



friendship force
GREATER DES MOINES



2025 FFGDM Calendar
(Dates and activities subject to change)

Mar 5	Lunch Friends
Mar TBD	Mahjong Club
Mar 10	Board Meeting
Mar 14	Game Night
Mar 20	Table of Friends
Mar TBD	Mahjong Club
Mar 24	Book Friends
Apr 2	Lunch Friends
Apr TBD	Mahjong Club
Apr 14	Board Meeting
Apr 17	Table of Friends
Apr TBD	Mahjong Club
Apr 27	Springfest
Apr 28	Book Friends
May 7	Lunch Friends
May TBD	Mahjong Club
May 12	Board Meeting
May 13	National Weather Service Tour
May 15	Table of Friends
May TBD	Mahjong Club
May 20-28	Journey to FF Lake Simcoe, Ontario
May 26	Book Friends
...	
Jun TBD	Islamic and Cultural Center Tour
Jun 29	All-Iowa FF Gathering
Jul 13	Sundaes on Sunday
Jul 14	Bastille Day Potluck
Jul 23-Aug 2	Open World from North Macedonia
Aug 11-17	Journey from FF Kansas
Oct 10-15	Journey to FF Shelby, NC



Celebrate
World Friendship Day
March 1

(see page 2)

Join us for our first Game Night

Bring the LUCK of the IRISH!

Game Night Mixer

Friday, March 14

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm?

Luther Memorial Church

1201 Grandview Ave, Des Moines 50316

We've planned a fun evening with friends --- We'll draw for new teams every 30 to 45 minutes so you'll have an opportunity to play several games and visit with different members to get to know them better.

It's a great night to bring a guest.

Please bring a sweet or savory snack to share, your own drink if you would like something other than tea or coffee, and a favorite game (if you've got one) that can be completed in about 30 minutes.

The person wearing the most green apparel might just get a prize.

The committee will also bring some games to play.

Please text, email, or call Lenne Orona to reserve a spot by **Friday, March 7.**

Phone: 630-290-6659

Email: crotia2023@gmail.com

President's Message



Dear Friendship Members and Friends,

Friendship Force's World Friendship Day (not to be confused with the United Nations' International Day of Friendship in July) is observed by FFI each year on March 1st. It marks the date the organization was officially established. Now, every March 1st is an opportunity to honor the connections that enrich our lives.



Due to our packed calendar of activities, our club does not formally celebrate FFI's World Friendship Day but this year we would like all our members to reflect on the importance of world friendship and how it serves our club, our nation, and our world.

There is still time for members to make a celebration of World Friendship Day their own. Two ideas - host an international dinner for friendship and ask your guests to bring dishes from different cultures or send emails to old Friendship Force friends from around the world. Both are simple activities that will embody the spirit of friendship and showcase the power of cultural exchange.

In other news. . .Pat Headley is the Ambassador Coordinator for the journey to Shelby, North Carolina, and she is accepting applications. You may apply using FFI's fillable application at - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1NqKpXdR7LcQBUWr7ekpJA98zI4SjMUl5/view?pli=1> or print and mail the application to Pat. See page 3 for details.

I hope to see you at Game Night on March 14, Springfest on April 27, or one of the several social clubs in the next month or so. If you are a newer member - don't be shy because you're always welcome to attend any club activity. I can guarantee we'll be glad to see you. 😊

In friendship,
Shelley Bain, FFGDM President

3 Travel Tips from the NY Times Frugal Traveler. . .

How to Take Advantage of the Exchange Rate

1. Before leaving home, make sure your credit card does not charge a fee for transactions in foreign currencies.
2. When using the card, pay in the local currency when vendors ask if you want to purchase the transaction in dollars or in foreign currency.
Always choose the local currency. This will avoid dynamic currency conversion, which is a service that converts the purchase to your home currency at a marked-up exchange rate. The European Consumer Organization that called the practice a "scam," noting that studies had found the practice raised prices between 2.6 and 12 percent for those who opted for the converted currency.
3. When you need foreign cash, withdraw it from a bank-owned ATM because bank ATMs offer a better exchange rate and lower fees than private ones.

Journeys



FF Shelby, NC Outbound Journey

October 10 – 15, 2025
(5 nights)

Estimated Fees

Administration Fee: \$25
FFI Fee: \$125
Program Fee: \$250 - \$275
Ambassador Coordinator fee: \$48
Total Fees: \$448 - \$473

Transportation

Airline costs: \$500 - \$600

Driving? It's 1,017 miles and
approximately 15h 32m of drive time.

Applications

Deadline: March 15, 2025

Make \$25 check payable to FFGDM
and send with your application to:

Pat Headley
6821 Mill Pond Drive
Urbandale, Iowa 50322

Questions?

