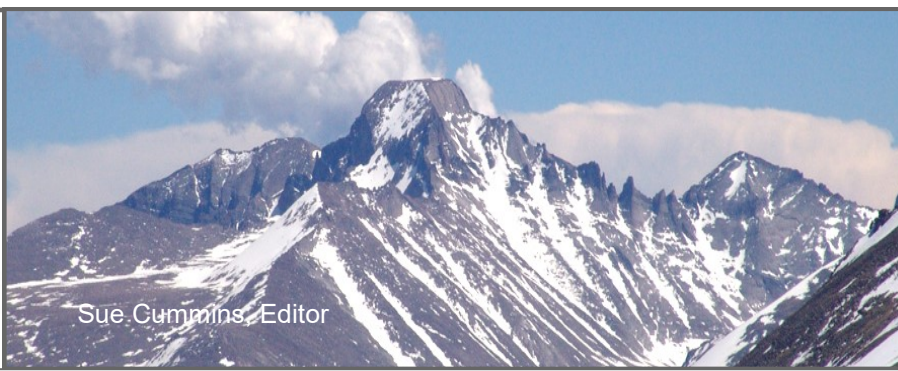




friendship force  
NORTHERN COLORADO



Sue Cummins, Editor

January  
2024

## Estes Park, Fort Collins, Greeley, Loveland, Windsor and Surrounding Areas

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January 12th  
Meeting  
7 p.m.  
First Christian  
Church  
2000 N. Lincoln  
Loveland

### FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Happy New Year My Friendship Force Friends,

We have made it through another year; amazing how this happens. Thank you to Ken Weaver for his detailed planning and coordination of so many things; this helped our past year run smoothly. The Holiday Celebration was a great success thanks to Suzi Gossard and many busy bees who helped her. We had a number of new and prospective members join us for our gathering. Our Club is thriving as we add new members to our roster. We have new friends, new faces, and new ideas to incorporate into our already vibrant organization. Welcome all! We thank all who are helping to make this possible. We've also had to say a few goodbyes to long-term members who have passed; Barbara McCluskey and Bob Wilhour. We extend our energy and thoughts to their families as they navigate life without these cherished people.

Our robust 2024 schedule includes the following:

**Inbound journeys** from Southwest Florida, June 25-30, and from Austin, Texas, September 13-18. Suzi Gossard and Marcia Ross are Host Coordinators for Southwest Florida, but we still need a Host Coordinator for the Austin group. Training will be provided if you would like to consider this, or possibly co-coordinate with someone who has more experience with journeys. Ken has graciously kept us informed on how to connect on line for applications for journey host <https://ffncolo.com/> or hosting forms at <https://ffncolo.com/Forms/HostApplicationAndAgreement.pdf>.

LaDonna Palm and Rocky Padden will be Ambassador Coordinators for our **outbound journey** to Pecs, Hungary, in late May and Cornwall, UK, early June. Contact them for details on whether applications are still being accepted. If they are, goto: <https://ffncolo.com/Forms/AmbassadorApplicationandAgreement.pdf>.

Dues for 2024 are \$50 per person. They can be sent by Zelle to [ffnocotreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:ffnocotreasurer@gmail.com) or mailed to LaDonna Palm at 4605 Hahns Peak Drive, #201, Loveland, CO 80538.

Our **January 12th monthly meeting** will be in-person at First Christian Church, 2000 N Lincoln, Loveland. Our presentation will be by Marilyn and Susanna Garner on our September 2023 Ontario journey.

I look forward to seeing everyone on Friday, January 12th.



*Susan Mathre*



## January 12 Program

**FROM CANADA TO CROATIA**

Your club's Friendship Force Journey Ambassadors to Lake Simcoe and Ottawa are excited to share our impressions of Ontario, including some interesting cultural and historical lessons we learned last September. Marcia Ross, Susan Mathre, Barb Turnbull, Marilyn



Garner, Paulette Weaver, Ken Weaver, Ann Lohmeyer, Rick Lohmeyer, LaDonna Palm and Susanna Garner all travelled to one of Canada's most beautiful cottage country areas and its capital city of Ottawa. We met new FFI friends and shared many wonderful experiences with our hosts.

Please join us on January 12th to see our photos and try a special Canadian dessert!


