



friendship force
GREATER DES MOINES



2025 FFGDM Calendar
(Dates and activities subject to change)

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Jul 2 | Lunch Friends |
| Jul 7 | Board Meeting |
| Jul 7 | Mahjong Club |
| Jul 10 | Tree Planning, <i>page 7</i> |
| Jul 13 | Sundaes on Sunday |
| Jul 14 | Bastille Day Potluck, <i>page 4</i> |
| Jul 17 | Table of Friends |
| Jul 18 | Mahjong Club |
| Jul 18 | Game Night |
| Jul 25-Aug 2 | Open World – N Macedonia |
| Jul 28 | Book Friends |
| Aug 6 | Lunch Friends |
| Aug 8 <i>TBC</i> | Mahjong Club |
| Aug 11-17 | FF Kansas IB Journey, <i>page 4</i> |
| Aug 11 | FF Kansas Welcome Potluck |
| Aug 16 | FF Kansas Farewell Party |
| Aug 21 | Table of Friends |
| Aug 22 <i>TBC</i> | Mahjong Club |
| Aug 25 | Book Friends |
| Sep 3 | Lunch Friends |
| Sep 8 | Board Meeting |
| Sep TBD | Middlebrook Farm Tour |
| Sep 12 <i>TBC</i> | Mahjong Club |
| Sep 18 | Table of Friends |
| Sep 19 | Game Night |
| Sep 22 | Book Friends |
| Sep 26 <i>TBC</i> | Mahjong Club |
| Oct 3 | Dept of the Blind Tour |
| Oct 10-15 | Journey to FF Shelby, NC |
| Nov 4 | Annual Dinner Meeting |
| Nov 10 | Board Meeting |
| Dec 2 | Happy Feet Lunch |
| Dec 8 | Board Meeting |



Sundaes on Sunday

Sunday, July 13
1:00 – 3:00 pm

Luther Memorial Church
1201 Grandview Ave * Des Moines 50316

Join your Friendship Force friends for a cool summer activity – Sundaes on Sunday. The Activities Committee will provide the ice cream and cake. You bring your favorite topping to share such as caramel sauce, coconut, pecans, strawberries, or other fruit.

The program will feature the ambassadors from the recent FF Lake Simcoe journey.

Especially for members who have not traveled with Friendship Force - come and find out how much fun and learning goes on when you travel with Friendship Force.

Hope to see you there.

RSVP, if attending, by July 9 to Karen at
karenkilpatrick@gmail.com
to let her know you'll be there.

Bring a friend or two!

President's Message



Dear Friendship Force Members and Friends,

What a great club we have – activities every month, six social clubs, several journeys each year – all keeping us engaged in our community and the world.

None of this would happen without the members who coordinate activities, lead journeys, volunteer at events, and serve on the Board of Directors. It is not too early to consider joining the Board of Directors at the Annual Dinner Meeting & Elections in the fall. We'll have details in the next newsletter, but if you are interested or want more information, please ask.

We love and hate technology, but did you know this about **Translating** *from the New York Times*?

“You may already have Google Translate on your device, but that app also has some lesser-known handy features. Point your camera at a foreign menu, train station sign or receipt, for example, and Google can translate it — even with non-Roman characters. The Conversation button in the app lets you pass your phone back and forth when you're trying to get directions, order food, ask for help and more. You can even create a custom phrase book in the app.”

In Friendship,
Shelley Bain
FFGDM President

JOURNEYS



FF Lake Simcoe Journal

May 21-27, 2025

Introduction – Ginny Renda, Ambassador Coordinator

The Friendship Force Club of Lake Simcoe is made up of members from Lake Simcoe, Lake Couchiching, and the Orillia area of Simcoe County, as well as some members who live out in rural areas. This club is in the middle portion of Southern Ontario, Canada, from Lake Simcoe in the east to Georgian Bay in the West. It is part of what is known as the Ontario Lake Country. It was easy to forget that we were in a foreign country because the land was very much like the terrain in Iowa, except that there was water everywhere, with an abundance of lakes, rivers, streams, and other waterways.