Contact Pat at
headleypatricia651@gmail.com

Things we may do

- Visit the Vanderbilt Estate
- Ride a restored carousel
- See Grandfather Mountain
- Visit the Earl Scruggs Center



- See Lake Lure
- Visit Tryon International Equestrian Center
- See the Great Smoky Mountain National Park
- See a scuppernong grape
- Other planned activities

Interesting Information

- 40 miles west of Charlotte
- Originally inhabited by the Catawba & Cherokee
- Chartered by Colonel Isaac Shelby (hero of the Battle of Kings Mountain during the American Revolution)
- Originally a textile industry but not since the 1990's
- Nickname – City of Pleasant Living
- Motto – “to be rather than to seem”
- Livemush Capital of the World
- One of the most attractive small cities in the Carolinas
- Permanent home of American Legion Baseball since 2011
- Debate – Whole hog or pulled pork?



FF Kansas (Wichita) Inbound Journey

Host Co-Coordinator Alice Rasmussen and Nancy Lundstrom are working on the details for the inbound journey, August 10-15. If you are able to home host, day host, or dinner host, please let Alice (off4ever@aol.com) or Nancy (nancylundstrom@mchsi.com) know you're available.

Activities



Sunday, April 27

Luther Memorial Church, Lykke Center
1201 Grandview Ave, Des Moines 50316

Doors open at 1:00 pm

Speaker

Mary Frances Evans

Executive Director

IRIS (Iowa Radio Reading Info Service)

Sweets & Savory Bar

Please bring a sweet or savory item to share.

Note: Our club is making a donation to IRIS on behalf of the membership, feel free to bring a personal donation if you wish.

Reservations, if attending, by April 21 to Pat at
Westphalp@central.edu or 515-277-5741

Department for the Blind Tour

The tour, scheduled for February 18, was cancelled due to severe weather. Thank you to Alice for coordinating the tour and notifying those who signed up that it was cancelled.

Friendship Force

Peace Tree

Christkindlmarket Des Moines

The Board voted to apply to decorate a tree at Christkindlmarket Des Moines. Decorating a tree is an opportunity for non-profits to promote their organization and add to the ambience of the market.

If accepted, we need some crafty members to create simple decorations promoting the theme of peace and friendship.

If you are crafty or want to be 😊, let Shelley know at bainshelley@gmail.com. This will be fun and easy!

Winter MLK Day Brunch

Eighteen members and guests ventured out January 20 to Main Street Café on the coldest day of the year, up to then, to enjoy brunch while honoring the life and legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.



Coordinator Marla Carr asked several people to read Martin Luther King quotes and provided a quiz about his life that was both interesting and enlightening.

In honor of MLK Day and its call to community service, Marcia collected \$200 in cash donations for the DMARC Food Pantry. Thank you Marcia and thank you members for your donations.

Special Interest Groups

Mahjong Club Our newest club is well underway and challenging but Sally Merritt's lessons have been an excellent introduction to the game. The Mahjong Club meets twice a month on Friday at 1:00 pm at Sally's clubhouse. If you are interested in learning this intriguing game or joining the club, contact Sally at merritt69_99@yahoo.com.

Friends of the Arts Friends of the Arts is a group of members who attend concerts, art galleries, art festivals, dance, opera, and plays by inviting each other to join them. Typically, two to eight members attend each performance they are invited to. In January, members attended The Byrne Brothers ceilidh, the plays Gull and Ripcord, and the musical Shucked. If you are interested in joining the club and inviting members to activities you wish to attend, contact Pat at WestphalP@central.edu.

Lunch Friends Lunch Friends is a social club where we meet at different restaurants around the Des Moines area to enjoy great food and conversation. We meet on the first Wednesday of every month at 11:30 AM. If you'd like to get email invites for future lunches, please contact Christine McQuillan, the Lunch Friends Coordinator at 1ordmco@gmail.com.

Table of Friends We meet the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 pm unless that date conflicts with other FF activities. Let Ginny know if you would like to join the group at rendaginny@gmail.com.

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 for more information.

Discussion DATE	MEMBER	TITLE	AUTHOR	SETTING
Mar 24	Nikki Hubbard	The Lost Girls of Paris	Pam Jenoff	Paris WWII - Historical Fiction
Apr 28	Ginny Renda	The Fountains of Silence	Ruta Sepetys	Spanish Dictator Novel
May 26	Anita Lindfield	The Violin Conspiracy	Brendan Slocumb	American to Russia - Fiction
Jun 23	Charlotte Buttin	Say Nothing	Patrick Redden Keefe	Ireland Narrative
Jul 28	Sally Merritt	Untamed	Glennon Doyle	Iowa Author Memoir
Aug 25	Dee Willemsen	The Seed Keeper	Diane Wilson	Native American Novel
Sep 22	Polly Antonelli	Molly Sand Must Die	Laura Snider	Iowa Author Thriller
Oct 27	Anita Lindfield	The Girl Who Came Home	Havel Gaynor	Ireland to US - Historical Fiction
Nov 24	ALL MEMBERS	BOOK SUGGESTIONS	For 2026	For Cultural Understanding
Dec 22	Connie Walters	Miss Benson's Beetle	Rachel Joyce	New Caledonia - Fiction



Spring Æbleskiver Brunch

Sunday, March 30
10:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Enjoy Æbleskiver, sausage, apple sauce, fruit salad and drinks.
Tickets: \$10 or donation to the Danish Brotherhood
Luther Memorial Church Lykke Hall
1201 Grandview Avenue, Des Moines 50316

Where in the World. . .

