



friendship force
SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

February 2025 Newsletter



**Wine Tasting with Chocolate,
Cheeses, Nuts and Snacks
Valentine's Day, February 14, 1 pm
2509 Deborah Dr, Punta Gorda**

Our first ever World Wine Tasting afternoon is full at 20, and maybe next year we can expand it. Carol will contact all those who signed up, to remind them what they should bring. It will be a fun day of wine trivia with prizes, 1 oz of wine tasting eight different wines, with comments and discussion and food to go with the wine.

At the end we will vote on a favorite wine. ♥

No meeting this month, just fun!



Are you ready?

**Winnipeg Canada FF arriving here
February 17-23, 2025**

**Sue Linehan, our Host Coordinator, presents the
schedule below for hosts & club members:**

Monday, 2/17	Ambassadors (guests) arrive	Hosts make pick-up arrangements & provide them dinner
Tuesday, 2/18	Welcome Brunch, 10 AM Michelle Kemps, 3772 Peace River Drive, Punta Gorda 941-268-8967	All club members will be contacted on what breakfast item to bring
	Pontoon ride of river and canals to follow. Hosts to provide optional touring of town.	Hosts provide dinner to your guest(s)
Wednesday, 2/19	Tour of Edison Ford Estates 9:30 AM 2350 McGregor Blvd, Ft Myers Picnic Lunch to follow on grounds	Hosts or day hosts transport guests to arrive by 9:30 AM sharp. Cost \$28 (it is optional for host or members to attend) Lunch cost estimate is ~\$10 (contact Sue if you wish to be included and pay her that day)
	Florida Repertory Theatre, 2 PM 2268 Bay Street, Ft Myers	Performance of "Boca," comedy Hosts or day hosts transport guests to arrive by 2 PM sharp. Cost \$45 (club has tickets for purchase, but first priority is hosts!) (All who want to go should contact Sue ASAP)
	Ambassador guests take hosts out to dinner.	Hosts should talk to guests in advance and make dinner reservation.
Thursday, 2/20	Babcock Ranch Eco Tours 9:30 AM 8502 FL 31, Punta Gorda Lunch to follow at Ranch casual restaurant.	Hosts or day hosts transport guests to arrive by 9:30 AM Cost is ~ \$20 depending upon size of group. (All who want to go should contact Sue ASAP) Everyone pays for their lunch
	Optional tour of new homes in Babcock Unique Solar Community	Hosts or day hosts transport guests to close-by site, if they so desire
	Small Group Dinner, ~ 6:00 PM	Ambassador guests and hosts drive to Small Group Dinner hosted by Club Member (s) Address will be provided
Friday, 2/21	King Fisher Fleet Cruise to Cabbage Key - 8:45 AM 1200 W Retta Esplanade #16A Fishermen's Village, Punta Gorda Optional for hosts to prepare sandwich brown bag lunch for guests or alternatively, guests should bring CASH to pay for	Hosts drive guests to arrive by 8:45 AM Sharp. No refunds for missed boat that leaves at 9 AM Hosts or club members may go at cost of \$60 each (All who want to cruise should contact Sue ASAP) Tickets must be procured in ADVANCE.

	restaurant meal (possibly \$30 for burger & fries)	Hosts should discuss lunch arrangements in advance with guest ambassadors.
Saturday, 2/22	Free Day until 3:00 PM	Hosts should ask guests what they would like to do - perhaps a leisurely breakfast
	Farewell Dinner at Ponce Park - 3:30 PM 3400 Ponce de Leon Pkway Punta Gorda, FL	Hosts should transport guests to Farewell Party. This will be catered in the park with activities. A Fun Time! Cost to be determined (All who want to come should contact Sue ASAP)
Sunday, 2/23	Ambassador guests depart	Hosts should transport guests to airport or other pre-arranged destination.

Please **contact Sue Linehan** by email , text or phone and let her know what events you are attending **by Feb 6th**. She needs a count ASAP to organize all the happenings during this busy season! Hopefully, most club members will attend the Welcome and Farewell Parties to show your support of our club and the Canadians who are visiting us.