The home hosts for this journey were in the towns of Orillia, Lake Simcoe, Coldwater, and Gravenhurst. Members of this club truly represent the very best of Friendship Force. They were kind, welcoming, and very interesting.

May 21 – Polly Antonelli

We had breakfast at our hotel then took 3 Ubers to Regan House. We were greeted by the FFLS Journey Coordinators Margie Sider and Connie Marr as well as several club members. Light refreshments were delightful.

Margie handed out lanyards and we all introduced ourselves.

Bob Bowles treated us to some history of Regan House, which he was instrumental in rebuilding. He also spoke about maple collection and processing.



Jay Ward is an Orillia City Councilor. He talked about some of the challenges of his job like the damage from a recent major ice storm and a record-breaking snowfall a month earlier. He also talked about some things he's proud of being involved in like 101 new affordable housing units for seniors, a climate change action group, and the city-wide garage sales to raise money for the affordable housing project.

Bob Bowles led a nature walk and gave lots of interesting information about the trees and flowers along the way. We were delighted to see trillium which is the official provincial flower of Ontario. It is delicate and has a short blooming season.

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May 22 – Marla Carr

On Thursday, May 22, our club visited the Canadian Muskoka Discovery Centre that was filled with historical artifacts and history about boating in the Great Lakes and the Muskoka Indian tribe. We had a great tour guide and speaker who shared his personal information about his tribe.

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May 24 – Jo Fenu

For me the Day started, by getting dropped off, by my lovely Home Host, Connie Irish, to the home of Connie Marr (Home Host to Darlene Blake-Beers. We rode together to Coldwater where we joined with the rest of our Group at Big Chute. The Tour was led by the very knowledgeable, FF Lake Simcoe Journey Director, Jon Wagner.







Despite the rain and cold temperature conditions, I along with the rest of the group enjoyed learning about Trent-Severn-Waterway. Chute, meaning Rapids. "Big Chute Marine Railway." And, this impressing system of transport, much used today.



This is an abbreviated version of the journey journal. To read the complete journey, contact Ginny Renda.

Journey Updates

FF Kōriyama withdrew as a host for the Japan journey but Journey Director Mike Davis continues to work with the FF Saitama and FF Twin-Cities to determine dates and potential additional travel. Once that is done, applications for the Ambassador Coordinator will be accepted. Work on the domestic 2026 Journeys will follow and we'll need coordinators for those, too, so look for emails seeking applications in late summer-early fall.

| 2025 | | 2026 | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| FF Kansas IB August 11-17 | FF Shelby NC OB October 10-15 | FF Saitama OB May – April ? | FF New Mexico OB May? | Quilting Special Journey | FF S. Oregon IB July? |
| Alice Rasmussen and Nancy Lundstrom Co-Host Coords | Pat Headley Ambassador Coord Wait list only | Dates, additional travel, and coordinator TBD | Dates and coordinator TBD | Board approval needed. Dates TBD | Dates and coordinator TBD |

