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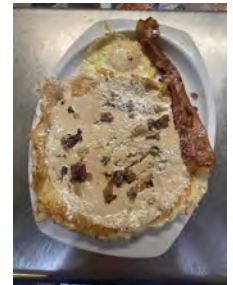


2026 CALENDAR

- Jan 15, 11:30 am** - MEG - Starduster, Independence (p 1)
Jan 18, 2 pm - Club Gathering CPI Bldg, Philomath (p 1)
Feb 3, noon - Callner/Minette Friendship Shared (p 4)
April 16-22 - Charlotte NC outbound journey (p 4)
April 24-27 - N Amer. FFI Conference, Memphis TN (p 6)
April 28 - May 6 - FFI Festival Cruise (p 6)
May 6 - 10 - FFI New Orleans tour
Sept 9 - 15 - Raleigh NC Inbound Journey - *we need a lead journey coordinator or coordinators*

Jan 15 MEG - Starduster Cafe - Independence

We will begin 2026 with a Meet, Eat and Get Acquainted at an old favorite, the Starduster Cafe in Independence - 4705 Airport Rd, Independence, OR 97351 - 11:30 am meeting time. You can watch people pull a plane out of their garage and fly away while eating a late breakfast or lunch. They have an amazing menu of food items, some that you will only find on their menu. If you already know now that you will be able to attend and have not done so already, please send an email or call MariAnna Biegel or Carolyn Powers to let them know. It helps them coordinate with restaurant staff.



General Gathering - Jan 18 - Philomath

A few days after the MEG, we will hold our first general gathering of the new year. We will meet at 2 pm on Jan 18 in the Community Room of the Consumer Power Building in Philomath - 6990 W Hills Rd, Philomath. We will conduct general club business - planning for this year's journeys - and are hoping to hear a presentation from another OSU international scholar. Club members with last names A-M are asked to bring snacks to share. Everyone should bring their own beverage. Our thanks to CPI for allowing free use of this meeting space - a true community service.



*This Issue of Connections, and more information about our club,
 can be found on our website: <http://www.fforegon.org>
 Contact us at: FFOMWV@gmail.com or PO Box 1703, Albany, Oregon 97321*

President's Message

Happy New Year!

New Year, New Beginnings! New Adventures!

Do you have some ideas for recruiting new members? Your club Board members would appreciate hearing those ideas.

Do you know of an organization that might need a speaker? We have members who would be willing to make short presentations about Friendship Force. Let's make 2026 a year of growth for our club and a year of getting our mission of peace out to a broader audience.

Friendship Force has a new project underway: a course in Global Citizenship. More news on this undertaking to come.



Dec 16 MEG Report

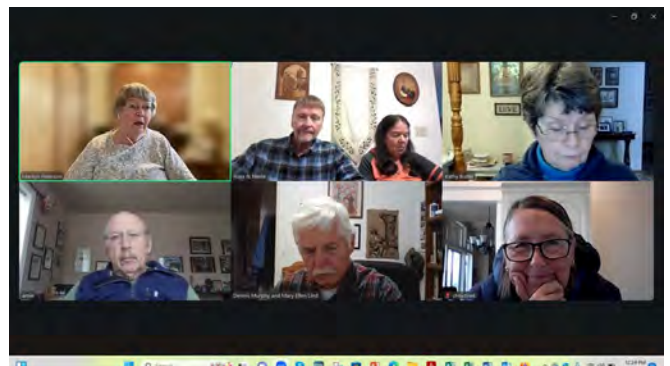
Our Dec 16 MEG (meet, eat and get acquainted) was held at a new location - Loafers Restaurant in Albany. The group was small but per usual had wide ranging, enjoyable conversations. The menu was varied and food good. Carolyn Powers has hosted international students for decades and brought Ali, her current Saudi Arabian "son" to meet the group.



