

Game Night: Playing Two Up

Happy 60th Wedding Anniversary to Keith and Eleanor! (4/23/26)

The Friendship Force of Greater Seattle Newsletter #66 April 30, 2026

FFGS Upcoming Events

May 14 – May 27, 2026 to Gifu and Nara, Japan; Pura & Bob coordinators

Mariner's Game Social Monday, June 18th, 1:10pm Family/friends welcome

May Board meeting: will be rescheduled ...

June General Meeting – More info soon as June 21st is Father's Day ...

August 19-26, 2026, Cincinnati Inbound, Karen/Joyce Coordinators

Oct 22–Oct 29 Richmond, VA Oct 31–Nov 6th Orlando, FL Ilene & Sue N coordinators

Mark has reserved Sunday, December 6, 2026 for our Annual Christmas luncheon! Save the date for Anthony's Home Port again.

President's Letter:

Happy May!

Many of our group are off to Japan in a couple of weeks. We wish them a wonderful trip and look forward to hearing about it when they return. This will necessitate changing our board meeting for May. We will figure out a good time once everyone is back. Our normal general meeting falls on Father's Day this year. We will work on moving that meeting as well. More info to follow!

Don't forget about the baseball game on June 18th. It is a day game at one o'clock. We have 20 going and a few extra tickets, in case you would like to sign up! Cincinnati is coming in August. Karen and Joyce are coordinating a really fun week. Let them know if you want to host or help out in other ways - there are always lots of great ways to be involved and enjoy the special friendships. Enjoy the beautiful weather!

--- Judi, FFGS President

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What is Friendship Force? *Founded in 1977 by visionary Wayne Smith and supported by the late President Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, Friendship force International is a nonprofit cultural organization focused on promoting understanding, cultural education, and citizen diplomacy through homestay journeys and personal friendships. Through these exciting personal encounters, strangers become friends – and we know that by experiencing different views, you can discover common ground.*

2026 FFGS Journey Assignments – Let’s travel!

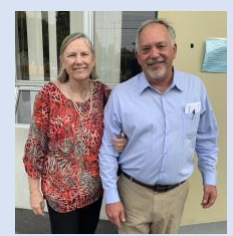
Inbound: **August 19 – 26, 2026** - Greater Cincinnati, USA to Greater Seattle FF
Karen and Joyce are co-coordinators for this inbound exchange. We are so looking forward to hosting Cincinnati who hosted us September 2024. Let Karen and Joyce know that you want to host!

Outbound: May 2026: FFGS to **Gifu and Nara, Japan**; **Pura & Bob** co-coordinators
Our outbound to Japan is from May 14-21 (Gifu) and May 21-27 (Nara).

Oct 22 – 29th: **Richmond, VA** & Oct 31–Nov 6, 2026: **Greater Orlando, FL**
Ilene and Sue N are the co-coordinators. Ilene & Sue N need to know that you want to go!

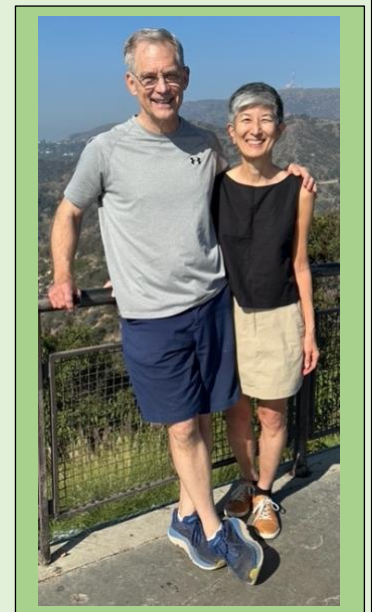
Coordinators:

