



friendship force
CEDAR RAPIDS-IOWA CITY

**CEDAR RAPIDS-IOWA CITY
FRIENDSHIP FORCE CLUB**

www.friendshipforcecr-ic.org

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Cedar Rapids- Iowa City Friendship Force

November 2023

Calendar of Events

- Nov 18** **Annual Meeting**
9:30AM **Ronneburg Restau-
rant Amana, IA**
- Nov 18** **Hike Amana Colonies**
 Nature Trail
- Dec 1** **Club Zoom Trivia**
7:00PM
- March 13th, 2024** **Open World Kosovo**
- Mid August 2024** **Outward bound Jour-
ney to Edmonton,
Canada**
- Sept/Oct 2024** **Incoming Journey
from Oregon's Mid-
Willamette Valley**
- Oct 7-9, 2024** **Super Regional Con-
ference Milwaukee**

President's Message

As I look back over the last year and reflect, I can't help but be proud of our club. We have done so much! Briefly, since last Nov, we have:

Dec, hosted Open World from Kosovo

Feb, held World Friendship Day and gained new members

March/April, had outbound journey to Australia and NZ

June/July, hosted inbound journey from Taiwan

Sept/Oct, sent a sizable group to World Conference, with add ons to Slovenia, Albania, and Kosovo

Oct, hosted inbound journey from Edmonton

Oct/Nov, hosted ALEX from Ukraine

That's a lot of activity! And that doesn't include the hikes, general meetings, LEOs and other activities. We have been busy! As I give the gavel over to Nancy on Nov 18th, I will be sad, but happy that she is to have the same opportunities to watch the club grow and prosper as I did. Thank you to all of the members who helped me out during this year, especially Connie and Judy, as I navigated through it. See you next year!

Patty Potter 2023 Club President



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Annual Meeting and 2024 Board Elections

November 18 at the Ronneburg Restaurant

The annual meeting of the Cedar Rapids / Iowa City Friendship Force Club will be **Saturday morning November 18th at 9:30AM**, at the Ronneburg Restaurant in Amana, IA. We will be holding elections for club officers for 2024. **Please mark you calendars and make plans to attend.**

Nancy York will be the club president and the following members have been nominated for positions so far. Nominations will also be taken at the meeting.

President Elect: Shirley Rosencranz

Treasurer : Sharon Bowers

Activities : Connie Williams

Secretary: Mary Carson

After the meeting, if you like to stretch your legs after a big meal, please join the hiking group on a **scenic walk** on Amana's hard surface trail. This is completely optional and weather dependent, but if you'd like to join us bring or wear appropriate footwear. Please call Jean Thomas, 319 830-5092 if you have questions.



Incoming Journey- Edmonton and Area Club of Canada October 16-23, 2023



Coming out of the corn at the Field of Dreams

The Edmonton and Area Friendship Force Club visited Cedar Rapids-Iowa City October 16-23, 2023. The Ambassadors were a great group and appreciated all we had planned for them. Many thanks to those who hosted:

Jerry & Carol Burke, Larry & Mary Ann Nelson, Myron & Connie Williams, Darlene Peterson, Patty Potter, John & Judy Miner, and Jim & Barb Steggall.

Many thanks to those who hosted dinners in their homes:

Emily & Corey Schneller, George & Stephanie Schulte, Tom Hess & Nancy York, and Dan & Nadine Stark.

Many thanks to Marty Novak and Marilyn Benge who Day Hosted.

Many thanks to Mary Stull (Cedar Rapids), Carol Malichky (Kalona), Christine Allen (Iowa City), Gayle Bray (Amana) and Shirley Rosencrans (Dubuque) who planned the individual days.



Home Hosted Meals with our Edmonton Friends

Lastly, thanks to all the Club members who attended the Farewell Party at Lowe Park. We are invited to visit Edmonton in 2024 and look forward to seeing our friends again and exploring their beautiful city. Experiences like these are what makes Friendship Force so great. ***Jim & Barb Steggall***



The Cremation of Sam McGee by Robert W Service

As preformed by the Edmonton Friendship Force Club

General Meeting from October 29

There was a General meeting of the Cedar Rapids / Iowa City Friendship Force Club held at the Coralville Public Library Sunday October 29. Russell Ganim was our guest speaker. He shared his insight in to what is happening in Kosovo, Ukraine and Palestine/Israel. It was very informative and there were thoughtful questions and interaction with the members present. We also were able to hear from our ALEX student. Special thanks to members Gayle Bray and Christine Allen for putting this event together.



Open World March 2024

Our club has been awarded an Open World with Kosovo in March 2024. Watch for more information in upcoming newsletters.



SUPER REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2024

The Canada United States Super Regional Conference will be in Milwaukee, WI. Circle your calendar for **October 7-9, 2024**



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GREATER MILWAUKEE

and make plans to be there. Let's support the Milwaukee club and show the rest of the US and Canada the best of the Midwest.