Board Meetings

The date for the next FFOMWV Board meeting is Wed Jan 14 at 12:30 pm. All meetings are held by ZOOM. All current and prospective club members are welcomed to participate. If interested, call or send an email to President Marilyn Peterson and she will send you the ZOOM link.

Last board meeting screen shot



Friendship Shared 2026

'Tis the season of Friendship Shared 2026 (FS26). What is Friendship Shared? Created by Cheeri and Van Nichols many years ago, Friendship Shared has been a significant and delightful way to raise money for charities by hosting small group gatherings for members and friends. The recipients of the donation will be chosen by those attending the event. As your FS26 facilitators (Eileen and Barb), we intend to make these experiences as easy, smooth, and enjoyable as possible by fine-tuning guidelines and to-do lists for ourselves, hosts, and guests. Here are three new FS26 features:

- Friendship Shared event opportunities will be available all year.
- Sign-up to attend the events will be at meetings, and paid for at that time.
- Cost for guests to attend an event will be \$20 donation. A person will not be included at an event, until they have paid.

To-Do Lists for Eileen and Barb

- We will collect host applications via email from prospective hosts
- We will promote hosted events in newsletters and also emails at least a week before meetings.
- At meetings, we will provide sign-up sheets to attend events.
- We will collect \$20 donation from each guest.
- We will stay in close contact with hosts about their event attendance.

To-do Lists for Wannabee Hosts

- Email your event applications to Eileen by January 11. Then we can promote the events in a notice to club members before the Jan. 18 meeting. We will be accepting applications throughout the year. (See model of our event application at end of this article)
- After receiving lists of guests, communicate with them about their specific needs, (food allergies, etc.)
- Keep Eileen and Barb updated with any host concerns.

To-do Lists for Event Guests

Watch newsletters for information on up-coming FS26 events.

Be ready at the meetings to sign up and pay for your chosen events.

If unable to come to the meetings, contact Eileen by phone or email at least two weeks before the event, to sign up and make the donation.

Once you have paid, keep in close contact with Hosts.

Thank you in advance for helping us make FS26 terrific!
Please feel free to contact us via email or phone if you have questions, comments and/or of course, compliments. 😊 !!

Eileen Minette

Barb Callner

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)



Friendship Shared (Continued)

Please use the format below to sign up for your host event and email to Eileen at least a week before the next meeting, Jan. 18 2026, so we can publi-cize your event.

Friendship Shared Events – Host Signup

Event (description)	Date and Time	Location	Number of <i>guests</i>
Hosted by:	Contact email	Phone/Text	Notes/comments



An example of a host event application for Barb and Eileen hosting in Feb.

Event (description)	Date and Time	Location	Number of <i>guests</i>
Soup, Salad, and a Smile- Stimulating Game!	Tuesday Feb. 3, 2026 High Noon	Barb's House 1200 Sher-wood PI Albany 97321	Six guests
Hosted by:	Contact email	Phone/text	Notes/comments
Barb Callner Eileen Minette			

Charlotte NC Outbound April 16-22 - Still Possible to Come Along

Plans are shaping up for our club's visit to Charlotte, NC. The dates are April 16 - 22, 2026. Now, is the time for you to complete your ambassador application and send it to Marilyn Peterson. Kathy and Marilyn will also accept hard copy applications sent by USPS. Here is where you find the online application:

helpcenter.friendshipforce.org

If you fill out the application online using the Google form, the application will automatically be mailed to Marilyn. We must have your applications by January 15 in order for Diann Norwood, Charlotte JC to complete the matching. We've have had interest from other clubs and want to fill this journey. Diann has some interesting activities planned for us. If you need an application emailed/handed to you, let Kathy or Marilyn know, and we will send or deliver one to you.

The cost of the Journey will be between \$600 and \$700 plus airfare and insurance. Speaking of airfare - getting to the eastern US probably means a flight which leaves on April 15, arriving on April 16.

Please contact either Kathy Butler or Marilyn Peterson with questions about this journey or the process.



