



friendship force
GREATER DES MOINES



2024 FFGDM Calendar
(Dates and activities subject to change)

Jan 2	Lunch Friends
Jan 15	Winter Brunch
Jan 18	Table of Friends
Jan 22	Book Friends
Feb 7	Lunch Friends
Feb	Chinese New Year Celebration
Feb 15	Table of Friends
Feb 26	Book Friends
Mar 5	Lunch Friends
Mar	Iowa Judicial Branch Building Tour
Mar 21	Table of Friends
Mar 25	Book Friends
Apr 3	Lunch Friends
Apr 14	Springfest
Apr 18	Table of Friends
Apr 22	Book Friends
May 7	Lunch Friends
May 16	Table of Friends
May	IPTV Tour
May 27	Book Friends
June 5	Lunch Friends
June	Architectural Walking Tour
June 18-25	Journey to FF Southern Oregon
June 20	Table of Friends
June 24	Book Friends
July 12	Bastille Day Fete
July	Harkin Institute Tour
Aug 4	Sundaes on Sunday
Aug 22-27	Journey to FF Kansas
Sep 13-20	Journey from FF Saitamo, Japan
Oct 7-10	FF North America Conference
Oct	Annual Dinner Meeting
Dec	Happy Feet Lunch

Join us for brunch on Martin Luther King Day



Winter Brunch

Monday, January 15
9:30 am

Earl Bird Brunch
1520 S Ankeny Blvd
Ankeny 50023

In honor of MLK Day and its call to community service, we ask members to bring a cash donation for the DMARC Food Pantry.

Guests are always welcome!

RESERVATIONS REQUIRED (if attending) . . .
to Marla at marlakcarr@yahoo.com or
text 515-238-6372 by January 10.

President's Message



Dear Members,

I'm back! After leaving the Board over four years ago due to term limits, I returned to the Board in October to complete the last two years of an open seat. I was lucky the first time around because I had Adrienne Moen to work with. I'm lucky this time because I follow Ginny Renda and Pat Headley who served as president or co-presidents during the pandemic. Ginny and Pat were instrumental in developing the small group socials on members' patios and promoting activities that were outside or covid-safe. These endeavors were so popular that we lost few members during that trying time. Thank you to Ginny and Pat for holding us together.

Speaking of Pat, did you know she's a published author? Her most recent article in "Our Iowa" magazine featured our very own Friendship Force club. Pat wrote of her positive experience as a host for two FF Dayton ambassadors. Thanks Pat!

We start 2024 with a smaller **Board of Directors** of seven members. I'm grateful for the other six who give their time and talent to our club. We can seat new board members at any time during the year so if you're interested, let's chat.

We also start the year with an energetic **Activities Committee** which plans most activities and community service projects. That committee is coordinated by Nancy Lundstrom and Marla Carr. Shoutouts to Nancy and Marla but also Gail Sheridan Lucht, Pat Westphal, Donna Archer, Karen Kilpatrick, and Ginny Renda who will lead activities this year.

Our long-serving **Membership Chair**, Alice Rasmussen, is a rock of common sense and can-do attitude. If you haven't renewed your membership, you can expect a call from Alice.

Mike Davis, **Journey Director**, has been stellar in finding our club Journey partners for this year. He's talking with FF Northern Colorado, FF Western Colorado, FF Eastern Washington-Northern Idaho, and FF Shelby NC about future domestic journeys. We should all appreciate Mike's enthusiasm for promoting our club.

The social clubs are successful in establishing more personal relationships among the members. I've coordinated **Table of Friends** but Ginny Renda will take over the dinner club in 2024. **Book Friends** has been ably coordinated by Connie Walters who everyone in the book club is thrilled to have as the coordinator. Our newish **Lunch Friends** is coordinated by Christine McQuillan, a stay-at-home mom who longed to hang out with people who travel; we're glad she found us. Our newest club, **Performing Arts Club (PAC)**, coordinated by Pat Westphal, was designed to match members who like to attend concerts, plays, movies, etc., and share the experience with others. I guess that was me because PAC is becoming my favorite club.

There are many opportunities to get more involved in FFGDM, I hope you will do that in 2024.

In friendship,
Shelley Bain
FFGDM President

"No road is long with good company." Turkish proverb

Activities

Annual Dinner Meeting

The Annual Dinner Meeting, at District 36 in Ankeny, was attended by 36 members who dined on a buffet of Grilled Pork Medallions, Pollo Farfalle, and Atlantic Salmon. Mike Merritt was elected to a full term to the Board; we are grateful he serves as Treasurer.

