2014 Meetings

- April 14
- June 23
- September 22
- November 10 (AGM)

FFO Board 2014

- President
  - Donna Nicholson
- VP, Exchanges
  - Kathy Hatherill
- VP, Membership
  - Jean Farrell
- Treasurer
  - Ulysse Nevraumont
- Secretary
  - Janet Wilkinson
- Directors:
  - Bob Brett (Publicity)
  - Mary Cajka (Social)
  - John Cooke (Mbr Engagement)
  - Brian Ingham (Media Equip.)
  - Tania Kamienski (Projects)
  - Ian Wilson (Archives)
- Past President
  - Pierrette Benoit
- FFO Webmaster
  - Conrad Gregoire
- CapCon Editor
  - Joanne Lee
- FFI website
  - friendshipforce.org

Message from your President

2014 is proving to be an exciting year at FFO as we are seeing much exchange and club activity plus an abundance of creative ideas. We are excited to consider new directions that are being discussed both at our home club as well as at FFI covering topics such as engaging the younger generation, club rejuvenation, membership retention and engagement, themed and humanitarian exchanges to mention just a few. I am pleased to announce the appointment of John Cooke to a new board position that will support both the VP Membership and the VP Exchanges as he will be focusing on member engagement and retention. At this point in time, FFO does not appear to be decreasing in numbers as a club, however during 2013, we gained 13 new members while losing 13 current ones. Our focus will be on retaining and building membership to ensure an active, vibrant club with significant participation on the part of all members into the future. John will be helping us to achieve that goal.

Our Past President, Pierrette Benoit, along with Jean Farrell, our VP Membership and the FFO Board are currently reviewing the work completed by the past Vitalization Committee and will soon make recommendations regarding FFO goals and priorities for the years 2014-2015. At this point, we can tell you that along with member engagement, we are already working on another priority which is to make information sharing more available, succinct and streamlined:

- meeting minutes are now posted on our FFO website instead of the newsletter;
- the FFO website has been enhanced to include a club monthly calendar with club events and dates of exchanges (check the website often for new information as it is posted);
- our new FFO Facebook page contains point-in-time information on our exchanges and activities plus it is receiving positive reviews from FF clubs around the world as friends we have made during exchanges find us and send us notes of congratulations;
- our General Meetings will be shorter, containing less administrative-type info and more human interest features such as special speakers, themes and displays to make our meetings more interesting for any guests who may attend.

This year, we have also introduced a revised Exchange Matching process to help collect information earlier in the FFI assigning of exchanges process. This will hopefully ensure that the exchanges offered by FFI are the outbound locations our club members desire and the inbounds they are prepared to host. You are being asked to tentatively identify your participation up-front so we ensure sufficient hosts and travelers for all our exchanges. We are also contacting presidents of all tentative ‘matches’ to ensure they can provide sufficient ambassadors and that they are in agreement with the suggested time-frame FFI has offered. This increased early communication will hopefully improve the success of the exchange experience. We have received an exciting list of 2015 exchanges and hope you all will participate in helping us change the way we see the world.

Donna Nicholson

Upcoming General Meeting Themes and Speakers

VP Membership Report
Since our January Potluck GM, we have 12 new members and would like to welcome them to our club. Our newly formed Membership Committee will be meeting in early April to discuss strategies for membership recruitment and engagement.

Get to know some of our New FFO Members since Jan 2014:
These people will be wearing 'New member name tags' at the General Meeting, so make sure to introduce yourselves and give them a warm welcome. If you have recently joined FFO and are not listed here, please send Ulysse Nevraumont a picture and brief bio to include in our Membership Directory which will soon be updated. We want to be sure we include everyone!

Paula and David Poupore are recently retired, Paula from a career in nursing and David from his own business. They are enjoying having more time with family and friends. During the winter they enjoy the great outdoors, particularly downhill skiing. Summer often finds them in the country, paddling their canoes and kayaks at their cottage. They love to travel and to meet new people and are taking advantage of the free time now available to visit the places they’ve always wanted to see.

Suzanne Muldoon is a retired High School Guidance Counsellor and psychotherapist. She is a member of Force de l’Amitié de la Capitale Canadienne. She enjoys outdoor activities, music, golf and traveling. She is a widow with 2 children and 3 grandchildren. She is past president of 125 French speaking women's club.

Charlotte Foster is retired from a career in administration in the Federal Government and hospital. She is a widow, mother of two children and has one granddaughter. She is an avid x-country skier and golfer. She has a leadership role in Church. She enjoys gardening, hiking, travelling, and playing bridge.