Where in the World . . . are Darlene Blake Beers, Dee Willemsen, Marla Carr, Alice Rasmussen, and Claudia Holcomb so far this year? Chili, Antarctica, Finland, Denmark, Mexico, Nashville, and New York City! If you have a journey to share with club members, just send a few photos and a short description to Shelley.



Member News

Welcome New Members

Karen Tegtmeyer
karen@javadiva.com

Pamela Rhodes
rhodes.pamela@gmail.com



Our Sympathy to the family of member

Del Wynn

January 29, 1943 — November 30, 2024

Del served on the Board from 2005-2010, including as President in 2006 and 2010. He was also newsletter editor for several years after he left the Board. He will be missed.

2025 FFGDM Leadership

Board Members

Shelley Bain – President
shelleybain@centurylink.net

Darlene Blake Beers - Veep
darleneblake@hotmail.com

Janette House - Secretary
j.house@mediacombb.net

Mike Merritt - Treasurer
merritt2007@sbcglobal.net

Alice Rasmussen
off4ever@aol.com

Ginny Renda
rendaginny@gmail.com

Karen Kilpatrick
karenkilpatrick@gmail.com

Task & Committee Leaders

Mike Davis – Journey Director
mjdavisconsulting@gmail.com

Marla Carr – Activities Co-Chair
marlakcarr@yahoo.com

Nancy Lundstrom – Activities Co-Chair
nancylundstrom@mchsi.com
open – FaceBook Coordinator

Social Clubs

Ginny Renda – Table of Friends
rendaginny@gmail.com

Christine McQuillen – Lunch Friends
1ordmco@gmail.com

Pat Westphal – Friends of the Arts
WestphalP@central.edu

Connie Walter – Book Friends
yourfriendconnie@gmail.com

Sally Merritt – Mahjong Club
merritt69_99@yahoo.com

Traveling with Other Clubs

Did you know you can travel with other FF clubs on their journeys if they have open seats?

As of 2/17/25, the following journeys, among other, invite you to apply...

Journey #25293: Greater Orlando to Xalapa, Mexico, April 26 - May 2

<https://friendshipforce.myshopify.com/products/xalapa-mexico-25293-myff?variant=49770780754226>

Journey #25252: Oklahoma to Baku, Azerbaijan and Yerevan, Armenia, May 8-12

<https://friendshipforce.myshopify.com/products/baku-azerbaijan-and-yerevan-armenia-25252-myff?variant=49674608279858>

Journey #25243: Explore the History of the Blues with the FF of Memphis, June 10 - 17

<https://friendshipforce.myshopify.com/products/explore-the-history-of-the-blues-with-the-ff-of-memphis-myff?variant=49615086158130>

Journey #25235: Boston Massachusetts and Hiking the White Mountains of New Hampshire, August 6 - 14, 2025

<https://friendshipforce.myshopify.com/products/boston-massachusetts-and-hiking-the-white-mountains-of-new-hampshire-25235-myff?variant=49044196720946>

Journey#25294: Discover the Magic of the Baltics, August 9-23, 2025

<https://friendshipforce.myshopify.com/products/discover-the-magic-of-the-baltics-25294-myff>

Journey #25318: Discover Amazon and the Pantanal, Aug 21 - Sep 4, 2025

<https://friendshipforce.myshopify.com/products/discover-belem-and-the-pantanal-25318-myff?variant=49671009829170>

Journey #25049: Discover History and Culture of Vietnam, August 22 - 30, 2025

<https://friendshipforce.myshopify.com/products/discover-vietnam-25049?variant=47710987583794>

Mail membership application and check to: **FFGDM, PO Box 13136, Des Moines, IA 50310.**
FFGDM membership dues cover a calendar year, January 1 through December 31.

Email _____ Birthday MM and DD for newsletter _____ / _____

[illegible]

<input type="checkbox"/> Activities Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter Editor	<u>Inbound Journey activities:</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Member (future)	<input type="checkbox"/> Outreach Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Day Host
<input type="checkbox"/> Board Treasurer (future)	<input type="checkbox"/> Photographer	<input type="checkbox"/> Farewell Party Volunteer
<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook Maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/> Website Coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/> Journey Coordinator
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Audit (annual)		<input type="checkbox"/> Home Host
<input type="checkbox"/> Journey Director		<input type="checkbox"/> Journey Planning Team
<input type="checkbox"/> Greeter at Activities	<u>Outbound Journey activities:</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> Small Dinner Host
<input type="checkbox"/> Membership Committee	<input type="checkbox"/> Journey Coordinator	<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome Party Volunteer
Please list a skill or interest you have, not listed above, that you are willing to share.		
<hr/>		

8 | Page