



friendship force
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

December 2025 Newsletter



**Announcing New Member
Christmas Coffee & Orientation
Friday, December 6, 10:00 am
2509 Deborah Drive, Punta Gorda**

The Christmas Coffee and New Member Orientation will be held Friday, Dec 6th at 10:00 am at 2509 Deborah Drive, Punta

Gorda. We ask the new members to RSVP to Carol Nasby 507-236-6704 by Dec 2 so we are ready for you. Board members will be there also, and anyone with questions about how SWF FF works, is welcome to come. This is a great time to invite prospective members. Everyone is welcome, even if you have been in the club for a while! Cheers!

Do you know that we welcomed the following 11 new members in 2024? It is time to get to know...

Kim Cullinan, Lee Fullerton, Dianne Gooding, Jane McDonald, John McNamee, Norma Meier, Leigha Murray, Candis Penley, Lori & Bob Rice and Patricia Zarate.

We also welcomed 3 new Associate Members as follows: Kathy Berglund, Chris Cochran, and Mary Montagne.

Holiday Breakfast Buffet

May your **December** be filled with **Joy**, lots of **Laughter**, **Good Friends**, and unexpected **Miracles!**



Isles Yacht Club

1780 West Marion Ave, Punta Gorda

Sunday, December 15, 2024, 9:45 am

Join your club for a fabulous **Holiday Breakfast** at Isles Yacht Club on **Sunday, December 15**. The buffet will start at **9:45 a.m.**

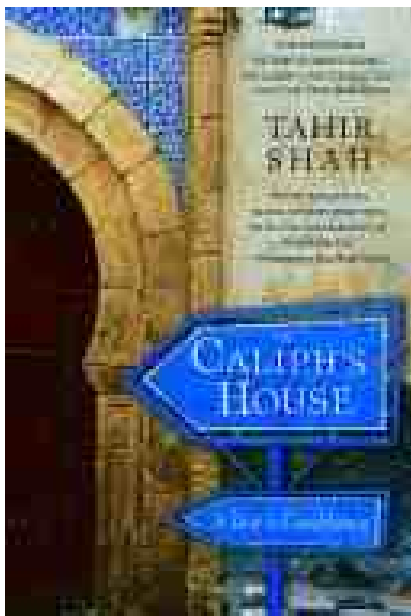
Cost is **\$26.00/person** and includes the gratuity, tax, and use of the **Commodore's Grill**. Mail a check payable to **FF of Southwest Florida** to our treasurer and mail or hand deliver to **257 Lido Drive, Punta Gorda** as soon as possible or by **December 7, 2024**.

FYI - On event day, if you order a **Mimosa**, **Bloody Mary**, or other beverage from the bar, you can write an additional check to cover that or bring cash to pay when you complete your meal. **Isles Yacht Club does NOT take credit cards.**



Our past tradition is that if you would like to participate in a fun gift exchange, bring your wrapped gift costing in the **\$10** range for holiday fun.

We will also have the **Annual Meeting** which will feature election of officers for **2025**.



Our Book Club: The Caliph's House: A Year in Casablanca by Tahir Shah
December 10 at 10 am, Joanne & Richard's home

Join us to discuss a fun read about an Englishman who takes on renovation of an ancient riad in Casablanca. It has intrigue, humor, cultural differences - what else could you want in a story?

Marci is out of town with Michelle touring India so we will meet at **Joanne & Richard's home**, on **12/10 at 10 am**, 257 Lido Drive, Punta Gorda, 10 am. This wonderful book can be borrowed from **Lee County Library** on line. Let us know if you are coming by clicking on **Joanne** by **12/9**.



Our January book selection is *The Last Light Over Oslo* by Alix Rickloff. This is the story of the Nazi invasion of Norway in 1940 and the escape and the involvement of the American ambassador to Norway. Just a fascinating read! Reserve it today at your local library and join the discussion on January 28 at Marci Ellis' home at 10 am.



Time to Pay Your Dues for Year 2025!

It's that time to mail in your check to renew your membership to our wonderful club. Club dues must be received by **12/7/24**.

Cost is only \$45 per person (\$90 per couple). Associate Members (those whose primary club is located outside of Florida) can rejoin at only \$15 each (or \$30 per couple). Your dues must be paid by December 7, 2024.

Mail your check made out to FF of SW Florida to Richard Collins, Treasurer, 257 Lido Drive, Punta Gorda, FL 33950. If you haven't paid already, just bring your checkbook to pay in person at the Holiday Breakfast.