*Susanna Garner*

*P.S. Ken Weaver will also report to us some of the highlights of the FFI World Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia, including wonderful staff workshops and FFI's strategic planning for 2024-2026. Since he begins his term on the FFI Board of Directors on January 1<sup>st</sup>, you can expect to hear more throughout 2024.*

## February 9th Program

**Fit to Travel**

**presented by Personal Trainer Alan Sharp**



Alan is a Certified Personal Trainer who lives in Loveland and works in Northern Colorado. He has a passion for helping people build healthy habits. With a background in Cancer Rehabilitation as well as a degree in Sport and Exercise Science from UNC, he works with dozens of folks to assist them in reaching their health and fitness goals. He currently splits his time between personal training and teaching exercise classes for the 55-and-older community, including many at Loveland's Good Samaritan who are much older than 55. By creating individualized programs, he ensures that his clients' goals are met and problems are addressed. Outside of work, Alan loves to play basketball, climb mountains, and have game nights with friends and family.

## March 8th Program

**World Friendship Day International Potluck**

with entertainment by

**The LOVE UKES**

and an overview of Friendship Force by

no less than our own new board member of Friendship Force International, Ken Weaver.

**Please invite your friends to this one.**



## Ken's World Conference Report

In early October, I attended the Friendship Force International World Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia. Jeremi Snook, CEO and President, welcomed several hundred of us with worthy remarks. To read the transcript, sign in at [https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign\\_in](https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/users/sign_in) to go to <https://my.friendshipforce.org/en/blog/d91d58390562590f>. Three days of excellent workshops, local outings, and socializing ended with a banquet with music and dancing. Here's my summary in sonnet form.

### Dubrovnik, Hrvatska World Conference 2023

Seafarers come to port at this fortress  
to reframe futures, as did we, to hear  
music, try Plavac Mali, dance late to  
Klapa Kase and share Konavle arts.  
We learned clean-beach eco-logic and how  
talking concern and aspiration is  
simple savory smorgasbord while one  
devours traditional Peka bell roast.  
World friends see situation differently,  
can change direction. When everyone leads  
experiment nurtures culture and we  
honor nature. Each heartfelt walkabout  
we voice this richness together, become  
intrepid civil discourse troubadours.



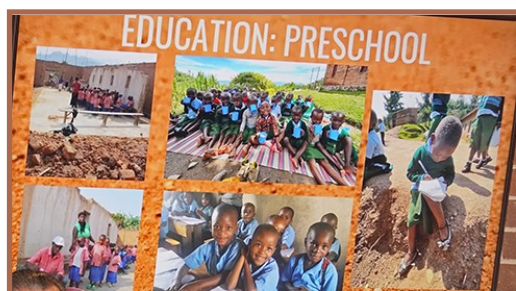
At our January 12<sup>th</sup> regular meeting, I'll highlight some of the wonderful staff workshops and also FFI's strategic planning for 2024-2026. Since I begin my term on the FFI Board of Directors on January 1<sup>st</sup>, you can expect to hear more throughout 2024.





## Recent Programs

At our October meeting, Erik Miller presented us uplifting information about the progress that is being made in Rwanda by a program called “Arise Rwanda.” He has traveled to Boneza three times in the past few years to personally observe and help with transforming that area through education, clean water, better healthcare, pastoral care, and economic development. Although I took copious notes throughout Erik’s excellent presentation, I am unable to locate them. The seemingly miraculous reversal after the 1994, 100-day Rwandan genocide, during which as many as 1 million people were killed, makes the peace and progress at Boneza especially impressive. Learn more at <https://ariserwanda.org>.



*Sue Cummins,  
photos by  
Ed Brigden*

For our program in November, Gerry Forney and his wife, Irene Ludwig (members of FF Denver), shared slides of their visit to Pecs, Hungary after the FF World Conference in Dubrovnik. Gerry shared some history of the area, part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and explained that the original walled city provided fortification against the barbarians (Huns). Gerry and Irene felt Pecs was reminiscent of Fort Collins, since it is home to the oldest university in Hungary. It boasts a population of 150,000, with 40,000 university students, similar to CSU. Some of the highlights shared by their hosts included the Zsolnay Porcelain Factory and museum, home of fine, hand-painted porcelain, as well as an Easter Egg museum with 2500 eggs on display. On their free day, their hosts took them to the Mecsek Mountains where there were some great restaurants with Hungarian specialties. Gerry and Irene encouraged our members to sign up for our upcoming outbound journey to this interesting and beautiful city!

