FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF RALEIGH

NEWS AND NOTES

Fall 2026

IMPORTANT DATES
COMING UP SOON

FIRST SUNDAY AT 5 – Nov. 1 at 5pm
Waltonwood Lake Boone, 3550 Horton St. 27607
Hosted by Doyle Long and your Board

Fajita Bar with all the trimmings
$20 per person at the door
Bring your favorite adult beverage if desired
Other beverages provided

Information Session, including reports on the recent Oregon Journey and upcoming journeys.
Possible speaker from the Mexican Consulate

RSVP required. Send to judytwright@gmail.com or reply to this email **by Oct. 27**.

ANNUAL DAY TRIP TO MRS. LACEY'S & SOUTHERN SUPREME - PLUS A STOP AT AMISH ROOTS BULK FOODS



On **Wednesday, Nov. 4**, Friendship Force of Raleigh is taking a day trip, starting with a visit to the **Amish Roots Bulk Food** store in Moncure (amishrootsbulk.com),

followed by lunch at **Mrs. Lacy's Magnolia House** in Sanford (mrslacys.com)





and then to **Southern Supreme Fruitcake Company** in Bear Creek (southernsupreme.com). We will meet at Ruth Drum's house about 9:00 a.m. and carpool, planning to return before rush hour. Please **RSVP** to Irene Cygan (815-341-8687 irene.cygan@gmail.com) **by October 30** as we need to make reservations.



SAVE THE DATE

December 3, 2026, Annual Holiday Luncheon at NC State University Club.
Details forthcoming but put it on your calendars.

UPCOMING JOURNEYS

FFI Special Journey: Outdoor Adventure



This is a combination of an inbound and outbound journey. FFR will host Ambassadors April 16 - 19, 2027 (3 nights). This journey starts in Richmond VA on April 12 and ends in Hendersonville NC April 19-23. It is designed for active adults and will include rafting, kayaking, biking, ziplining, and hiking. Raleigh will offer biking on the Neuse River Trail, kayaking at Robertson Millpond, and hiking at Dix Park to see the Trolls. Sign up early, the spots are going fast. Journey # 27493. Journey Coordinator – Leanne Richbourg – contact her with questions or to offer to host at lrichbourg@gmail.com.

Outbound Journeys

Vancouver: June 2027. Dates yet to be determined. FFR has 8 confirmed ambassadors. There are 10 slots and we must share them with Michigan. We are waiting to hear how many ambassadors Michigan has confirmed. The Board will devise a fair way to assign the openings. Journey # 27212

New Mexico: September 12 - 18, 2027. Please email your intention to participate to Leanne Richbourg lrichbourg@gmail.com. Contact with any questions that you might have. Journey # 27316

TIME TO RENEW AND PAY YOUR FF RALEIGH DUES

The local dues for FF Raleigh FOR 2027 are $15/year. They are due before the end of the year. You may bring your check payable to Friendship Force of Raleigh to Jane Fellows at the November First Sunday meeting or mail it to Treasurer Jane Fellows, 1108 Alabama Ave., Durham, NC 27705.

RECENT OUTBOUND JOURNEYS

Friendship Force Raleigh Discovers Oregon
September 9–17, 2026

Coastlines, crabs, wine, hazelnuts, honey—and a whole lot of friendship!
Nine members of Friendship Force Raleigh spent September 9–17 exploring Oregon with the Oregon Friendship Force Club, and every day brought a new adventure. The trip began with a warm welcome at the Eugene Airport, followed by a stop at Camas Country Bakery and Store in Junction City and a welcoming lunch at Long Timber Brewing Company in Monroe. It was a wonderful introduction to Oregon hospitality—and to the hosts who would make the week so special.

A Day on the Oregon Coast
The next day took us to the spectacular Oregon coast. Along the way, we visited the Chachalu Museum in Grand Ronde and stopped at a beautiful beach home in Lincoln City before arriving in Newport. We toured Yaquina Head Lighthouse, enjoyed fresh seafood at Luna Sea Fish House, and spent the night on the coast.



