or (828) 808-5077.
- 2024 Art Prize Festival in Grand Rapids, MI



- Tour Meijer Gardens - Horticultural display and sculpture gardens
- Trip to Frankenmuth, MI - Michigan's Little Bavaria
- Tour of Facility for Rare Isotope Beams at Michigan State University
- Host club open to special requests

Inbound from The Villages, FL

- October 15 – 21
- Contact Karen Brown at Kareneslbrown@gmail.com
- Home hosts, day hosts and dinner hosts needed.
- Volunteer to help plan the itinerary



hosts

FFR Social Activities

Upcoming – Next First Sunday at Five – at Pat DeBoer and Curt Youngblood’s lovely home in Oakwood - 411 Oakwood Ave. Dinner catered by Neomonde Mediterranean Restaurant and the cost will be \$15pp. Iced tea and water provided. Members may bring wine and beer if desired. A walk around the neighborhood is a favorite after dinner activity. **RSVP** to Doyle Long doylejlong0831@gmail.com so that Pat will know how much food to order.

Previous Socials

We have had several well attended First Sunday at Five gatherings that have provided a lot of time to visit, share stories and enjoy good food. Molly Kiefer hosted January at High Park Bar and Grill, Paula Berryann hosted February at La Rancherita Grill & Tequila Bar, and Doyle Long and the Board of Directors hosted March at Waltonwood Lake Boone. The latter gathering included presentations about upcoming activities and an overview of Giavanna’s journey to New Zealand. This was well received, and the 23 members present voted to include informative sessions periodically, perhaps once a quarter.

Holiday Party – Friendship Force of Raleigh members enjoyed a wonderful evening at the Holiday Party organized by Molly Kiefer and Doyle Long and held at the NC State University Club. The highlight of the evening was the entertainment provided

by Ben Youngblood (Pat and Curt's son) and his partner, Annelle Stall. Their music lifted everyone's spirits and a sing-along at the end topped it off. View other photos of this event at the end of this newsletter.



Other Journeys

Check out the Journey Catalog at my.friendshipforce.org. There is a myriad of journeys that you can join outside of the ones that our club is organizing. **Steve and Carol Persche are going with the Charlotte club to Africa. They suggest that you check this one out. Here is a link to a colorful flyer promoting this journey. It looks exciting.**

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FOtL_ZtVvSyhsPGy9dCgUFMssdSKlyct/view?usp=sharing

Read this from the coordinator of the journey for FF trip #24039:

“Although I have been on a previous safari, this itinerary is just so enticing. After speaking with the clubs in Brazil and Utah, I believe this is a trip of a lifetime. I am attaching the pdf file for my presentation, and I hope you will pass it on to your club members. Again, I believe this will be the most memorable friendship force trip....one that reflects the true meaning of the Friendship Force.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by phone: 704 649 2044.”

Yours in friendship, Dorthe Tremble, President Emeritus; Journey Coordinator for Africa

Journey to New Zealand by Giavanna Richards

Recently Friendship Force of Raleigh member Giavanna Richards traveled with members of several clubs to New Zealand. She compiled this documentation of her journey so that we can appreciate the richness of this experience.

NEW ZEALAND SCENIC AND FARMING TOUR

This was my first journey with Friendship Force after joining in December 2022. The Scenic and Farming Tour to New Zealand included homestays with two different clubs on the North Island as well as a 10-day bus tour of the South Island. It definitely made the 15-hour flight from the US worthwhile.

Our group included 29 ambassadors from many different FF clubs around the world. They came from Australia, Belgium and Canada in addition to the US. Our US ambassadors came from Salt Lake City, UT; Sun City West, AZ; New Mexico; Orlando, FL; Wichita, KS; Detroit, MI; Lincoln, NE; Iowa; Richmond, VA; Nashville, TN; Dover, DE; Madison, WI; and McLean, VA.

