



friendship force

SACRAMENTO

www.thefriendshipforce.org

www.ffiisacramento.org

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Inside this issue:

President's Message	1
Upcoming Events	2
Game Time	2
Learn about the Sikh religion	2
General Membership Meeting	2
2024 Inbound Journeys	3
2024 Outbound Journeys	3
Quick Journey to Oregon?	4
ANNOUNCEMENTS	4
Sunshine Corner	4
In Memoriam	5
American River Spring Clean-up	5
Tour Sacramento Zoo	5
Recent Events	6
End the US Embargo on Cuba	6
Mission & Vision	9
Board Members	9

President's Message

I just learned that one of our Charter members died on 14 March.

Pat Longest was a remarkable person.

Although I did not know her well, I

always knew I was going to get a hug from

her whenever I saw her. I think she was

secretary of the Sacramento Friendship

Force for many years and she always

attended our meetings if she could. I know I will miss her

positive outlook on life and support of FF Sacramento. Rest in Peace!



Greetings from Japan where it is cold and rainy, delaying cherry blossom viewing by at least 2 weeks. Lynn and I joined Hiro Onishi, the Japan Regional representative, and 2 members of his Nara club. Last year Nara initiated a 3 generation Journey to San Diego with 11 adults and 14 children, ages 6-18. They were so happy with the Journey that they want to repeat it with a Sacramento Journey in early August 2025. We will need to find families who want to host, usually one parent or grandparent and 1 or 2 kids. The Journey will be focused on the kids with such activities as a baseball game, the Wakamatsu story, Gold Discovery, a water park and indoor skydiving, for instance.

Nara has also developed an associate membership for young working families, not yet able to host but who want to be involved. They pay minimal local dues and no FFI dues until they go on a Journey. Let's explore that concept as well!

In Friendship

— George Meyer, President

Upcoming Events

See FF Sacramento website for latest schedule and to register for an event: [\(link\)](#)

Calendar view: click [\(link\)](#) [must sign in to see all events]

April 7	Sun	Game Time with Charlene – 1:00 PM (register)
April 8	Mon	Board Meeting – Zoom 4:00 PM (register)
April 10	Wed	Learn about the Sikh religion 10:30 AM (register)
April 13	Sat	American River Spring Clean-up (See article in Announcements)
April 13	Sat	General Membership Meeting 3:30 Fair Oaks Library(register)
April 16	Tues	Tour Sacramento Zoo – 9:15 AM (See article in Announcements)
April 28	Sun	Hmong Cultural Show – 11:00AM – 3:00 PM – Sac State Ballroom

Game Time

By Charlene Taylor

Want to get together and play a game just for fun? On Sunday, April 7th from 1:00 - 3:00 pm Charlene is inviting us to do just that. The First 16 Club Members to RSVP will be included. If we fill up there will be a stand-by list. Nonmembers may attend if we have openings. This will all take place at Charlene Taylor's, 9303 Edensbury Ct, Elk Grove 95758. Charlene is on a cul-de-sac with limited parking so some can park in front of her garage and on her side driveway.

Learn about the Sikh religion

By Elaine Armstrong

The Sikh religion is the fifth largest religion in the world with around 23 million members. Sikhs came to America over 100 years ago from the state of Punjab in India. Ninety-nine percent of people in America wearing turbans are Sikhs. Want to learn more about this interesting religion? Join us on April 10 for a tour of Sikh Gurdwara followed by a talk about Sikhism and lunch. There is no cost, but donations are welcomed.

General Membership Meeting

By George Meyer

Join us on April 13 for our general membership meeting. We'll be discussing "Peace Corps Memories". Come hear our returned Peace Corps volunteers talk about their 2 year experiences in the Peace Corps (Nancy Sinnwell; Audrey Wiechman; George Galamba).

The Fair Oaks Library at 11601 Fair Oaks Blvd., Fair Oaks, is the venue from 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm.

After the meeting interested members will adjourn to a nearby restaurant.

2024 Inbound Journeys

If you are looking for a way to participate in Friendship Force, you might want to consider being a host for one of our inbound journeys.

1. September 20 – 27 Salvador, Brazil to Sacramento and Napa. Journey # 24192; Bonita Thomas is JC.
2. October 18-25, Saskatoon, Canada to Sacramento and then on to San Francisco Bay Area. Journey #24035; JC Chris Smith.

Watch the website and future newsletters for details. There will definitely be hosting opportunities for these inbound friends.

2024 Outbound Journeys

Journeys being planned by FF Sacramento this year include:

1. May 18 – June 4, Iringa, Tanzania. Journey # 24217, Ray Missman AC. Trip is filled.
2. August 21-28, Lake Simcoe, Journey # 24171, Rona Katz AC. Lake Simcoe is north of Toronto and there will be an optional pre-trip to Toronto and Niagara Falls.
3. September 4 – 8, Mid-Willamette Valley, Journey # 24170, Linda Basuki AC, Marty McKnew will mentor. This is a chance to visit our friends who were here in October and learn about their state.
4. October 7-10, Regional Conference (Canada & USA), Milwaukee. A great place to go to learn more about Friendship Force and make new friends.