| Reservations for FF Kansas (Wichita) Inbound Journey | | | | |
|--|--|----------------------|----------|----------|
| Activities Open to Members | | | | |
| Date & Time | Activity | Cost | # people | Total \$ |
| Mon, Aug 11 5:30 pm | Welcome Potluck (<i>bring dish to share</i>) Ankeny First United Methodist Church 206 SW Walnut St, Ankeny 50023 --North entrance | free | | |
| Wed, Aug 13 10:00 am | World Food Prize Hall of Laureates tour 100 Locust Street, Des Moines 50309 | free | | |
| Wed, Aug 13 2:00 pm | Iowa State Capitol Tour 100 Locust Street, Des Moines 50309 | free | | |
| Thurs, Aug 14 10:30 am | Terrace Hill Tour (<i>bring photo ID</i>) 2300 Grand Avenue, Des Moines 50312 | \$5 | | |
| Thur, Aug 14 12:30 pm | Lunch at Hugo's and Hydroponic Farm Tour 3206 University Avenue, Des Moines 50311 <i>Park at rear of building</i> | Pay for own lunch | | |
| Thur, Aug 14 7:30 pm | The Perfect Rendezvous The Musical (<i>Hosts only</i>) Ankeny Community Theater 1932 SW 3rd St, Ankeny 50023 | \$15 | | |
| Sat, Aug 16 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm arrival | Farewell Dinner at Wallace Farm 2773 290th Street, Orient 50858 Speaker at 5:00, pork loin dinner at 5:30 pm. Activities: walking trail with 80 prairie paintings, gift shop, gardens, and barn. | \$26 | | |
| Name(s) | | total | | |
| DUE AUG 1 | Make checks payable to FFGDM and mail with the form to: Alice Rasmussen, 1159 SW Hardwick LN, Ankeny, IA 50023 | | | |

Activities

Alliance Française of Central Iowa
invites Friendship Force Members and friends . . .



Bastille Day Fête Potluck

Monday, July 14

5:00 - Doors open
5:30 - Brief program
Dinner follows

Ding Darling Shelter

Birdland Park * 2100 Saylor Road * Des Moines

The celebration will include a pétanque tournament, French accordion music, and plenty of food. There will be prizes for the best French dish so be sure to enter yours in the contest.

The Alliance will provide roast pork, baguettes, and tableware. We hope you'll bring your enthusiastic selves and a dish to share. You may bring beer or wine in non-glass containers.

Questions? Pat W at westphalp@central.edu

Making Friends at the Animal Rescue League

Thirteen members toured the Animal Rescue League of Iowa on Tuesday, May 13. CEO Tom Colvin presented a introductory slide show and took questions before the guided tour. Tom was particularly proud of the success of the TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) project, which means altering, vaccinating, ear-tipping feral and community cats, and returning healthy cats to their "home" areas.

The presentation and tour impressed members with the size of the operation which includes Clowder House for cats and a farm



(down the road) for horses, sheep, pigs and other farm animals.

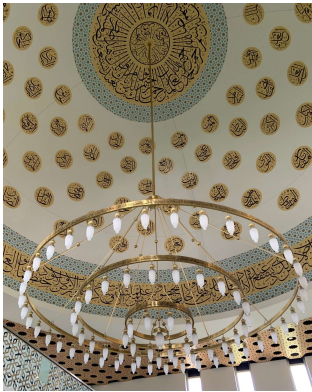
The main building includes a training area, gift shop, "meet and hug" rooms for potential adoptions,

laundry facility with commercial quality machines, a grooming shop, many rooms dedicated to various levels of medical care, and 5 veterinarians. There are also interns from the ISU School of Veterinary Medicine who help out. For more information, check out <https://www.arl-iowa.org/>

FFGDM made a cash donation to the ARL and members made personal donations of cash or needed items. Thanks to Karen Kilpatrick and Shelley Bain for organizing the pre-tour lunch at Smokey D's and the ARL tour.

Islamic and Cultural Center Bosniak Tour

Members toured the mosque and cultural center, cemetery, and funeral building on June 9. Our guide,



Elvedin Sivac, proudly explained the history of the buildings and that all the money raised and most of the labor came from within the Bosnian community. Elvedin, a carpenter, used oak and walnut wood throughout the building to emphasize the traditional designs.



We also learned Bosnian Muslim funeral traditions that emphasize simplicity, modesty, and reverence for the deceased. Key practices include a ritual washing, shrouding the body in plain white cloth, and a funeral prayer. The burial, usually within 24 hours of death, is straightforward, with the unembalmed body placed in a simple grave, facing Mecca, and the grave marked with a modest headstone and footstone. FFGDM made a cash donation to the center.

Thank you to Gail Sheridan Lucht who coordinated the activity.