Announcing next year's International Outbound Journey...

**Nairobi Kenya Club
beginning August 15, 2025
with optional African Safari to follow**

Our past president, Maureen Butt, is leading a 7 day journey to Kenya Nairobi Club. Terry "Treza" Solomon visited our Club some years ago and wants to return the hospitality she received from us by coordinating this "extra" journey for our club. In addition, Maureen is working on an exciting post trip with a Safari Company.

August is Kenya's fall season and it is the perfect time to spot animals in the thinner bush at this time of year. Don't miss out on this opportunity!

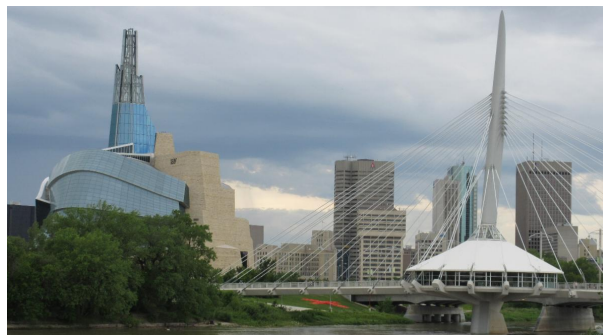
We've already received interest from Judy Carson, Michelle Kemps, Carol & Chris Nasby, Terese Libby, Sue and Rob Linehan, Candis Penley, Ginny Dooley and Fred & Mary Giddings. If you want to join us & come on a fantastic adventure with our club, let Maureen know soon by emailing her [here](#).



Announcing next year's Inbound Journey... Winnipeg Canada FF arriving here February 17-23, 2025

The Winnipeg Club, established in 2001, is a vibrant community of 60 enthusiastic members who embody the spirit of friendship and cultural exchange. Recently, they showcased their warm hospitality by hosting the San Diego and Quad Cities Clubs in June, creating lasting bonds and memorable experiences. This September, 10 of their members visited Leicester, England FF Club.

We are fortunate to be the next club to host them and we ask that you save the dates so that you are able to help us. This help can be hosting, or day-hosting, preparing a small group dinner or serving on the Committee to plan the events with experienced Host Coordinator, Sue Linehan. **Since Sue is traveling this month, you will receive a phone call from her assistant, Bev Haggerty, asking you how you will help. Please be ready to volunteer in some way. It takes all the club pulling together to host a great inbound for our visitors coming here!**



Nestled at the geographic center of North America, Winnipeg stands at the

confluence of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, serving as the capital of Manitoba and the seventh largest city in Canada. With a metropolitan population of 825,000 and a provincial population of 1.38 million, Winnipeg is a tapestry of cultural diversity, where over 100 languages are spoken, including the largest Francophone community outside Quebec.

**Unique Opportunity
Reciprocal Meeting
visit Orlando Feb 3-6
host Orlando here March 17-20**

Marcia Ellis reports that there are 8 singles and 5 couples for a total of 18 club members who are taking advantage of this reciprocal stay and meeting in Orlando. The Orlando Club asks if this is the "final number?" If you are holding back deciding whether to come, now is the time to decide and let Marci know! The Orlando Club is starting to recruit home hosts and they need time to do so. Contact Marcia today at 269-760-2582 or by clicking on [Marci's email](#)



**Announcing next year's Domestic Outbound Journey
to Napa Sonoma Valley FF Club
October 6-11, 2025
with pre-trip at Crater Lake National Lodge**



Our journey coordinator, **Terese Libby**, is working behind the scenes and recently received confirmation that the dates October 6-11, 2025 are firm for our exciting outbound to California's gorgeous Napa Sonoma Valley. From their club's post on FFI, "visits to the Napa and Sonoma wine growing valleys to views of our rugged Pacific Ocean coast, we try to give you a taste of our varied activities and landscape. The Sonoma Mission is the furthest north in California, there are 300+ft redwood trees as well as the World Class Charles M. Schultz museum and fun towns to explore in between. Our farm to table cuisine is a treat and there are beer gardens, olive oil tastings and port makers, too! We are happy to share the bounty of our counties with you!"

The trip is limited to 12 ambassadors and she is now taking "Waiting List" applicants. If you think you want to be on the Waiting List, please click on [Terese's email](#) and let her know you are interested. Terese has booked rooms at [National Park Lodge at Crater Lake](#) for those who told her they are interested in the pre-trip and is planning a tour of some of the other sites around the vicinity.