Denis & Gaye Fournier enjoy skiing, boating, cycling, travelling and meeting new people. Denis was in IT at a college and Gaye had various careers in real estate, consulting, law and in non-profit. They love adventure and took a fighter combat course together several years ago.

Bob Elliott (partner of Eve) joined at our January potluck. Welcome, Bob!

Bill Collins

Wayne & Heather Bennet
Wayne and Heather Bennett are both newly retired and loving it; Wayne from the City of Ottawa where he worked as a Civil Engineer on roads, bridges, sewer and water infrastructure, Heather from Algonquin College where she helped international students with admissions and visas. Biking, skiing and the garden keep us happy. Having lived in Uganda and Jamaica, we want to mix up our usual tourist travels with more in depth visits by staying with locals via Friendship Force.

Leonard Bonnet & Joan Kinnie

News from our Sister Club, FARCC
Force de l’amitié de la capitale canadienne (FARCC) is our francophone club in the National Capital area (www.forceamitiecapitalecanadienne.org)

Here’s what they are doing in 2014
Outbound: Iringa, Tanzania departing November 1
Inbound: Coatepec, Mexico arriving September 1

Planning is underway for a 4-Club Global Exchange to take place in June 2015 with FARCC, Montreal, Sherbrooke and Quebec Region participating. There will be spaces for 15 ambassadors who will visit themed exchanges in each community over 17 days. Congratulations to these clubs for their creativity and initiative in planning what promises to be a very interesting exchange experience.
Australian Friendship Force Conference
by Susan Aiken

The Australian Friendship Force, 24th Annual Conference, was organized by the Tweed Valley FF Club, and held in Coolangatta on the Queensland/New South Wales boarder from 14-16 Feb. 2014. It was attended by over 200 people from 29 Australian clubs.

The theme of the exchange was Bush to Beach with pre-conference and party events featuring both “habitats”. In her opening address, FFI president Joy DiBenedetto spoke of the 4 months and 5 interviews she endured before being appointed. She introduced the 8 full time people in the FFI office, and explained their areas of responsibility. She explained that since becoming president she has gotten to know her staff, attended the FFI World Conference in New Orleans, traveled to Sochi, Russia with the Childrens’ Art Project and attended the All Africa Conference. She reported that, at the same time as she was speaking, there were 290 FF clubs in 63 countries, and 40 exchanges taking place in different parts of the world.

There were workshops and talks of interest to Australians. Many of the conference attendees had been on exchanges to Ottawa, including Geraldine and Ian Cook who were returning from the FFI winter exchange this year. People told of many excellent exchanges to FFO with happy memories and asked me to convey greetings to club members who had hosted them.

Global Arts & Culture Exchange in Sarasota, Florida
by Jaap & Maria Schouten

From January 31 to February 9, 2014, twenty-four ambassadors from five different countries – Canada, the UK, Switzerland, Japan, and the US - enjoyed two concerts, theatre, ballet, the circus, a musical, visual arts and design, during the Friendship Force of Sarasota’s Global Arts and Culture Exchange. We are fortunate to have been part of this very special themed exchange.

Few communities can match the cultural assets of Sarasota, Florida. The city is home to Florida’s oldest continuing orchestra (Sarasota Orchestra), the oldest theatre company (Asolo Repertory Theatre), as well as the Gulf Coast’s first professional ballet company (Sarasota Ballet), all of which we had a chance to experience firsthand.

The program for the exchange, which lasted 9 days, instead of the usual 7, was well organized, and included several dinners hosted by club members. Fortunately, all night, day, and dinner hosts survived this demanding program while offering us excellent hospitality.

Our experienced and gracious hostess, Ramona McGee, in addition to participating fully in all aspects of the exchange program, also showed us many of Sarasota’s sites and attractions, such as the beautiful Selby Gardens and Myakka River State Park.

It was our first time on a non-FFO exchange and this special experience definitely whetted our appetite for participating in global and/or themed exchanges hosted by other clubs.

Special Opportunity Exchange

Are you thinking of attending the World FFI Conference in Auckland, NZ, Oct. 14 to 16, 2014? FF Sarasota & Orlando Clubs are arranging a special exchange to tour both Australia and NZ with 2 homestays and a commercial tour following the conference. Contact Judi Stratton (jaspetite@comcast.net) for more information.

For other exciting exchange opportunities, go to the FFI website (www.friendshipforce.org) and click on “World of Friends Catalog” to explore opportunities with other FF Clubs internationally. Or search our Canadian Undersubscribed Exchanges website at www.canffex.ca to see domestic (Canadian) exchanges that are seeking ambassadors. As the Schoutens recently discovered, sharing the exchange experience with other FF Clubs can be a unique and special experience.

