

MESSAGE FROM FFO PRESIDENT

JOAN KINNIE

2025 is quickly coming to an end after a very successful year hosting FF Kern County from California for the May tulips and the FF Hungarian club in July for historic visits to sites along the Rideau Canal. A few FFO members also assisted the FF Canadian Capital Region Club host ambassadors who were visiting their club in early October. That experience cemented a long-standing relationship where each of the two FF clubs in the Ottawa Gatineau region have supported the other one over the years.

- Thanks to FFO Board Members of 2025. Everyone on the Board was dedicated, extremely easy to work with and presented excellent suggestions to update/improve our Club. Some board members will now be moving to other activities or to relax, since their term has ended.
- New board members will be selected at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on December 8th at the Riverside United Church, starting at 11am. Information about this election has already been sent to you.
- We will be having our Holiday Lunch immediately following the AGM – a roast turkey dinner is on the menu. If you haven't advised the Treasurer that you intend to come to the lunch, please contact Colin Leech as soon as possible.

FFO BOARD 2024-2025 - CURRENT

<u>President</u> Joan Kinnie	<u>VP Journeys</u> Barb Davignon
<u>Secretary</u> Vivien Runnels	<u>VP Membership</u> Lynne Deachman
<u>Treasurer</u> Colin Leech	<u>Past President</u> Anna Rochon
<u>Director-at-Large</u> Valerie Wright	<u>Director-at-Large</u> Pierrette Benoit

PROPOSED SLATE: FFO BOARD 2025-2026

(To be confirmed at AGM on Dec 08th)

<u>President</u> Joan Kinnie	<u>VP Journeys</u> Barb Davignon
<u>Secretary</u> Michael Curran	<u>VP Membership</u> Lynne Deachman
<u>Treasurer</u> Liz Ford	<u>Past President</u> Anna Rochon
<u>Director-at-Large</u> Gail Sherman	<u>Director-at-Large</u> Lorraine Chartrand

MEMBERSHIP FEES and HOLIDAY LUNCH AT AGM

BY COLIN LEECH, FFO TREASURER

FFO 2026 Membership Fees:

The Board reviews fees annually and increases or decreases fees as necessary.

- **Regular Members \$60**
- **Associate Members \$30**

Payment of fees deadline is December 31, 2025 to ensure FFI receives its share of the fees in January 2026. The Associate Membership has proven successful so FFO will maintain this category unless/until FFI announces changes that would affect us.

Holiday Lunch: Dec 08th at Riverside United Church at 11:00am. **Cost: \$30 per person.** Guests are welcome to join us.

Lunch payment deadline is Nov 30 so we can tell the caterer how many people to expect on Dec 08.

Payments details:

Payments by e-transfer (preferred). Cheques for membership fees / holiday lunch may be sent together, and couples may pay jointly.

E-transfers - send to TreasurerFFO@gmail.com.

Cheques must be payable to **"Friendship Force Ottawa"** (or just "FFO") and mailed to Colin Leech at:
53 Sullivan Ave. Ottawa ON K2G 1V1

Cheques for membership fees will be accepted by the Treasurer at the Holiday Lunch.

VP JOURNEYS

BARB DAVIGNON

What 2027 destinations, preferred by FFO, will be submitted to FFI?

The United Kingdom came in first, with 17 votes followed by Chile (13 votes), and then Korea and Turkey tied with 12 votes. Peru and Columbia are next with 11 votes each. Canada and Switzerland have 10 votes each, and Austria and Brazil garnered 8 votes.

The top 10 choices will be submitted early in the new year. There is still time to submit your choices. You can refer to the survey form you received for a list of all the countries, and send an email to journeysffo@gmail.com

FFO OUTBOUND JOURNEYS 2026

The Leuven Belgium journey (April 21-28) is fully subscribed with no wait list. Rosemae Blackwood, an ambassador to Leuven, volunteered to brief our group on the cultural aspects of this country and shared information that confirms that the Belgium food scene emphasizes quality and taste above all. The country's national cuisine extends well beyond the country's "sinfully delicious" Belgian fries, waffles, and chocolates.

The Perth Australia journey (November 9-16, 2026)



has
10

confirmed members but can have up to 16. Our guesstimate is that the club and FFI fees for this journey will come to about \$575.00 CDN for the week. Despite requesting that FFI make this trip a double journey, the response to date has not been promising.

Their Australian club has entertained previous visitors with activities such as Queensland Backstep dance lessons. Other possibilities include learning to crack a whip to bring the sheep in for shearing and visits to a shipwreck museum and a 19th century jail that was originally built for Australia's worst criminals. There's also the option of watching a sunset over the Indian Ocean while eating Fish and Chips.

