



A quarterly newsletter for  
Club and Regional members of  
Friendship Force in New Zealand

**WINTER EDITION**  
**August 2023**

## News from the RSM desk

Greetings friends, welcome to the Winter Edition of our NZ Friendship Flyer.

I hope you are all keeping warm and well in this changeable weather. It's so hard to watch the news at night and see all the climate-related crises around the world—fires, floods and heatwaves everywhere. Makes me appreciate the cool weather here, and relish the sunny days in amongst the rainy ones.

In this edition of the Friendship Flyer, I give a brief report on the regional meetings which were held to give feedback on FFI's new strategic plan. Thank you to those who attended, the responses were very valuable.

I have also included reports on the recent outbound journeys lead by Wellington and Hamilton-Waikato clubs, they sound like they had a wonderful time with their various hosts. Barry also has some great pointers at the end of his report for future journeys, so do check those out!

I am looking forward to the International Conference in Dubrovnik in October, at which I will be running workshops called "*The Club Leadership Connundrum*". The focus of these workshops will be on ways of keeping your club going when you can't get anyone to stand for President or Secretary—it is possible, as evidenced by Christchurch and Kapiti. So new ways of doing things and lots of brainstorming. Hopefully I'll come back with some new ideas as well.

I will be away from 24 September (flying first to Sweden to visit my brother, then to Hannover to stay with FF friends, then to Dubrovnik for the Conference, then doing a post-conference bus tour of Croatia and Slovenia). I'll be home on 14 October. Till then, take care everyone.

Ngā mihi, Debbie Lattey  
NZ Regional Support Manager

### IN THIS EDITION:

- ⇒ News from the RSM desk
- ⇒ Regional Meetings
- ⇒ Call for Club videos
- ⇒ FF Wellington outbound journey
- ⇒ FF Hamilton-Waikato outbound journey
- ⇒ Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

## REGIONAL MEETINGS

A series of regional meetings were held this month—the first in Hamilton on Friday 18 August, and the second in Kapiti on Saturday 19 August. This second workshop was part of our Nuts & Bolts Day.

The main aim of these meetings was to gather feedback on the future direction of Friendship Force. Board Director John Hannah lead the workshops, and encouraged participants to share their ideas and views so he can report them back to the FFI Board. A total of approx. 40 members attended these two workshops, and we are grateful to those who took the time to attend and give your feedback.

It was interesting that a comment that came up over and over again was the need to rebrand and drop the word "Force" from our name. I know it's been a bone of contention for a long time amongst our members, and has been discussed by the Board from time to time, but the cost of rebranding is probably sadly prohibitive.

The feedback sheets have all been collated and John Hannah will present the findings to the FFI Board as part of their ongoing strategic planning.

## AN INVITATION TO CLUBS AND CLUB MEMBERS

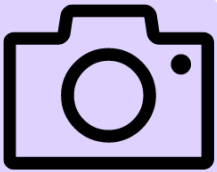
Do you know someone who has great video skills? Perhaps a younger family member or friend? Here's an invitation from FFI to create a video promoting FF—be creative and see what you can do!

This video may be used as a greeting from your Club at the World Conference in Dubrovnik, or to promote your part of the world to FF members.



**friendship force**  
international

# SHOW THE WORLD WHO YOU ARE!



SEND A BITE-SIZED CLUB  
VIDEO!



## WE ARE LOOKING FOR SHORT, FUN VIDEOS FROM OUR CLUB MEMBERS!

If you could say anything to the other clubs worldwide, what would that be?


This is your chance!

## BE CREATIVE!

1. Your video can be a simple greeting, the sharing of a highlight, a commercial, or a song or dance!
2. Video should be under 3 minutes in length - make sure to have fun!

**PLEASE SUBMIT IT BY  
(SEPTEMBER 15TH, 2023)**

IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS,  
PLEASE REACH OUT TO:

 [gia@friendshipforce.org](mailto:gia@friendshipforce.org)

**WE WILL ACCEPT SUBMISSIONS AFTER  
SET DATE TOO!**

**There are 3 ways you  
can send your video:**

WHATSAPP



FACEBOOK



Post on our page at  
<https://www.facebook.com/friendshipforce>

EMAIL



## Wellington FF visits two Washington State clubs

The Wellington FF club was allocated two clubs in Washington State in the north-west of USA, namely Eastern Washington/Northern Idaho based in Spokane and Lower Columbia based in Longview about 40 minutes north of Portland. The visits to the two clubs were fantastic – they were so keen to have us and to display friendship and local places. As the Longview club is small, we only had nine of us, including two Wairarapa members. For six it was their first international journey.



