

Ambassador Journal

FF Greater Des Moines to FF Knoxville

April 20-25, 2022

Ambassadors:

Shelley Bain (Ambassador Coordinator), Marla Carr, Keuier Chung, Mike Davis, Ronda Davis, Pat Headley, Wendy Johnston, Anita Lindfield, Ginny Renda, Bob Strahan

April 20 - WELCOME

Ten members of Friendship Force journeyed to Knoxville, Tennessee on April 20, 2022. Seven of the ambassadors were from Friendship Force of Greater Des Moines, two ambassadors were from Friendship Force of Central Iowa, and one ambassador was from the Friendship Force Tallahassee.

For the Des Moines Club, the Welcome Party was really a reunion. When we arrived at the Cherokee Bluff Club House, there were 9 members of the Knoxville Club who had been on a journey to Des Moines in August 2019. It was just wonderful to reconnect with our friends from Knoxville, Tennessee.

The Cherokee Bluff Club House was a fantastic place to view the city because it was located at a high elevation, so we could see a great deal of the city of Knoxville, Tennessee.

Jayne Raparelli, the club president, gave us a warm welcome and introduced her husband Mike McDonough who was the journey coordinator. Mike gave us some insight as to what we would be seeing in the days to come. He was informative as well as entertaining. He told us that we would see Dolly Parton downtown on Thursday, and we could have a picture taken with Dolly. I got so excited and thought that Mike had some pretty important connections in Knoxville. Later, Barbara Elder my home host told me that it was a joke. I guess that I am too gullible or maybe just too stupid!

After Mike and Jayne introduced all the ambassadors and home hosts and gave us welcome bags filled with all kinds of goodies, we then had a delicious buffet dinner. There were all kinds of salads, a delightful chicken casserole, and a tasty, tender ham that Mike said he prepared, but after the Dolly incident, I am not so sure that I believe him. The desserts were amazing and included: a cracked wine cake, brownies, and chocolate chip cookies.

By the time we left the party, I was ready to get out of my clothes that fit before the party but were too tight



Kueier, Marla, Bob. Ginny, Mike, Pat, Anita, Ronda, Wendy, Shelley

after dinner. I guess I have zero willpower when it comes to good food. The food was amazing, but the members of the Knoxville Club really were what made the event very special. --- Ginny

Breaking the Covid pandemic spell, Ambassador Wendy Johnson flew from Tallahassee, Florida to join seven Iowans to make a team on a journey together in Knoxville, Tennessee. Most of us had met our hosts in Knoxville before attending the warm welcome dinner at the Cherokee Bluff Clubhouse where we overlooked the city. With President Jayne Raparelli's introductions and Mike McDonough's briefing of the activities, we looked forward to our adventures with friends in downtown Knoxville the next day. --- Keuier



Mike & Ronda



Keuier & bob



Marla & Ginny

April 21 – DOWNTOWN KNOXVILLE AND SMALL GROUP DINNERS

We began the day with a lovely breakfast. Jayne and Mike have a lovely back yard with a small water feature, trees, and raised gardens. Mike feeds the birds, squirrels, and a fish. We saw one duck and birds in the backyard.

We picked up Wendy Johnston, who has joined our club for this journey, and we drove downtown.

We met at a church to begin a tour of downtown led by Mike. He told the story of the Tennessee theater. We saw the Bijou theater and then walked to what they call the Old Courthouse, which is still used. There we saw the monument to John Sevier, first governor of Tennessee, and his two wives. We heard their very interesting life stories. He had 10 children with his first wife, who he married when he was 17 and she was 15. After she died, he married his second wife, who he had saved from a Native American raid. They had 8 more children. A bonus was that another visitor to the monuments was meeting a descendant who happened to visit at the same time. --- Mike



Monument to Tennessee Suffragists



Febb and Harry Burn

Note: Just steps from the Woman Suffrage Memorial, at the corner of Clinch Avenue and Market Square, sits the Burn Memorial. Erected in 2018, this memorial statue by Nashville sculptor Alan LeQuire depicts Rep. Harry Burn of Niota and his mother, Febb, and honors each of their roles in the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Harry Burn served as a freshman representative in the Tennessee legislature in 1920, and on Aug. 18, Harry cast the deciding vote to approve the 19th Amendment. Tennessee became the 36th and last state needed to sign the amendment into law. Tennessee played a pivotal role in gaining the right to vote for women. By March of 1920, 35 states had ratified the 19th amendment, one state shy of the three-quarters required for national ratification. The State of Tennessee provided the critical vote, based on the urging of a McMinn County mother to her son, Harry T. Burn, a member of the Tennessee General Assembly. Burn's vote is credited with positioning Tennessee as the deciding state supporting the change to the U.S. Constitution. – Shelley



Bonnie Kate Sevier Monument



Old Court House



Meeting Dolly!