Valentine's Day Fun on Feb 14th

Our dear president, Carol, has a super idea! Let's celebrate Valentine's Day at **1 pm** together with a wine tasting from



around the world vineyards with
chocolate desserts, of course!

She is looking for some new members to help her organize this easy event.

Let her know at the Christmas Coffee if you are "in" to help !

Let's have some fun in the new year! Let's get a social committee together with some new ideas!



January 10 - General Meeting at main Fort Myers Library, 10:30 am followed by optional lunch at the Lodge in downtown Ft Myers. Topic is Sherbrooke, Canada Journey and pre and post visits to Quebec and Montreal. Speakers are Marci and Michelle.

January 25 - Theater outing to Florida Repertory matinee show with optional lunch before the show. Cost is \$57. Eleven tickets taken - don't miss out! Tickets still available! Contact and pay Carol.

January 28 - Book Club at Marci Ellis' home, 10 am, Please read *The Last Light Over Oslo* by Alix Rickloff. This is story of Nazi invasion of Norway in 1940 and the escape and involvement of the American ambassador to Norway.

February 3 - 6 - Many club members will travel to Orlando to meet and stay with one of their club members for a fabulous reciprocal visit!

February 14 - Valentine Event at Carol's Home, a wine tasting from around the world at 1 pm with a chocolate treat.

****February 17-23** - All Hands on Deck to help with Winnipeg Canada Inbound** Block off your calendar to host or help in some way. It takes EVERYONE to pull off a great welcome to our club!

March 14 - World Friendship Force Pot Luck - Lovely home of Cheryle Phelps & Lou Rizk, 9035 Prosperity Way, Ft Myers, FL 33913

March 17 - 20 - Part 2 of Reciprocal Visit, this time we host and welcome Orlando Club members.

April 18 - General Meeting and Program on Visiting Fabulous India - presenter to be determined at North Fort Myers Library with luncheon to follow.

Missed meeting? Need to Keep Up with our Club?

If you've missed a meeting and want to know what happened, check out club MINUTES found on our FF Website under Membership Tab. Click [minutes](#). Go to minutes and read all about it. So easy!

CHANGING THE WAY YOU SEE THE WORLD

My FFI

The members-only portal, my.friendshipforce.org, is the go-to place for news, journey opportunities, payments, virtual experiences and all other member-relevant information. If you have not yet signed up, please do so.

More Travel Opportunities

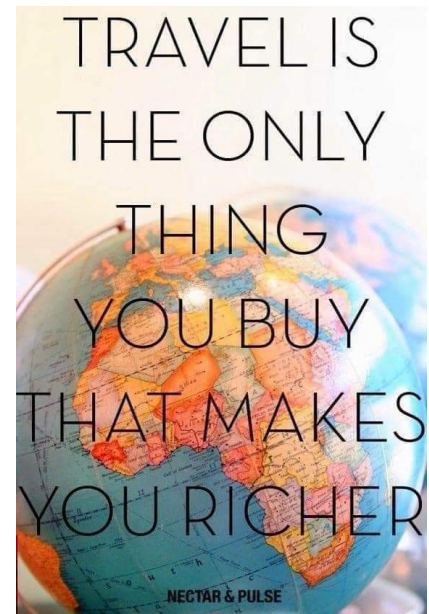
FFI has posted all club journeys throughout the world for 2025!

Click the link below to review a catalog of Special Journeys that are currently being offered by other FFI clubs. Perhaps there is a journey that interests you

[2024-2025 CLUB GROUP JOURNEYS](#)

[2024-2025 INDEPENDENT JOURNEYS](#)

President's Comments





Christmas Thoughts

One of my all time favorite quotes is this one from To Kill a Mockingbird. Atticus says,

"You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... until you climb into his skin and walk around in it".

This is another reason why we choose Friendship Force. We choose to stay with local people, to eat with locals from each country or town, and to walk beside the locals.

We choose to try to understand people by looking at the world from their points of view. It hopefully makes us more tolerant and more accepting of one another.

May this Christmas season fill us with understanding and peace as we journey this world together.

*Peace,
Carol*

Parting Shot

The November meeting featured an excellent TSA Speaker, McLaughlin, a federal Security Director, who showed us intriguing confiscated items from his big lock box!



Friendship Force of Southwest Florida



[Email Us](#)

Check us out & contribute to Group Facebook Page! Click FaceBook icon above!

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Friendship Force of Southwest Florida | 2509 Deborah Drive | Punta Gorda, FL 33950 US

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