

Friendship Force



Memphis, TN

June 1, 2024

Changing the Way You See the World

<https://ffmem.com>



An Evening In the Country

General Meeting and Potluck Dinner (no alcoholic beverages)

Guest musician: Roger Pace, well-known local jazz saxophonist

June 13, 2024, 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

9125 Highway 196

Collierville, TN 38017

Invite prospective new members!

Please carpool as parking is limited.

RSVP to our host, Mike Farien

mfarien@reagan.com

Greetings from the President, Kathryn Gardner



Spring has been bustin' out all over here in the Memphis Friendship Force. Do you remember hearing the Rodgers and Hammerstein's famous song from Carousel—"June is Bustin Out all over?" It keeps playing in my head when I see magnolias, hydrangeas, azaleas, roses and other flowers galore at our wonderful Dixon Gardens, Botanic Gardens and in our own backyards.

April 8-10, eight FF members enjoyed a great trip to North Alabama, organized meticulously by Karen Bowyer and Richard Thomas. Thank you Karen and Richard for a wonderful time. Also, thank you Rick for the two breakfasts of shrimp and grits and omelettes. You are quite the chef! Geri Meltzer has written a nice article about the trip in this newsletter. I only want to add a couple of cuisine highlights in Florence, Alabama. We enjoyed salmon and gumbo in the revolving Hightower restaurant that overlooks superb views of the Tennessee River. The next day we ate veal Marsala with piping hot bread smothered in olive oil and perfect seasonings and wrapped in individual paper bags. Those meals beckon me to return!

April 11, twenty FF members attended our 2nd general meeting at Eggs Up Grill on Forest-Hill Irene in Germantown. We enjoyed great food, service and fellowship. Our excellent speaker, Collierville Chief of Police Dale Lane, informed us on the state of crime in Collierville and in the country, but inspired us



about the progress and success of many of the programs in which officers are involved. Thank you, Mike Farien, for arranging and presenting Chief Lane to our membership. He is a great example of an excellent police chief for anytime and anywhere.

Our 3rd general meeting on June 13th will be enjoyed at the lovely Tennessee country estate of Mike Farien. It will give us a chance to relax and enjoy a great pot luck feast, musical entertainment, and fellowship. We will also discuss our upcoming plans so please mark your calendars.

I can't wait to host our lovely guests from Calgary in late September. More about that inbound journey is included in our newsletter.

Don't forget to check <https://ffmem.com> for local info and contact Ray Rider, your Webmaster, if you need help with the Atlanta website or our local one. Did you know our theme song is "Let There Be Peace On Earth"? Check out the lyrics and music on You Tube, so we can all burst forth in song at the next general meeting.

Rick Thomas has been planning our LEO's-Let's Eat Out and has done an excellent job. Shirley Kincaid and Carolyn Pierce have graciously agreed to take responsibility for the upcoming LEO'S. If you have a suggestion for a great international restaurant you think the club would enjoy, let them know. We usually have 3 or 4 LEO's a year. May/April Showers bring more May flowers!

Alabama Jaunt by Geri Meltzer

We had a delightful trip to northern Alabama recently. After seeing the movie and battlefields at Shiloh National Park, we arrived at the railway crossroads in

Corinth, Mississippi. It was there we saw the eclipse of the sun with our special glasses.

Our destination was Florence, Alabama, where we toured the home of Helen Keller, WC Handy and a Usonian home by Frank Lloyd Wright. We spent the evening dancing to the music of studio musicians from FAME and our president sang "Crazy" à la Patsy Cline on stage.



W. C. Handy Home



The following day we toured the recording studios at Muscle Shoals where Aretha Franklin and Little Richard sang and recorded their hits! Our jaunt ended with a visit to Elvis' birthplace and

museum in Tupelo. It included an immersive experience at the Church of God in Christ where Elvis sang as a boy. Many thanks to Rick



Thomas and Karen Bowyer for arranging this tour! Participants included: Lynette Moore, Kathy Gardener, Rick Thomas, Geri Metzler, Joe Ventimiglia, Shirley Kincaid, and Karen Bowyer.



Journey Report, Rick Thomas and Karen Bowyer

The upcoming Inbound Journey – Calgary, Alberta to Memphis is September 29 – October 5, 2024. 12 Ambassadors are planning to travel to Memphis. Rick sent out an email on May 16, 2024, requesting assistance from FF Memphis members to serve as home hosts, day hosts or transporters. So far, Kathy Gardener, Karen Bowyer, Mary Bullard, and Carolyn and Woody Pierce have volunteered as home hosts.

Rick has also asked for activities for the Canadian Ambassadors. Last year for the Ambassadors from Lethbridge, Alberta the following activities were enjoyed by our guests in May of 2023: Dixon Gallery and Gardens tour, National Civil Rights Museum, Riverboat Tour, Beale Street Entertainment District, Cotton Museum, Crosstown Concourse, Memphis Zoo, Bass Pro Pyramid, Slavehaven Underground Railroad Museum, Rock 'n Soul Museum, Graceland (an optional activity), Huey's, and the St. Jude Children's Hospital Tour.

This year we plan to have home dinners for two or three Ambassadors and their home hosts in each group. Those of us who traveled to Sarasota and The Villages in February and March of 2023 enjoyed these dinners. We need volunteers to host these small dinner parties.