Highlights included: teaching us line dancing, walking downtown in Spokane with its gushing waterways, attending the local production of Grease, going underground into the Sierra Silver mine, walking up Mt Spokane and travelling on America's longest gondola, and boating on Lake Coeur D'Alene. At Longview highlights included: climbing the Astoria Column, visiting Mt Helens and listening to the locals telling us about the eruption, meeting the leader of the local Indian tribe "Colwitz" and boating on the Columbia River. Two great journeys.



Each of our hosts were fantastic and we made true friends.

For our performance we did the poi, haka and sung a couple of waiata.

## Hamilton-Waikato Journey to Vancouver, Seattle and Costa Rica

Seventeen Friendship Force travellers recently completed a demanding five-week Journey through four countries, Canada, the USA, Mexico and Costa Rica.

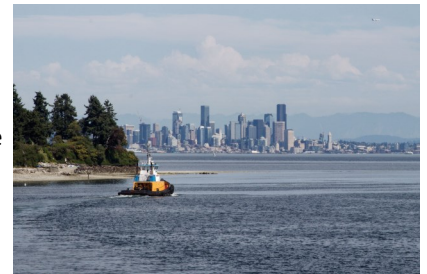
This Journey, that had been awarded to the Hamilton and Waikato club, had some initial problems which may have helped it become such a wonderful trip. Originally three overseas Friendship Force clubs were to be visited but one pulled out after firm arrangements had been made with the other two. Fortunately the Vancouver club then offered to host us, but at the start of our trip. This left two spare weeks in the middle of the Journey – which we filled with a visit to Mexico and an extra week in Costa Rica, all at our own cost.

Hamilton and Waikato could not fill the trip so we recruited one person from the Taupo club, one from Manawatu, two from Wellington and two from the Christchurch club. A very positive aspect of the Journey was how these travellers all mixed and got on despite not previously knowing each other. A pre-trip get-together that we held, may have helped.

The Journey itself got off to a rocky start when connecting flights from Wellington and Christchurch were delayed or cancelled, but we finally all made it onto the direct flight from Auckland to Vancouver.

Highlights of our time in Vancouver were a visit to a now-closed Salmon cannery, which had been a major industry, learning how ethnic Japanese, a major part of the cannery work-force, had been treated so badly in the Second World War, exploring the Granville Island markets, touring the harbours in small ferry boats and visiting the Maritime museum. On a free day some of us visited a national park in the hills above Vancouver and saw a lumberjack show and real live Grizzly bears. Plenty to see, do and learn in Vancouver, with very gracious hosts helping us do this.

A 4 hour Greyhound bus trip saw us arrive in Seattle, to be met by a very energetic Friendship Force club. Stand-outs from this visit were the Chiluly glass exhibition and the Boeing aircraft museum. Look them both up on the internet. Chiluly features very large scale glass creations that leave one stunned and wondering how they were put together. At the Boeing museum one can walk through a Concorde and also through the Air Force One jet used by 3 Presidents of the USA, inspect fighter planes from various wars and marvel at the fastest plane ever made, now many years old. Lunch break was a picnic outside under the tail of an old Lockheed Constellation plane.



*A view of Seattle from our ferry*



*On a terrace above Guanajuato reached by cable car*

From Seattle we flew, via Dallas / Fort Worth to Guanajuato in Mexico. This was chosen because it was in the hills and had lower summertime temperatures than the Mexican coast. Despite an initial problem with the booked minibus not turning up at the airport when we arrived shortly after midnight, we quickly settled in and, for many, this became a highlight of the Journey. Guanajuato was built on the back of silver mines in the area and the city's former wealth is demonstrated by its many large churches. The city is hilly and jam-packed with buildings, the streets narrow and one-way with much vehicle traffic moving underground along old underground waterways that have been converted to roads. Walking is the way to go and there is plenty to see, from the local population to street sellers, markets, small shops, many cafes and restaurants and, in the evening, outdoor street bands serenading

those in the many restaurants in various town squares. A highlight was the mummy museum – not a place for the faint of heart (check it out on the internet!!) Safety was guaranteed by a very strong police presence. The city was a great place to relax and recover from two very busy Friendship Force hostings.

