



# PASSPORT

A Publication of the Friendship Force of Lincoln  
[www.fflincoln.org](http://www.fflincoln.org)

Number 182

Lincoln, Nebraska

December 2025

## Sarasota Journey by Lincoln and Birmingham Friendship Clubs

By Judy Keetle

Seven members of Friendship Force of Lincoln, Gayle and Milt Bayer, Maxine Moul, Arlene Rea, Carol Johnstone-Hornig, Pat Novak, and Judy Keetle, traveled to Sarasota, FL November 5-9. Five members of the Birmingham, Alabama FF joined us on this Journey. From the airport we went directly to the beach to watch the sunset in the west, the full moon rising in the east, and the pelicans and other birds frolic in the air and water of the Sarasota Bay.

Sites we visited in Sarasota included: (1) Selby Gardens - a tropical urban oasis with a large collection of orchids; (2) a tour of the historic Opera House; (3) The Ringling Museums and Ca'd Zan (the stunning Venetian Gothic mansion, home of John and Mable Ringling); (4) Bishop Museum of Science and Nature where the

"Reflections of Manatees" was a highlight; and (5) a Sarasota Bay Eco Boat Tour and more. On Friday evening we enjoyed dinner parties in Sarasota FF members' homes. The home hosts and day hosts showed us a really GREAT time in their BEAUTIFUL city.

The Welcome 'Friendsgiving' lunch and the Farewell Dinner gave us a chance to enjoy good food and socialize with our new friends. There was talk of the Birmingham FF and the Lincoln FF exchanging Journeys in 2027. We will see what the future holds.

Florida sunsets and moon rises in the warmth of the November days were welcomed by the Lincoln Friendship Force members.



The Lincoln and Birmingham Friendship Force on the journey to Sarasota enjoyed mansions and museums.



## From the FFL President, December 2025

**By Arlene Rea, President**

Dear Lincoln Friendship Force Friends,

This is my last letter as President of the Lincoln Friendship Force Club. It has been a busy and rewarding two years, as well as the two years earlier in 2021-2022. A special thank you goes to Vice President Midge Dublinske, who took on the responsibilities of President during my absence for most of 2025. I wish to thank the Board for its constant support and assistance. When anything needed to be done, someone willingly stepped forward. Please consider helping Judy Keetle, President-Elect, with the various positions open for 2026.



**Arlene Rea**

Also, I want to thank all the club members who generously gave of their time, talent, and treasures this past year. Many helped with an incoming journey or Open World (COIL), went on an outbound journey to promote the FFI mission, participated in our LEOs and Breakfast and Conversations, engaged with the Diversity and Community Service outreach programs, or attended the Annual Meeting and monthly Board meetings. It is certainly true: “It takes a village to accomplish our goals.”

We had a wonderful turnout of our Friendship Force Club members and guests for the Holiday Party at the Quilt Museum on Saturday, December 6. See the article on Page 3.

There will be changes happening at FFI which will include all the clubs worldwide. See the recent email from FFI, dated December 10, 2025. See, also, the explanation of dues for FFL and FFI on page 4.

Remember Wayne Smith and President Jimmy Carter’s mission for starting Friendship Force International: “A World of Friends is a World of Peace.” If we ever needed an organization that promotes friendship and peace, our country and world are in dire need of it now. Our club needs you as members of Friendship Force International to be ambassadors of goodwill to promote peace in our world.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you, as it has been a real pleasure. I treasure our friendships.

**Arlene Rea,**

**President**

**Friendship Force of Lincoln.**

## Birthday Celebrations for Friendship Force Members

Joann Brown	15-Dec	Dorothy Anderson	14-Jan	Arlene Rea	9-Feb
Barbara Ridder	22-Dec	Maxine Moul	26-Jan	Laurie Ann Scott	11-Feb
Mary Jo Shibata	25-Dec	Larry Harnisch	6-Feb	Lois Katt	26-Feb
JoEllen Polzien	26-Dec	Thomas Higley	7-Feb	Kay Rockwell	28-Feb
Phyllis Arth	29-Dec				

## Holiday Party Held at the International Quilt Museum

By Julie Splichel,  
Chair, Social Committee

It's safe to say everyone enjoyed themselves at the FFL Holiday Party, as we were nearly booted out of the international quilt museum at closing. In true Friendship Force mode, members pitched in to quickly clean up in the nick of time.

President Arlene Rea welcomed guests, thanked the current board members and committee chairs, then introduced the new board for the upcoming year. She reviewed the numerous activities and events that have taken place in the past year and updated participants on the latest FFL developments.

