
UW Arboretum Fall colors



friendship force INTERNATIONAL

Annual FFGS Holiday Party!

Sunday, December 6, 2026, 1 – 4 pm

Anthony's Home Port in Des Moines

White Elephant Gift Exchange – Mark F





***The Friendship Force of Greater Seattle* Newsletter #69 November 14, 2026**

FFGS Upcoming Events

Thursday, Nov 19, 2026
FFGS Board Meeting 12-3 pm
Broadview library

Sunday, December 6, 2026
Annual Christmas luncheon
1 – 4 pm at ***Des Moines Anthony's White Elephant Exchange!***

Board Meeting: 1/20/27
General meeting: 2/21/27
Save the dates!

Inbound Global Hiking Journey: Spokane (May 10-16, 2027) with FFGS (May 17-20, 2027)

Inbound Florida Journey; tentatively August 29 – September 4, 2027

***Inbound:* Isle of Wight?**
SW Florida: August 29-Sept 4

***Outbound:* FFGS to Montreal, CA (June 6?)**

Connecticut: Fall?

President's Letter:

We are close to wrapping up another great year of travel and hosting for FFGS!

A group of us just returned from Richmond, VA and Orlando, FL where we had a really great time. We are so grateful that everyone returned before the flight cancellations that occurred yesterday. Ilene and Sue did a great job coordinating these two journeys. Both hosting clubs had many fun activities as well as wonderful hosts. Be sure to read the article about our hosts in Richmond, VA. Jackie was very busy during our week there as she was campaigning for a school board position! And, she won!

Our FFGS board will be meeting this coming Thursday at noon at the Broadview library (12755 Greenwood Ave. N., Seattle, WA 98133). All club members are welcome to attend.

Dates and coordinators for our 2027 inbound and outbound journeys are still being nailed down. Elaine and Pura will be coordinating our trip in June to Montreal (can host 12 people). Please let me know if you are interested in being part of a coordinating team for a journey.

Our annual Holiday luncheon is December 6th at Anthony's Homeport in Des Moines once again. Please get your money and meal selection to Mark F. This is always so much fun. Start thinking of your fabulous white elephant gift! See more about menu choices on page 3 of this newsletter!

- - - Judi, FFGS President

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.*

Woodland Park Zoo Carousel Talk

Linda Allen, Sunday, October 18, 2026

Zoo animals!











Carousel Pictures!



Keith and his daughter



Joe, Judi, Dave, and Pura



Jim (kids and their phones …)



Linda (more kids & their phones…)



J & J's daughter-in-law & grandson



Linda and Dave



Eleanor



Barbara



One way mirrored wall from meeting room



Karen and Linda

FFGS Annual Holiday Luncheon! Let's Party!



2025 Holiday Party ...

Sunday, December 6, 2026 from 1 – 4 pm at Anthony's Homeport in Des Moines.

421 South 227th Street, Des Moines, WA 98198

Here are the menu choices for this year. The prices include tax and a 20% tip.
Make checks to: *Friendship Force of Greater Seattle* and mail them to Mark F.
Choose an entree from these choices:

Kalbi Chicken.	$42
Sirloin Steak.	$51
Caddy Ganty (cod)	$58
Primavera Pasta	$38

(We will need around 33 people to meet the restaurant minimum)

Our Christmas luncheon is a great time to invite friends to join us!
Mark F will again be running the White Elephant gift exchange, so start prepping those fabulous gifts to pass along to your fellow FFGS members.
Let Mark know if you would like to help with some simple decorating.
Looking forward to celebrating with all of our travel buddies!








Dave and Judi's hosts in Richmond, VA were lovely and such a joy to meet! We saw a fair amount of Kaestner during the week, but we did not see too much of Jackie as she was running for a school board position and had election events to attend! What a joy to discover that Jackie actually won her race!

