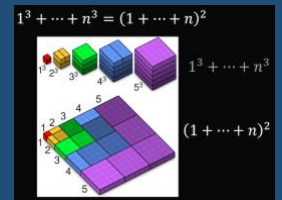


**HAPPY  
NEW  
YEAR!**



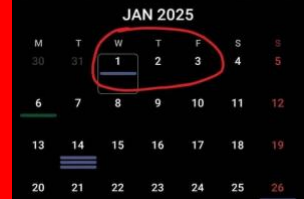
friendship force  
INTERNATIONAL



$$2025 = 1^3 + 2^3 + 3^3 + 4^3 + 5^3 + 6^3 + 7^3 + 8^3 + 9^3$$

$$2025 = (1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 + 9)^2$$

Should we be worried that 2025 begins with "WTF"



**The Friendship Force of Greater Seattle Newsletter #58 January 6, 2025**

- FFGS Board Meeting**  
Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2025  
Broadview Library, Noon
- Hamilton Outbound**  
February 20 – 26, 2024  
Bob & Karen – coordinators  
Tour: Feb. 27 – March
- Cuba Global Outbound**  
April 13-19, 2024  
9 FFGS members going
- Richmond, VA Outbound**  
Judi – coordinator  
First week of June, 2025
- Alajuela, Costa Rica Inbound**  
Joyce & Sue – coordinators  
July 3 – 10, 2025
- Manitoba, Canada Outbound**  
Pura – coordinator  
August 5 – 12, 2025
- Winnipeg, Canada Inbound**  
Elaine - coordinator  
Sept 30 – October 7, 2025

**President’s Letter:**

*Happy New Year! Hope your Holidays were fabulous! We have a busy year coming up. Our next board meeting is **January 15 at 12:00 noon** at the Broadview Library on Greenwood & 130<sup>th</sup>. Everyone is welcome; inbound & outbound journey coordinators should also attend. We plan to schedule our next board meeting on the eastside. As of January 1<sup>st</sup> Bob is taking over the journey treasurer job from Bart. Thanks to Bart for all his work keeping our journeys on track and to Bob for volunteering to take over this position. We will discuss details at the board meeting. We had a wonderful Christmas lunch on December 1<sup>st</sup>. It was so nice to see everyone. What a perfect way to start the holidays. Bob and Karen have done a great job coordinating our journey to New Zealand in February. This will be a great start to 2025. Be sure to check the schedule for the year. We have many opportunities for **travel and hosting**. Mark your calendars and plan to have a wonderful year.*

- - - Judi, FFGS President

*“We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.” President Jimmy Carter*  
*“What are the things that you can’t see that are important? I would say justice, truth, humility, service, compassion, love. They’re the guiding lights of a life.” President Jimmy Carter*

## 2025 Inbounds and Outbounds – Pack your bags!

### **Hamilton, New Zealand: February 20 – March 10, 2025**

FFGS Members are looking forward to our Hamilton Friendship Force homestay February 20 to 26, 2025. Twenty members will be participating in the journey, 13 from our club, 6 from the Columbia/Cascade club, plus one member from the Missoula, Montana club. The Hamilton host coordinator is Jude Rees; Jude was hosted by Keith and Eleanor when the Hamilton club visited us in Seattle during July of 2023. Following the Friendship Force Hamilton journey, 14 of the 20 ambassadors will continue on a private tour from February 27 through March 10, returning home from Auckland on March 11. The tour of the North and South Islands includes visits to Christchurch, Queenstown, Doubtful Sound, Wellington, and Rotorua.

### **Inbound Journeys:** *(Joyce, Sue, & Elaine are ready to take names for hosting!)*

**Alajuela, Costa Rica** to Victoria/Vancouver Island, and FF Greater Seattle

**Coordinators: Joyce and Sue; July 3 – 10, 2025**

**Winnipeg, Canada** to FF Greater Seattle and FF Columbia Cascade

**Coordinator: Elaine; dates Sept. 30 – Oct. 7, 2025**

### **Outbound Journeys:**

FF Greater Seattle to **Hamilton New Zealand – February 20 – 26**

**Coordinators: Bob and Karen**

**Nine FFGS members are going on a Cuba Global Journey April 13 – 19, 2024**

FF Greater Seattle to **Richmond, Virginia** – **Coordinator: Judi; first week of June**

FF Greater Seattle to **Manitoba, Canada** – **Coordinator: Pura; August 5 – 12, 2025**

## New rules for travelers in 2025

There are new rules for airline travel for 2025 that can affect us. Specifically,

- battery pack chargers are limited to **100 watt-hours** or 27000 milliamp hours, and must be in your carry-on, not your checked luggage. That is a relatively generous allowance, but do check the specifications of any large ones that you might be intending to buy.
- Most airlines have come to a size standard for carry-on bags, limiting them to no larger than **22 inches long, 14 inches wide and 9 inches high** including handles and wheels.
- One positive change is that travelers are entitled to a refund of bag fees if the bag is delayed more than 12 hours on domestic flights or 15-30 hours on international flights.
- If you have not yet upgraded to the enhanced Washington State driver's license, you will need to use your passport to fly beginning in **May of 2025**.