Everyone was so engaged with the games not a single photo was taken during the party. Just picture participants decked out in elf hats and oven mitts struggling to open layers of boxes and wrap before a roll of the dice takes away their opportunity to retrieve a prize. Then teams were drawn for a scavenger hunt to locate specific quilt patterns scattered throughout the beautiful museum.

Finally, there was time to visit with friends old and new while sipping hot beverages and tasting the fabulous array of home-made cookies and candies graciously provided by the social committee.



The International Quilt Museum in Lincoln is a premier site in the United States for quilt exhibits and preservation.

## Deadline is December 31 for 2026 FFL Dues

**By Arlene Rea, President**

There have been questions about the 2026 dues.

**Friendship Force dues of \$50 for 2026 are due on December 31, 2025 (\$30 for FFI and \$20 for FFL). Members may remit to Friendship Force of Lincoln, PO Box 30334, Lincoln, NE 68503.** These dues were set at our Annual Meeting on September 21, 2025. We met all the Bylaw requirements by giving a 30-day notice and voting on them at the meeting.

A short time later, FFI notified all clubs about the FFI increase from \$30 to \$100 dues to be paid directly to FFI.

Because we are following our Bylaws, the FFL dues are \$50, including FFI: \$30 and FFL: \$20. They will be collected by our treasurer, Milt Bayer, until December 31, 2025. As in the past, he will send in the FFI dues for all members, in January.

Friendship Force will celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 2027

Income to the national office has been affected by the COVID-19 years of no travel and subsequent issues. Friendship Force International is implementing a "New Global Membership Structure. See the email and video FFI sent to all members on December 1 to get more information about this.

## LEO Dinners to Resume in the Spring

Please let LEO co-chairs Bruce and Carlene Keim if you have any suggestions for ethnic restaurants that you recommend for our FFL members. [carlene33@gmail.com](mailto:carlene33@gmail.com) or [brucelkeim@gmail.com](mailto:brucelkeim@gmail.com)

## Calendar December 2025, Special Events 2026

**FFL members are invited and encouraged to participate in any of the following events, including the monthly board meetings.**

- Community Service Committee Activity December 30
- Breakfast and Conversation, second Saturday of each month at Stauffer's Restaurant, 8:30 a.m. Bring a guest.
- Crane Incoming Journey, March 9 - 13
- COIL (Open World) September 18-26, Hungary

## Lincoln to host Sandhills Crane Journey, Needs Volunteers

By Midge Dublinske

The FFL Crane Journey is scheduled for March 9-13, 2026 with 10 ambassadors from Cedar Rapids-Iowa City, Des Moines and St. Louis. I have never led a Journey nor have I been on a planning committee. I just know where the Sandhills Cranes are. I need lots of help and input.

Specifically, I need:

Co-Coordinator, Journey Treasurer, Home Hosts for Monday night (March 9) and Thursday night (March 12). Four committee members to plan welcome and closing activities, itinerary for the week, and planning for alternative activities if the weather doesn't cooperate. I will need four drivers, who can stay in Grand Island for the activities on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. This is a big commitment since most of the activities will be happening in the Grand Island area. Thank you in advance for considering to be a part of this Journey and the planning.

Please contact me if you would like to help with the Crane Journey at

402-560-2884

[midge.dublinske@gmail.com](mailto:midge.dublinske@gmail.com)

## Canadian Journey Has Been Cancelled, Novak is Journey Chair

The Canadian trip has been cancelled because neither Laramie, WY nor Lincoln had enough interest. The Manitoba Niagara Falls Canada journey was to be in June.

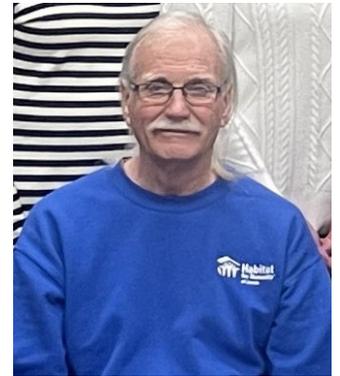
Pat Novak is returning for her third year of serving as Journey Coordinator Chair. She has recently served as Journey Coordinator for the inbound Columbia Cascade event in September and the November outbound journey to Sarasota, FL. Hopefully, with her past experience, she will be able to assist future journey coordinators in their planning.