Dec 7 Holiday Party Snapshot

Eighteen club members participated in our club holiday party at the Mennonite Village Lakeside Center in Albany. The Center was decorated for the holidays with a tree and overhead lights. We added our own red and green table cloths (thanks Kathy Butler) and seasonal center pieces thanks to MariAnna and Craig Biegel and Carolyn Powers. Dennis Murphy served as MC, Nancy Hoecker told a wonderful small world story connected to a recent FFI trip (reconnecting with a high school friend in Oregon through a FFI connection in Australia), MariAnna guided us through a fun filled gift exchange (wine, foods, books, a small quilt, electric candles, etc.), and Chris Duval led us in holiday song. Per usual food and conversation were plentiful and grand. The party was a great launch for the holiday season.





Registration is still available for the April 24-27 North American Regional Conference. Log into MyFF to register. The conference hotel is full but other accommodations are available nearby. A number of our club members plan to attend the conference and also go on the river cruise to follow.

Sign into your MyFF account to find out more about the NA Conference, to view other events and to pay your 2026 dues.



2026 FFI Dues - Directly Paid to FFI - none due to FFOMWV

Now is the time to pay your annual dues to Friendship Force. Log into my.friendshipforce.org using your login (email address and password). Once you are logged into the myFFI site, there is a button in the upper right corner of the screen to renew your membership. You'll receive an email acknowledging the payment. You may pay monthly (\$8.33) or annually (\$100) There are no credit card fees.

For 2026 FFOMWV is not charging club dues.

If you have problems logging in, let Marilyn know. We'll get you some help. There will be assistance available at our January 18 gathering if needed.

New Membership Form



Your board is asking all members, old and new, to please fill out the new membership form on pages 7 and 8 of this newsletter. As you will see in reading the form, we want to gather current information on the areas in which you wish to be involved with our club. The form can be returned to any board member or to our the club at: FFOMWV, PO Box 1703, Albany, OR 97322. ***Do not send in any dues payment to our club for 2026.*** FFI dues will be paid directly to FFI online.



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

**a world of friends
is a world of peace**

(Must be completed by *each* new member. Sometimes couples have different contact information and participation interests.)

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-Mail _____

My primary interest is: Hosting Traveling Both Other _____

I understand the primary purpose & mission of Friendship Force of Oregon's Mid-Willamette Valley is to promote international understanding by conducting people-to-people homestay programs with other Friendship Force Clubs.

Signed _____ Date _____

Local dues are waived for 2026. FFI dues will be \$100 paid *via FFI portal*
Dues include name badge for new members. Replacement badges will be charged at cost. **PRINT CLEARLY EXACTLY HOW YOU WANT YOUR NAME TO APPEAR ON YOUR BADGE**

We are glad you have joined FFOMWV!

Sign up online at my.friendshipforce.org using your email address. If you need help with the myFFI website, contact any club officer.

Tell us about yourself: to know each other, we spotlight members in our Newsletter. This may help you get started: How long have you lived in Western Oregon? What other places have you lived? How did you learn about FFOMWV? What is your current career? Are you retired? If so, what was your former career? What are your hobbies and/or interests? Tell us what places you have visited or places you would like to visit? Do you enjoy hosting friends and/or family in your home? Do you have pets in your home? If so, tell us about them. Share anything of interest about yourself and/or your family.

Completed application with payment may be mailed to FFOMWV, PO Box 1703, Albany OR 97321 or can be given to any club officer at an upcoming meeting or club event.

Email biographical information and photo to our club address: ffomwv@gmail.com

FOR TREASURER'S USE ONLY

DATE JOINED _____

PIN _____

BADGE ORDERED _____

Invitation to Members to Participate in FFOMWV Activities

The Friendship Force of Oregon's Mid-Willamette Valley Board of Directors would like to know which of the following committees/projects you would be willing to work with. Please check those of interest!

