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- 8 - Membership form; July 19 summer picnic
- 9 - 2026 Club Board; club virus policy



2026 CALENDAR

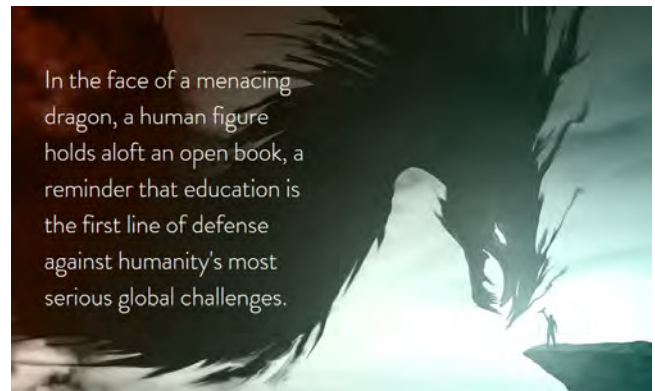
- Mar 11, 4 pm** - board meeting (p 2)
Mar 21, 10 am - Peace Studies event & MEG (p 1)
April - no general gathering given travel commitments
April 16-22 - Charlotte NC outbound journey (p 2)
April 24-27 - North Amer. FFI Conference, Memphis
April 28 - May 6 - FFI Festival Cruise
May 6 - 10 - FFI New Orleans tour
May 17, 2 pm - general gathering, CPI Philomath (p 2)
July 19, noon - club summer picnic, Avery Park (p 8)
Sept 9 - 15 - Raleigh NC Inbound Journey - **we need a host coordinator or coordinators** (p 4)
Oct 4 - 11 - FFI Festival at Sea (p 6)

Peace Studies Event - Mar 21

Given the FFI initiative to become more active in peace initiatives around the world, our FFOMWV group is planning to learn more about the Peace Studies program at OSU and Peace Literacy Institute located in Corvallis. We will determine whether there are things we can do locally to help with peace seeking and promotion. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis is our cosponsor. The Rotary clubs in Corvallis, OSU Retirement Association and other similar groups have been invited to attend.

Please mark your calendar for Saturday March 21, 10 – 12 at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Corvallis - 2945 NW Circle Blvd. Dr. Linda Richards (OSU Peace Studies Program Coordinator) and Dr. Shari Clough with the Peace Literacy Institute (www.peaceliteracy.org) will speak with us. Following these background presentations, we will explore ideas for how interested local people can engage and support these programs.

MEG (Meet, Eat and Get Acquainted) lunches will be held after this event. Current thought is to have people self-organize after the meeting as we do not know how many people will attend and if you want to take others with you to lunch. People could go different directions.



*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

FFOMWV is such an active group. We have MEG gatherings, Friendship Shared activities, fascinating speakers at our monthly gatherings.... Thank you all for helping make these and other club activities happen. We have new members. All because our members step up and make things happen.

We are looking for someone to be the contact Journey Coordinator for our September visit from Raleigh, NC. Lots of the day to day event planning is already done or in process. We need someone to be the contact for our club and oversee the process. We even have a 'shadow' (learning the process) for the JC. Thank you, Linda Pierson. Please think about this opportunity and contact me if you might be interested or have questions.

Enjoy the beautiful spring flowers. See you all at the Peace Studies event on March 21.



Charlotte NC Outbound April 16-22

All the pieces are nearly in place for this journey. There are 10 ambassadors. Patricia Hoppa and Linda Pierson are on their first FF journey and Laraine Hicks is joining us from Pennsylvania. Several of the travelers are going early or extending their adventures after the Charlotte Journey. Marilyn, Kathy and others will share a report on their return.

Stowe Botanical Gardens Charlotte, NC



May 17 General Gathering, 2 pm - CPI Philomath

Our May general gathering will be on Sunday, May 17 at 2 pm in the community room at CPI - 6990 W Hills Rd, Philomath. We will conduct general club business - continued planning for this year's journeys, announcement of upcoming Friendship Shared events and MEGs, and will hear a presentation from International Mom's Group member Marina Memon, originally from Pakistan. 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 us to routinely use this space. This community service is appreciated. This is an open meeting, so invite your friends and neighbors.