All-Iowa FF Picnic

Our club hosted the All-Iowa Friendship Force Picnic at the Machine Shed on Saturday, June 28. Sixty people attended, representing all four Iowa clubs. It was a time to reacquire with members of other clubs and learn about their club journeys and activities. Regional Rep Connie Williams (*right*) shared the latests news from FFI.



Some members brought items for a silent auction benefitting the Food Bank of Iowa – we raised \$469.



Thank you to our volunteers – Greeters Elaine and Alice; Check In Gail and Cathy; Photographer Gene; Auctioneers Janette, Carol, Carmie and Anita; Door Prize Coordinator Darlene; Picnic

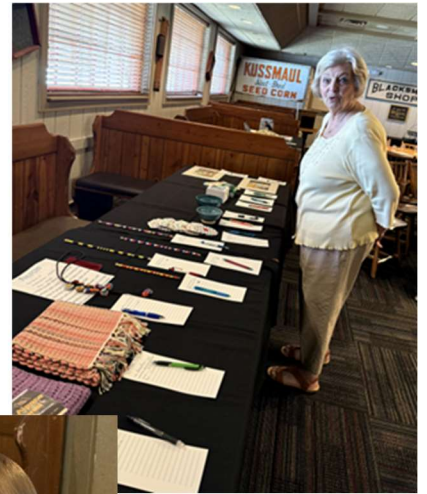
Coordinators Ginny and Shelley – and those who brought items for the silent auction.
Nancy (right) checking out the auction items.

Thank you to club leaders – Alta Byg, Barb Jacobsen, Judy Minor, and Deb Steele who did a great job encouraging their members to attend and also representing their clubs.

We look forward to next year – in the Quad-Cities.



Working the ice beaker – Art Bingo (left)



Avalon enjoying lunch.



Member News

*Welcome
New Member*

Tina Heinen
tinaheinen4014@gmail.com

Christkindlmarket Tree Planning

All crafty members or crafty-wannabees are invited to help plan our club's tree on July 10 from 5-7 pm in the Conference Room at the Urbandale Library.

If you can attend, let Pat H know at
headleypatricia651@gmail.com.



Special Interest Groups

Friends Game Night

We launched our newest social club – Friends Game Night. The plan is to meet the third Friday evening of the month. Gail is coordinating the club so let her know if you are interested at gail.lucht@gmail.com.



Mahjong Club The Mahjong Club meets twice a month on Friday at 1:00 pm, usually at Sally's clubhouse. If you are interested in learning this intriguing game, 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. 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 meets the first Wednesday of every month at 11:30 AM. Contact Christine at 1ordmco@gmail.com.

Table of Friends Table of Friends dines the third Thursday of the month at 6:00 pm. 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. Contact coordinator Connie Walters at yourfriendconnie@gmail.com for more information.

| DATE | MEMBER | TITLE | AUTHOR | SETTING |
|--------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 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 |

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
 Pat Headley
headleypatricia651@gmail.com
 Karen Kilpatrick
karenkilpatrick@gmail.com

Alice Rasmussen - Membership
off4ever@aol.com
 Ginny Renda
rendaginny@gmail.com

Task & Committee Leaders

Mike Davis – Journey Director
mjdavisconsulting@gmail.com
 Marla Carr – Activities Co-Chair
marlakarr@yahoo.com
 Nancy Lundstrom – Activities Co-Chair
nancy.lundstrom@reesassociates.com

Social Clubs

Christine McQuillen – Lunch Friends
1ordmco@gmail.com
 Sally Merritt – Mahjong Club
merritt69_99@yahoo.com
 Ginny Renda – Table of Friends
rendaginny@gmail.com
 Gail Sheridan Luchts – Friends Game Night
gail.lucht@gmail.com
 Pat Westphal – Friends of the Arts
WestphalP@central.edu
 Connie Walters – Book Friends
yourfriendconnie@gmail.com