

FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF RALEIGH
NEWS AND NOTES
Summer 2026



NO FIRST SUNDAY IN JULY – HAPPY FOURTH



AUGUST FIRST SUNDAY – AUGUST 2 AT 5 PM
Waltonwood Lake Boone
3550 Horton St, Raleigh, NC 27607
Hosted by Doyle Long and Leanne Richbourg

This will be both a social and informational meeting.
Details coming mid-July.



SEPTEMBER – No First Sunday – many of our members will be on the outbound journey to Oregon's Mid-Willamette Valley

OCTOBER FIRST SUNDAY – OCTOBER 4 AT 5 PM
Casa Carbone Ristorante – Hosted by Ruth and Austin Drum

NOVEMBER FIRST SUNDAY – NOVEMBER 1 AT 5 PM
Waltonwood Lake Boone – Annual Meeting
Hosted by Doyle Long and Jan Johnson

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JUNE FIRST SUNDAY at JAN JOHNSON'S FARM



If you missed this one, you missed delicious food – barbecue (the real deal), fried chicken, potato salad and more! Lots of fun visiting and, believe it or not, we were not too hot. The shade from the large trees and cooling of the nearby pond kept the temps pleasant. No baby lambs this time, but three rams in residence.



SAVE THESE DATES:

November 4, 2026, Annual day trip to Mrs. Lacy's Magnolia House in Sanford for lunch and shopping at Southern Supreme Fruitcake and More in Bear Creek.

December 3, 2026, Annual Holiday Luncheon at NC State University Club.

INBOUND JOURNEYS

Omaha, Nebraska – 2026 - cancelled due to insufficient ambassadors

Themed Journey: Outdoor Adventures – 2027 - TBD

OUTBOUND JOURNEYS

Mid-Willamette Valley, Oregon – Sept. 9 – 16, 2026

Coordinators – Karen Brown and Roselyn Brown

Journey full

New Mexico – assigned by FFI for March 2027

Metro Vancouver, Canada – (reciprocal) June 2027- with Greater Lansing, MI

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2026 North American Friendship Force Conference, April 24-27, 2026

The conference was held at the Hyatt Centric Beale Street Hotel which has an onsite conference center. The location had a wonderful view of the Mississippi River out the back, especially from the roof top bar, and its location on Beale Street meant club members were only a few short blocks away from blues music.

The director of the National Civil Rights Museum, housed in a building attached to the motel where Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated in 1968, gave the keynote address. He reminded us about the nonviolent work done by civil rights protestors across the South. He spoke eloquently about the legacy of MLK Jr.

The lectures offered by various regional field representatives and FF club members provided many interesting ideas for ways to conduct the club's business, recruit new members, keep old members engaged, and how to have a great time. There were several social activities offered, including trips to Elvis' home, Graceland, and tours related to the history of the music known as the Blues.

- article submitted by Leanne Richbourg, President

FRIENDSHIP FORCE JOURNEYS BY OUR MEMBERS

FFI BALTIC EXPEDITION – Krystyna Dixon August 2025

Our Baltic expedition last August brought together sixteen Friendship Force members from across the country for a memorable bus journey through Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Eschewing traditional homestays for the comfort of central hotels, the group enjoyed a shared perspective on the region's dramatic evolution from the Soviet era to modern European vibrance. Traveling together by coach



allowed for a unique bond to form among the diverse members, as we marveled at the medieval spires of Tallinn, the Art Nouveau elegance of Riga, and the Baroque beauty of Vilnius.



Against the backdrop of a temperate Baltic summer, the trip was defined by this shared spirit of discovery, bridging the miles between our American hometowns while uncovering the resilient history and lush landscapes of the Baltic states



FF RALEIGH JOURNEY TO FF GREATER SENDAI, JAPAN APRIL 21-27, 2026

Article submitted by Giavanna Richards, other ambassadors were Irene Cygan, Betsy and Russ Lambert

Four members of FF Raleigh visited FF Greater Sendai in April. We arrived at the train station on April 21st where we were greeted by our home hosts – Shigeko Kamata (club president), Tamaki Nakagawa (club vice-president) and Yumiko Sato. Sendai is a modern city of one million people. Its streets are lined with zelkova trees, and the Hirose River flows through its center. Sendai is called the “City of Trees.”

On our first day, we joined other club members for a Takoyaki party at a small temple overlooking the city. Takoyaki are octopus dumplings made from a pancake-like batter on a griddle with round cups. We discovered it was quite challenging

to rotate them into balls using a pointed metal turner.