Anita Lindfield organized Des Moines' latest band, The FFGDM Crew, with the help of her friend Kirk Johnson on guitar. Anita, a former music teacher, led the talented singers - Kay Hertz, Claudia Holcomb, LaVonne Neerland, Polly Antonelli, and Marla Carr – in sometimes tender and sometime robust renditions of songs from around the world and from our campfire days. Thank you to Anita and the FFGDM Crew.



Pat Headley presented outgoing President Ginny Renda with a gift to thank her for her years of service which included organizing the Annual Meeting. Ginny has been an exemplary leader for our club. She may be leaving the board of directors but she will remain active with Table of Friends and the Activities Committee.



Happy Feet Holiday Lunch

The club ended the year with over 30 members and family members attending the annual Happy Feet Lunch on December 5 at Trostel's Greenbriar.

Lunch was delicious, as usual, and some members wore their favorite holiday sweaters.

The topper on the tree was the collection of 420 pairs of socks for the homeless women and men at Central Iowa Shelter & Services. Our club did an outstanding job with this project! A big thank you to Karen Kilpatrick for coordinating this lunch and community service since 2016.



CHINESE NEW YEAR



Join us in celebrating the year of the Dragon

February TBD

Jade Garden Chinese Restaurant
602 N Ankeny Blvd, Ankeny, IA 50023

Look for an email with details closer to the date.

Iowa Judicial Branch Building Tour



The Iowa Judicial Branch Building, on the Capitol Complex, is the home of the Iowa Supreme Court, the Iowa Court of Appeals, and state court administration. Join us for a tour of this beautiful building with an option for lunch after.

March TBD

1111 E Court Ave, Des Moines 50319

Look for an email with details closer to the date.

Journeys



FF Southern Oregon Journey

June 18-25, 2024

Join us on our westward Journey to Southern Oregon where we will experience the four topographic areas of Oregon—High Desert, Coastline, Dense Forest, and Fertile vineyard.

Instead of historical buildings and museums, although they are there, we will visit the Redwoods of California, a lighthouse on the Coast, the Shakespeare Festival, a Japanese Garden plus many more wonderful sights.

If you are sincerely interested in this journey, please send your application and \$25 check, payable to FFGDM, by January 15 and be invited to a “Taste of Oregon” on January 16, 6:30 pm, at my home. Lenne Orona, Ambassador Coordinator

Draft itinerary - 7 nights

- Day 1, 6/18 Arrive in Medford. Settle in with home hosts.
- Day 2, 6/19 Jacksonville tour, visit wineries and Welcome Dinner.
- Day 3, 6/20 Crater Lake Day with stops at Natural Bridge/Gorge.
- Day 4, 6/21 Ashland Day - Japanese Garden, Lithia Park, Shakespeare Festival.
- Day 5, 6/22 Redwoods/Coast Trip - Overnight
- Day 6, 6/23 Visit Crescent City via Prairie Creek State Park.
- Day 7, 6/24 Free day and Farewell Dinner.
- Day 8, 6/25 Depart

Lenne will send an email with more details before the New Year.

Transportation
Flights should be arranged to Rogue Valley Medford Airport (MFR).

Air travel has us spending most of the day in the air.

Estimated Costs

Administration Fee	25
FFI Fee	175
Coordinator Fee	50
Program Fee	<u>275</u>
Total Estimate	525
+ 1 night lodging	
+ airfare	

More Information

Lenne Orona
4307 41st ST
Des Moines, IA 50310
630-290-6659 phone/text
crotia2023@gmail.com

Please call for instructions on how to download an application.

Des Moines to Leuven Journal

September 17 - 27 2023

Sunday, September 17 – Welcome to Belgium

Shelley - We all made it safely to Brussels despite Jane's cramped middle seat on the flight from Chicago. 13 of us took the



train to Leuven station where we were met by Host Coordinator Greta and club President Dany. Ron and Elyse had arrived by train from Paris and were waiting for us. We had a delicious charcuterie welcome lunch at Brasserie Van de Weyer, across the square from the train station. This was the beginning of many food adventures the ambassadors experienced while in Belgium.