Six FF clubs participated in hosting us on the North Island. Our group tour director was John Hannah from the FF Christchurch club. He was supported by Susanne McCardle, a travel agent from the Flight Centre in New Zealand. I have to give a shout-out to Susanne. She handled all of my flight and hotel arrangements as well as all of the group hotel and travel reservations for the North Island portion of the journey. She was incredibly responsive and even provided each of us with a bound itinerary and copies of our travel documents upon arrival. Her service was well above my expectations or prior experience!

Upon arrival in Auckland, we stayed in the Sky City Hotel for two nights and enjoyed a tour of Auckland and a welcome dinner. The Rugby World Cup playoff occurred during our stay and the Kiwis were quite disappointed when their team lost to France. We split into 3 groups – each group hosted by a different NZ club at the north end of the North Island. Our host clubs were in Hamilton, Tauranga and Northland.

My group went to Hamilton by bus where our hosts took us to [Hamilton Gardens](#) upon arrival for a light lunch and tour. During our five-day stay, we visited:



- [Sanctuary Mountain](#), an ecological island surrounded by one of the world's largest pest-proof fences. The sanctuary protects the native flora and fauna of NZ from invasive species and predators. They have a plant with large leaves which are white on the back. These leaves were once valid to use as a postcard and could be sent through the mail!
- [Cambridge Stud](#) farm where we learned how serious the Kiwis are about their horse racing. My host, Jan Alderton, even owns shares in three race horses. The Melbourne Cup was run during our visit and everyone was very excited to watch it.

- [The Karapiro International Sports Centre](#) where the NZ Olympic rowing team practices.
- The Spellbound [glowworm caves](#). Glow worms are not actually worms but the larvae of fungus gnats (similar to mosquitos). The glow worms catch their prey by dropping silk threads from the ceiling of the cave. These threads are covered in a sticky bioluminescent mucus.
- The quaint surf town of [Raglan](#) on the west coast, with its black sand beaches and viewed Bridal Veil Falls on our way home.

We enjoyed a BBQ with the entire club one evening and got to play croquet. Apparently, this is still a very popular activity in New Zealand; I had not played croquet since I was 10 years old.

On our last day, our host took us to the [Velodrome](#) in Cambridge where the NZ Olympic indoor cycling team practices before we headed to the airport to travel to Wellington and re-unite with the entire group. We spent one night in a hotel downtown and then split into a new set of 3 groups the next day to journey to our host clubs at the south end of the island. Our South Island host clubs were in Wellington (my assignment), Wairarapa and Kapiti.



Our Wellington hosts picked us up at the hotel and whisked us off to Mt. Victoria to see the stunning views of the harbor. The club president had prepared a scavenger hunt around Wellington for us to complete with our hosts – even they didn't know where we were going! It was a nice icebreaker to help us get to know our hosts. We completed our scavenger hunt at [Carlucci Land](#) where we played a fun game of mini-golf with everyone. That evening, my host,

Christina MacFarlane, introduced me to feijoa crumble. Feijoa (aka pineapple guava) is originally from Brazil, but New Zealand is now one of the largest producers of this fruit; Christina has a tree in her backyard.

We started our sightseeing with a visit to West Wind Farm in Makara to see the wind turbines and WWII gun emplacements. The views of the coastline were quite awe-inspiring. Our hosts provided scones and tea for us to have a morning picnic.



The next two days our itinerary required a lot of changes due to wind and heavy rains. We had planned to visit Some's Island but had to stay indoors instead. I quite enjoyed the exhibits at [Te Papa museum](#) on the Maori, NZ, earthquakes and the NZ campaign at [Gallipoli](#). The Gallipoli exhibit was created by the [Weta Workshop](#) which is the NZ special effects company behind *The Lord of the Rings*. (I had toured the [Weta Workshop Experience](#) while in Auckland at the Sky City Hotel.) The Wellington club president was a very knowledgeable guide through the Maori exhibit and also showed us the [earthquake stabilizers](#) which are visible under the

museum.