## 7 Must-See Hot Springs in the U.S (The Discover)

### 5 US Cities with the best parks – Seattle! (one of the five)

“Nicknamed the Emerald City for its sheer amount of greenery, [Seattle's](#) park system is top-notch. But with so many [outstanding parks in one city](#), we can't mention them all. [Discovery Park](#) is the city's largest park and perhaps the most well-known. It boasts 534 bio-diverse acres of tidal beaches, meadows, and sand dunes, while offering up stunning views of Puget Sound. If you find yourself in central Seattle, check out [Gas Works Park](#). In 1975, the city repurposed the old gasification factory into this unique park with a rolling green lawn, views of Lake Union, and the Seattle skyline in the distance. [Seward Park](#) is another gem that shouldn't be missed. The park's trail system, old-growth trees, and access to Lake Washington will make it hard to believe you're still within city limits.” [The Discoverer Blog](#)



***FFGS Annual Christmas Luncheon – Anthony’s Home Port, December 1, 2024***



*What a beautiful sunny day for our annual FFGS Christmas Luncheon! We enjoyed getting together and swapping stories about our activities and travels. The tasty lunch was followed by a lively ‘White Elephant Gift Exchange’ led by Brian with help from Mark. Gifts of wine bottles seemed to find the most number of relocations, but the yodeling pickle was definitely a hit. A stuffed copy of the painting, “The Scream” was a popular as well. Some attendees even took home a tasteful gift to cherish (or return with next year). A very special thanks to Mark who coordinated this fun social event – it was a wonderful start to the Christmas season.*



# Christmas shopping & lunch Social; December 13, 2024 Archie McPhee's & Blue Star Café & Pub



Fourteen of us met up for a last minute shopping trip to Archie McPhee's for gag Christmas presents and lunch at the Blue Star Café and Pub just down the street. We all got some extra steps in as we planned to meet at 10:30 am and the 'new' December hours were from 11 am on. I am sure that all of our relatives enjoyed the tasteful surprises they received including the nose pencil sharpener, yodeling pickle, and numerous Big Foot items. Do you have a FFGS idea for a social event? Let Mark know!

*Pictures for all of you foodies!*



**Unusual appetizers:** Butter as a melting candle, spun sugar for a latte, and an adorable gnome for dessert



## FFI Statement Regarding the death of President Carter

*It is with profound sadness that FFI announces the death of President Carter. President Carter passed away on December 29<sup>th</sup>, surrounded by his family.*

*On March 1, 1977, the newly inaugurated President Carter in support of his longtime friend, Friendship Force founder Wayne Smith, took the monumental step of formally introducing Friendship Force at a White House gathering of State Governors. The two men could not have known how much this decision and vision behind it would impact world communities in the next 45 years. What began as an experiment has become a global phenomenon, with thousands of people from more than 80 countries having participated as hosts or citizen ambassadors to date.*

*Post-presidency, Carter continued with his gracious support of the organization for many, many years and the late First Lady Rosalynn Carter served as its Honorary Chairperson until 2002. The Carters attended the International Friendship Force Conference in 2000, in Wisconsin, USA, to celebrate the retirement of Friendship Force's then president, founder Wayne Smith. President and Rosalynn Carter visited the offices of Friendship Force several times to show their support for the staff who were headquartered there. Despite the Carters officially parting ways with the organization in 2003, their championing of human rights and their core message of peace continues to be upheld by Friendship Force to this day.*



### **Friendship Force Pledge**

As a member of the Friendship Force

I recognize that I can make a difference

I recognize that I have a mission  
That mission is to be a friend of the people of the world.