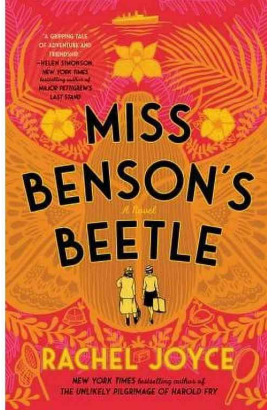
Email here at **Sue's Email**
Phone or text her at **941-979-6977**

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

Marcia Ellis advises that all arrangements have been made for a fun meeting in Orlando. There are 3 carloads of members going. Questions? Contact **Marci's email**



February Book Club Discussion
Tuesday, February 25, 10 AM
257 Lido Drive, Punta Gorda



Join us for the February Book Club meeting featuring a NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER, *Miss Benson's Beetle* by Rachel Joyce.

On Tuesday, February 25 at 10 am, we will gather at Joanne's home for a lively discussion . This beautifully written novel follows two ordinary women on an extraordinary quest, as they embark on an unlikely scientific expedition to the South Seas! This engaging read also offers a unique glimpse into New Caledonia (where there is a current FF club). We hope you can join us for a fun and thought-provoking discussion.

If you are coming, let Joanne know by Feb 21 by emailing Joanne.

Announcing next year's Domestic Outbound Journey to Napa Sonoma Valley FF Club
Change of date October 3-8, 2025
with pre-trip at Crater Lake National Lodge



Our journey coordinator, **Terese Libby**, advises that the dates have changed for our exciting outbound to California's gorgeous Napa Sonoma Valley to **October 3-8**. The pre-trip to reservation for Crater

Lake is okay with **October 1 and 2nd** dates.

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.



February 14 - Valentine Event at Carol's Home, a wine tasting from around the world at 1 pm with a chocolate, crackers, cheese, fruit and nuts.

****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 11 - General Meeting and Program on Visiting Fabulous India - Marci Ellis & Michelle Kemps, presenters, at North Fort Myers Library with luncheon to follow.

May Game Day - Date & location to be determined by Terese and Kim.



Possible Visit from Baku, Azerbaijan November 9-13, 2025

FYI - Some members of our club visited Baku, Azerbaijan a few years ago. Now, the Baku Club would like us to host them in November and hope to send 4 to 6 guests here. Many may not get visas to come, but still, we hope some will.

Just where is Baku? It is located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. It is known for the still waters of the Caspian Sea and its historic Inner city that reminds tourists of Dubai and Paris in equal parts!

What an opportunity for us to know fellow Friendship Force members from this intriguing city!

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.

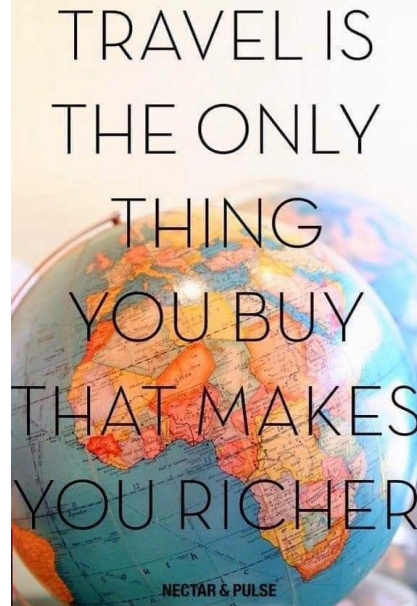
More Travel Opportunities

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



Enjoy this balmy weather, and let's hope it stays so we can show off our Southwest Florida at its best when our guests come.

Please join in the fun by helping at the welcome party, the farewell party, and our various events along the week.

Making friends is what we are all about. ♥

*Peace,
Carol*

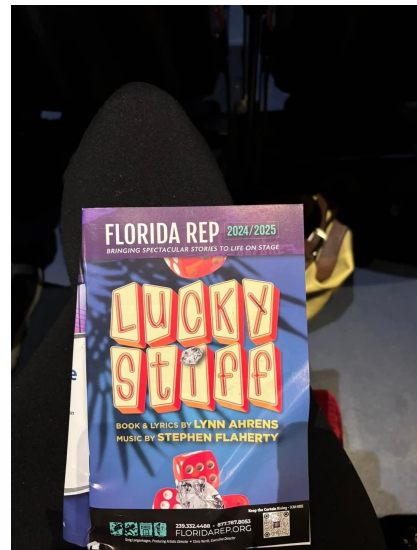
Parting Shots



After our January meeting, a large group enjoyed a great lunch at The Lodge



Enjoying an afternoon matinee



Friendship Force of Southwest Florida

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Group Facebook Page! Click
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