We went through the lovely Krutch Park, which is filled with azaleas and other plants along with contemporary sculptures, most of which remain for about a year and are then rotated with new sculptures. Diagonally across from the park was Market Square with many restaurants and shops. It's a pedestrian mall about two blocks long. Concerts are held there from May into fall.

We went to WDVX radio 89.9 at the visitor center to attend the Blue-Plate Special show at noon. The show is on Tuesday-Saturday and features local and traveling musicians. The station is a public community listener-supported station focused on roots music, and the show is free. The duo Three's Company from Chattanooga played first. Singer Shawnessey Cargil and his partner perform singer-songwriter music I enjoyed a lot. The second performer was Chloe Kimes and her group from Nashville—very country.

Jayne, Ronda, and the two Mikes ate lunch at Babalu—we started with an excellent freshly made guacamole. Then we got ice cream at Cruze Dairy and learned the interesting story of the young entrepreneur who founded and operates the ice cream shops that began as her way to make the family dairy more profitable.

Ronda, Jayne, and I went to the East Tennessee History Center about a block away while Mike went to the Embassy Suites, where he suggested people meet later to go to the rooftop bar. The Center had an exhibit about the World's Fair of 1982 as well as their permanent interesting exhibit about life in East Tennessee from the time when it was inhabited only by Cherokees until the present.

The three of us then joined Mike M and several hosts and ambassadors at the top of the Embassy, where we had splendid views of the city to go along with our drinks and conversation. Then our host Mike drove us home, where he prepared an excellent dinner for the four of us and Wendy and her host Karen. --- Mike

Loved the walking tour of downtown Knoxville. We learned the interesting story of the Sevier family and their impact on the development of the town. While we stood in front of - Sevier's monument, a couple from Texas were visiting the site and he was the great grandson 5 times removed of --- Sevier and his second wife Bonny Kate. Bonny Kate was a fast runner and could reportedly outrun any white man or native in the territory.

We also toured Market Square where we saw the monuments to women's suffrage and Senator Harry Burn and his mother Febe. Burn cast the deciding vote to give women suffrage after an appeal from his mother Febe to "do the right thing". Good for Knoxville that they honor such important people in the fight for women's rights.

We enjoyed a live music show at WDVX, the local public radio station where we were entertained by Shawnessey Cargil (and Jerome) in the first act and Chloe Kimes in the second act. We knew we were in TN when Ms Kimes spoke about being from MI and attending university in Nashville with a major in record production with an emphasis on song writing.

Some of the ambassadors "visited" Kruse Ice Cream, the best ice cream in town. It was yummy.

The small group dinner that night was a delight of mixed messages. We were warmly greeted by our hosts, Janis and Bruce Robinson who prepared a delicious and healthy low-carb dinner and THEN offered dessert - fruit cobbler, flourless chocolate torte, chocolate mousse, and whipping cream. Ginny thought it was the best torte she'd ever had and I loved the silky smooth mouse. We got the recipes. Our hosts also mentioned that they regularly use the pot holder they received from Janette House when they visited Des Moines. --- Shelley

April 22 - GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS

The day began with a beautiful sunny morning. We were out of the house for the first stop at 8:30 at Weigel's for ice to fill the cooler to chill the waters. Off we went to the Dancing Bear Lodge to meet the group in The Great Smoky Mountains National Park. People did different activities; I was with the group that hiked/walked along the Middle Prong Trail. It follows an old railroad bed that took passengers to a hotel that is no longer there. It was the perfect day for the walk, beautiful weather and even more beautiful scenery. We stopped often for photos. Then we went to the Metcalf Bottoms Pavilion for our picnic lunch from Ham 'n Goodys. After lunch we had a choice of several other activities. We took the drive along the Cades Cove Loop, 11 beautiful miles. Our evening found us at Harper Bros. General Merchandise Store to browse all that was available to purchase. An early dinner next door at Elvira's Cafe in Sevierville, delicious home cooking! An early evening back to Jayne and Mike's for a chat and a good night's sleep. --- Ronda

My host and I, while driving along the Cades Cove Loop, an 11-mile route that gives people a glimpse of Smoky Mountains history by stopping at places such as log cabins, churches, a cantilever barn, and a mill. Diana and I hit gold by seeing two sets of black bears, a mother and three cubs frolicking in a clearing and a little further down the road - another mother and two cubs. The bears and people watching them all seemed to have a good afternoon.