Home Host – This involves hosting an individual(s) or a couple for 4 – 6 nights. You'll have a chance to “open your home and heart” to share our culture by providing some meals, transportation to planned activities, and companionship to your guests. We need to know bedroom configuration(s) - twin bed(s), double, queen or king beds and whether your ambassador(s) would have their own bathroom?

Day Host — This is another way to be actively involved in a journey. Having a day host gives the home host more flexibility. A day host is a great way to join in and get to know our ambassadors. You could be a driver for a planned activity or one of your choosing. Day hosts can also drive the ambassador(s) to an overnight for a planned activity such as staying at the coast for one night.

Small Group Dinner Host — During the week of a journey while we are hosting ambassadors, we plan small dinner gatherings (6 – 8 persons) in several members' homes. YOU decide the number you can accommodate as well as the menu. You can ask a non-hosting member to help you with dinner preparations or to furnish a menu item.

Journey Planning — Members' input is essential for planning each of our journeys. The group that makes the plans for the week's activities is that journey's committee. New people bring fresh ideas to the journey activities.

Journey Coordinator – The coordinator works with the Journey Planning committee to finalize the journey itinerary, develops a budget to charge the ambassadors, and is the main contact to the journey coordinator from the other club. The Journey Coordinator makes all necessary reservations for the planned activities.

Event planning — We are looking for new and interesting ideas and a group of individuals to plan and carry them out. Many hands make light work in setting up/cleaning up, organizing food details, theme-decorations, and entertainment. This ad hoc group plans special events such as the annual holiday party. You don't need to commit to helping with every event, but a few extra hands at each event is helpful.

Membership Recruitment and Retention — Welcomes new members and greets attendees at club events. Plans annual new member training.

Public Relations — Secures media coverage of both incoming and outgoing journeys as well as special events. Submits information to local media of upcoming events.

Programming — Assists the Vice President secure programs for membership gatherings and for other events as needed. Determines equipment needs and assists in securing equipment for programs.

Meet, Eat and Get Acquainted (MEG) – Organizes monthly get togethers at local restaurants. Makes reservations at the restaurant and sends out a notification to all members. Informs the newsletter editor of the time, date, and location so the information can be put in the newsletter.

Friendship Shared – Assists members in organizing events such as lunch, happy hour, etc. in their homes and helps them set a price to charge people who sign up for their event. Money earned at these events is donated to the charity that the people attending the event vote on.

Newsletter — Provides content for the Newsletter as requested by the newsletter editor and/or assists in creation.

Your 2026 Leadership Team

Board Members

President	Marilyn Peterson
Vice-President	Ruth Wyse
Secretary	Marla Karow
Treasurer	Chris Kastella
Journey Organizer	Chris Duval
Newsletter/Archives	Russ Karow

Activity Leads

Friendship Shared	Barb Callner Eileen Minette
Internet Communications	Marilyn Peterson
MEG Coordinators	Carolyn Powers Marianna Biegel
Sunshine Committee	Mary Ellen Lind

2026 Journey Coordinators

April 17-22 - Charlotte NC outbound - Marilyn Peterson and Kathy Butler
Sept 9-15 - Raleigh NC inbound - coordinators needed!

Viruses And Our Club

As you are likely aware from personal experience or that of friends, an array of viruses are circulating in our communities - flu, norovirus, COVID, RSV, and even measles in some parts of the US. The effects of these viruses vary significantly for individuals and can result in hospitalization in some cases. Your board encourages all of the members of our community to get the whole array of vaccines available to you if no other medical conditions prevent or make it dangerous. We encourage you to wear a mask in crowded situations. It is one of the best forms of protection available to all of us. Along with the face masks, washing your hands especially after having been in crowded situations with unknown people. If you are not feeling well in even the slightest way, please do not attend club gatherings. We have a number of members with medical conditions of various sorts - many of us are of that age. We all need to do our very best to protect ourselves and each other in every way that we can.

