friendship force OTTAWA

Capital Connections

Newsletter of the Friendship Force of Ottawa, Canada

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FFO GM NEWS - MARCH 03, 2025

Lynne Deachman is our new Membership VP. A member of FFO since September 2014, Lynne is looking forward to her portfolio and recruitment and retention of members will be Job #1 for her.

FFO welcomes 3 new members to the club: Barbara Davignon, Gail and Peter Sherman.

Correction: One of our newer members is **Réjeanne Lévesque,** not Renée Levesque.

Featured guest speaker: Jill Heinerth
Topic: Into the Planet – My Life as a Cave Diver

Jill Heinerth is one of the most celebrated cave divers in the world. Her work takes her around the world and her photographs and video clips of dives were evidence of what she has encountered: artificial reefs and shipwrecks still filled with cargo; dives beneath icebergs and between the tectonic plates in Iceland; the 10.5 km cave system near Westmeath, Ontario; dives in Cuba, Mexico, Russia and the Canary Islands, and unusual places like the Sahara Desert and the Antarctic.

- Read more about Jill on the FFO website (Resources publications section) and/or in her book **Into the Planet: One Woman's Journey to Find Herself.** (2019) Anchor Canada.

FFO IS OUT IN THE COMMUNITY!

Traveling with Friendship Force

Thanks to FFO member, Elizabeth Ballard, our club was approached by The Glebe Centre to present FFO at their Senior's Fair this past January. Also, we were asked to have a booth to promote our club. Our involvement in the fair elicited a $150 donation to FFO from the Centre!

Mary Jane and Colin responded to many questions from interested attendees - 14 asked for additional information.

Joanne's presentation on her experiences with inbound and outbound FFO journeys was well received by 25 people in attendance.

THE FOLLOWING IS A SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION INCLUDING SOME PRACTICAL TIPS TO THE FFO FRIENDLY WANDERERS ON NOVEMBER 14, 2024.

IMPACT OF HEAT STRESS ON SENIORS AND PRACTICAL WAYS TO ADDRESS IT

In mid-November a team of researchers from Dr. Glen Kenny's University of Ottawa's Human and Environmental Physiology Research Unit spoke to FFO members about their research on helping Canadians better tolerate rising temperature extremes.

Dr. Jeremy McCormick, Dr. Kelli King and Ms. Caroline Li-Maloney reviewed the physiological impact of heat stress and provided an overview of how their work is reshaping heat-health action to protect Canadians from the health risks created by rising global temperatures. More frequent, longer and more intense heat waves are expected in many parts of the world because of climate change. Mortality during heat waves, particularly in seniors, has been a focus for research in this very specialized lab.

Humans cool themselves by sweating (evaporation of the sweat reduces the body temperature) AND by increasing blood flow to carry heat from the body's core to its skin where it can be dissipated.

When the cooling mechanisms break down, the core temperature of the body rises. Two degrees above the normal 37˚C. can result in damage to body organs and the breakdown of protein in the cells. There are changes in some chemicals circulating in the blood that can be studied as biomarkers during less extreme exposures. If environmental temperatures reach 40˚C. and 70% humidity, sweat stops evaporating and the outcome can be fatal.

However, damage from heat waves can and does occur at lower temperatures amongst elderly people. 26˚C. is generally recognized as a safe prolonged temperature, even for the most vulnerable. Even one degree higher can be detrimental to the most susceptible. Sustained indoor temperatures over 31˚C. have a markedly higher risk of detrimental effects in susceptible people.

Who are the susceptible? Age is a factor. Older people do not sweat as much and their hearts may be less efficient at pumping more blood, faster to the skin. Starting around age 40 a body experiences a four to five per cent decline in its capacity to lose heat per decade. What this means is that seniors are less able to release heat as they get older and as such their core temperature goes up faster and higher during heat events.

Seniors also have a higher incidence of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, cognitive decline and an increased usage of medications, all of which can alter the body's response to heat.

Other factors increasing susceptibility are poor physical fitness, sleep deprivation (including jet lag), previous heat exposure injury due to an extreme heat event.

One other factor leading to susceptibility can be lack of prior acclimatization to high heat. It can take the body 4 or 5 days to adjust to higher than usual temperatures by increasing the volume of blood, increasing the sweating response of the skin, and changing some of the blood chemistry. There is some research that if the body has acclimated once, subsequent adjustment is easier. Research into increasing heat tolerance is a current focus of Dr Kenny's lab.

Hydration is the key to sweating and dissipating heat. Seniors are at greater risk of becoming dehydrated during a prolonged heat event. In part this is due to older people's tendency to reduce their daily fluid intake as well as their diminished thirst response to dehydration and the fact that their bodies may be less effective at conserving salt and water.

Awareness of the possible effects of heat during a heat wave, or when travelling from Canada to a tropical country, is a first line of defence. Identifying vulnerabilities, understanding the environmental parameters that pose a risk, and knowing the first signs

of heat damage are important for taking mitigating steps early.

Being able to move to a cooler venue for a few hours

allows the core body temperature to stabilize. Air conditioning is the gold standard, but nighttime cooling or placing extremities in cool water can also help. Fans can sometimes help. However, fans only work if the temperature is cooler than your 33℃. skin temperature. In instances where the air is warmer than that, the fan will work against you by warming your skin more.

Some suggestions for adding "artificial sweat" to cool the body by evaporation are removing heavy clothing and misting your body or clothing with water, rubbing an ice cube over the skin, or taking a cool bath or shower and not towel drying yourself.

➢Check out the following documents at this link: https://hepru.ca/educational-material

1. ***RISK ASSESSMENT: A Guide for Preparing Your Home*** prepared by the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health. The last page includes a list of factors that increase susceptibility to heat.
2. ***HEALTH CHECKS DURING EXTREME HEAT EVENTS*****,** describes how to tell if heat is affecting a susceptible person, and ends with specific temperatures for body and the environment that would cause concern, and action items to mitigate each.

Sharing this cake was a delicious way for FFO to celebrate both World Friendship Day and the 30th anniversary of the club at the GM on March 03, 2025.

TROPICAL JUNGLE, MOUNTAINS & A VOLCANO…

Hiking over a field of darkened coal created by a past lava flow from the IRAZU VOLCANO, dancing to the music of a marimba band wearing festival masques and a visit to a Friendship Force Monument where an FFO plaque was installed were some of the highlights of a double journey to Costa Rica. **Join us for the next Friendly Wanderers on April 8, 11:30-13:30** for Alberta Aboud's and her fellow travelers' much anticipated presentation on COSTA RICA. **Location to be confirmed.** (see photo of FFO travellers to Costa Rica below)

ANTARCTIC ICEBERGS WERE AWE-INSPIRING!

Although, we often picture Antarctica as a vast expanse of ice and sea, members of Friendship Force Ottawa discovered a different perspective during Anna & Paul Rochon's presentation at Friendly Wanderers. They learned that, despite its extreme cold, relentless winds, and desert-like conditions, Antarctica is teeming with life - even at a microscopic level. Of course, the iconic penguins stole the spotlight, but the breathtaking icebergs, in every imaginable shape and size, were a constant and awe-inspiring presence.