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**FRIENDSHIP FORCE OF CENTRAL  
ARIZONA NEWSLETTER**

**April 2025**

**2025 OFFICERS AND BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS**

President Nancy Mueller - 608-838-3575

Vice President - Maggie Wittenberg  
623-688-4245

Treasurer - Ruth Noble 602-920-8680

Secretary - Chris Kastella 208-691-4610

Journey Coordinator - Richard Mueller

Membership - Maggie Wittenberg

Newsletter - Nancy Unferth nferth@aol.com

Website - Bill Kram

Activities- Pat Forsythe

**Next Board Meeting is April 9. 4:00 pm Zoom**

**TRAVELING WITH FF CENTRAL  
ARIZONA**

April 6-8 The Antelope Canyon exploration in  
April is fully booked.

June 23-29 The Northern Colorado Outbound  
Journey to Fort Collins, Greeley and Loveland  
still has openings. Cost is \$425. Contact Chris  
Kastella 208-691-4610

October 29-November 4 inbound from Chiang  
Mai Thailand. Discussion continues. Bonny  
Yamashita 310-341-4252

November 17-24 inbound from National  
Capital Area (Washington DC). Working on  
itinerary. Contact Sue LaVacque 970-589-  
5004



**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

*I'm sending this recent message from the FFI  
President Jeremi Snook to remind us all that the  
purpose of Friendship Force affirms that people  
are more important than politics.*

**"People, Not Politics —A Message for Our  
Members from Friendship Force International.**

**In Uncertain Times, Connection Matters More  
Than Ever. Avoiding a country makes a  
statement. Visiting one makes a difference.**

**YOU HAVE THIS PART**

It took vision beyond politics and propaganda to  
bring diverse nations -/—

It took vision beyond politics and propaganda to  
bring diverse nations together. Fueled by the  
hope that sharing everyday life could knit hearts  
and minds beyond the barriers that separated  
them. Friendship Force members have traveled  
the world—even in the most challenging  
times—to foster understanding and friendship.

Today, as we face another period of global  
tension, we understand that some members  
might question whether to travel to some  
places, including the U.S. However, we  
encourage you to consider the deeper impact  
of personal connection in challenging times.  
Throughout history, Friendship Force has  
thrived not despite division, but because of it.  
When political landscapes shift, it is precisely  
our mission—to promote global  
understanding across the barriers that  
separate people—that becomes even  
more vital.

**"You are standing for the idea that the decisions**

of governments do not define the character of the people they govern". Boycotting travel may feel like a statement, but it ultimately limits the opportunity for true connection and understanding. When we choose to travel, especially to places where tensions are high, we affirm our belief that **people matter more than politics.**

I urge you to go. And if you choose to, you are not just visiting a place—you are standing for the idea that the decisions of governments do not define the character of the people they govern. You are leading with empathy, curiosity, and courage, showing the world that bridges are stronger than walls.

Whatever decision you make, we encourage thoughtful reflection on the power of personal diplomacy. At Friendship Force, we remain committed to our mission and our vision.

Please—be the change the world needs. Be the light, and go.



### **FRIENDSHIP FORCE HUGS.** **Help Us Grow Stronger**

Pat and Al Forsythe worked for months to create the Antelope Canyon exploration for the other 20 Friendship Force travelers. They even did a scouting trip of their own to check on hotels, travel times, road conditions, and tours and put reservations on their personal credit cards. This is just one example of many activities they have organized over the past years. We are grateful for all your efforts.

### **OUR THAI REAL AND SUSHI** **FEBRUARY 4X4**

Another wonderful meal with friends old and new was enjoyed by my 18 Central AZ FFI group with two additional guests. Delectable choices ranged from sushi to Thai food and was enjoyed by all! After the lovely meal, President Nancy Mueller gave an overview of upcoming journeys, events and a bit of history of our local club. Nancy and our club were pleased to



retire our original banner (circa 1982) and replace it with a beautiful new banner with our FFI logo and name. April's 4X4 will be held at the Surprise Library and will be a potluck.



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### **Friday April 4x4 SPRING FLING**

Let's celebrate Arizona's sunny skies and the hint of spring with an outdoor potluck.

Meet at 4 pm on April 4th. Bring a food item to share, your own place setting and your own beverage. We will meet at the picnic tables by the fishing pond near the Surprise Regional Library, 26089 N Bullard Avenue in Surprise Community Park. Bring your stories about fishing or water sports.