**Pat Novak recently was on trip to Bolivia. She is at LaCumbre Pass, Bolivia at 15,000+**



## FFL Officers Will Lead Club in 2026

Congratulations to the 2026 officers who were elected at the September 21 Annual Meeting: Judy Keetle, President; Ann Quinlan, Vice President; Carol Johnstone-Hornig, Secretary; Milt Bayer, Treasurer. Judy has served as president previously. Ann previously served as secretary and Milt has served nine terms as treasurer. Carol is a new member of Friendship Force of Lincoln (2025) and we are pleased that she is willing to step into leadership in the club. **Pictured below, left to right, are Judy Keetle, Ann Quinlan, Carol Johnstone-Hornig and Milt Bayer.**



## FFL Members Participate in FFI Cruise to Vietnam, Cambodia

by Judy Keetle

In October Sharre Jahde and I traveled to Vietnam and Cambodia with the Friendship Force International's "Festival on the Me-kong". The main part of the trip was eight days in cabins on the Amawaterways' riverboat Amadara. We opted to do the two day pretour and two day post-tour where we stayed in hotels. The trip was arranged by Debbie Powell, FFI staff member from England.

Most of the participants were from the US with one couple from Australia and Debbie from England. It was great spending so much time with and getting to know other FF members and others on the tour eating, visiting sites, and enjoying entertainment provided on the boat.

The larger cities we spent time in were quite developed with skyscrapers, lots of businesses, and millions of people living and working there - Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) in Vietnam and Phnom Penh and Siem Reap in Cambodia. **Continued pg 7**

Angkor Wat in Cambodia was on the FFI Journey for Judy Keetle.



## FFI Festival of Seas Journey

Continued from Page 6

Open air markets were plentiful. Most of the countryside was 'third world' - small remote villages, ramshackle houses on stilts due to frequent flooding of the Mekong River, very little furniture, bamboo mats to sleep on, if they were lucky the people had one burner to cook on in addition to their fire pit outside, toilets and showers in an out building, no banks (their money was in their animals and rice fields). But most houses had electricity and cell phones (when they worked). Transportation in the cities was mostly small scooters and some cars. In the rest of the country boats and walking were the main forms of transportation.

Both countries had temples and buildings dating back to the 1100s. Sites we visited included: Cu Chi tunnels, Kiet's House and local workshops in Cai Be, local market in Sa De, Cao Dai Temple, Tan Chau Trishaw excursion, Royal palace and central market in Phnom Penh, Oudong Buddhist Monastery and a Phnom Penh Tuk Tuk ride, silk weaving village, and local school visit in Oknhatey Village, Angkor Ban Village, Mat Norkor, 3 Angkor Archaeological Park excursions. A highlight of the trip was seeing Angkor Wat Temple, the largest religious site in the world and the 8th wonder of the world.

Everyone we met was friendly, happy, and welcoming. We did not see many natives wearing glasses. As one of our tour guides showed us, native Vietnamese and Cambodian people have no bridge on their noses to hold glasses, so they have to use a strap around the back of their heads to keep them on. Families are very close in both countries. Elders are respected and cared for by the family. We were told not to give money to the children on the streets, because then they wouldn't go to school. We saw monks, boys and men of any age, in orange robes everywhere. There were mostly children, grandparents, and aunties in the villages. People of working age and skills often went to the cities to work and make money to support the whole family.

All in all we were very glad we endured the long flights and layovers getting to Vietnam and returning from Cambodia. We were most impressed with the airport in Qatar that had an inside garden with many plants, sculptures, and shops. If you ever have a chance to participate in a Festival at Sea or the River Cruise down the Mississippi River next Spring you might consider going. When you travel with Friendship Force you know the accommodations will be vetted and the sites and guides will be topnotch.

## “Spice Up Each Meal” is Diversity Committee Effort

A very successful Spice Drive was sponsored by the FFL Diversity and Community Service Committee to collect spices to donate to The Asian Community and Cultural Center. After learning how much their clients depend upon spices to make their family dishes and considering the cost of spices in these challenging economic times, FFL members and friends donated or funded the purchase of many jars and bags of spices, enough to fill four large boxes which will be delivered in mid-December.

**The Friendship Force of Lincoln Membership Application**  
**Friendship Force International and Friendship Force of Lincoln Dues**  
**\$50 per person**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewing Member \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Birthday: Month \_\_\_ Day \_\_\_ Would you like to receive an electronic birthday greeting? Y N

Does Friendship Force of Lincoln have your permission to use your photograph in brochures, media articles, website, Facebook, etc. to promote the Organization? Y N

New Members receive a complimentary name badge. Circle your choice: Pin Magnetic

**Ways I can help:** (Circle as many as you like)

Club supporter

Inbound Home Host

Activities Committee

Inbound Dinner Host

Open World (COIL) Committee

Journey Coordinator

Computer/Internet Skills

Officer Nominating Committee

Diversity & Community Service Committee

Passport Newsletter Formatting

Feature article writer for Passport or Neighborhood Extra

Speakers' Bureau

Social Committee

Future Officer

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Make check payable to: Friendship Force of Lincoln.**  
**Send to Friendship Force, PO Box 30334, Lincoln, NE 68503**