*Joyce, Karen,
Bob, Pura, Ilene,
Sue N*



Welcome new FFGS members Jim and Michiko

Michiko grew up in Nagoya and Tokyo, Japan. Jim grew up in the US Midwest (South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska) before moving to Seattle in 1985. He was transferred to Tokyo for work in 1996. It was there that Michiko and Jim met, started dating and were married in 1998. They moved to Seattle in 1999. Michiko is a partially-retired social worker, still operating her private psychotherapy practice two days a week. Jim retired in 2020 after 14 years of working for Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. They have one daughter, Mariko, who will be graduating from Gonzaga University this spring. Michiko enjoys playing tennis, cooking and gardening. Jim can often be found playing golf in the early morning hours on Seattle-area courses, playing ping pong at a nearby community center or volunteering for a number of local organizations.

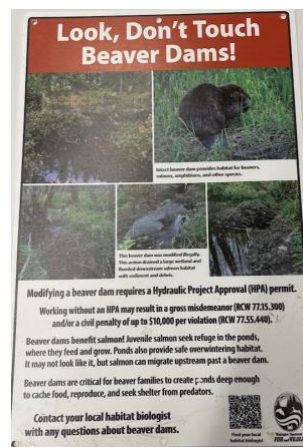


Beavers NW: April Rhodes, Sunday, April 19, 2026 (by Karen)

April gave a brief history of the near extinction and rebound of the beaver population in the United States. The beavers are making a comeback and expanding into their old territories again. Beaver pelts were used to make men's hats before 1850. Although it is still legal to hunt them, Beavers NW works with property owners to find ways to help people and beavers live together. Beavers are fascinating animals and do much to improve the water retention and biodiversity of wetlands.

Some Beaver facts:

- *Beavers are the 2nd largest rodent in the world (Capybaras are the largest).*
- *Beavers weigh 40-80lbs.*
- *Marmot, Mountain Beaver (not a true beaver), River Otter, Nutria, Capybara look similar*
- *Beavers have two upper incisors and two lower ones. They are iron-clad (thus the orange color) and grow continuously throughout their life. The upper teeth are quite long; only about 1/3 are visible with the rest far back within their head.*
- *Beavers use their tail to maneuver through water, signaling danger by loudly slapping their tail on the water.*
- *They have web feet*
- *They have two sets of eyelids, and ears that can close when they are underwater.*
- *They can hold their breath for 10 to 15 minutes.*
- *Their lodges are above water, either on their dam or in an embankment. The entrance to the lodge is always underwater for safety. The dams control the water level.*
- *The dams are made of sticks, logs, mud, rocks and grass. They will use whatever materials are available, including even man-made things.*
- *Beavers are herbivores and eat plants and wood, especially the inner layer of wood just under the bark. They prefer Willows, Cottonwoods, Alder and Vine Maple which can regenerate from the roots. Beavers will eat Cedar, Spruce and other trees when they are the only ones available.*
- *Property owners can protect trees by putting a wire fence around them.*
- *Beaver created ponds lead to biodiversity bringing salmon, frogs, waterfowl, insects into an area.*
- *Beaver dams allow water to soak into the land slowly to prevent flash flooding and as a fire control.*
- *Some beavers live in lakes and don't build dams. Beavers live in fresh water but can spend short periods of time in salt water.*
- *Beavers mate for life with litters once a year of 1 - 4 kits who remain with the parents up to 2 years.*
- *Beavers live in family groups up to 10 - 15 individuals; the young then split off to find a new area.*
- *Beavers mark their territory with scent mounds on the perimeter of their area.*
- *It is illegal to destroy beaver dams, but people do it by 'notching' the top of the dam to drain the water. This can be very destructive, causing flooding below and drying up the wetlands.*
- *People are beginning to see the benefits beavers bring instead of as a destructive nuisance.*



Cherry Blossoms at the UW Quad!

Historically, the onset of peak bloom has fallen between March 12 and April 3, with an average date of March 23. While the weather impacts peak bloom year to year, climate change drives longer term trends over multiple decades. Research published last summer shows that bloom time has shifted approximately two days earlier each decade since the 1960s.