The next day we also had to stay indoors so we went lawn bowling. I learned that the bowling balls are weighted on one side so they roll in an arc.

On our final day in Wellington we returned to our hotel where the Wellington club president led everyone on a walking tour of the city, including a ride on the cable car. That evening we had our group farewell dinner for the North Island and the chance to hear about everyone's adventures with the other clubs.





The next day we took the ferry from Wellington to Picton on the South Island. From Picton, we took the train down the coast to Christchurch where our bus driver, Pete Higinbottom, met us. Over the next ten days, John Hannah, his wife Elaine, and Pete led us on our tour of the South Island. Pete has been leading the FF tours of the South Island for over 20 years.

The scenery of the South Island is incredibly varied from coastal to alpine. The most striking geographical note about New Zealand is how mountainous it is (including the North Island). Only the Canterbury plain around Christchurch is relatively level. Most of the roads we traveled were winding, two-lane roads; there were few highways outside the major cities.

Our bus tour was a whirlwind of different hotels every night. The scenery was awesome, but by the end of the tour you become a little jaded by yet-another-mountain and not-another-bloody-sheepfarm! The highlights of our tour were:

- A dairy farm with a robotic milking system. The cows actually come in on their own to be milked, and the system lets them into the milking shed when it's their turn.
- [Erewhon Station](#) – a sheep farm and Clydesdale stud farm where they use the horses to do all of the farm work instead of vehicles.
- Lake Tekapo and midnight stargazing. This area is part of the [Aoraki Mackenzie Dark Sky Reserve](#).
- The [Clay Cliffs](#) in Omarama and the [Punakaiki Pancake Rocks](#).
- Numerous sheep farms to learn about different breeds of sheep and sheep shearing.
- Watching bungy jumpers at [AJ Hackett bungy jumping](#) center where the sport originated.
- Taking the [Skyline Gondola](#) up the slopes of Ben Lomond in Queenstown.



- Cruise of [Milford Sound](#) where the nose of the boat would nearly go under the waterfalls
- [Dolphin cruise](#) in Akaroa where they use a small dog as a dolphin spotter (he can hear the sounds they make).



We concluded our tour with a group dinner at our hotel in Christchurch. Elaine Hannah treated us to a homemade pavlova (another New Zealand specialty). Some of my fellow ambassadors remained in Christchurch for a few days, others decided to stop in Fiji on their way home. Before we began our journey, John set up a group chat for us on WhatsApp, and we have continued to share memories, pictures and holiday greetings with each other since our return home.

FRIENDSHIP FORCE PLEDGE

As a member of the Friendship Force, I recognize that I can make a difference. I have a mission to be a friend to the people of the world. As I embark upon this adventure, I know that others will be watching. I know that through my example to my fellow citizens and the people of other nations, the cause of friendship, love and peace can be advanced. *I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.*

2024
Friendship Force of Raleigh BOARD OF DIRECTORS
President: vacant Vice President: Jan Johnson Treasurer: Mary Louise Gray Secretary: Karen Brown
Directors: Jane Fellows Doyle Long Giavanna Richards Liz Smith

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.

From Friendship Force International: **For us, travel is about more than taking a vacation. With nearly 300 clubs and thousands of members worldwide, Friendship Force International connects people with its mission to promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people. Through home-hosting and meaningful travel experiences, participants learn about other cultures, develop a better understanding of our world, and discover our shared humanity.**

**THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF
RALEIGH 2024 MEMBERSHIP
APPLICATION/RENEWAL**

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, 2024

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

_____ \$40.00 *Individual membership

_____ \$10.00 Student membership

* Note that \$30pp of your dues will be paid to Friendship Force International.

Please make check payable to Friendship Force of Raleigh and mail to:
Mary Louise Gray at 2210 Nash Place North, Wilson, NC 27896.