If you choose, we will walk the xeriscape gardens after the potluck. RSVP and Questions: Diane Francom -435-279-3687.

**Sunday May 4x4pm. Bilbianos**, 11001 N 99th Ave., Peoria. 623-972-0202 Enjoy Mexican food from flautas to fajitas in a homey, festive space. Practice your Spanish. This phrase is very important - "una cerveza, por favor". Come at 3:30 since they close at 6 pm. Discussion topic - what places do you suggest for October 4, November 4, December4.  
RSVP and Questions: Diane Francom – 435-279-3687.

**May is the last 4x4 until October**

### **NEARBY ACTIVITIES TO FILL THE AFTERNOONS BESIDES APRIL 4x4.**

**March 17 - Fri, Apr 18, 2025, 8a-5p The Annual Charter School Art Exhibit** Open to the public on the ground floor of City Hall, City Hall Gallery, 16000 N Civic Center Plaza, Surprise, AZ 85374. Features the artwork of local charter school students in grades 1st through 12th using a diverse array of mediums.

**March 28-May 25 Cowgirl Up!** Desert Caballeros Western Museum, Wickenburg  
Cowgirl Up! Exhibit features more than 60 female artists working in Western genre.

**TOUR OF COWGIRL UP!** on Thursday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am. Cost \$11:00 at door  
Lunch to follow at a place TBA  
Car pools from Sun City Bell library parking lot at 10:00 am  
Check the website for details  
[www.westernmuseum.org](http://www.westernmuseum.org)  
Call Pat Forsythe 414-803-5704 to reserve your spot.

**April 1-30 10a- 4p Tues - Sat at WHAM What's Happening in Art Movement.** 16560 N Dysart Rd, Surprise, AZ 85378  
The West Valley of Phoenix Community offers a juried Exhibit of Collage and Assemblage featuring artists who make art from unrelated found objects and torn paper.

### **MAYBE THIS IS IN YOUR BUCKET LIST AND YOU ARE AN ADVENTURER. (2 Journeys below)**

FF Utah is visiting two Peruvian FF Clubs followed by a tour of Cusco and Machu Picchu August 4-20, 2025. There are slots for two or three additional Ambassadors. Details and **prices are not final.**

- Have an opportunity to visit Machu Picchu, a must on many bucket lists.
  - Meet new Peruvian friends with home stays in Tarapoto and Trujillo.
  - Make wonderful new friends from Utah.
- For details contact 801-424-2850 or email [utahfriendshipforce@gmail.com](mailto:utahfriendshipforce@gmail.com)

### **THAILAND INBOUND JOURNEY**

Bonny Yamashita is host coordinator for a group coming from Chang Mai Thailand scheduled for October 29-November 4. The group will also visit the Friendship Force Club in Los Angeles. Bonny is communicating with both clubs to work on logistics. (continued on page 4)



Chiang Mai is a land of misty mountains and colorful hill tribes. It is 700 km north of Bangkok, set in a verdant valley on the banks of the Ping River. The city was founded in 1296 as the capital of the ancient Lanna Kingdom and it still proudly displays its distinctive culture and long history.

At the February 4x4 Bonny shared a number of ideas to show case our fall culture like a Halloween party and a traditional Thanksgiving meal. There will be a variety of volunteer opportunities for this in-bound as more details are known.

### **CHECK OUT OUR REVAMPED WEBSITE**

Our Friendship Force of Central Arizona website address is <https://ffcenaz.com>. This is a completely new layout and we thank Bill Kram for his new design. Please look at it and consider suggestions for other information you would find useful as a member. Email Bill with your ideas — [billkram01@gmail.com](mailto:billkram01@gmail.com).

### **20th ANNUAL POLLISH FESTIVAL AND A TO Z POLISH MARKET**



## MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



Kathy Luglio

I'm originally from Chicago. I first traveled across the 'Cheddar Curtain' to Wisconsin for college, where I met my husband at Marquette University in Milwaukee. We loved traveling and visited many countries in our 45 years together. When my husband passed away, I joined FF of Greater Milwaukee to continue traveling.. My first journey with FF was to Phoenix. I enjoyed the winter in Phoenix/Sun City so much during that journey that I bought a house in Sun City, But I refuse to call myself a Snowbird. I prefer the term "Winter Resident." My husband and I were ski instructors for 17 years. We skied all over the Rockies and even went skiing in Chile, SA. My license plate is still "Skiers 4" from when we skied with our 2 children. My daughter is married and lives in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. My son lives in Milwaukee. I spend summer in the Milwaukee area where I spend a lot of time on my sailboat on Lake Michigan. In addition to traveling and sailing, I enjoy glass fusion, sewing, reading and recently have taken up ceramics.