Board Meetings

The date for the next FFOMWV Board meeting is Wed Mar 11 at 4 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 on secretary Marla Karow's computer



Feb 19 MEG Recap

A MEG (Meet, Eat and Get Acquainted) was held at Laughing Planet in downtown Corvallis on Feb 19. Thirteen club members were present including prospective member Sandy Olson. Laughing Planet specializes in “bowls” of many types, vegan to full on red meat. All were good. Conversations revolved around family happenings, planning for our July club picnic, winter plant care, travel, etc. A good time was had by all. Thanks to Carolyn and Marianna for their planning efforts.



John Wyse Has Died

As announced earlier, John Wyse died on Friday, February 13 after a short illness. Marilyn Peterson received word the week prior from Ruth Wyse that John had been placed in hospice. They had gone on a trip, he returned not feeling well, went to the doctor, was found to have undiagnosed cancer and associated kidney failure. While unexpected, as Ruth said in another email to Marilyn “Thankfully it was pain free and peaceful. It certainly was unexpected, but I cannot imagine a better final few weeks.” Two of the Wyse’s children were with Ruth at the time of John’s passing. We have not yet received any information on a memorial service. Cards/notes can be sent to Ruth at 124 NW 7th Street #412, Corvallis OR 97330. John was a long-time and active member of Friendship Force. He often had a hard time hearing what was going on but was always willing to engage in conversation, had a wicked sense of humor and a memorable laugh. He will be missed.



Friendship Shared Is Off and Running

A number of Friendship Shared events have already been held with more happening in the coming month:

- Feb 3 - soup, salad and smiles at Barb Callner's with cohost Eileen Minette
- Feb 27 - Mar 1 coast getaway hosted by Marla & Russ Karow
- Mar 17 - St Patrick's Day event hosted by Dennis Murphey & Mary Ellen Lind
- Mar 28 - Valentine's Day Revisited event at Chris Duval's
- Apr 1st - (no not April Fools) Irish Spring event at MariAnna & Craig Biegel's

These events are all fully booked. Given their success, we encourage you to consider an offering of your own. With spring approaching, an outing may be in appropriate. Perhaps a walk/hike somewhere with snacks provided. Perhaps lunch in your yard with the spring time blooms.

Contact Eileen Minette with your offering. They need this information - event de-scription, date/times, location, number of people accommodated and your contact information. Barb and Eileen will advertise and work with you on getting people signed up.



Feb 3 soup, salad and smiles at Barb Callner's

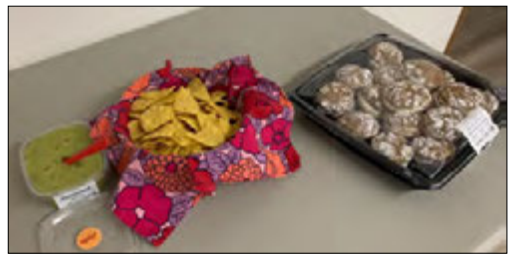
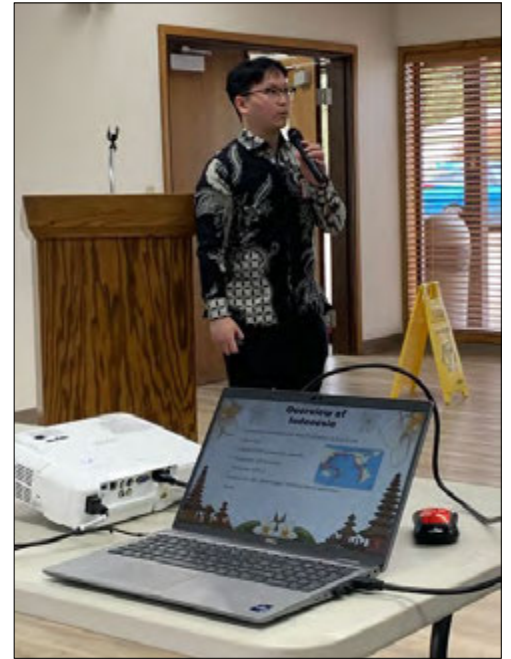
Raleigh NC Inbound Journey - Sept 9-15

Our club will host an inbound group from Raleigh North Carolina Sept 9-15. A planning team including Dennis Murphy, Mary Ellen Lind, Eileen Minette, Marilyn Peterson, Linda Pierson and Marla and Russ Karow are developing journey plans. **We still need someone to take the lead in being the primary contact for the Raleigh group.** Chris Duval has initially agreed to take on the task, but life got in her way and she is no longer able to lead this effort. Can you help?? Most of the initial planning work will be done for you. Contact Dennis Murphy if you are able to fill this leadership need for our club.



Feb 15 General Gathering Recap

Twenty club members gathered on Sunday the 15th for our February general gathering.