After bear spotting, we treated ourselves with dinner at Hot Rods, a 50's diner that was a lot of fun. Diana chowed down on fried chicken livers and fried okra while I had steak sliders and onion rings. Also on Friday, my host and I saw Always Patsy Cline at Clarence Brown theatre on the UT campus. It was an excellent production and we both left a little teary eyed. --- Shelley

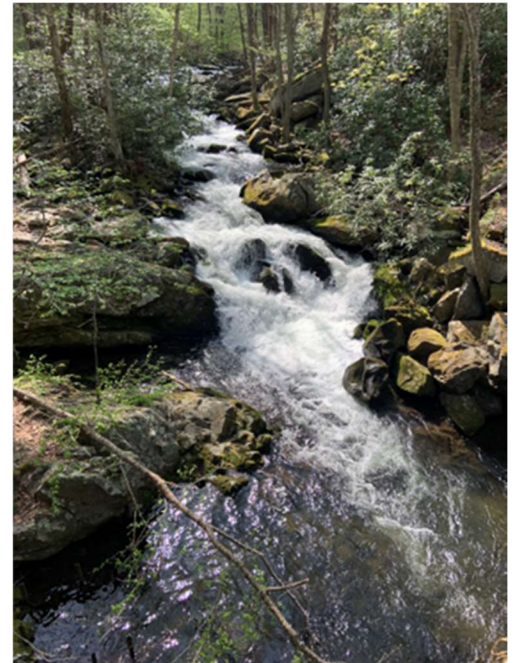




Barbara, our host, Ginny, and I spent more time in the Smokey Mountains Friday afternoon. We went to the Smokey Mountain Visitor Center and were introduced to all the plants, animals, and birds we might see there. They have possum, black and white warblers, wild lilies and a lot of wildlife to see.

We drove to the top of the mountain to Newfound Gap where they dedicated the Smokey National Park. Kids saved their lunch money in a

coal bucket a couple of days a week to help buy the land, and the Rockefellers gave 5 million dollars to finish the purchase. It is the only national park that doesn't charge an admittance fee.



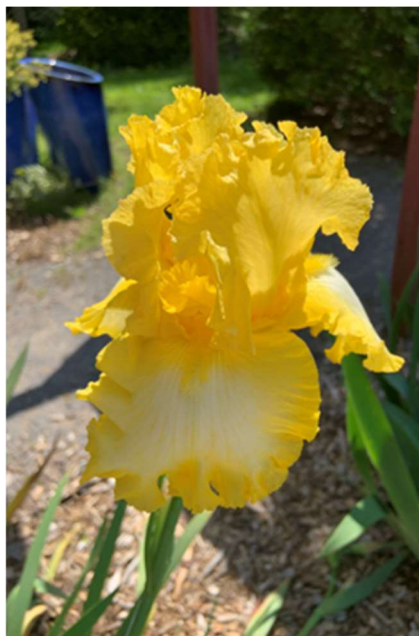
We went on to Gatlinburg and visited several art and craft galleries. Last stop Friday afternoon was Santa's Clauset in Gatlinburg. It was a very cute Christmas store with many rooms of decorations. Ginny bought 2 Christmas ornaments and I bought some learning activities for the grandboys. Ginny wants you to know that she hasn't bought one clothing item since arriving in Knoxville. --- Marla

April 23 - FREE DAY



For my free day, I really enjoyed the UT Gardens especially the kitchen garden where I was able to name plants. We also enjoyed a wonderful dinner with host Leslie, other ambassadors Mike, Ronda, and Wendy and hosts Mike and Jayne and Karen. --- Anita

Today's highlight was having a Hillbilly Heap sandwich at Redbud Kitchen and seeing the bright yellow Sun Flame azalea in host Leslie's neighborhood. The menus are interesting in that pimento cheese is prominent either as a sandwich or ingredient in other items. I grew up knowing about pimento, but itbut it wasn't a feature ingredient as it seems to be here. --- Pat



My day host Bill Cherry and I started the day at the University of Tennessee botanical gardens which had a wonderful collection of trees and flowers. Then to the McClung Museum of Natural History and Culture which was also on the campus.