FFI World Conference and Beyond

On September 25th Marty Novak, Shirley Rosencrans, Judy Frascht-Miner, Connie Williams and Christine Allen left to attend the Friendship Force International World Conference in Dubrovnik, Croatia. They would meet up with Joannie Lacayo, Nancy York and Tom Hess. Here is a recap of their journey.

The first leg of the journey to Slovenia. Shirley Rosencrans



I was very fortunate to reunite with my dear friend, Zlatka and her husband, Goran, in Maribor, Slovenia. I hosted Zlatka in my home in 2003 through the IRIS program which stands for Iowa Resources for International Services and no longer exists. Zlatka and I have stayed in contact via email all these years and we send each other a post card every time we travel. When I found out the FF International Conference was going to be in Croatia, I knew I would be going and visit Zlatka and Goran in their beautiful Slovenia. Plans began to snowball and now Christine, Marty, Judy and Connie decided to join me on the adventure. Goran rented us a van that he drove and Zlatka planned the six days in Slovenia including picking us up at the airport in Ljubljana, Slovenia. We learned about the rich history of Slovenia, experienced castles and other historical areas, ate local food at wonderful restaurants, stopped for coffee daily and enjoyed the friendship of dear friends. I still can't believe that I actually reunited with Zlatka after all these years. What a wonderful experience!!! Thank you, Zlatka and Goran.



Second leg was the FF World Conference. Nancy York



Dubrovnik, Croatia, the setting for this year's Friendship Force World Conference, was breathtakingly beautiful. Who couldn't have a good and productive time surrounded by mountains and the crystal-clear Adriatic Sea? Local excursions before, during, and after the conference only enhanced the experience and deepened our understanding of the people and this region.

Opening and closing ceremonies of the conference featured performances by local musicians and dancers, as well as lectures on Croatian history and environmentally-conscious travel by local presenters. Workshops on species and habitats of the Dalmation Coast and the meanings of traditional Croatia costumes rounded out the first day.



Wednesday's workshops focused exclusively on the FFI vision and club strengthening. Members gave input on the evolving



FFI strategic plan, learned different ways to bring age, culture, and representation into their clubs, shared how they handled reluctance to fill leadership positions, found new apps to make life easier, and discovered new ideas for expanding the FFI mission. There are lots of new and exciting things coming to Friendship Force, and you'll be



hearing more about them in the future. Be sure to ask any of the delegates—Christine Allen, Judy Frascht-Miner, Tom Hess, Joan Lacayo, Marty Novak, Shirley Rosencrans, Connie Williams, or me--what excited them most.



The 3rd part of the Journey Kosovo. Connie William

We were graciously invited into several homes for meals. Shehadin Rystemi invited us to his Pristina home to meet his family and sample a local dish made of many layers of very thin pastry, coated with olive oil and baked, one layer at a time. It was a wonderful to see Shehadin again, also known as Deano. I had met him in 2019 with the group of Iowa Sister State citizen diplomats, he called me his 'American mother'. He is the head of IT sector at the Kosovo Ministry of Defense.

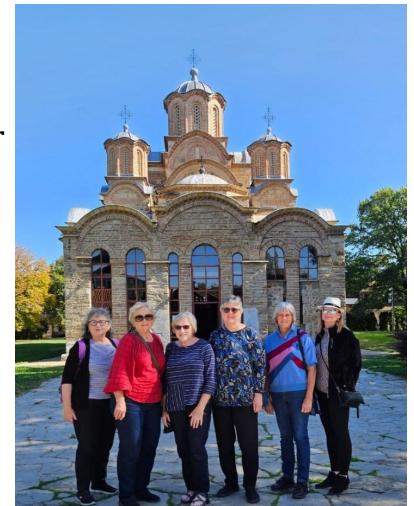


Rozafa Ukimeraj Cuni and her husband, Eddy Cuni, hosted us for a barbeque dinner one evening in Pristina. Rozafa has been in government work for 15 years, currently with USAID, United States Agency for International Development as the Senior Governance Adviser. Her past appointments have been as General Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government Administration and General Secretary of the Ministry of Defense. Both she and Eddy are attorneys.



Majlinda Kelmendi invited us to her parents' home in Peja, so we could meet her multigenerational family. We were guests to a meal of stuffed peppers, breads, and salads. Her father's sister presided over the table and we were served by her mother and sister-in-law. Joanie stayed with the family as their first American overnight guest in the home, as Joanie had hosted Majlinda when she was in Cedar Rapids for Open World this past December.

Many of us met Luljeta Gjonbalaj when she visited with Open World in December 2022. Luljeta was the facilitator then and she was a fantastic planner and host to us in Pristina. Valon Xhabali was our host in Prizren, although we were not able to see him, as he was home with a sick child. His colleagues at Ec Ma Ndryshe, Kaltrine, Eroll and Edin, gave us wonderful tours of Prizren. Dea Gaxha and Diana Nokaj, also Open World alumni, were with us



for a lovely day in Gjakova. And thanks to Qazim Doda, our friend and Open World interpreter, who engineered many aspects of this trip.

