



friendship force
SARASOTA

a world of friends is a world of peace



friendship force
international



Happy September. Wow the summer has flown by. Many are returning to our soggy area (have you built an ark yet?), and many are taking off for parts unknown. If you're in town, don't forget our first meeting after summer hiatus is **Wed, Sept 3, 6:00 pm at the Fruitville Library.** Come early and socialize. We have a delightful program presented by our own Chris Johnes. Her topic is: *'Keepin it Wild'*,

Exploring Sarasota County Park and Habitats. She has great knowledge and is an avid observer of our local flora and fauna with beautiful photos and insider tips on our many natural resources.



We have a jam-packed newsletter so please read through it.

1. Did you receive our first ever **'pictorial' directory**? We are so pleased with the job Community Media of Venice Island did in printing the booklets. So nice to see faces of our friends. A few directories were returned, and we've corrected addresses and remailed. If you have a change or correction, please email ffsrq@outlook.com. Unbelievably, it costs more to mail than to actually print. Directory updates are on page 4 of the newsletter. Please pencil them into your new directory.
2. **Social Committee**-Kay Consigny is hosting a meeting at her place to fill in our calendar for dinner, games, events and other fun stuff on **Tues, Sept 2, 3 pm**. See her address in Turtle Rock in your directory. You must contact Kay (if you haven't already) if you're planning to attend as she must put your name in her security gate. If you can't be at the meeting, please submit your ideas or event you are willing to host/organize with your suggested date and time. Thanks again for your support. We'll be updating our calendar as events are confirmed.
3. Abe Lederman, our membership chair, has organized a **Christmas Spectacular Tour of the Stetson Mansion in DeLand, 12:30 PM, Friday, December 12**, Deadline to purchase is Aug 31. This is Florida's first luxury home and the grandest home ever built in Florida during the 19th century! Built in **1886** by famed hat maker and philanthropist John B. Stetson, his winter retreat was the only richly detailed "Gilded Age" estate built in Florida. It has been restored and updated in a timeless fashion. <https://www.stetsonmansion.com/>



DeLand is about 180 miles from Sarasota, **about a 3-hour drive**. The visit to the Stetson Mansion can be made in a day, or one can plan to stay overnight in DeLand. Abe encourages car-pooling and can help facilitate. 12 tickets are available to visit the Mansion **at \$48 each**. To reserve a private tour of the Mansion, Abe purchased tickets in advance. **Questions? Call Abe at (505) 690-3271**. Your ticket is **not reserved until he receives payment**. Refund is available **ONLY** if someone takes your place. Bring your \$\$ to the Sept 3 meeting.

4. **FFI News: Recent change to the Travel Protection Plan offered by Friendship Force**

As a reminder, **all FF journeys require travel insurance**-domestic & intl from any insurance company. You must provide the policy number to the coordinator. The coordinator will deny your acceptance on the journey if you do not comply. The [Ambassador Application and Agreement form](#) includes the following statement: "I hereby agree to secure adequate travel and medical insurance for the duration of the journey."

Beginning Jun 1, 2025, the travel insurance policy that we offer **for US residents** will be changing. The new policy is also underwritten by Nationwide Insurance, but we no longer have access to a *custom* group policy. The coverage is similar, and the price is comparable. There are even some new benefits that the old policy didn't offer.

The payment for premiums will now be collected by Trawick International, the benefits coordinator for this plan. The Confirmation of Coverage will be sent by Trawick International. As with the old plan, the Safe Travels Journey plan is available to both Friendship Force members and their friends and family and can be used for **Friendship Force travel or personal travel**.

<https://helpcenter.friendshipforce.org/help/which-insurance-policies-are-offered-by-ffi/> (must be logged in) **To get a quote for the new travel protection plan, click [here](#)**.