We had lunch in the historic district at Central Flats and Taps at 1204 North Central Street. Nice sitting on the outside patio with the sunny weather. A visit next to the Old Gray Cemetery to see the graves of several of the founding members of Knoxville as well as Civil War heroes.



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Dinner at Corner 16 with hosts Karen Ogle, Jayne Raparelli, Mike McDonough, and Leslie Bandaines and ambassadors Wendy Johnston, Mike and Rhonda Davis, Pat Headley, and Anita Lindfield. --- Wendy



We started our free day with a drive along one of the dogwood trails. The trail was marked by pink painted lines on the street and fancy green, pink, and white mailbox bows showed which homes had dogwood trees and azaleas in bloom. Knoxville has the perfect climate for both species and although the dogwoods were in their waning days, the azaleas were glorious in several shades of pink, white, lavender, red, and coral. I didn't notice any yellow shrubs which are the most fragrant of all. Driving along the trail, there were several others to follow, was a terrific way to see Knoxville neighborhoods and some impressive homes.

We also visited the TU Garden which is on the main campus but a couple of miles away at the Agriculture and Veterinary School campus. The small TU Garden includes a children's playground, an enclosed vegetable garden, and a circular bed of Iris which are all Dykes Medal Winners. The Dykes Medal is the highest award an Iris can receive.

The garden was preparing for an afternoon wedding and reception. The wedding couple will stand under an open canopy and look out over the lawn and woodland garden when they turn toward their guests.

I spotted a Japanese Maple I've never seen locally, 'Mikawa Yatsubusa', with a crush of leaves at each leave branch.

We lunched at Redbud, a neat little restaurant in SE Knoxville, across the street from where my host's father had a small grocery store.

We visited the Knoxville Museum of Art and the new exhibit of women artists before exploring the other galleries. The KMA has a nice collection of Tennessee art, and my host explained the background of many of the pieces because she works there part-time. That was followed by a stroll through the Dogwood Arts Festival where I was tempted to make a pottery purchase but did not give in. We finished the perfect day with pizza from a local pizzeria.

----- Shelley



On Saturday we went to the Sequoyah Museum to learn about the history of the founder of the Cherokee written language, Sequoyah.

Fort Loudon in the Vonore area was a focal point where the British fought side by side with the Cherokee to prevent the French from taking over the area. Then the British wanted to take the land from the Cherokee which backfired on the British.

We had an enjoyable lunch at Tallico Grains Bakery in Tallico, TN. It was a very old, reclaimed building that had been the home to many businesses.

After seeing the museum, fort, and lunch we went to Sweetwater, TN, for ice cream and browsing. There were lots of boutiques, antique and gift shops. I did buy 4 pretty bracelets for gifts and myself. -- Marla



Saturday was our free day and Marla Carr and our home host, Ed Elder played pickle ball and Barbara Elder and I slept in. It was nice to get to sleep a little longer. After a nice breakfast, we headed to the Sequoyah Birthplace Museum. Sequoyah was a Cherokee Indian who was born in 1776 to a white Virginian fur trader and an Indian woman who was the daughter of a Cherokee Chief. Besides fighting for the United States in War of 1812, Sequoyah is most famous for inventing a system of writing for the Cherokee Nation. Sequoyah, with the help of his daughter, is responsible for thousands of Cherokee Indians becoming literate and learning to read and write.

After visiting the Sequoyah Museum, Ed Elder drove us down the road to Fort Loudoun State Historical Park which is located on the shores of Tellico Lake. First constructed in 1756, this place was one of the earliest forts built on the then western frontier. When we arrived, we watched a 15-minute video of the history of the site that was shown in the auditorium. The Fort was reconstructed during the Great Depression by the Civilian Conservation Corp and became a National Historical Landmark in 1965. It has at least 14 structures outside designed to replicate life in this historic place. While we were there, we were fortunate to observe a live staging of men

dressed up in British uniforms. These soldiers had actual muskets. They did some marching and then they fired their muskets. This created a great deal of noise and smoke. This live enactment was a special feature that does



not happen every day at Fort Loudoun.

We left the fort and headed for the town of Tellico Plains to have lunch at Tellico Grains which has now become one of my favorite places to have pizza.