"Earlier this year, the Richmond School Board decided that Anne Holton was the best fit for the vacant 6th District seat. But residents thought otherwise. In a major upset, Jackie McDonnough won with a resounding share of the vote. As of Tuesday night she had 68% of the vote, with a few thousand early and absentee ballots remaining to be counted. She will now represent Richmond Public Schools' 6th District next year. It is a dramatic win against Holton, a recognized name backed by leaders within the state's Democratic party. "Our opponent was meant to be the Second Lady of the United States of America. (Tim Kane's wife).We were not invited to win this race," Elliott wrote in a press release. "We won big anyway because we built a coalition that understood that the status quo is no longer working, and we have the power to do something about it if we work together."

It's Poinsettia season!

Karen and I got to visit with our cousin's daughter, Stevie, in Orlando. Stevie is the head grower and a plant propagator for Alexander Hay Greenhouses. She was recently given an award for 40 people under the age of 40 in her field. She specializes in growing Poinsettias and Easter Lilies. Enjoy pictures of her poinsettias!









Local Areas worth exploring!



Marina at Blaine, Washington

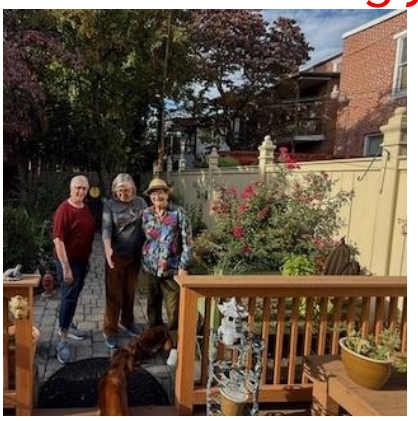


Cormorants at Semiahmoo



Dudley Carter Park in Redmond

FFCC Harrisburg Journey – pictures shared by Bob



Deborah & Barbara's home in Harrisburg



Bob's cousin's home – renovated 1837 Grist mill



Lunch at Bob's cousin, Keith's house



Columbia Cascade to Harrisburg



Center Point Knob, halfway point on Appalachian Trail





Bob's host's 1869 home in Boiling Springs



Lake in front of Bob's host's home



Peace Bridge across the Niagara River, connecting NY & Ontario



Bob's brother's view to Canada









Bob's family camp SE of Buffalo

Buffalo farmer's market, basket of acorn squash for $12, 3 eggplants for $2, peppers for $2-$5/quart

Chicago pictures shared by Mark & Denise





What makes a happy retirement?

A formal, written financial plan
Listing 10 things you are genuinely curious about
Enough money to feel safe
Low debt/low fixed obligations
Strong relationships
Purpose and structure

Retirement woes?
Loss of identity, lack of routine, lack of purpose

Richmond, VA Outbound, October 21 – 29, 2026: Art & History








Fabergé Eggs



1875 Renoir – The Day Dreamer



1889 Van Gogh – The Wheat Field



1971 Norman Rockwell – The Collector



1070 BC Inner Coffin



Entire Quran written on both sides of shirt



1873 Monet – Camille at the Window




Richmond Capital in Legos: Front and Back

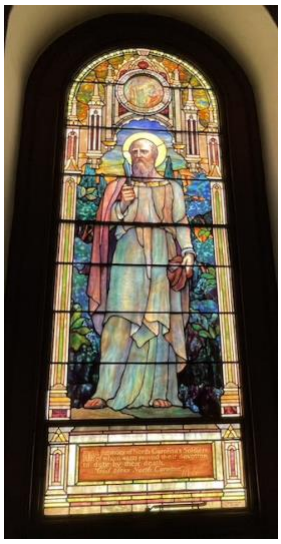




The Legal System can force open doors and sometimes even knock down walls. But it cannot build bridges. That job belongs to you and me.