The signature, gnarled Yoshino Cherry trees were originally located in the Washington Park Arboretum. Plans to develop a freeway interchange threatened the young trees. In 1962 the University decided to relocate 30 trees to the Quad. While the freeway project was abandoned (“Ramp to Nowhere”) the trees have become iconic on campus, especially during their springtime bloom.



Washington Arboretum – the trees are blooming; the turtles are out!



Turtles in a row



Under the 520 bridge, walking to Foster Island



The Arboretum was the first public garden on the west coast to introduce many of the Magnolia species and cultivars now common in home landscapes. Partly due to this history, there are nearly 20 magnolias in the collection that are recognized as state champions.

At left – Magnolia ‘serene’.

Game Night with pizza!



Two-up is a traditional Australian gambling game, involving a designated "spinner" throwing two coins, usually Australian pennies, into the air. Players bet on whether the coins will both fall with heads up, both with tails up, or with a head and one a tail. The game is traditionally played in pubs and clubs throughout Australia on Anzac Day, in part to mark a shared experience with diggers (soldiers). Notice Sue's winning strategy of both tails and Don with two heads! Sharon won with her heads/tails.

Bellevue Botanical Garden is in bloom!



Tree Peony



Salmon Berry



Yao Japanese Garden

La Conner



In 1880 A.G. Tillinghast moved his seed company to La Conner. Vegetable seed crops were introduced in 1882 with 20,000 customers receiving his seed catalog. Cabbage, beet, and spinach seed became standard crops grown on the Skagit flats along with hay, oats, barley and potatoes. Skagit Valley still produces a high percentage of the world's vegetable seed supply. The Koudal farm remains in the family with 4th generation farmer, Dave Hedlin.

Kirkland



Roozengarde Tulips at the Skagit Valley Tulip Festival



Strawberry Cream

Since 1947, Roozengarde (a Dutch family business with a long history in bulb growing) is known for its vast fields of tulips and daffodils (60 acres) and its 8-acre display garden. The Washington Bulb Company is North America's largest bulb grower. What an incredible sunny day!

"Tulips are nature's way of telling us that even the most delicate of flowers can withstand the harshest of storms." - - - Unknown

"Tulips are the poets of the garden, whispering tales of strength and beauty to those who listen with their hearts." - - - Alice Hoffman

The Nature Conservancy trip to Yellow Island

*Yellow Island is an 11 acre island between Shaw, Orcas, and San Juan islands in the San Juan archipelago. It has been owned since 1980 by The Nature Conservancy. **Read about TNC and work on Yellow Island [here](#)***



Wild Flowers in full bloom



Getting on/off Yellow Island



Great Camus with 1 white Camus



Chocolate Lily! (actually edible)



Harsh Paint brush & Camus.



Camus



Fawn Lily



Although donating to The Nature Conservancy for years, we had never been on one of their field trips. Recently, we signed up for a trip to Yellow Island and checked with a few FFGS members to see if anyone else was interested in an early Monday morning trip out of Anacortes).

“The island is a rare example of an ecosystem that was once more common in the San Juans: a diverse prairie characterized by a purple flower called camas. Yellow Island is not a pristine relic. Its diverse meadows have been shaped by humans over thousands of years, and will always require people to maintain them.”

Let me know if you are interested in going on a future Nature Conservancy trip!

Click the picture to read this interesting article.

Remembering past journeys with fondness: Huntsville! (2018)

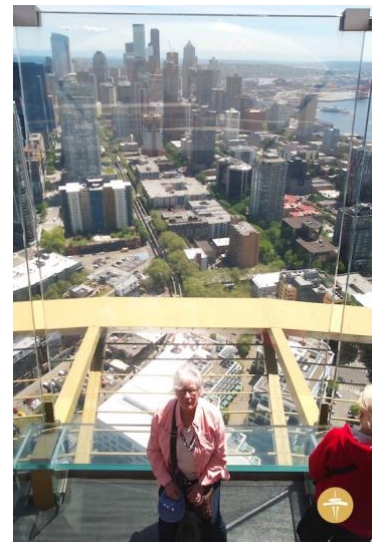


Can you tell that it was a 50s themed party?