After lunch and a drive around orientation to Leuven, we went to my hosts' home where I met their huge German Shorthair Pointer, Bruce, who is more like a human than a dog. Dany prepared the traditional stoofvlees (caramelized onions and beef that has been braised slowly in beer) and small boiled potatoes for dinner – it was rich and delicious. Forget Belgian – we enjoyed wine with all our dinners.



Monday, September 18 – Touring Leuven

Jane - Our first day of touring Leuven began with the Groot Beguinage (French spelling) (Dutch spelling Begijnhof). The beguinage started sometime around 1232-1234. It was established as a community for single women who dedicated their lives to God but were not required to take vows as they would have in a convent. They provided social care to the poor and sick but were free to leave if they wanted, for instance to marry. Everyone contributed through work to keep the community running. Beguines lived in the Leuven community until approximately the 1980s when the



University of Leuven took over the property and uses the quarters currently to house students and teachers. The site is now a UNESCO World Heritage site.



Mike - Ronda and I took the train from our host's town of Haacht to meet the rest of our group at the Leuven train station. After we left the Beguinage, Dany took us to St. Anthony's Chapel where Father Damien is buried. Father Damien served people banished to the island of Molokai (Hawaii) because they had leprosy. After eleven years of caring for the physical, spiritual, and emotional needs of those in the leper colony, Father Damien contracted leprosy and died in 1859.



We then walked to De Blauwe Schuit (the Blue Bird) restaurant for an excellent lunch of spaghetti Arrabiata.



Shelley – One of my favorite places in Leuven was St. Peter's Church and its beautiful arches. The belfry and bell tower are UNESCO World Heritage sites. The interior is as fascinating as the outside – filled with beautiful stained glass windows, an elaborate oak pulpit, tombs of the famous, and paintings considered masterpieces.

Outside De Blauwe Schuit were several trees with fascinating seed pods. They were Turkish Hickory trees. Since bringing the seed pod into the US is illegal, I had to be satisfied with a photo.



Did I mention that Leuven has 100,000 residents, 50,000 students, and what seems like 1,000,000 bikes! I spent a lot of time moving out of the way of the cyclists.

The photo to the right is the very ornate Leuven Town Hall. Built in a Brabantine late-Gothic style between 1439 and 1469, it is famous for its ornate architecture, crafted in lace-like detail. It looked like a very busy wedding cake.



The photo to the left is Oude Markt ("Old Market"). The square is lined by many historical buildings and shops and many prominent merchants lived there.

We walked and walked in Leuven, seeing historic buildings and learning the history of this important University town. The members of FF Leuven are justifiably proud of their city.



IOWA CONNECTION While on the walking tour of Leuven, we stopped at The Library of the Catholic University Leuven (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven aka UK Leuven) and heard its story of destruction and rebuilding. During World War I, German occupation and British blockades caused mass food shortages in Belgium. Through the efforts of Herbert Hoover and the Commission for the Relief of Belgium, over 9 million people a day were fed in Belgium and Northern France.



This library was burned by German soldiers at the beginning of WWI, destroying approximately 230,000 books, 950 manuscripts, and 800 other items. After WWI, a new library was erected on the Ladeuzeplein. It is of neo-Flemish-Renaissance style, designed by the American architect Whitney Warren and built between 1921 and 1928. Some of our group had our photo taken with the bust of Herbert Hoover in the library.

To read the rest of the Journal –
go to the <https://friendshipdsm.org/journeys/journals/>

Special Interest Groups

Performing Arts Club

November brought many performances to choose from. Members attended musical events by the Polaris Wind Quartet, jazz group SPARKS at Caspe Terrace, “visionary virtuoso” Bruce Brubaker playing Philip Glass, Celtic tunes by classical guitarist Steven Kennedy, and pianist Nicholas Roth. We also attended the Drake Theatre play “Almost, Maine” which featured member Carol Grant’s granddaughter. In the busy month of December, members enjoyed Tallgrass Theatre’s “A Christmas Cabaret” and the movie Bonaparte.

The PAC has had two to six people attend each performance. If you are interested in joining the club and inviting members to performances you wish to attend, contact Pat at WestphalP@central.edu.

Book Friends

Join us on the 4th Monday of each month from 2:30 to 4:00 pm at Northwest Community Center, 5110 Franklin Avenue in Des Moines. In the summer we sometimes meet at Gray’s Lake Park.

We are open to all Friendship Force members and their friends - the only requirement is a love of books. Contact coordinator Connie Walters at yourfriendconnie@gmail.com or 515-971-1916 for more information.