Justice Thurgood Marshall

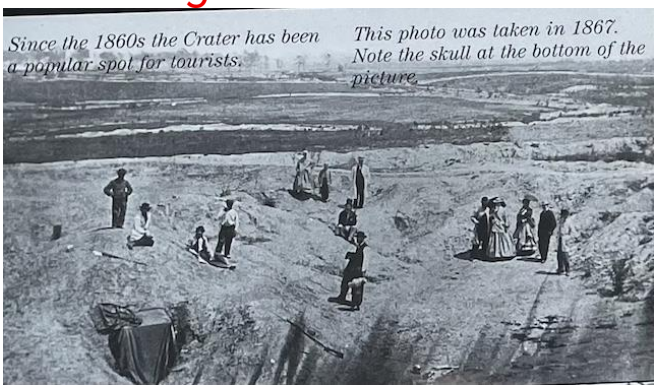
Petersburg: Lots of Civil War history



Historic Blandford Church was built in 1735 as an Anglican church. It now features a set of 15 memorial Tiffany stained-glass windows donated by different Confederate states. The Blandford cemetery contains mass graves of 30,000 Confederate soldiers who died during the Sieg of Petersburg (1864-1865).

Petersburg Battlefield






The Battle of the Crater was a major engagement of the Civil War (July 30, 1864). Union soldiers tunneled 511 feet under Confederate lines and packed the chamber with 8000 pounds of black powder. At 4:44 am, the mine detonated killing roughly 270 Confederate soldiers and blowing a massive hole (170' long by 10' wide; 30' deep).



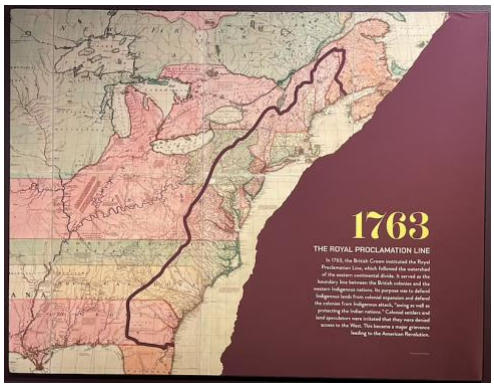

Lunch in Petersburg followed by touring the Peter Jones Trading Station (1626).
The building served as a colonial trading and exploration outpost to an ammunition and powder magazine (1785-1791), a Civil War prison and hospital, a tobacco stemmery, and a granary. A destructive fire in 1980 gutted the wooden components and roof, leaving behind historic stone walls and fireplace chimney.



Hollywood Cemetery (1847) is the 2nd most visited cemetery in the US after Arlington National Cemetery. It is the final resting place of Presidents James Monroe & John Tyler. 11,000 to 18,000 Confederate soldiers are buried there.

American Revolution Museum at Yorktown is a living history museum with many indoor exhibits as well as outdoor re-creations of a Continental encampment and 1780s farm.

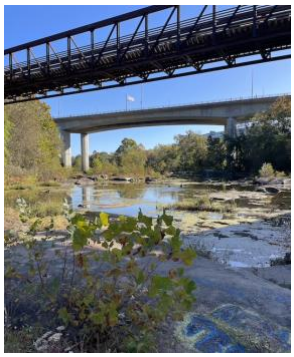




In 1763, the British Crown institute the Royal Proclamation Line, which followed the watershed of the eastern continental divide. It served as the boundary line between the British colonies and the western Indigenous nations. Its purpose was to defend Indigenous lands from colonial expansion and defend the colonies from Indigenous attack.

Beach at Yorktown with many historic buildings as well.