But the real highlight was a behind-the-scenes visit to the Oregon Coast Aquarium. We got an up-close look at Earl, a rescued sea otter, during feeding time and learned about the aquarium's impressive work rescuing and rehabilitating Oregon's marine wildlife.



Science, Wine and a Little Competition
At the Hatfield Marine Science Center, we became scientists for the day, conducting a hands-on experiment to determine just how fast crabs can move. Afterward, we enjoyed lunch in Newport before heading back to Willamette Valley.

No Oregon trip would be complete without wine tasting! At Lumos Winery, we sampled local wines while learning about the winery and the people behind it. Later

in the week, we visited the beautiful Willamette Valley Vineyards, overlooking miles of vineyards.

Farms, Honey and Theatre



Oregon's agricultural heritage was on full display at Christensen Farms, where we toured a family-owned hazelnut operation and learned about the production of one of the Willamette Valley's signature crops.

We also visited a Christmas tree farm and discovered that honey comes in far more varieties than we imagined. We sampled blackberry, wildflower, pumpkin, mint parsley and even poison oak blossom honey!

For a change of pace, we headed to the countryside for a performance of *Moonfall Goes to the Country* at Moonfall Theatre in Rickreall. The charming small theatre provided an intimate setting—and, of course, every seat was a good seat!

History, Community and Friendship

In Albany, we stepped back in time at the historic Monteith House and learned about Oregon's early pioneer days. We also toured the Albany Carousel, an extraordinary community project created and maintained by volunteers. The craftsmanship was impressive, but the community spirit behind it was even more inspiring.



Evenings were just as memorable as the daytime adventures. Small-group dinners gave us the chance to share stories, laugh together and get to know our Oregon hosts and fellow Friendship Force members.

A Memorable Farewell

Our final evening brought everyone together for a farewell dinner at Mennonite Village. We were treated to a beautifully decorated cake—and a surprise performance of the **"Thank You Raleigh" song**, sung to the tune of *You Are My Sunshine*. It was the perfect ending to a wonderful week.

While the scenery, food, farms, wine and attractions gave us plenty to talk about, the true highlight of the journey was the people. Our Oregon hosts opened their homes, shared their favorite places and welcomed us into their communities. We arrived as visitors and left as friends—with wonderful memories, plenty of stories to share, and a much deeper appreciation for Oregon.

That's the magic of Friendship Force!

Friendship Force Raleigh Explores Santa Rosa and Sonoma County
September 17–23, 2026

Redwoods, wine caves, whales, Disney art, assistance dogs and Snoopy—what a week! Some Friendship Force of Raleigh ambassadors extended their Oregon journey by joining Western NC FF on a journey to Santa Rosa and Sonoma County, California. This was a week filled with fascinating discoveries, beautiful scenery, wonderful food, and, of course, new friendships.

Our adventure began with a warm welcome at the Charles M. Schulz–Sonoma County Airport and a lively Welcome Dinner, where members of the Santa Rosa/Sonoma County club and their Raleigh guests gathered for good food and an evening of getting acquainted.

Calistoga, Napa Valley and a Disney Connection
Our first full day took us to Calistoga, where we explored the charming shops and streets before heading into the Napa Valley. After lunch in St. Helena, we visited the Napa Valley Museum and discovered an unexpected gem: an exhibition celebrating the life and work of artist **Mary Blair**.

Blair, whose distinctive style featured bold shapes and vibrant colors, was an important creative force at Walt Disney Studios. Her concept art helped shape the visual direction of films including *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *Peter Pan*. Seeing her imaginative work offered a fascinating glimpse into the creative process behind some of Disney's most beloved films.

We finished the day with a quick visit to the Culinary Institute of America in Napa, a fitting stop in a region renowned for its food and wine.

Jack London and Wine Underground
Saturday brought us to Jack London State Historic Park, where we explored the grounds, visited London's gravesite and saw the remains of Wolf House, which burned before the author and his family ever occupied it. The visit provided a fascinating look at the life of one of California's best-known writers.
Then it was time for wine!