Laura Isaacs

> I live in Sun City, AZ after moving here in October 2022 from Beachwood Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. My husband Bob and I moved here because we fell in love with Arizona after traveling to Sedona many times on vacation. We decided to live in the Phoenix area after our daughter, Amanda, moved here with her boyfriend in 2021. We love the climate and we were both retired so we sold our house and moved here. Many of our friends had moved to other areas in the country to care for their grandchildren so the timing was right as well. Our daughter, Abby, and a grandchild Sofia live in New Jersey. Due to the distance we only see them occasionally.

> I joined the Friendship Force of Central Arizona last year after attending meetings with Kathy Luglio as her guest. I love to travel and meet new people. I learned a lot about the Phoenix area through our monthly meetings and planned events. My pastimes include reading, spending time with our pets and walking in the Bell walking pool where Kathy and I met. Bobby and I recently adopted a 2 year old black goldendoodle and we have a senior black cat. I am looking forward to going to visit Antelope Canyon and other attractions on my first trip with the Friendship Force in April.



**Treasurer Report Ending: March 20, 2025  
Club Account**

**Beginning Balance:** .....\$6,185.03  
**Income:**..... \$7,780.00  
(Membership \$80.00)  
(Antelope Canyon  
trip \$7,700)

**Disbursement:**.....\$ 129.69  
(Webpage )

**March 20, 2025 Balance: \$13,835.34**

**Journey Account:**

**Beginning Balance:** .....\$2,162.48  
**Income:** .....\$ -0-  
**Disbursement:**.....\$ -0-  
**March 20, 2025 Balance: \$2,162.48**

**NEWSLETTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
MEETING**

**March 12<sup>th</sup>**

Attendees - Nancy Mueller, Maggie Wittenberg,  
Ruth Nobel, Chris Kastella, Bill Kram, Richard  
Mueller and Gordon Birschbach

The Board of Directors meeting was called to order  
at 4:07 on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2025 by President Nancy  
Mueller via Zoom.

MaggieW moved, and RichardM seconded, a  
**motion to approve the February Board Meeting  
minutes as presented to the members in  
the March Newsletter. Approved.**

Treasurers Report showed \$6,185.03 in the clubs  
Wells Fargo Account and \$2,162.48 in the Chase  
Journey Account. \$2,400 is for the Antelope  
Canyon excursion. The club has 39 paid  
memberships to date. Badges look wonderful  
and GordyB will continue to be the point person for  
ordering.

BillK has renovated the club website. The website  
will include the **membership application  
with MaggieW's mailing address for  
applications and checks. MaggieW will deposit  
membership checks and inform RuthN.** Our

website address is <https://ffcenaz.com> and  
continues to be updated. BillK is still exploring to  
see if our website will allow member only  
access. More to follow.

NancyU will send the Central AZ

FFI Newsletter to members via email on the  
25<sup>th</sup>. Maggie W will do a newsletter preview  
as NancyM will be on a journey. Newsletter will  
include -

- President's message – Nancy M will write
- Introduce two members and include pics –  
Maggie W will write
- Write up on Cowboy Up – PatF will write
- Repeat Antelope Canyon - Done
- Article about the Mar 4x4 – ChrisK - Done
- Update on the June Northern CO, Thailand  
and National Capital - Done

FFI provided a \$350 grant to Central AZ FFI which  
the club spent money on new business cards,  
website and banner. We had 7 new members join in  
2024 with all renewed in 2025. Additionally, 7 new  
members have joined in 2025.

Chris K reported interest has been expressed for the  
Northern CO Journey however she has  
received only 2 applications or deposits to  
date. ChrisK will contact the Tucson club to see if  
any interest in joining the  
journey. NancyM reported both inbound journey  
coordinators, Bonnie and Sue, are working on 2024  
fall journeys from Thailand and the National  
Capitol Area.

BillK will host a summer picnic in Prescott in Aug.  
The next Board of Director meeting will be April  
9<sup>th</sup> at 4:00. Meeting adjourned 3:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted, Christine Kastella,  
Secretary