The people are what made our journey to Kosovo wonderful. They gave us a very good introduction to the history, the culture and the lifestyle of Kosovars. We hope to see them again, very possibly in 2024.

The final leg of the Journey Albania. Judy Frascht-Miner

We were able to meet up with our ALEX Albanian guests from 2022. Mirsela Gorani, Ana Maria Cotaj, Mexhit Kastrat, Redi Bizhuta, and Arkejsi Lico. We had dinner with all but 2 of them (Arlind Shorri and Sara Belshi) and a couple of them were able to spend additional time with us. They all look wonderful and are still very bubbly. They caught us up on their studies and the lives they are building.



Our whole trip was about relationships developed over time. On this last segment we met two additional friends we will never forget and plan to see in the future. The story begins with Qazim Dodo the translator Connie referred to earlier. He translated our Kosova Open World. When we reached out for guidance he quickly said I will help you, "Don't Worry". He introduced us to Agim Sylejmani and his

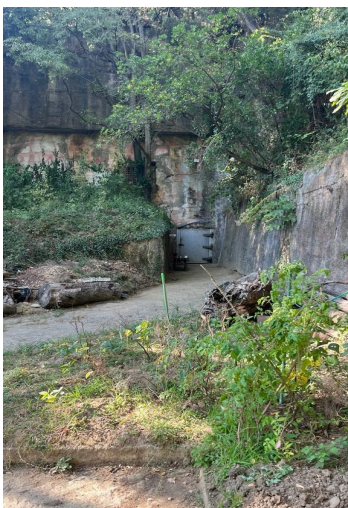
sister Haygo, exceptional individuals, who were our driver/guides through Albanian. They guided us through many historical sites, beautiful country sides, and exceptional food, but the greatest gift was getting to know them. Agim was part of the resistance and war fighting to gain Kosova's independence. Which included 5 years in prison, relocating to Switzerland and returning to fight in the war.

Our entire journey was profound!

Com-
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Farm to
Table



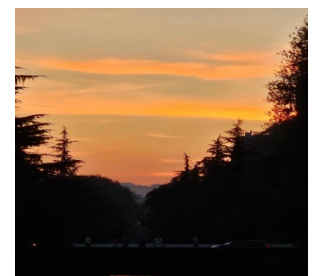
View from Castle



Bunker Museum Entrance



Outdoor market of hand
crafted items. Shopping
while climbing the moun-
tain to a castle museum



Trivia

Don't forget to join us for the next Zoom Club Trivia on Friday December 1st. It is fun and the scoring doesn't really matter. It is easy to log in. Hit the link in the invitation email and enjoy the fun with your friends from CR/IC FF Club.

See you there.



ALEX to CR-IC Oct 26 to Nov 2

Our Club is currently hosting 9 students plus a facilitator from Ukraine for the ALEX (American Life Experience program. They will be experiencing all that Eastern Iowa and our Club have to offer. Here are a few pictures of what they have experienced so far. Look for more information about them in the next Newsletter.



Enjoying the Dubuque overlook
at Fenelon Place Elevator



Carving pumpkins at the welcome
hosted by Larry and
Mary Ann Nelson.

Journey Calendar by Judy Frascht-Miner



2024 JOURNEY ASSIGNMENTS!!!! We have been assigned an outbound to **Edmonton, Canada** and an inbound from **Oregon's Mid-**

Willamette Valley. See below. I encourage you to get involved in our journey's even if in a small way. There are so many ways to

be involved. It takes a village! Don't wait to be asked, contact me and discuss options: Judy Frascht-Miner
jjbm526@aol.com 319-540-1701



OCTOBER 26TH - NOVEMBER 2ND —UKRAINE— ALEX young adults from Ukraine are presently here and leaving soon. They are delightful guests!

MID MARCH 2024 OPEN WORLD - We have been approved for an Open World with our good friends from Kosovo. More information will be coming

MID AUGUST 2024 Outbound to Edmonton —

The dates have been narrowed down to mid August.

Jerry and Carol Burke will be the Host Coordinators. If you would like to join the journey please let

Jerry and Carol or myself know soon. It is filling up

fast. Jerry and Carol Burke, jbcburke@yahoo.com

or Judy Frascht-Miner, jjbm526@aol.com.



LATE SEPTEMBER/EARLY OCTOBER 2024 Incoming from Oregon's Mid-Willamette Valley– If you would like to be part of the planning of this incoming Journey contact Judy Frascht-Miner, jjbm526@aol.com

I look forward to traveling with many of you soon!

2023 Cedar Rapids/Iowa City FF Officers

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