Belle Island
a POW camp built for 3000 soldiers held 10,000 Union soldiers, *"the larger portion had no shelter whatever." General Neal Dow*





Looking towards Belle Island *Richmond from James River* *James River rapids*







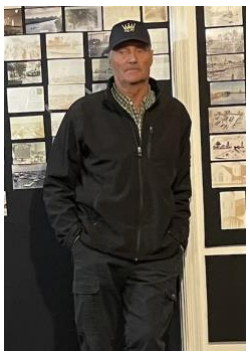
Edgar Allan Poe Museum

It is still an unanswered question as to how Edgar Allan Poe died

Edgar Allan Poe had a tough life. His father abandoned the family and his mother (an actress) died when he was two and his sister was only one. Frances Vallentine Allan cared for his dying mother and took Edgar in after his mother's death. Edgar's sister went to live with the Mackenzie family. Frances died of tuberculosis when Edgar was 20. He married his 13-year- old cousin, Virginia Clemm when he was 27. Unfortunately, she also died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-four. Engaged and about to start his own literary magazine, he left for a business trip to Philadelphia September 27, 1849. He disappeared for several days and was found in Baltimore where he was hospitalized and died four days later.

Free day – some of us took a boat to Tangier Island in Chesapeake Bay



A brisk hour+ ride out with lots of spray *Captain Billy choosing another dock to disembark* *Visit with mayor*




Lunch with fresh caught seafood *Check out all of the crab pots!*

Click this link* to watch a PBS documentary about Tangier Island called *"Saving Tangier Island".

On to Orlando!

Morse Museum of American Art (world's largest collection of works by Tiffany)







Christine (my host) was our Morse Museum docent

Plenty of time for fun with game night!





Rock Springs/Kelly Park









St Johns River Eco Cruise & Winter Park Scenic Boat Tour



















Wait, are those alligators on both sides of the path?



Orlando Wetlands (1650 acres):



eco-park in Christmas, Florida

Kennedy Space Center



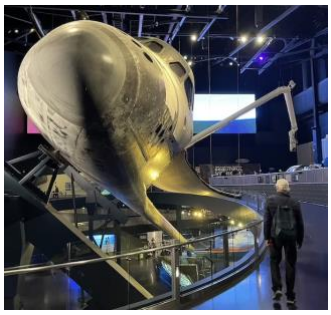




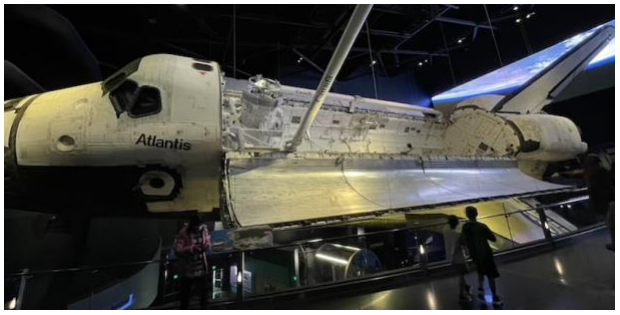












It (the rocket) will free man from his remaining chains; the chains of gravity which still tie him to this planet. It will open to him the gates of heaven. Wernher von Braun

Did You Know - - - Canada *(Sources: Google, Wikipedia.com)*

- *Canada is the world's second largest country by area; estimated 2025 population is 41,000,000.*
- *Canada is highly-ranked in international measurements of government transparency, quality of life, economic competitiveness, innovation, education, and human rights.*
- *The British North American Act of 1867 established the Dominion of Canada, with the confederation of the provinces of Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.*
- *British Columbia agreed to join the confederation in 1871, with the promise the federal government would complete a transcontinental railway to Victoria within ten years to connect the West Coast to Canada's Eastern Provinces. Lacking this, British Columbia would consider annexation to the US*
- *The Canadian Pacific Railroad completed the line in 1885, a distance of 2,858 miles, an impressive achievement for a country of only 4.3 million at the time.*