We left Tellico Plains and journeyed to Sweetwater, TN, to shop and have ice cream. The ice cream was very good. After Sweetwater, we went to Gatlinburg, TN to an area that had



wonderful art and crafts for sale. After visiting Gatlinburg, we headed to Pigeon Forge where we drove around and counted the number of pancake places. Pigeon Forge was a very interesting place.

We drove back home and rested for a few minutes and then it was time to go to dinner. I had a delicious prime rib dinner. The restaurant was a lovely place. Barb and Ed called it the Yacht Club, but I do not think that was the actual name.

The entire day was a wonderful experience. I think that Barb's second life should be lived as a tour guide. She is so good at planning an adventure. She and Ed planned an amazing day for Marla and me. I learned so much, and I thoroughly enjoyed spending time with Barb and Ed. The day could not have been better even if I planned it myself! --- Ginny



On our free day, Kueier and I and I visited with our hosts Jean and Ron Mayer the American Museum of Science and Energy in Oak Ridge. Given my background in physics, this was particularly interesting to me. In addition to the museum films and displays, the Van de Graaff generator exhibition by one of Jean's friends was an unexpected pleasure.

Following this morning trip to Oak Ridge, and lunch, we attended the Dogwood Arts Festival.

Then, walked out, we had a wine and pizza dinner at the home of Jean and Ron. Great day. --- Bob Strahan

We had an easy morning. Host Mike M. made us a breakfast feast. Then Mike D. and I left Jayne and Mike M. to go to the Museum of Appalachia on our own. Too bad we didn't have unlimited time to spend. It's an outdoor history of the area with cabins and other buildings that have been moved to there. Plus, a Hall of Fame building with so much history of people of the area, some famous, others not but they left their mark on the growth of E. Tennessee. We could have stayed and learned much more but off we went for the next adventure.

We went back to meet up with Jayne and Mike who took us to the World's Fair Park for the Dogwood Arts Festival. Jayne went with us while Mike found a quiet cool spot to relax. I think I heard it was the 61st year of this

festival. Many artists were showing their works and gladly willing to chat about what they do. It was a bright sunny day, very warm but so nice to enjoy the park and the art.

Mike picked us up and we stopped at the Pretentious Glass Company to continue our art tour. Wonderful and unique glasses and other things. Jayne found a beautiful pink vase complete with plant that she had to have. It went home with her!

Then it was time to meet up with some of our fellows for the Take Your Host to Dinner. Jayne and Mike chose to go to Corner 36, a lively place with a huge menu. Something for everyone!! Wendy and Karen, Pat, Anita and Leslie joined us. We had great table talk! And that was the day!! --- Ronda

April 24 - Norris Area and Farewell Dinner

Lunch at Clinch River Brewing, where owner/host Cathy Taylor regaled us with stories of the inception of this restaurant, including how one of its beers happened to be named Chunk Lite after a rescued otter.

Then to the Rice Grist Mill, where a Norris Dam State Park Ranger took his day off to tell us the history of this 18th Century preservation. This was followed by an historical talk by another Park Ranger, Joe Gamble, before a visit inside the Lenoir Museum where several bluegrass musicians were playing.

For some of us, the next activity was a hike led by Ron Mayer to view remnants of the Civilian Conservation Corps' Camp Kinchen. Interpretive panels helped to imagine life back then.

Before dinner some went to the Mayer home for drinks and cheese.
--- Bob



Our last day in Knoxville began with a visit to the Norris Dam State Park. Our first stop was the visitors' center that included an interesting film featuring the history of the dam and its construction by the Civilian Conservation Corps. We then went to the overlook and Knoxville club member Ron Mayer shared with us about his responsibilities when he was working there. Again, we were treated to lots of beautiful scenery. Our next stop was Clinch River Brewing for lunch. Yes, we're eating again but we'll need to have energy for our afternoon activities. --- Anita

The cacophony bouncing off the walls and ceiling were evidence of the excitement ambassadors, club members, and visitors shared at the Farewell Dinner. New and long-time friends selected their seats and drinks before we got to the business of eating a delicious meal typical of southern cooking. The hospitality was merely a continuation of what we had received all week. As more proof of a successful journey, the normal quiet that sometimes goes with eating was noticeably absent. We visited as if we thought we'd never see each other again. After dinner, hosts and their ambassadors shared stories, accolades, and an enthusiastic thank you going in both directions. But we really didn't have to wait until the end to know this was an incredible experience for all of us.
--- Pat