Quick Journey to Oregon?

By Linda Basuki

Linda Basuki is coordinating a 4 night Journey to Oregon's Mid-Willamette Valley September 4 - 8, 2024. She would like to see who might be interested. The welcome dinner is Sept 4th, then over the next three days you'll visit wineries, Oregon State University, day trip to the coast, have home hosted dinners and free time to explore. You'll depart on Sept 8th. Please contact Linda at lbasuki@yahoo.com ASAP if this is something you might like to do.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sunshine Corner

By Donna Kincannon

It is with great sadness to report that Pat Longest, a charter member, passed away March 14. A sympathy card will be sent to her family.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS FOR APRIL:

Pete Martineau 4-2
 Bill DeBlonk 4-14
 Elaine Armstrong 4-17
 George Meyer 4-30



Wishing you all a wonderful birthday!

If you would like to be included in the birthday greetings, please let me know.

Is there a happy occasion in your family this year that you would like to share? Call, text, or email me: (916) 390-1479 or dlkincannon@att.net

In Memoriam

By Elaine Armstrong and Friends

Pat Longest, a Charter Member of the Sacramento Friendship Force since 1988, passed away last month. Pat was a staunch supporter of FF and always someone you could count on. Among other jobs, she was Secretary for the club for several years. Even as Pat got up there in years, she would come to the Sister Cities Garden and help spread mulch around the trees. Pat would always tell you straight out what she thought. She had still been communicating with some FF members from other countries she had stayed with, and home hosted over the years. She will be missed.

At Pat's request, there will be no public service.



American River Spring Clean-up

By Nancy Sinwell

Walk along the river and collect trash left by other visitors. Plastic gloves and garbage bags provided. Bringing your own heavier gloves is recommended. You may also bring collector stick, if you have one.

You may attend for one, two, or all three hours. People with kayaks or other small craft can collect trash from the water along the edges of the river.

[Click here](#) for more details, [click here](#) to register, or contact Nancy Sinnwell - nlsinnwell@gmail.com

Tour Sacramento Zoo

By Stephanie Turner

Stephanie Turner (a F.F. Member) is a volunteer docent at the Sacramento Zoo and invites you to join her on April 16 for a tour of the zoo and personal stories of her experiences.

The zoo does NOT offer tours and this is NOT an official zoo tour, it is a personal one. There will NOT be any behind the scenes tours included with this visit. You are being invited as her friend. You will need to pay for entrance to the zoo. She is limiting this event to 8 people, however she will do it again on May 14.

If you are interested please see details and register on the website. ([click here](#))

Recent Events

End the US Embargo on Cuba

By Dan Ortiz

In our most recent FFI Special Journey to Cuba from February 25 – March 1, 2024, we had the unique opportunity to meet, Lis Cuesta Peraza, the First Partner of Miguel Diaz-Canel, the First Secretary of the Communist Party and President of Cuba. (Ms. Cuesta doesn't like to be addressed as First Lady.)

This special meeting, arranged by our very own club member Paul Bardwil, took place in a hotel in central Havana. This question-and-answer session with 32 FF club ambassadors and Ms. Cuesta lasted an hour. She proved to be a warm and personable spokesperson as she fielded questions ranging from salsa dancing, to her country's need for medical supplies, and to the effects of the U.S Embargo on her country. When asked how we, as U.S. citizens, can help her country? She quickly replied, "end the U.S. embargo on Cuba!" She passionately implored us to convince our elected leaders to lift the embargo. She added, "we are a peaceful country and mean no harm to the United States. We are not terrorists, and your country is one of our closest neighbors. We have long historical ties with your country. Moreover, many Cubans have friends and family in United States and have waited years to be able to reunite with them. The economic embargo has had a devastating effect on our people. As a result, many talented people have left our country to be with family and to find better economic opportunities in the United States and in other countries." She added, "the United States has also applied sanctions on artists and performing groups that have visited Cuba. As a result, many individuals and groups have been reluctant to visit Cuba due to the fear of not being able to enter the United States and perform there."

Asked if FFI can established a club within Cuba, Ms. Cuesta replied, "of course, that would be wonderful. Our Minister of Culture, Abel Prieto Jimenez, has work to do to establish a club in our country." On the lighter side of meeting, Jeremi Snook, FFI CEO, presented Ms. Cuesta with a proclamation and gift. Sandee Lee, as FFI Board Treasurer, presented Ms. Cuesta with an FF Sacramento baseball cap and a box of chocolates. Ms. Cuesta delighted the journey ambassadors by promptly putting on the baseball cap. The U.S. embargo, first imposed by President John F. Kennedy, in 1962, has had a negative effect on Cuba's economy and has led to a humanitarian crisis within the country. The embargo imposes a complete prohibition on trade with the





United States. As a result, Cuba cannot import much needed food, medicines, medical equipment and goods. For instance, Cuba cannot acquire the needed medicines to treat childhood cancer. Cuban has a highly educated population but limited employment opportunities has caused an outward migration of more than 250,000 Cubans annually. Most of these individuals pay a huge amount of money to travel to one of Central American countries and then make their way to the Mexican border and cross into the United States without documentation and eventually settle in Miami, Florida. In December of 2014, President Obama lifted the restrictions for Cuban-Americans to travel, allowed family members to send money to Cuba, allowed the expansion of internet services and licensed trade opportunities for U.S. companies.