Introduction

- Born and raised in Jakarta, Indonesia
- Senior year in Finance at OSU
- Hobbies are: Badminton and eating





2026 Online Training For Leaders and Members

To view recordings from 2025, scroll down and click on the corresponding link.

Month	Training Topic	Presenter	Date/time	Registration link	Link to the recording
March	New Member Orientation	Satoshi Nagae, FFI Staff	3/12/2026 11:00 am eastern	https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6pJzaWnGQxiL3bsqpMZYAQ	
	The People of Friendship Force: Roles & Functions	Hemily Nogueira, FFI Staff	3/18/2026 11:30 AM eastern	https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6mF9735jJC4A	
	Independent Journeys General Club and Journey Q & A	Hemily Nogueira, FFI Staff Allison Lindsey, FFI Staff	3/23/2026 13:30 eastern TBD	https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6mF9735jJC4A	
April	Recruiting New Members	Hemily Nogueira, FFI Staff	4/1/2026 11:30 AM Brasilia Time	https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6mF9735jJC4A	
	Journey Coordinator Training	Hemily Nogueira, FFI Staff	4/6/2026 13:00 eastern	https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6mF9735jJC4A	
	New Member Orientation	Olga Dyakova, FFI Staff	4/09/2026 14:00 eastern	https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6mF9735jJC4A	
	General Club and Journey Q & A	Hemily Nogueira, FFI Staff	4/13/2026 13:00 eastern	https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6mF9735jJC4A	
May	New Member Orientation	Taryn Roberts, FFI Staff	5/20/2026 12:00 eastern	https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6mF9735jJC4A	
	Travel Insurance Q & A	Allison Lindsey, FFI Staff	5/7/2026 19:00 eastern	https://us06web.zoom.us/j/6mF9735jJC4A	

Sign into your MyFF account to find out more about these training sessions as well as other FFI online offerings.

Festival at Sea 2026

Join fellow FFI members from around the world for an unforgettable **Festival at Sea** as we explore one of the most remote and biologically rich regions on Earth — the breathtaking Great Bear Rainforest. This exclusive 7-day Friendship Force cruise sails roundtrip from Seattle, USA, to Ketchikan, Alaska, offering dramatic coastal scenery, incredible wildlife viewing, and meaningful connections with your global Friendship Force community.

Festival at Sea: The Great Bear Rainforest

Journey #: 26434 (MyFF)

Dates: 4–11 October 2026

Departure: Roundtrip from Seattle, USA

Spots Available: 80

Costs: Cabins start at \$1,084 per person plus additional \$225 FFI program fee. Oceanview, verandah, and suite options are available.

[For full details and to reserve your spot, please click here.](#)



Board Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2026

Present: Marilyn Peterson, Chris Kastella, Dennis Murphy, Russ Karow, Mary Ellen Lind, Chris Duval, Kathy Butler, and Marla Karow

Meeting called to order by President Marilyn Peterson at 3:04 pm.
Meeting was via zoom

November Board meeting minutes: November minutes resent earlier this week. Additional edit to these minutes was to add an 'a' after Chris Kastella's name. Minutes approved with this additional edit. The Board did not meet in December.

Treasurer's Report: Treasurer's report sent out. Funds have moved over to Oregon State Credit Union. Chris is working on getting linked up correctly between Quicken and OSCU.

President's Report:

Currently seven people have paid their membership dues. One person in Bend is having difficulty with the site. Tom Best is aware that there are issues. Marilyn will bring her iPad, and Russ his computer to the general meeting on Sunday to assist people with paying their membership fee. People need to pay their FFI dues by March 1.

The Outbound Destination Request Form for 2027 is due Feb 20. Due to the unknowns of international travel, the Board decided that our international outbound journey will be to the World conference in Strasbourg, France and the domestic journey will be to Birmingham, Alabama. Marilyn will fill out the form after consulting with members at the Sunday general meeting. She will also try to find out the date of the World conference. Members will be asked if there were additional journeys they would like tacked onto the 2027 journey to France and/or the journey to Birmingham, AL.

Journey Organizer report: Chris D will work with Dennis regarding the Raleigh, North Carolina journey as journey coordinators are still needed.

Charlotte, NC journey report: Marilyn and Kathy reported nine people have submitted ambassador forms and one is pending. Charlotte club can host 12 ambassadors. The journey will be opened regionally after Jan 23. Marilyn will send an email to Russ about journey, and he will send an email to members.