5. **A number of you have expressed interested in going to the North American Conference ~ Memphis, April 24-27, 2026; Our club will cover your registrations fees for board members.**

- Friday 24th-Registration Day
- Saturday 25th-Full day of opening plenary, speakers, workshops
- Sunday 26th -AM: Field Rep breakout sessions, PM: Excursions
- Monday 27th- Check out
- Hyatt Centric Hotel-33 Beale Street
- Registration will open on September 1, 2025-up to 400 people

6. **Festival on the Mississippi ~ Please Join Us! April 28 - May 6, 2026.** Friendship Force International sailing on the Mississippi River from Memphis to New Orleans on the American Splendor Paddle-wheeler. Questions? Contact Louisiana Journey Coordinator Bob Duncan at mardigrasbob@hotmail.com, <https://friendshipforce.myshopify.com/products/festival-on-the-mississippi-26256?variant=50038865199410>

7. **Journeys 2025 and 2026-Judi Stratton, Journeys Coordinator**

1. **Inbound Nov 4-9, 2025** from Lincoln, NE, Carol Hagglund, Host Coordinator, there will be signup sheets at the meeting. We still need day hosts and someone to put together our 'gift' bags. Thanks

to our volunteers for home hosts and the committee chairs and teams. Awesome job. We'll have RSVP forms for the activities in Sept.

2. **Outbound** March or April **2026** to 26277 FF Alajuela, Costa Rica to be scheduled. This club was on our requested 2026 destinations. Abe Lederman is Ambassador Coordinator. Link to Feb 2025 journey from Baton Rouge to Alajuela. <https://friendshipforcebatonrouge.org/2025-outgoing---alajuela-costa-rica.html>
3. **Outbound** October 4-11, **2026**. Ft Worth (rescheduled from Helene and Milton in 2024). Debbie Kuhns, Ambassador Coordinator.
4. **Inbound** Nov ?, **2026** 26094 Banjarmasin, Indonesia. Our club visited Banjarmasin in 2019. Terri Holsinger Host Coordinator.
5. **To see journeys from around the world, you must login to FFI Member Portal.** <https://my.friendshipforce.org/?locale=en> Additionally, there are many independent journeys where you're invited by an individual to visit their city/country: NZ, Brazil, CT, MI, Tanzania, OH, TX, CAN, Quebec, Germany, Japan, Switzerland, Mexico. For all journeys, you must be a member of any club and/or FFI, have travel insurance and sign a mobility waiver.
6. **Welcome new members Vera Crenshaw, Ellenton.** She moved here from SC. She is an author, and her books are on Amazon about her experiences escaping the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia during the Pol Pot era 1975-79.



7. **Upcoming Meetings and Events: Mark Your Calendars**

Fri, Aug 29, 1 pm, Film Talk
Wed, Sept 3, 6:00 pm (room open at 5:00 for socializing) —General meeting at the Fruitville Library, Program with Chris Johnes, <i>Keepin it Wild</i> , Exploring Sarasota County Park and Habitats.
Mon, Sept 15, 10 am, Book Club , New College on the water. <i>The Japanese Lover</i> , Isabel Allende
Wed, Oct 1, 2025, 6:00 pm (room open at 5:00 for socializing) —General meeting at the Fruitville Library; Abe Lederman and team presenting on their outbound to AUS/NZ. An amazing month.
Mon, Oct 20, 10 am Book club, New College on the water. <i>The Choice: Embrace the Possible</i>
Fri, Oct 31, 1:00 Film Talk, email will go out a few days prior to announce movie.
Tues, Nov 4-9, Inbound Lincoln, Nebraska, Carol Hagglund Host Coordinator.
Wed, Nov 5, Noon FF Welcome Luncheon, First Congregation United Church of Christ, Syster Hall
Mon, Nov 17 10 am, Book Club, New College on the water. <i>Enter Ghost</i> , Isabella Hammad
Fri, Nov 28, 1 pm, Film Talk email will go out a few days prior to announce movie.
Wed, Dec 3, 5:00, Holiday Dinner Party, Bevardi's Salute Restaurant, RSVP email coming
Mon, Dec 15, 10 am, Book club, New College on the water. Socialize & choose 2026 Books
Fri, Dec 26, 1 pm, Film Talk, email will go out a few days prior to announce movie.

8. **We need greeters, meeting hosts and someone to run the projector** as Bob Joyce has officially retired after 14 years of being AV for our club. PLEASE volunteer to help with these important jobs required at every meeting. We need someone to run the projector for October meeting and greeters and meeting host for October meeting. Nov and December have no meetings. Sign-up sheets at the meeting or email ffsrq@outlook.com



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