FFO Capital Connections April 2014 Page 3
VP Exchanges: Kathy Hatherill

The winter exchange was very successful thanks to Pierrette and her committee. Pierrette will give us a report at the general meeting.

Plans are well underway for the Cornwall/Devon Exchange. More day hosts are needed.

Exchanges 2015. Proposed exchanges for 2015 have been received from FFI and all members are asked to indicate their tentative plans for participating in future Inbound and Outbound exchanges. Be sure to sign at the tables at the April GM or forward your completed survey by email to Donna. (See email of March 10th for survey.)

ED and Treasurers Training will take place on April 30 at the Hintonburg Community Centre from 1-4 pm. Although the training is primarily for EDs and Treasurers of upcoming exchanges, everyone who is interested in knowing how exchanges work will find it a very useful afternoon and there will be lots of opportunities to ask questions. Please let Kathy know if you plan to attend.

FFO OUTBOUND EXCHANGES 2014

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

EDs: Pat Cianfaglione and Heather Pettipas

Twenty ambassadors are excited and ready to go to the exchange at Baton Rouge, Louisiana on April 23rd. Unfortunately, the second week in Florida had to be cancelled, despite lots of PR from FFI and our own president, Donna. BUT, Baton Rouge beckons, and we are following the week with two days in New Orleans. We would have stayed longer, but there is a major jazz festival going on and the room rates jumped to $395. The ED in Baton Rouge, Karen, has a long list of activities for us, including lots of crawfish boils, more crawfish boils, plantation tours, and more. We are very excited to go to this neck of the woods, and explore!! Pat and I were ED’s for Las Vegas, many years ago, so look forward to the experience again.

Tirana, Albania

ED: Claire Fortin

22 enthusiastic members will be going to the Tirana, Albania exchange from May 30-June 06. All of us will be doing pre-travel, some leaving as early as May 7, visiting, Slovenia, Croatia, a few islands, Bosnia, Montenegro, Albania, and Corfu. Others are going to Malta and Corsica. We will meet with various FFO members along the way until the evening before the exchange starts. Everyone returns at different times from different places. We’ve had a brunch, an ‘Albanian foods’ pot luck, ‘singles’ meeting(s), and lots of laughs learning various words/phrases to impress everyone. The suggested itinerary covers the outlying areas as well as the city of Tirana. There are many interesting places to discover. Communication has been established and plans are underway for what we hope will be an exciting week.

Florianopolis, Brazil & Villa Maria, Argentina

EDs: Tim Traynor (Brazil) and Richard Hatherill (Argentina)

This is a fully subscribed, double exchange. The dates for the Brazil/Argentina exchange have now been finalized, so detailed planning has started.

Brazil (A) September 12 -19
Free days September 20 - 25
Argentina (B) September 26 - October 1

The sunny shores and friendly folks of Florianopolis, southern Brazil, beckon participants in the first of the exchanges in the Southern Hemisphere. Friendship Force of Florianopolis will be hosting 12 of our members, who are looking forward to samba and surf from 12 to 18 September. Several stops, including Iguazu Falls and Cordoba, are being planned as the group makes its way over to Villa Maria, Argentina for the second exchange. On the 26th of September the five day Villa Maria exchange starts for the 15 FFO ambassadors. We will visit local farms, enjoy a barbecue, and experience a tango and folklore show. Group travel to Buenos Aries and possibly Montevideo are planned for after the exchange.
Kathmandu, Nepal

ED: Ruth Kirk

In October 14 Ottawa ambassadors will visit the fabled city of Kathmandu. Already we all feel very welcome as the Exchange Director, Lekali, has written each of us a warm letter of welcome introducing himself and his family, describing his work and interests and telling us that he is trying his best to make our Friendship Force travel in Nepal memorable. We were very impressed with his warmth and graciousness.

At present we are planning our activities for the exchange: visits to UNESCO Heritage Sites, a visit to a rural school and, of course, time with our host families. The Hindu festival of Tihar (the Nepalese equivalent of Diwali) will begin during our exchange.

Our mid-March exchange meeting was a record breaking occasion. 100% attendance! Not only were all 14 Ottawa Ambassadors present, but also the 4 ambassadors from Toronto and Greater Hamilton/Burlington Friendship Force clubs drove to Ottawa to attend the meeting. And our ambassador from the Saskatoon club joined us via Skype for the entire meeting. We were able to start to get to know each other and build friendships.