After lunch, we had a calligraphy lesson and practiced writing the Kanji symbols for the four seasons.

The next day we took an hour and a half bus ride to the small town of Yanaizu where some other club members live. They met us at our bus stop and took us to see the Yanaizu Kokuzoson Buddhist temple. This is one of Japan's three great Kokuzo Bosatsu temples honoring the Buddhist bodhisattva of wisdom and compassion.

After exploring the temple, we went to a member's home where we learned how to pound mochi (called a Mochi-tsuki performance) and then enjoyed the mochi for lunch. Our hosts insisted we get the full experience by wearing traditional smocks and kerchiefs.





On Friday we toured the Miyagi Gakuin Women's University where Shigeko and Tamaki work as English professors. We especially enjoyed talking with the students in a couple English classes and having lunch at the university cafeteria.



Saturday morning, we assembled with other club members to put on kimonos. It took a couple hours to get everyone dressed. Our hosts gifted each of us with a pair of zōri (sandals) and socks to wear with our kimonos. We were able to wear kimonos that our hosts owned. Then we went to the home of another club member for a bento box lunch followed by a formal tea ceremony. Our host's mother is a retired tea master and presided over the ceremony.

On Sunday we met several other club members at a community center where we had a cooking class. We learned to make various kinds of Japanese foods including sushi. After enjoying lunch, we headed downtown for some last-minute shopping before our farewell dinner. Our host, Yumiko, owns three restaurants in the Sendai area and treated us to a wonderful, multi-course Italian dinner at her restaurant in the city.

On a lighter note, Betsy Lambert reflected on their journey to Japan by writing poetry.

Bidet, You Say?

All hail the mighty Japanese “throne,”
sat upon by young and old.
Even when on it, you’re all alone
and sometimes the spray is cold.

Some salute when you cross its path,
while others just lie in wait.
They all seem to act like a public bath,
spraying your naked state.

But lest you try to outwit their care
for cleaning your nether parts,
they’ll spray mindlessly into the air
like an errant fountain of sorts.

The buttons to choose are graphically
drawn
to try to describe the spray,
and predicting whether you’re petite or
brawn
can be a hard game to play.

But in the “end,” we can say it’s true—
the gods of the potty will win.
You feel nice and clean when you are
through
and blessed both without and within.
—Betsy Lambert, April 2026

Mother Earth Speaks

An earthquake awoke me one night,
as the ground shifted side-to-side.
It wasn’t a huge revelation
or even a memorable ride.

It was just a gentle reminder
that we are not in control.
Mother Earth has her own timetable
for reaching her rocky goal.

I am just an observer
of her storms, wind and rain.
I cannot hope to affect them
so I have nothing to gain.

Mother Earth will continue rotating
long after I am gone.
She’ll nurture as long as we let her
and let us know if we treat her wrong.
—Betsy Lambert, April 2026

THE FRIENDSHIP FORCE PLEDGE

As a member of the Friendship Force
I recognize that I can make a difference.

I recognize that I have a mission.

That mission is to be a friend to the
people of the world.

As I embark on this adventure,
I know that others will be watching me.
I know that through my example to
my fellow citizens and
people of other countries,
the cause of peace and friendship
can be furthered.
I can make a difference.

Guests are always welcome to attend any of our events. We hope that you will join us. Contact President Leanne Richbourg - lrichbourg@gmail.com.

ANNUAL DUES FOR FFI

AND FF OF RALEIGH

Members, hopefully, by now you are aware that the dues structure has changed. In the past you paid dues just to the local club and the club paid dues on your behalf to FFI. That has now changed. You join FFI directly for an automatic payment of \$8/month or a one-time payment of \$100 per year. This will qualify you to travel and host throughout the year, along with other FFI member benefits.

The local dues for FF Raleigh are \$10/year. Send your check payable to Friendship Force of Raleigh to Treasurer Jane Fellows, 1108 Alabama Ave., Durham, NC 27705.

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Visit our website at <https://friendshipforceraleighnc.org/> and

our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/friendshipforceraleigh>

2026 Board of Directors

President – Leanne Richbourg - lrichbourg@gmail.com

Treasurer – Jane Fellows

Directors – Irene Cygan, Krystyna Dixon, Ruth Drum, Jan Johnson, Doyle Long, Giavanna Richards, Judy Wilkes, Judy Wright.