January 18 meeting:

Russ picked up the key for the CPI meeting room
Xiaodan Zheng from China will be the speaker. She belongs to the International Mother's group.
Installation of officers - Barb Callner will preside
Journey Organizer report
Update on Charlotte, NC journey
Russ will bring a sign-up sheet for the International Coffee at the Cultural Center
Russ will present information regarding partnering with Peace Studies to do a presentation.
Update from Barb Callner and/or Eileen Minette regarding Friendship Shared
Update from MariAnna Biegel and/or Carolyn Powers regarding MEG

Old Business: Russ has been in contact with Linda Richards who is with the Peace Studies Program regarding a shared event. Other groups who may be interested in participating are Rotary, Crossroads International, and Academy for Lifelong Learning. Possible dates include March 1, which is FF Friendship Day or March 21. Event would be in the morning and we would provide food. Need publicity as last year's event wasn't as well attended as hoped. Russ will check with the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship regarding space for the event.

New Business: Ruth has been looking for meeting venue in Salem. Their library is now charging for a room. The club has policy of donating \$50 for room rental. Russ will check with the Willamette Valley Vineyard regarding renting a room.

The club needs three administrators on the Friendship Force International websites. Currently Marilyn, Dennis and Chris D are listed as administrators. All agreed to continue in this role.

Discussion around whether people can participate in club activities if they haven't paid dues. Some long-time members who are no longer traveling or hosting but enjoy the socialization aspect may not want to pay the dues. Need consistent FFI policy regarding whether nonmembers can host throughout the FF clubs. Marilyn will contact Tom Best regarding the written policies.

February 15 meeting: Mennonite Village Lakeside Center large room. Marilyn will put article in Mennonite Village newsletter as the meeting is open to the Village residents. Russ has three possibilities for speakers.

March meeting: Event with Peace Studies would be in lieu of general meeting.

April meeting: There will not be a meeting due to the Charlotte journey and the FF conference in Memphis. Russ will ask the speaker Kara Hanson from Crossroads International if she can reschedule.

Next board meeting: February 11 at 4:00 pm

Meeting adjourned at: 4:22 pm

2026 Dues & New Membership Form

March 1 is the deadline for paying your 2026 FFI dues. If you need help paying online, we have a workaround. Please contact Marilyn Peterson **immediately** to use the alternative payment process or simply send a check to our post office box in the amount of \$100 per person made out to FFOMWV. The address is:

FFOMWV, PO Box 1703 Albany, OR 97321

Thank you to all of you who have paid your dues. FFI sustainability and future depend on our combined support of FFI both financially and in recognition of the purpose and mission of our organization. Membership status of those not renewing will be changed after March 1.



On a related note, if you have not already done so, your board is asking all members to please fill out the new membership form available by clicking [here](#). 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 at an upcoming event or can be mailed to the club at: FFOMWV, PO Box 1703, Albany, OR 97322.

Longtime members, while it may seem redundant, please complete the form so that we have information about your current club interests and capabilities.

While Still A Way Off - July 19 Summer Club Picnic

While summer is yet top of mind, reservations for summer picnic locations need to be made this time of year. Accordingly, your board has selected a date, time and place of our annual summer picnic - July 19, noon to 4 pm (food served at 12:30) at the Thompson Shelter in the SW section of Avery Park, Corvallis. This shelter has easy parking access, a cover for summer shade, electricity and sinks and bathrooms. Details on food and other activities will be planned later, but get the date on your calendar now!



Little Known Facts About St Patrick's Day (If you believe AI and the New York Times)

- ♣ St. Patrick was not Irish: Born in Britain in the late 4th century, he was kidnapped by Irish raiders as a teenager before later bringing Christianity to Ireland
- ♣ The Original Color Was Blue: Green was not associated with the holiday until the late 18th century; "Saint Patrick's blue" was the traditional color
- ♣ First Parade in America: The earliest St. Patrick's Day parade was held in 1601 in St. Augustine, FL not in Ireland
- ♣ Corned Beef is an American Invention: While bacon and cabbage were eaten in Ireland, Irish immigrants in the U.S. substituted it with cheaper corned beef
- ♣ Chicago River Dyes Green: Since 1962, Chicago has turned its river green using a secret formula, a tradition that started on March 12, 1955.
- ♣ No Snakes in Ireland: St. Patrick did not banish snakes from Ireland; it is widely believed that none ever existed there due to the climate.
- ♣ The Shamrock's Purpose: According to legend, St. Patrick used the three-leafed shamrock to explain the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit).

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.