Perth, Australia Global Winter Exchange

ED: Pierrette Benoit

A winter exchange is a wonderful opportunity to rediscover your inner child; a cold winter day with lots of snow on the ground provides the perfect environment to revert to child-like behaviours. It is a week of new experiences, of fun, of laughter...what a great way to share the week with new friends.

Dog sledging in a picturesque forest, feeding the wildlife in a large open park, snowshoeing/walking along snowy trails while small birds come to eat the seeds in your hand, walking on the ice of the Rideau Canal a UNESCO World Heritage Site, admiring the amazing ice sculptures, eating a beavertail pastry or sinking your teeth into a poutine, visiting with the locals at the ice fishing village where you can peek down the ice fishing hole and listen to famous fishing stories, enjoying a sleigh ride with the traditional snow fight and making of snow angels. Fun, laughter, great food and good wine make for the creation of wonderful friendships!!!

Zoomer Visit

by Bob Brett

We were fortunate to have a visit from one of the Senior editors from Zoomer Magazine who participated in part of the recently completed Global Winter exchange activities with FF members. She attended the welcoming party at the Villa Centre, had dessert and coffee at the Bretts with an ambassador from Australia, took the Parliamentary Tour, visited the Museum of History in the afternoon and attended a dinner in the evening. The next morning, she mushed by Dogsled in Montebello following which she attended the lunch at the Le Zouk Resto Bar. From here she returned to Ottawa and took the train back to Toronto.

She plans to write an article featuring the Friendship Force for inclusion in a coming issue of Zoomer Magazine. Wait for it.
Planning for this exchange is well underway with matching completed for ambassadors to hosts. The program will include a welcome picnic in the Gatineau Park, an Aboriginal Experience on Victoria Island, visit to the Parliament buildings thanks to MP Paul Dewar’s office who are making arrangements (as all regular tours are fully booked for school groups that week), Peace Tower visit with Carillonneur, Dr Andrea McCrady, a noon hour Carillon concert picnic followed by a walking tour of lower town and the Byward Market, National Art Gallery, Vanier Sugar Shack supper and musical evening, Ottawa River Boat cruise, Museum of History, Rideau Canal bike ride or guided Nordic Walking option, visit to the Central Experimental Farm Dominion Arboretum, RCMP museum and stables visit, and a closing dinner* featuring the Barrhaven Fiddleheads.

Our club has opened up this exchange with an invitation to an Arizona Club who would like to visit Ottawa in the summertime. FFO members are invited to join us for any of this program, but especially for the welcome picnic, Aboriginal Experience*, Vanier Sugar Shack*, Ottawa River cruise* and closing dinner party*. Sign up lists with prices* and location details will be made available at the April 14th FFO general meeting. We are hoping to borrow adult bicycles for Sunday, June 15th so if you can loan one please advise Diane. We are also looking for a few backup hosts, some helpers for setup for the opening welcome picnic, and a photographer and perhaps someone in an RCMP uniform to add flair. Please call Diane at 613-234-6418 if you can help.

All is rolling along for an exchange with a wonderful group from Cornwall and Devon!

Vietnam
ED Barb Smith, smithouse1@sympatico.ca, 613-829-7219 home, 613-795-7220 cell

We are very excited to be welcoming approximately 10 ambassadors from Vietnam in September. This promises to be an interesting and somewhat different exchange.

The incoming group will consist of people who are interested in making new friends as well as making some business connections here in Ottawa.

Vietnam does not have a Friendship Force club as such. Also due to government restrictions, married people are discouraged from coming on an exchange such as this one. There are, however many people who are interested in forming friendships with Friendship Force clubs around the world. I have been in contact with the ED from Vietnam and they are really looking forward to being with us.

The first four days of this exchange will be a regular exchange. The group then will spend two days pursuing their business opportunities within Ottawa. We will wrap up the exchange with some type of farewell event.

The Vietnam group will be meeting sometime in March and I am looking forward to hearing from them again, once they have done so.

I am pleased to welcome George Steeves to the committee as the Deputy ED, and Tania Kamienski as our treasurer. I am looking for others to help with activities, and matching hosts and day hosts. I do have some volunteers for day hosts and dinner hosts that we will be contacting as soon as plans become a little firmer. Please let me know if you are interested in being part of the planning committee for what promises to be a unique and fun exchange.