We then flew, via Mexico City to San Jose, Costa Rica for our two weeks, the first of which was not hosted. Apart from exploring San Jose a highlight of this was our trip to the 'cloud forest' at Tortuguero. This involved a long trip down narrow roads – a memorable event being when two large buses could not pass each other and one driver got out with a sickle and cut the long grass on the side of the road so he could drive his vehicle 'off-road'. At the end of this bus trip we transferred to a long boat powered by an outboard motor, us in the front and luggage stacked in the rear, for a 40 minute ride downriver to our lodge on the shore of the river. OSH in New Zealand would have been scandalised by the bus to boat transfer on a rocky river bank and the boat trip. The accommodation could have been better but the trip in river boats to spot the wild-life (helped by a guide with eagle eyes) and the night-time walk to see the turtles come ashore and lay eggs, more than made up. The trip back and our attempts to berth on the river bank would have been excellent material for a TV comedy.

From San Jose we travelled to the neighbouring city of Alajuela to be hosted by the West Alajuela club.

Our hosts were very gracious and very friendly. Unfortunately there was not much English spoken so lots of cell-phones featuring Google-translate got passed around – but the language issue never became a problem.

For anyone this was a 'tough' week, but for our age-challenged group it was demanding. One day involved getting on a bus at 5.00am driving for many hours to Savegre, a resort that was really at the back of beyond, reached via a narrow winding road with precipitous, very deep falls to the side. Pay-back was the wonderful sights, a great meal, many close-by humming birds and a 4 – wheel drive trip and walk in the forest. Home was not reached until after 7.00pm and much later for some. Other highlights were a trip to a live but dormant volcano (no mention of White Island here), a wonderful visit to the La Paz Waterfall Gardens Park, where even little red eyed green frogs were sighted. Too much to describe - so check it on the internet.



*Off to visit the forest at Savegre in Costa Rica*

Our hosts were very much 'party animals' and both the welcoming function and our farewell involved a lot of dancing. We sang 'Now is the Hour' at the farewell and our hosts responded with a song that seemed to have an unlimited number of verses. This function doubled as a birthday party for one of our number who celebrated a 'significant' birthday. This person surprised us all with her very smart stepping and boundless energy. Even the Costa Ricans were impressed.

And then after about 26 hours of continuous travel it was over and we were back in cold, but welcome, New Zealand.

Lessons for Friendship Force:

- ◇ A hard-working and competent travel agent eliminates a lot of potential problems
- ◇ Identical markers on our suitcases proved useful
- ◇ Our very smart scarves proved both useful markers and items of sartorial elegance
- ◇ The black t-shirts worn at welcoming and leaving functions looked smart and presented New Zealand well
- ◇ Our pictorial presentation about New Zealand and the regions represented went across very well with all clubs visited
- ◇ There is no 'right' way to host. Seattle did a lot of travel in club members' cars, made picnic meals and charged us a relatively low fee. West Alajuela charged a fee of at least double but everything was included – buses, entry fees and meals. At both clubs we felt comfortable that we had received 'value for money'
- ◇ Being hosted is hard work and days of rest between hostings was beneficial
- ◇ Older people know how to enjoy themselves and can be a lot tougher than they look
- ◇ To learn about other cultures and achieve the goal of 'world peace' there is no substitute to actually living with your hosts in their homes learning how they live and of their own family dramas.

Barry O'Donnell,  
Journey Coordinator

## Guess Who's Coming to Dinner

Recently Wellington FF had 17 members in groups of 6, 6 and 5, at the homes of three hosts.

From comments expressed to date, it was a huge success, and what was particularly enjoyable was the opportunity to spend time chatting with each other over the evening, as against being able to speak to members for only a few minutes over coffee mornings or on other occasions.

It was particularly good for those new members who attended as those dining with them were given a real chance to get to know them.

The evening is pretty easy to organise. Initially I suggested setting a dinner table for 6, 7 or 8, but on reflection, I think the numbers we had of 5 and 6, were probably better. These smaller numbers certainly enable much chatting between each other over the predinner nibbles, and then round the dining table.

If anyone would like more information about how to organise such event, and a draft invitation, feel free to reach out to me.

In friendship, Malcolm Sime, Wellington FF

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