*Suzi Gossard, with photos by Ed Brigden*





## Friends, Fun, and Yum At Holiday Party



Suzi

A festive evening of fun, food and fellowship was enjoyed by all who attended the December Holiday Social at the Harvest Park Community Clubhouse. Lots of laughter accompanied the “Find Someone Who...” activity as we sampled delicious treats from Nancy’s beautiful charcuterie boards. The buzz of great conversations filled the room as we enjoyed our dinner and cheesecake while helpers Alexa and Allie kept the buffet filled with goodies. Then holiday songs filled the air as we sang a few of our favorites. What a great way to celebrate together with friends! Many thanks go to Suzi, Nancy, Elizabeth, Debbie, Susan and Cathie for all their work planning the party and to all who helped set up and clean up!

*Suzi Gossard*

*Photos by Ed Brigden*



Carol & Randie McGrath



Barbara & Dennis Miller



Sue & Gary Cummins



Caption requested for this one of  
Ken and Suzi.



Alexa and Allie  
were a big part of our ability  
to enjoy the evening.





### **Marcia Ross Named Volunteer of the Year**

According to Ken Weaver, “it was great to see the look of surprise on her face” when as club president he named Marcia Ross as volunteer of the year at the holiday party. He said that the recognition is for how much recently and for decades Marcia has meant to The Friendship Force of Northern Colorado. Marcia has been club president, a journey coordinator often, and agreed to serve as Secretary again during 2023. From her career as a school principal, she’s extraordinarily organized. “Her minutes were succinct, her advice salient and in good judgement,” according to Ken, “often making thoughtful suggestions for how to handle a question or approach a decision.” Also at the holiday gathering, Ken made a point of thanking the dozens of other member volunteers who each, in one way or another, helped so much to make 2023 a true comeback year.

### **Our Ultimate Volunteers for 2024**

Susan Mathre, president  
Suzi Gossard, vice president  
LaDonna Palm, treasurer  
Carol McGrath

### **Our Dues Are Due**

Dues for 2024 are \$50 per person and should be paid by January 31st. You can remit that amount by Zelle to [ffnocotreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:ffnocotreasurer@gmail.com); or bring your check, payable to FFNC, to our meeting on January 12th; or mail your check to our treasurer, LaDonna Palm, 4605 Hahns Peak Drive, #201, Loveland, CO 80538. So that Ed Brigden can update our directory, please also fill out the 2024 member information and change form.



**CLEO Luncheon for All Members and Guests**

Colorado Eating Out  
11:30 a.m., Thursday, January 18  
at the Pourhouse, 124 East 4th Street, Loveland  
**Please r.s.v.p. to Rocky Padden**

***Outbound Journey to Pecs, Hungary, and Cornwall, UK  
Late May 2024 to Pecs and June 3-10 to Cornwall***

Contact the coordinators for this journey if you are interested. Ambassadors who have been chosen have been notified, but please contact Rocky Padden or LaDonna Palm if you'd like to be considered if more ambassadors are needed.

**Inbound Journey from Friendship Force of Southwest Florida**

Under the leadership of Host Coordinators Suzi Gossard and Marcia Ross, the planning committee is beginning to organize events and home hosts for this journey, scheduled for June 25-30, 2024. If you have not signed up to participate, we could still use a couple more small group dinner hosts. Even if you aren't able to host a dinner for 6 to 10 in your home, remember that you can team up to work with someone else who has room; he or she would likely appreciate the extra help! Generally, the dinner host provides the main dish and some sides, but you may ask guests attending from our club to bring beverages and/or additional sides or dessert, if you wish. This journey will only last five days, so we won't be doing an overnight stay near RMNP this time. Journey # 24176.

***Opportunities for you to serve:***

1. We have openings on some of our committees for your talents and skills. Please contact our president, Susan Mathre, to find out a way you might be able to serve.
2. We need a host coordinator for the inbound journey from Austin, Texas, which is scheduled for September 13-18. You will not be alone; help and training will be available to you. Rick and Ann Lohmeyer will be your immediate contacts for this.

**You may have noticed that we are trying not to give actual contact information for our members in our newsletters. We have had some interference by scammers that makes this wise. You should have been emailed a copy of our latest membership list. If not, please tell any member you know. Cathy McCallum is our membership chair.**