Gelsenkirchen and Schwerin, Germany
ED Gail Nevraumont

We have had contact with our inbound Exchange from Gelsenkirchen & Schwerin, Germany to FF Ottawa, Canada that will take place from Oct. 3 - 10, 2014. Presently, our information is that we have 23 Ambassadors coming - including one family of 5 (3 teenagers). If anyone from FFO feels that they would like to host the whole family, please let Gail know soon. We are still in need of many volunteers, for all hosting duties. Our cultural committee member is working at connecting us with our local German community as well. It should be a great time.
Social Activity Committee:

Social Director
Mary Cajka

Art Study Group
Laura Légare

Bridge Club:
John/Lucy Nelms

Dinner Club:
Jessica Sullivan
Gail Nevraumont

Friendship Force Day
Mary Cajka

Friendly Wanderers
Anna Rochon

Golf:
Rheo Brunet

Walking Club:
Fay McNeil
Jane Rau

Social Activities

Friendship Force Day Celebration March 1st Games Night

Almost 50 members and guests participated in what is turning out to be an annual affair. This year the theme was Italian, and in keeping with that, we enjoyed pizza, Caesar salad, tiramisu (garnished with beautiful strawberries) and of course, lots of wine, beer and soft drinks. The Légares generously provided their party room, complete with a brand new kitchen.

Lucy and John Nelms organized the games and as usual, there was lots of laughter and noise. In addition, Lucy made up a quiz regarding all things Italian, and members tried their collective hand at answering. Wow, were they hard! Two tables tied for first place and the winner had to be decided by a new question. Anybody know who was the only Newfoundlander to ever win a gold medal at the winter Olympics?

Prizes for costumes (a nice bottle of wine) went to Frank and Mary Mayda who arrived as a mafioso and his moll, David Douglas dressed as Julius Caesar (complete with armour), and Janet Striha suitably attired as a young peasant girl, complete with a bunch of garlic tied to her waist.

So many thanks to my committee of Lucy Nelms, Maureen Sly and Kay Knobel who put considerable time and effort into making this another successful event.

Grazie!
Mary Cajka

***VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED***

If you are able to help out with the social activities, please consider volunteering at the next Friendship Force meeting in April, where a table will be set up. Opportunities are available for the Christmas Party, The Friendship Force Day event, January Potluck, the Golf Tournament, any of the numerous social committees and of course the coffee service. Let’s keep these activities well-staffed, as they contribute to the health of our club.

Mary Cajka, cjcajka@sympatico.ca

Art Study
Convener: Laura Légare

Members have enjoyed a year learning from special exhibits at the National Gallery. January’s feature was the work of John Ruskin, a celebrated Victorian British artist and thinker whose detailed drawings are truly remarkable. The next meeting, scheduled for May 15, is a survey of the work of Charles Edenshaw, the acclaimed Haida artist whose art objects won him much acclaim at the turn of the 20th century. There are a few openings for this tour so contact Laura Légare if interested. Following each tour members usually convene at a nearby pub for light refreshments.

Bridge Club ♥♥♠♣♦
Convener: Lucy and John Nelms

The snow birds are slowly returning from the sunny (and warm) south, looking forward to playing their remaining bridge games. Lucy would like the games completed and scores sent in by the middle of August. A date for the windup bridge evening will be announced later.
Dinner and Supper Clubs
Convener: Jessica Sullivan
Supper Convener: Gail Nevraumont

Despite treacherous roads, a malfunctioning GPS (or user error) wrong addresses, and numerous other obstacles, the dinner club continues to thrive. Good food and lively conversation make this activity one of the most popular. Think about joining up next year.

Friendly Wanderers
Convener: Anna Rochon 613-258-2706, aprochon@cogeco.ca

If you would like to share a destination experience that you are enthusiastic about please contact Anna Rochon and a date will be arranged. Have you even wondered or dreamed about visiting a country but were afraid it wouldn’t live up to your expectations or the images in your mind’s eyes. The Friendly Wanderers gives you a taste without the expense and may wet your appetite for more. It is also an opportunity to share non Friendship Force travel with the membership. Everyone is welcome to volunteer to present their stories and pictures. The goal is to have four evenings per year.

On April 1st, 7 p.m., David Douglas presents his experience on navigating the Trent Canal.

The next Friendly Wanderers will be held on May 28th at 7 p.m. at the Ottawa Citizen on Baxter Road.
Timothy Traynor is presenting Coastal France: Exploration and Nostalgia.
Come and see coastal France from north to south.

For more information contact Anna Rochon.

Walking Group
Convener: Fay McNeil and Jane Rau

Members of the walking group joined the ambassadors from Perth, Australia, during their Winterlude excursion on the Global Winter exchange.

The next excursion for the walking group is scheduled for the end of May or early June. Maybe the snow and cold weather will be gone by then! The exact date and location will be announced mid-May. If you want to be included, please contact one of the coordinators as reservations for lunch must be made in advance.