



friendship force  
BIG CANOE -  
NORTH GEORGIA

February  
2023  
Newsletter

a world of friends is a world of peace

<http://www.ffbcng.org>

### Coming Events

February 19, 2023, at 2:00, at Fuego's Mexican Grill in Marle Hill	Regular monthly meeting. Program is a video on Azerbaijan.
March 19, 2023 , at 2:00, at Windermere Clubhouse in Cumming	Regular monthly meeting. Catered dinner. Program is a presentation on Petros Zoe, a community-based organization that has a mission of transforming the
April 8, 2023	Open World Program (Azerbaijan)
April 25, 2023	Outgoing journey to Greater Orlando, Florida
May 29, 2023	Incoming journey from Siberia
October 2, 2023	Friendship Force World Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia
November 1, 2023	Incoming journey from San Antonio

**Sign up for the Friendship Force International web site:** To sign up, connect to [https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign\\_in](https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign_in), then click SIGN UP.

Please see the president's letter for our new COVID policy.



## President's Letter

### **BIG CANOE/CANOE/NORTH GEORGIA COVID POLICY**

We recently reviewed and revised our Covid Policy; the focus of the revision is personal responsibility and awareness. The revised policy is shown below:

“We ask that our Members, Ambassadors and Guests take personal responsibility for their health decisions and mask as they choose.

We request that they follow updated CDC recommendations and, if exposed or showing symptoms, take a test. If the test is positive or inconclusive or no testing is done, please refrain from attending Club events until negative or cleared by a doctor.

The mutating nature of this disease and the progressively changing efforts to prevent infection resist a more definitive Covid policy. Big Canoe/North

Georgia Friendship Force cannot be and is not responsible for any financial damage or personal harm or inconvenience allegedly caused by exposure to or affliction with any Covid variant or the enforcement of any regulatory or personal policies relating to the mitigation or avoidance of Covid.

January 17, 2023”

### **2024 JOURNEY DESTINATION FORM**

As you may recall, in a recent survey we asked our members to prioritize 2024 Outbound Destination Locations. The survey results were identical to the 2023 destination requests.

Journey #1 Outbound International

Outbound international destination 1st choice Western Canada

Outbound International destination 2<sup>nd</sup> choice Japan

Journey #2 Outbound Domestic

We have requested a 2024 Outbound Domestic Journey; the USA location will be determined by FFI

### **OPEN WORLD**

We are excited to participate in the Open World Program again this year. In April we will be hosting an Open World Delegation from Azerbaijan. The Theme of the program is Arts as a Means of Social Change in the USA.

Sherry will be coordinating this program and needs volunteers to work on the various committees associated with

this event.

A program of this complexity requires people to work on several committees such as transportation, hospitality, hosting, professional program development, public relations, political contacts, etc. This is a very rewarding experience and provides an opportunity to participate as a citizen ambassador to citizens from another part of the world.

Please contact Sherry if you would like to participate in this program.

### **ORLANDO JOURNEY**

Our club will be visiting Orlando April 25<sup>th</sup>-May 2<sup>nd</sup>. An exciting Journey is being planned by the Orlando Club. We still have spots available; for more information please contact Mary Ellen or Alan .

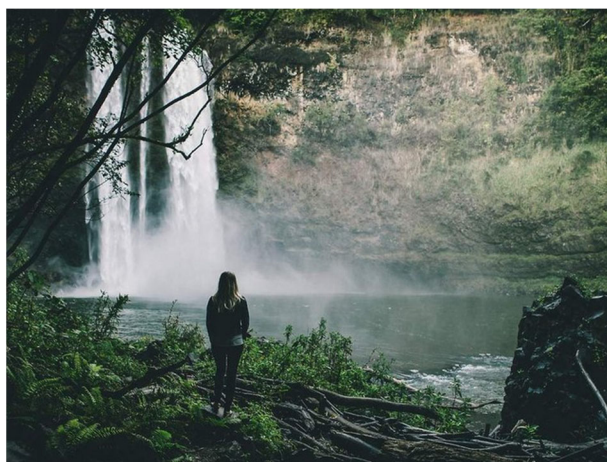


### **Upcoming Meetings**

February 19<sup>th</sup> – Regular monthly meeting at Fuego's Mexican Grill in Marble Hill from 2:00-4:00. We will order from the menu. Our program will be a video on Azerbaijan where our Open World guests are from. We will learn about the country and its people. There will be a discussion about this journey including planning committee and potential hosts.

March 19<sup>th</sup> – Regular monthly meeting at Windemere Clubhouse in Cumming from 2:00-4:00. We will have a catered dinner with a Middle Eastern flair. Each member will be charged \$15 for this meal. The club will supply tea. If you prefer something else, you may bring it. Our speaker will be Erin Magada. She will be sharing her experiences in Petros Zoe, a community-based organization that has a mission of transforming the lives of youth.

There will be no April or May meetings due to our Open World and Orlando Journeys. The club annual picnic will be on June 11<sup>th</sup> at the home of Tim and Lenna Anderson.



### **INTRODUCING ERIN MAGADA, SPEAKER AT OUR MARCH MEETING**

**By Sherry W.**

In February of 2020, just before the pandemic shut down the country, I was given the opportunity to attend the World Federation of Youth Clubs international conference. I represented

Sector 3, the organization in the Republic of Georgia led by Ketevan Chachava. One of the highlights of the conference was meeting Erin and learning about the Petros Zoe Initiative (<https://www.petroszoe.org/home>) in Uganda.

Petros Zoe's vision is to raise a community of self-driven, responsible, and economically empowered youth in a country where the average age of the population is 15.8. Less than 25% of the students finish their education and the unemployment rate for youth is around 80%.