As I embark on this adventure,  
I know that others will be watching me

I know that through my example to my fellow citizens  
And the people of other nations

The cause of friendship, love,  
and peace will be furthered  
I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### **A message from Jeremi Snook, Friendship Force International CEO and President**

*Finding a single word to summarize an entire year feels almost impossible. A year is made up of countless moments – each with its own thoughts, emotions, and events. The joy of a perfect day. The pain of losing a beloved friend. The triumph of achieving a personal goal. The struggle of an unexpected crisis. Every moment is unique, deserving a word of its own.*

*Friendship Force was created to honor the cultures and customs that make our world so rich and diverse. Through fostering international friendships, we promote understanding and appreciation for the life experiences that shape each of us.*

*If one word could capture the essence of this mission, it would be humanity. And if two words could define how peace is truly achieved they would be Friendship Force.*

*Wishing you and your loved ones a joyful holiday season.*



# Travel Photos from Mexico! *Grutas de Tolantongo*

*Grutas de Tolantongo is one of the most stunning man made and natural attractions in the world - a thermal waterpark with waterfalls, caves, tunnels, and man made thermal pools all located on the side of a mountain*



*Waterfall with 99 degree water caves    River (with rock dams) with warm water*

*Perhaps 50+ man made thermal pools*

## *Prismas Basálticos*

The prisms were created by a lava flow, an effusive volcanic activity 2.58 million years ago. The geometry of these columns is a result of the cooling of the lava upon contact with a body of water like a swamp or an ancient lake. Some columns reach up to 40 meters high. A prism can have five or six faces depending on the number of fractures formed during the cooling process. The dark color of these rocks is due to their chemical composition, rich in magnesium, iron and calcium.



*Warm water  
Cave at  
Tolantongo*  
  
*Ringtail cat in  
norther Mexico*  
  
*Live Scorpion  
found on our  
granddaughter at  
our Airbnb*



## **Did You Know? - - - Auckland** (Source: *Wikipedia.com Distantjourneys.co.uk*)

- With a population of 1,700,000 Auckland is the largest metropolitan area in New Zealand. It comprises approximately one third of the country's population.
- Located on a narrow isthmus between Manukau Harbor on the Tasman Sea and Waitemata Harbor on the Pacific Ocean Auckland is one of the few cities in the world to have harbors on two separate major bodies of water.
- Auckland has a subtropical climate; it's located about the same latitude in the southern hemisphere as El Salvador in Central America in the northern hemisphere. The average high temperature in February is 76-degees, the average low is 61.
- Over fifty volcanoes are located in Auckland, resulting in a dramatic landscape but with little chance of any eruptions.
- Auckland is frequently listed as one of the world's most livable cities.



**Auckland**



**Havana**

## **Did You Know? - - - Havana** (Source: *Wikipedia.com*)

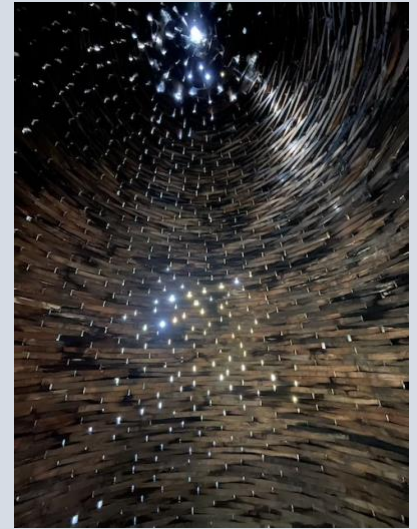
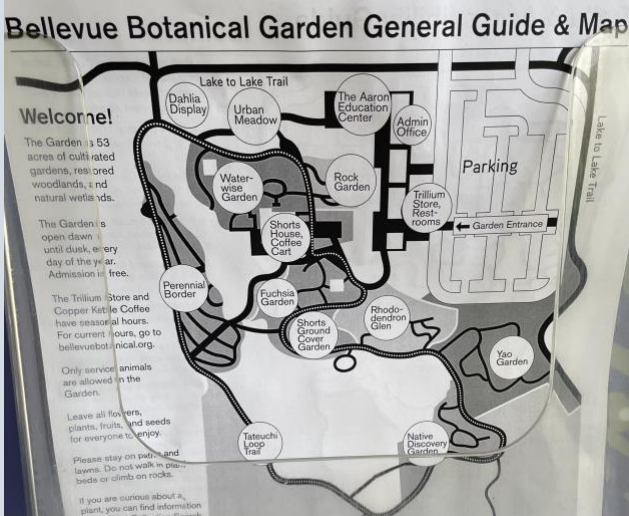
- Was founded in 1514, its population in 2023 was 1,814,000.
- Over a million tourists visit Havana each year.
- The best time to visit is during the November–April dry season.
- Havana has a tropical climate; the April temperature averages a high of 86-degrees with a low of 67; the average April precipitation is 1.28 inches; humidity averages 72%.
- **Ropa vieja** is a favorite meal, it consists of stewed, shredded beef slow-cooked in fresh tomatoes, onions, peppers, garlic and wine; accompanied by white rice, black beans, and sweet plantains.
- One U.S. dollar is currently worth 24 Cuban pesos