Karen rocked the hula hoop competition.

Bart & Roberta cruisin'

Montreal (May 2024)



New Zealand (2015)

ANZAC BISCUITS

- 1/2 cup Champion standard plain flour
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2/3 cup coconut
- 3/4 cup Fleming's rolled oats

- 50 g butter
- 1 tablespoon golden syrup
- 1/2 teaspoon Edmonds baking soda
- 2 tablespoons boiling water

Mix together flour, sugar, coconut and rolled oats. Melt butter and golden syrup. Dissolve baking soda in the boiling water and add to butter and golden syrup. Stir butter mixture into the dry ingredients. Place level tablespoonsful of mixture onto cold greased trays. Bake at 180°C for about 15 minutes or until golden. Makes 20.

Boating terms explained (sort of ...) – by Joe

Now that boating season has opened, it's time to review some standard boating terms. It's hard to forget "starboard" means "right" and "port" means "left" except when facing aft, in which case it isn't your left, it's the other left. Here are some other terms to remember.

Spinnaker – the big balloon sail you put up when running downwind and drag in the water when trying to stop suddenly.

Jib – depending on the cut, it is a storm jib, a trysail, a staysail, a jib, a genoa, a code zero, or an asymmetrical spinnaker. When someone says they like the cut of your jib, you have no idea which they mean.

Boom – the large horizontal beam named after the sound it makes when striking an unwary sailor.

Gybe – (pronounced jibe, because) to gybe is to turn the boat so that the boom crosses the cockpit and clears away any unwary sailors.

Tack – the lowest point on the front of a triangular sail.

To Tack - change direction by turning the front of the boat through the wind. When done perfectly, it only takes four commands and very little cursing.

Starboard tack – going into the wind with the sails on the port side.

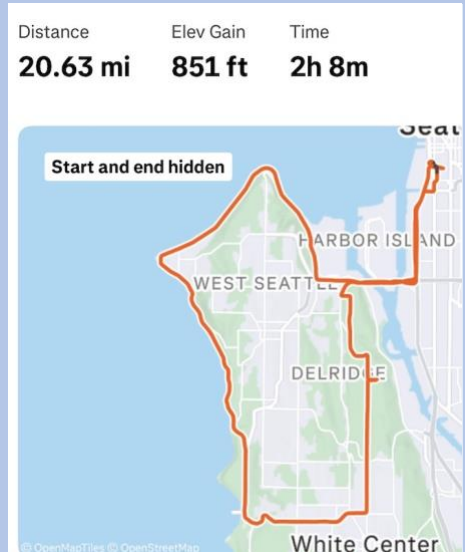
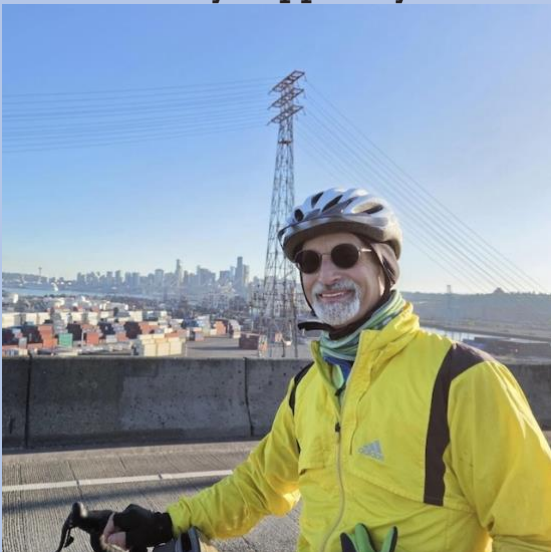
Port tack – going into the wind with the sails on the starboard side.