Erin is a human dynamo, and she brought that energy with her when she joined Petros Zoe as co-director in 2018. Petros Zoe is now a registered non-governmental organization in Uganda and the US.

Come to our March meeting to meet Erin and to learn more about Petros Zoe's programs! I guarantee that you will feel her enthusiasm and be awed by what the organization has accomplished.



### Upcoming Journeys Greater Orlando

The Outbound Journey to the  
Greater Orlando Club April 25 -

May 2 is in the planning stage. We are a small group so far, and are able to drive to Orlando. The real Orlando has many natural springs and treasures that the Disney crowd doesn't see, in addition to a Club that is looking forward to hosting us and showing us their bit of paradise. The weather should be beautiful - not too hot or cold. You are welcome to join us if you let us know before the end of February.

Mary Ellen & Alan  
Johnson 706-253-4891



### Siberia

Oyuna Sengeeva, the FFI Regional Support Manager for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Baltic States, Moldova, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Republic of Georgia and Mongolia, asked that our club accept a journey from the club in Siberia, Russia. We have done so.

Oyuna was born in Siberia but now lives in the United States. The president of the Siberia club is her mother. Oyuna is well acquainted with many of the ambassadors. The journey will include four nights with our club and four nights with the Huntsville club.

As Bob A. discussed in his presentation at the meeting, governments



may disagree, but Friendship Force members can still agree to meet and share their culture. Our organization declares “a world of friends is a world of peace” and this journey will give our club the opportunity to live that message.

If the ambassadors from **Siberia** are approved for US visas, their visit with us will be on or about **May 29, 2023**.



## January Meeting

The January meeting was held at the beach club in Big Canoe. President Barry K. presided. He recognized Sherry W. for her service as president (picture above), and Robert L. for his service as treasurer.

The following announcements were made:

- The February program will be a talk about Azerbaijan, by Erin Magda, on February 19.
- The March program will be a talk on Uganda, on March 19
- The Open World program will be April 8 to 15.
- Everything is on track for the jour-

ney to the Greater Orlando club. There is room for more ambassadors, and we have opened the door for members of other clubs to join us.

- The World Conference is in Dubrovnik October 2 to 5 this year. Registration will be open soon. Opportunities for home stays before and after are available.

- A new vertical banner has been obtained

- The May meeting will be a picnic at the home of Tim and Lenna A. Anyone who has not yet paid their dues for 2023 should do so now.



## World Conference

FFI is organizing a World Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia this year (October 2-5, 2023). Pre and Post conference excursions will also be offered. Details to follow.





## NEWS FROM OUR UKRAINIAN FRIENDS

(Communicating through Facebook Messenger)

Nataliia

Dear Sherry, happy to hear from you. I am good. Research Fellow for European liberals on Ukraine, currently in Brussels

Bogdan

Dear Sherry, happy to hear from you. I am good. Research Fellow for European liberals on Ukraine, currently in Brussels

Olga

Hi Sherry! Thank you for asking. I, my son and my parents decided to spend winter in Poland due to blackouts in Kyiv. I am currently on maternity leave. Sending lots of love to Friendship Force Club members!

Anna

Hello Sherry Hi everyone I am in Switzerland now. Just a week ago came

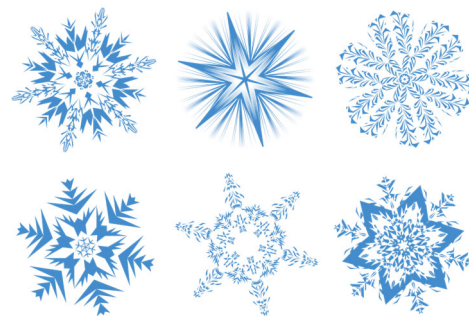
from Kyiv. Was there for quite a long-time. Next stop is Israel, i think 🤔 So I am moving, as always. Looks like it is my permanent state of being...Quit my previous job officially. Unofficial- still in the pipeline of processes of what I have been doing. Tired and exhausted

😞 Sending all of you my warmest hugs 🤗 ❤️ PS. Sherry, thank you for always being in touch with us. I do very much miss that time and people - Friendship Force.

Oleksandr

Dear Sherry, nice to hear from you. I am still in Kyiv and continue being here till we win Russia in this war this

year 😊 I am continuing my work as a corporate governance consultant, in particular, I provide consulting to the government of Ukraine regarding the management of state property. In addition, I'm still a member of an international group on sanctions. You can show my interview (with English subtitles) in which I describe our sanctions activities.





## March Birthdays

1	Tom C.
19	Jeannette W.
28	Jean Z.



## Cares and Concerns

Margie B. has been having a tough time. She was diagnosed with Covid on January 17. On January 19, she fell in her apartment, and was hospitalized with a sodium deficiency. She was discharged from the sodium deficiency, but was re-admitted to the hospital on February 6, where she was diagnosed with a broken vertebra. She had surgery for the broken vertebra on February 10. She appreciates the thoughts and prayers of her Friendship Force friends.



## Next Issue

We want input from you. Have you been on a journey with another club? Have you traveled on your own? If you have any information that might be of interest to other club members, send it to your newsletter editor:

Ray Bowyer  
 raybowyer@earthlink.net  
 770-366-3736  
 8592 Roswell Road #420  
 Sandy Springs, Georgia 30350

Deadline for the March issue is March 5, 2023.



## News From Friendship Force International

The International board of directors has two new members:

- Robert Wagner has been a member of the Friendship Force of Bavaria for 16 years.
- John Hannah is the former president of Friendship Force Christchurch.