(Back row) Dee, Ginny, Nikki, Ronda, (Front row) Polly, Anita, Connie, and Kay. Photo by Charlotte.

DATE	TITLE	AUTHOR	MEMBER	NOTES
Jan 22	Age of Vice	Deepti Kapoor	Charlotte	Set in contemporary India, compelling crime thriller mixed with a family saga
Feb 26	The Winemaker’s Wife	Kristen Harmel	Ronda	Love, betrayal, and courage in the champagne region of France during WWI.
Mar 25	Redemption	David Baldacci	Mary	Detective discovers that a rookie mistake he made may have led to deadly consequences.
Apr 22	All Boys Aren't Blue	George M. Johnson	Polly	Personal essays about growing up Black and queer in America.
May 27	The Memory Shop	Ella Griffin	Nikki	Uplifting novel, set in Ireland, about love, family and finding your way.
June 24	The Tea Girl of Hummingbird Lane	Lisa See	Anita	Lives of a Chinese mother and her daughter who was adopted by an American couple.
July 22	The Spitfire Girls	Saraya Lane	Ginny	Historical fiction of UK and US female pilots in WWII.
Aug 26	Loving Frank	Nancy Horan	Dee	Fictionalized account of Mamah Borthwick's love affair with Frank Lloyd Wright.
Sept 23	Maisie Dobbs	Jacqueline Winspear	Charlotte	Historical mystery, set in 1910-1929 England.
Oct 28	Once and Future Witches	Alix E. Harrow	Connie	Set in 1893, sisters struggle for autonomy and power in a patriarchal world.
Nov 25	2025 Recommendations			
Dec 16	Crow Mary	Kathleen Grissom	Ginny	The story of a Native woman caught between two cultures in 1870s.

Lunch Friends

We'll kick off 2024 with lunch on Tuesday, January 2, at Lindo Jalisco in Ankeny. Host Alice Rasmussen is taking reservations until December 30 at 515-865-6331 or off4ever@aol.com. If you would like to join our lunch group, please email me at 1ordmco@gmail.com. Our gatherings are open to anyone who enjoys delicious food, engaging conversations, and a warm and welcoming atmosphere. --- Christine McQuillan, Lunch Friends Coordinator

Table of Friends

January 18 is the date of our first dinner of 2024. Shelley Bain plans to host the group at the popular but small Simon's at Merla Hay and Franklin. Last year we cancelled due to the weather, we hope not to this year. We meet the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm unless that date conflicts with other FF activities. Let me know if you would like to join the group. ---- Ginny Renda, TOF Coordinator, rendaginny@gmail.com

Member News



New Members

Jerri Fuller
16405 NE 68th St
Cambridge, IA 50046
515-215-0275
djfuller4isu.live.com

Elaine Anderson
4801 Dakota Dr
West Des Moines, IA 50265
515-556-1989
elaine.anderson.2001@gmail.com

Thank You!

Thank you to members who have paid their membership fees for 2024. If you haven't, please mail your check with the completed membership form today.

--- Alice Rasmussen
Membership Chair

Change of Address

Nina Dahl
2801 EP True Parkway - Unit 602
West Des Moines, IA 50265-5670

Please update your roster.

Our Sympathy

to the family of former member



Roger G. Landwehr
1923 - 2023

Roger is remembered fondly for his participation in journeys and community service projects.

2024 FFGDM Board Members & Committee Chairs

Board Members

Shelley Bain – President
shelleybain@centurylink.net
Janette House - Secretary
j.house@mediacombb.net
Mike Merritt - Treasurer
merritt2007@sbcglobal.net
Mike Davis – Journey Director
mjdavisconsulting@gmail.com
Darlene Blake-Beers
darleneblake@hotmail.com

Board Members

Nikki Hubbard
nihubbard@aol.com
Anita Lindfield
anitalindfield@gmail.com

Other Committees and Tasks

Marla Carr – Activities Co-Chair
marlakcarr@yahoo.com
Nancy Lundstrom – Activities Co-Chair
nancylundstrom@mchsi.com

Other Committees and Tasks

Ginny Renda – Table of Friends
rendaginny@gmail.com
Christine McQuillen – Lunch Friends
1ordmco@gmail.com
Pat Westphal – Performing Arts
WestphalP@central.edu
Connie Walter – Book Friends
yourfriendconnie@gmail.com
Alice Rasmussen – Membership Chair
off4ever@aol.com