Reefing – to make the sails smaller and slow the boat, you put a reef in them. To stop the boat completely, you can put it on a reef (not recommended).

Make fast – you tie, cleat, or jam a line on something and make it fast to stop it from running.

Buoy – (pronounced boo-ey or boy, depending on the whim of the speaker) is an intentionally floating object anchored in a particular place to mark something important, like a wreck, a rock, or a safe channel.

Dave cycled with his friend, Bill, over the West Seattle bridge, around Alki, and back to the stadiums. They stopped by the new Ichiro statue for a picture at the end.



Friendship Force Pledge

As a member of the Friendship Force
 I recognize that I can make a difference
 I recognize that I have a mission
 That mission is to be a friend of the people of the world.
 As I embark on this adventure,
 I know that others will be watching me
 I know that through my example
 to my fellow citizens
 And the people of other nations
 The cause of friendship, love,
 and peace will be furthered
I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

One type of exercise can cut your risk of developing 8 diseases – CNN Health

People who had more than about 4% of their total activity classified as vigorous had substantially lower risks of developing these conditions compared with people who had no vigorous activity at all. The numbers were stunning, with the participants having the following results:

- 63% lower risk of dementia
- 60% lower risk of type 2 diabetes,
- 48% lower risk of fatty liver disease,
- 44% lower risk of chronic respiratory disease,
- 41% lower risk of chronic kidney disease,
- 39% lower risk of immune-mediated inflammatory diseases,
- 31% lower risk of major cardiovascular events,
- 29% lower risk of atrial fibrillation, and
- 46% lower risk of death from any cause.

(A new study published in the **European Heart Journal** found that a small amount of vigorous activity may be linked to lower risk of eight different chronic diseases.)

Space Needle or Eiffel Tower? (The Seattle Times, March 29, 2026)

Choose either: A) The Space Needle B) The Eiffel Tower C) Both D) Neither
 for each question

1. Which tower was built for a world's fair celebrating technological progress?
2. Which one was conceived as a dining destination as much as an observation platform?
3. Plans for this one were first sketched on a napkin (or serviette, in French).
4. Which was primarily financed with significant government funding?
5. Financed largely with private capital, this structure generated enough revenue in its first year to repay its principal investor.
6. This one debuted in varied shades of red.
7. It was attacked by prominent artists as a monstrous eyesore.
8. Its official height increased after antennas were added.
9. Originally, it was intended to stand for only 20 years.
10. Which one was famously climbed by a reigning British monarch during its inaugural year?

The answers (No peeking!)

- 1: Both. The Eiffel Tower (1889) marked the centennial of the French Revolution. The Space Needle (1962) celebrated the Space Age.
- 2: Space Needle. Its revolving restaurant was central to the Century 21 vision.
- 3: Space Needle. Edward R. Carlson sketched his early concept after visiting Stuttgart's TV tower.
- 4: Neither. Both relied primarily on private financing.
- 5: Eiffel Tower. Gustave Eiffel's personal underwriting reportedly paid off during the first year of operation.
- 6: Both. The Eiffel began "Venetian Red" The Needle's "Galaxy Gold" was more orange than gold.
- 7: Eiffel Tower. A "Committee of Three Hundred" artists protested it in 1887.
- 8: Both. Each gained height through later antenna additions.
- 9: Eiffel Tower. Its permit ran 20 years. Radio transmission saved it.
- 10: Neither. Queen Victoria never climbed the Eiffel (she died in 1901). Queen Elizabeth II visited Seattle in 1983, long after the Needle's debut.

Some Space Needle Fun Facts

- **Wind/Earthquake Proof:** Designed to withstand wind speeds up to 200 mph and earthquakes, it is one of the safest structures in the city.
- **Lightning:** It is struck by lightning over 100 times per year.
- **Cost:** It cost roughly \$4.5 million to build in 1962, which would be over \$100 million today.