Obama also reopened the U.S. Embassy in Havana.

In 2017, the Trump administration undid all the progress achieved by the Obama administration and re-imposed trade restrictions and prohibited U.S. visitors from staying in hotels. Trump also reduced the number of embassy staff in Havana. Although a campaign promise in 2020, the Biden administration has not lifted the embargo nor resumed consular services in Havana. Interestingly enough, the United Nations in November of 2023, asked the United States to lift the economic, commercial and financial embargo on Cuba. It asked that Cuba be taken off the list of states sponsoring terrorism and allow Cuba to join the international community on equal and financial basis. It stated that the embargo has had a devastating effect on the Cuban people, its trade and investment in the country. Delegates from Singapore, Mauritania, Zambia, El Salvador and Venezuela spoke on the resolution to end Cuba's embargo imposed by the United States. The measure failed as 187 countries voted in favor of ending the embargo and only 2, the United States and Israel voted against it.

Most European and Latin American countries have reinstated their relations with Cuba years ago. Moreover, many people in the United States believe that it is time:

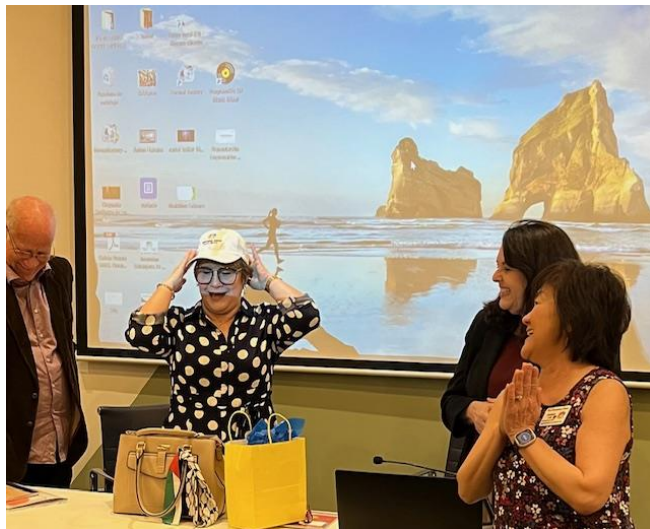
- for the United States to end the embargo to allow food,
- medicines and medical equipment to be sold or traded to Cuba,



- to allow private companies to do business in Cuba,
- to allow U.S. citizens to travel as tourists,
- to remove restrictions on family and non-family remittances to Cuba,
- to fully restaff the U.S. Embassy to resume consular services,
- to lift the travel restrictions between the U.S. and Cuban people,
- and
- to remove Cuba from the State Sponsor of Terrorism list.

The FFI special journey ended with a tour of Las Terrazas, a biosphere reserve that was once a French coffee plantation. We also toured Cubaemprenda, an entrepreneurial center operated by the Catholic church, to help entrepreneurs get started in their businesses. We were all delighted with the enthusiasm and energy of the young entrepreneurs as they were confident their start-up businesses would make a difference in their country.

Many thanks to Paul Bardwil for coordinating a successful FFI Special Journey and to George Meyer for being a good assistant to Paul.



Mission & Vision

Experience Different Views. Discover Common Ground.

Mission: Explore - Understand – Serve

To promote global understanding across the barriers that separate people.

Vision: Each individual will contribute to global goodwill.

- The Friendship Force worldwide network of clubs and individuals will overcome differences among people and nations.
- By connecting the world, one friend at a time, we will create a world of friends that becomes a world of peace.

Board Members

2024 Board Members	
President: George Meyer	Membership: Pat Ghiglieri and Serena Williams
Vice President: Marty McKnew	Crafts: Julia Smith
Secretary: Nancy Sinnwell	Special Events: Helen Flach
Treasurer: Charlene Taylor	ByLaws/Parliamentarian: Ray Missman
Journey Treasurer: Dan Ortiz	Sunshine: Donna Kincannon
Past President: Charlene Taylor	Publicity: .Paul Bardwil
Sister Cities: Chris Smith	Newsletter: Elaine Armstrong
Webmaster: Chris Smith	Ex-officio: Sandee Lee

If you wish to contact information for any of our board members please use this [link](#)

Next Newsletter Deadline: April 26, 2024

Submit your articles & photos to Elaine Armstrong:

<mailto:mellomom.elaine@gmail.com>