At Benziger Family Winery, we enjoyed a guided tour of the property and learned about the Benziger family's winemaking history and traditions. A highlight was descending into the winery caves for a tasting—a memorable experience surrounded by the atmospheric beauty of the underground cellars.

Giant Redwoods and the Pacific
Sunday offered a dramatic change of scenery as we headed to Armstrong Redwoods State Natural Reserve. Walking among the enormous, ancient redwoods

was an awe-inspiring experience. A picnic lunch surrounded by these magnificent trees made the morning even more enjoyable.
From the redwoods, we headed toward the Sonoma Coast, stopping in Sebastopol to see the colorful and whimsical junk-art sculptures created by local artists Patrick Amiot and Brigitte Laurent. The imaginative works scattered throughout the neighborhood provided plenty of photo opportunities—and plenty of smiles.

At Bodega Head, we turned our attention to the Pacific and went whale watching. With binoculars in hand, we scanned the horizon until we spotted a group of whales in the distance. We then continued to the beach, where members of our group had the simple pleasure of putting their feet in the Pacific Ocean.

Dinner in the nearby town of Bodega added another bit of local flavor. The town is also famous for its connection to Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*, making it fun to recognize some of the locations associated with the classic film.

Assistance Dogs and the World of Peanuts
Monday brought two very different but equally memorable experiences.
At the Canine Companions campus in Santa Rosa, we learned about the organization's work training Golden Retrievers and Labradors as assistance dogs for people with disabilities. Seeing the facilities and learning about the intensive training, patience and teamwork involved gave us a new appreciation for these extraordinary animals and the difference they make in people's lives.

Next came a visit to the **Charles M. Schulz Museum and Research Center**—a perfect stop in Santa Rosa, the longtime home of *Peanuts* creator Charles Schulz. After lunch at the Warm Puppy Café, we explored the museum and its remarkable collection of *Peanuts* memorabilia. Among the highlights were the enormous Peanuts Tile Mural, made from thousands of individual tiles representing comic strips, and the fascinating Morphing Snoopy sculpture.

The museum offered much more than a celebration of Snoopy, Charlie Brown and the rest of the gang. It provided a wonderful look at Schulz's creativity, humor and imagination—and the lasting impact his work has had on generations around the world.

More Than a Trip
Our week in Santa Rosa and Sonoma County was packed with experiences, but the memories that will last longest are the ones created along the way: conversations in the car, meals around the table, unexpected discoveries, laughter, and the opportunity to see Northern California through the eyes of the people who call it home.

From towering redwoods to the Pacific Ocean, from wine caves to Walt Disney's artistic world, from assistance dogs to Snoopy, our journey offered a remarkable glimpse into the many personalities and treasures of Sonoma County.
We came as visitors and left with new friends, wonderful stories, and a deeper appreciation for this beautiful corner of California.
Another Friendship Force adventure to remember!

Editors Note: Both the Oregon and Sonoma articles were provided by Ruth Drum. Ruth and Austin Drum participated in both journeys and this newsletter editor took the liberty to use AI to condense her extensive and well written articles.

I believe that we all would have enjoyed these journeys as much as they did. Remember that we can sign on to any journey that any club is taking that is not full.

MORE INTERESTING READING

We received this message from the UK from Mr. Michael Downes mr.downes@gmail.com: Hi I thought you might like to see this record of a Friendship Force Raleigh visit of 82 members, including the late Troy Page and his family, to the homeland of Sir Walter Raleigh in East Budleigh UK. It was some time ago, back in 1984! Here's the link to the article: https://conantcourier.blogspot.com/2026/09/conant-country-winter-2026.html

FFR Editor's Note – Many of you may not know that originally Friendship Force took whole plane loads of ambassadors on the journeys. This article is about Sir Walter Raleigh and includes the origins of Hayes Barton and Budleigh names, two Raleigh neighborhoods, and has a photo of some of the ambassadors. I'm wondering if I see Carol Reilly in the photo. I found it to be an interesting read and I wrote to Michael Downes to thank him for sharing his article. He sent a link to another article in case you are interested: https://conantcourier.blogspot.com/2026/09/talking-about-east-budleighs-french.html

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