**Tom Hanks** has played historical figures such as Walt Disney and Mister Rogers throughout his illustrious career, but he's never been a president — not even the one he's related to. As if he weren't already enough of an American icon, the Oscar-winning actor is also a [distant relative](#) of Abraham Lincoln. Honest Abe's mother was named Nancy Hanks Lincoln, and through her, the president and actor are third cousins four times removed. Though Hanks has never depicted his distant relative on film, he did narrate *National Geographic's* 2013 docudrama *Killing Lincoln*, based on the book of the same name.

Everyone's favorite everyman isn't the only actor related to a president. **Brad Pitt and Barack Obama** are ninth cousins, **Richard Gere is the sixth cousin four times removed of James Garfield**, and **Marilyn Monroe and George H.W. Bush** were ninth cousins once removed, [among others](#). Most surprising of all: **Richard Nixon and James Dean**, whose public personas couldn't be more different, were seventh cousins once removed.



# Local Places worth exploring: [Bellevue Botanical Gardens](#)



*Night Blooming (Taiji Miyasaka & David Drake) is a catenary dome constructed using lumber salvaged from grain elevators in the Palouse region of Eastern Washington. The patterns of voids provide subtle changes of light and shadow.*



## [Myrtle Edwards Park](#)



***“In Seattle, we live among the trees and the waterways, and we feel we are rocked gently in the cradle of life. Our winters are not cold and our summers are not hot and we congratulate ourselves for choosing such a spectacular place to rest our heads.”***  
— [Garth Stein](#), American author and film producer



# Des Moines





### Maury Island Incident

Mural commissioned by John White  
Created by Artists Nancy & Zach Pahl

On June 21, 1947, just weeks before the notorious Roswell incident, Captain Harold Dahl sailed off the sunny shores of Des Moines, Washington—unaware that he was about to witness something beyond imagination. Out of nowhere, racing across the summer sky, Dahl spotted six doughnut-shaped UFOs. As they quietly came to a stop and hovered above his boat, one unleashed a rain of molten metal that injured his son and tragically took the life of his loyal dog.

The next day, a mysterious figure in a black suit and sunglasses approached Dahl and delivered a chilling warning: he knew what the captain had seen on the water and ominously cautioned him to remain silent, lest terrible misfortune follow. This fateful encounter marked the dawn of the “men in black” of legend, leaving an indelible mark on extraterrestrial mythology and a trail of yet-to-be-solved UFO mysteries.

Learn more here: 

In partnership with:   
www.MIIMural.com



# Meydenbauer Bay Park (Bellevue)





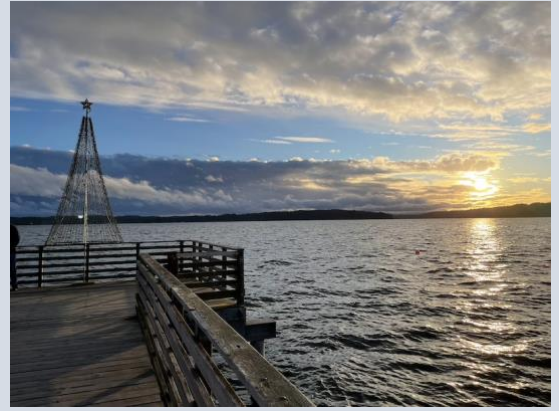
## Camp Indianola & Indianola



Camp Indianola



Logging spring board slots



long dock at Indianola at sunset

## Carkeek Park



**Carkeek Beaver Updates:**  
*Two Notch Exclusion Fences were placed in the beaver dam at the beginning of the year to regulate water levels and improve access for salmon. Salmon are generally able to navigate beaver dams – they evolved together!*

### **What can I do to help the salmon return home safely?**

*Install a rain garden, safely dispose of hazardous waste, maintain your car, support fish passage projects (culvert replacements), follow salmon safe gardening guidelines, support salmon friendly power projects.*

## University of Washington



Drumheller Fountain



Mushrooms



Suzzallo Library



# REWIND - - - Memories of Journeys Past

## Huntsville, Alabama, April, 2018



*The most beautiful things are not associated with money; they are memories and moments. If you don't celebrate those, they can pass you by. - - - Alek Wek*