Travel Opportunity in August 2024: On May 16, 2024, Rick Thomas sent out an email to the FF Memphis membership to let them know about an overseas travel opportunity in August 2024. The trip is to visit Sri Lanka on Dec. 5-12. They have already had people sign up for this "special" program (that is open to any FF member). **Here is some information on the journey:** Known as the “Pearl of the Orient”, Sri Lanka is an island country in South Asia, located in the Indian Ocean

southwest of the Bay of Bengal. There are many unique activities planned during the 7 night Special Journey, that will allow you to experience Sri Lankan culture first hand such as: a workshop to learn the Sri Lankan Language (Sinhala), a workshop to learn traditional Batik clothing design, a visit to an Elephant Orphanage - Udawalawe and a Udawalawe Wildlife Safari, a visit to a gemstone mine, a tour of the Tsunami Memorial and the Hikkaduwa Tourist Beach City, a visit to Galle Fort (first built by Portuguese in 1588 and fortified by the Dutch in the 17th century), a boat safari on the “Madu Ganga” River, a visit to Kande Viharaya (one of the major Buddhist temples founded in 1737), a tea factory tour in Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon where we get Ceylon tea), a tour of a cinnamon plantation where you will learn about the role of cinnamon in Sri Lanka’s history, and a visit to a traditional Mask Museum in Ambalangoda.

Cost: \$815 (includes host fee of \$640 plus FFI fee of \$175) for a twin/double room and \$915 USD for a single room.

We will also be considering a 3-4 day extension at the end of the journey. To find additional information or to apply for the trip you must have an account at friendshipforce.org. It is easy to sign up but you must let the Memphis FF treasurer (Woody Pierce) know that you have applied for an account. If you have questions you can contact the following journey coordinators: Rick Thomas (901-485-0861) or assistant coordinator Karen Bowyer (731-297-7836).

Other Opportunities: FF North American Conference in Milwaukee is October 7-9, 2024. Karen Bowyer plans to attend. Another “Friendly Jaunt” in November 2024 is being discussed. Possible destinations are Nashville or Arkansas.

New Member Spotlight



Donna Flinn

Donna is married to Dr. Carl Flinn, “Buddy” , a pediatric ophthalmologist. Missy and Phillip are her grown children and they each have two children.

Donna has a West Highland White Terrier named Genevieve. She is a native Memphian and graduated from Lausanne School and earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Tennessee Memphis in Dental Hygiene and then an M.S. from Medical College of Georgia in Augusta, Ga., in Health Education. She enjoys

volunteering, hobbies, church, friends, and home. She looks forward to meeting “Les Bons Amis” of Friendship Force!

Maria Isabel and Mike Gross

(Article by Mike)

Maria is the most wonderful lady in the world! Before the economic collapse of Venezuela, she had a thriving ophthalmology clinic, many real estate holdings and sent her two sons through medical school, all as a single mother. After her arrival four years ago in North America, she has worked diligently to become fluent in English and soon, by the grace of God, she will become a naturalized citizen of the USA. She loves her reading and language groups and has many amazing friends she loves dearly. She is a grandmother of five exceptional grandchildren who love their “abuelita” very much! She loves to travel and, when her passport arrives we hope to see the world together.



Mike is no doubt the luckiest guy in the world. One evening Maria came to Mike's house to inquire about renting a room. The rest is history, as they say. We have been married three years and my Spanish gets better day by day. I now feel blessed to have a very large extended Venezuelan family and our mission is to help these wonderful immigrants anyway we can in their quest for a better life. I work full time as a sales manager for a large mechanical contracting company and have no plans to retire. I love fishing, skiing, tennis, playing guitar, singing and trying to make Maria laugh. I have two grown, incredible children and Maria and I share our five, "off the charts" grandchildren. Maria Isabel and I are looking forward to getting to know the great people of Friendship Force. Warmest regards to each of you!



Pat Hayden

Pat Hayden is a retired Insurance Industry Executive with over 20 years at Progressive Ins., Co. with other stints at Key Risk Management Services, ServiceMaster, Sedgwick Claims Management Services, Midland Risk Ins., Co. and the Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation. He managed six offices in Northeast Ohio and over 800 employees. He now owns a Painting Business.

Pat is the father of four grown children and seven grandchildren. He spends time traveling, gardening and serving in ministries at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Germantown, TN. Proclaiming God's word as a Lector, training all new Lectors, taking Communion to Nursing Facilities and Hospitals as a Eucharistic Minister and praying with those unable to attend Mass are the ministries closest to his heart. He has facilitated the

"Careers In Transition" group at Our Lady for over 20 years, assisting those in job searches. He is also a member of the Knights of Columbus and the Fishers Of Men Prayer group.

His newest hobby and interest is learning Spanish. He takes several classes a week at St. Michael's and enjoys all the new friendships and the delicious pot luck feasts with his favorite Spanish group.

He joined the Friendship Force in December, 2023 and looks forward to opportunities for new friends and travel. He is always grateful and has a joyful heart for all the special people God has surrounded him with, in the Memphis, TN area.



Sunshine News

Shirley Kincaid is our Sunshine chairman and often sends lovely cards on our behalf. If you have any sunshine news, please let her know.

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