Did You Know - - - Isle of Wight **(Source: Wikipedia.com)**

- *The Isle of Wight lies off the south coast of England; with a land area of 150 square miles, it's about twice the size of the District of Columbia. It's England's largest island with a 2024 population of 141,660.*
- *Known for its mild climate it's said to be the sunniest place in Great Britain. The largely rural island is noted for its coastal scenery, fields, and downs.*
- *Osborne House, the winter home of Queen Victoria, is open to the public. The Isle of Wight Festival founded in 1970 is an annual event.*
- *With an oceanic climate the Isle of Wight is generally warmer and sunnier than the rest of the United Kingdom; the island is in Hardiness Zone 9, the same as Seattle.*
- *Average daily highs in August are in the high 60s with lows in the high 50s, the island averages two inches of rain in August.*





In the news…

Emergency declared as Orcas Island ferry terminal damage chokes supplies

"San Juan County declared a state of emergency Tuesday because structural damage on the Orcas Island ferry terminal has severely limited truck traffic and therefore the island's access to supplies. On Monday, the Washington State Department of Transportation began limiting traffic across the terminal's transfer span, the movable bridge connecting the land to the ferry that vehicles use to get on and off. Engineers had found cracks in two steel beams beneath the transfer span that required immediate repair. Vehicles over 22 feet long cannot load and unload at the Orcas dock as those beams are being repaired."

Orcas Island Market, the largest grocery store on the island, said in a Facebook post on Tuesday that it had scheduled a barge to bring groceries and produce to the island.

*All trash must be shipped off the island, so Orcas Recycling Services has asked residents to keep their trash at home for as long as they can. (*Nov. 12, 2026, By Alexis Weisend)

New study says Orlando, not Seattle, is new coffee capital of U.S.

The days of Seattle and Portland's coffee supremacy may be over — a new coffee monarch has taken the throne, according to a new study. Orlando, Florida — home of Disney World, Universal Orlando Resort and SeaWorld — has been crowned coffee king by personal finance company WalletHub in its latest ranking of the best coffee cities in the U.S. Get mad, Pacific Northwest bean-water drinkers. Portland came in second place and Seattle came in fifth.

Orlando is the best city for coffee lovers, and its coffee-crazy households spend an average of over $154 on the beverage each year. The city also has the highest number of "Free Wi-Fi" coffee and tea shops per capita, making it a true hub for caffeine enthusiasts and specialty brews. In addition, Orlando has a ton of coffee shops, and it ranks among the top cities for affordable shops that are rated at least 4.5 stars out of 5. Plus, for those who want a sweet treat to pair with their cup of Joe, the city has the most donut shops per capita.

Project feast: Training Cafe, Catering, Community Events

This spring, Mark and Denise were invited to a meeting where they were served delicious food catered by immigrant cooks from ***Ubuntu Street Café*** *(a training cafe sponsored by* ***Project Feast)*** *to empower refugee and immigrant cooks. The cafe is located at 202 W. Gowe St., Kent WA. Family meals, community events, and catering are offered to highlight recipes from different cultures developed by staff and apprentices over the years. Project Feast is a non-profit. Find out how you can support them by visiting their webpage .*





Remembering long time FFGS member, Brian, at his memorial and burial on 9/2/26. Many FFGS came to say farewell to Brian. Ila and Wilma attended the beer social at the Masonic Lodge in Issaquah as well.

And, even more Orlando photos!



Rockets!



Trick or treating in Orlando



Line dancing at the Orlando farewell





Rollins College boat benches. Won't you be my neighbor?





Shopping Disney



Spanish Moss – not Spanish, not moss



Just for fun...

*The results of this year's **Fat Bear Week** are in! Bear 89 (Backpack), the son of 2019 champion Bear 435 Holly, defeated Bear 910 in the final round by roughly 5000 votes, pulling in over 200,000 votes. The 2026 season featured a record high of 19 bear families and 37 cubs at Brook's river, including defending champion Bear 32 (Chunk).*



Fat Bear Week Contestant



Fat Bear Week Winner!

"Fat Bear Week, which started in 2014, is an annual competition that celebrates the remarkable transformation of Katmai's brown bears as they feast on salmon and build the fat reserves they need to survive the winter."