If you haven't already signed up for Perth, now is the time! After December 15 we will consider promoting the journey to other Canadian clubs.

FFO INBOUND JOURNEYS FOLLOW A BASIC PLAN TO ORGANIZE A 7-DAY INBOUND JOURNEY:

The Journey Coordinator works with the Planning Committee as follows (helping new members to learn the roles):

- Journey Treasurer helps prepare and balance the budget while paying invoices and collecting club and activity fees.
- Program activities lead and day coordinators plan and organize a program of activities for each day.
- Host lead & support volunteers recruit, match and assign night hosts (bed, breakfast & some dinners), day hosts (transport and accompany ambassadors at day's activities) and friendship dinner hosts (prepare and host dinner for up to 8 ambassadors & night hosts).
- Welcome / Farewell Event leads & support volunteers determine location, menu, program, cost, set-up and clean-up for both events.

➤ www.friendshipforceottawa.ca

For information, go to *Resources/Journey Toolbox*

Recruitment for about 40 volunteers needed for each 2026 inbound journey to Ottawa has begun.

New and experienced members are invited to join in to create an enjoyable experience for all!

Email Petra or Pierrette to volunteer in June &/or in September for these 2 journeys.

a) FF Western N Carolina, USA June 8-14, 2026

FFO Journey Coordinator: Petra Friedrichson

petra_rich@icloud.com Deputy Coordinator:

Mary Jane Kelleher. 15 ambassadors have requested one day of volunteering at a location of our choice.

b) FF Colorado USA (September 21-28, 2026)

FFO Journey Coordinator: Pierrette Benoit

benoitp@ncf.ca 15 ambassadors.

Two members have already signed up for the planning committee, six to be night hosts, four to be day hosts and two to be dinner hosts.

VP MEMBERSHIP

LYNNE DEACHMAN

2025 has been a banner year as FFO has welcomed 12 new members. This brings our total membership to 86, 63 of whom are full members. Increasing membership means more helping hands, allowing us to bid for more outbound journeys and also host a greater number of inbound journeys.

I enthusiastically talk about FFO to friends and acquaintances and would encourage all of you to do the same. Additionally, we have business cards that you can hand out so that interested people can contact the V.P. of Membership for further information. I will have the business cards with me at the December 8th AGM. Please grab a few.

FRIENDLY WANDERERS' PRESENTATION

Tuesday, November 18, 2025, 11:30am-1:00pm

Lands of Fire & Illumination – Mary Jane & Colin's journey with FF Oklahoma in 2025 to Azerbaijan & Armenia

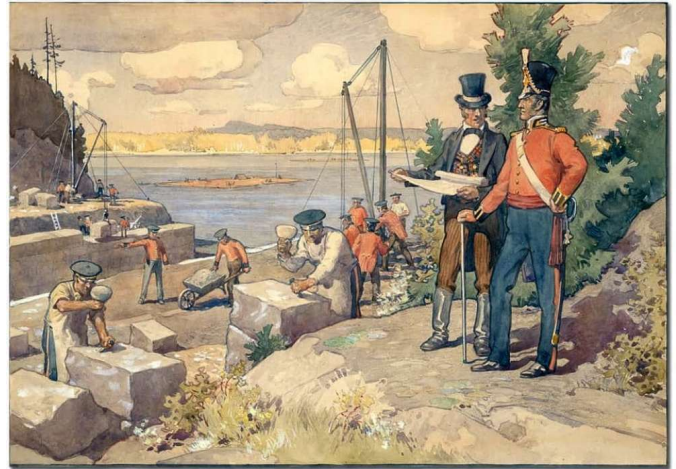


Mary Jane and Colin's presentation, a fascinating travelogue on Azerbaijan and Armenia, was appreciated by 38 FFO members and guests. Azerbaijan is rich in oil and gas and offers a unique blend of modern buildings and ancient history.

Armenia, in contrast, is the first Christian nation in the world and boasts numerous ancient monasteries and churches flanked by impressive mountain landscapes. Recent turmoil over a region between the two countries has presented travel challenges, necessitating a detour through Georgia when travelling from one country to the other. (See photo right for the blend of new and old in the city of Baku, Afghanistan.)

➤ SAVE THE DATE - NEXT FRIENDLY WANDERERS IS FEB 10, 2026

Did you know that 2026 is the 200th anniversary of the founding of Ottawa? Given that we'll be hosting two Friendship Force clubs from the US next year it seemed like the perfect opportunity to learn about some interesting and important events in Ottawa's history.

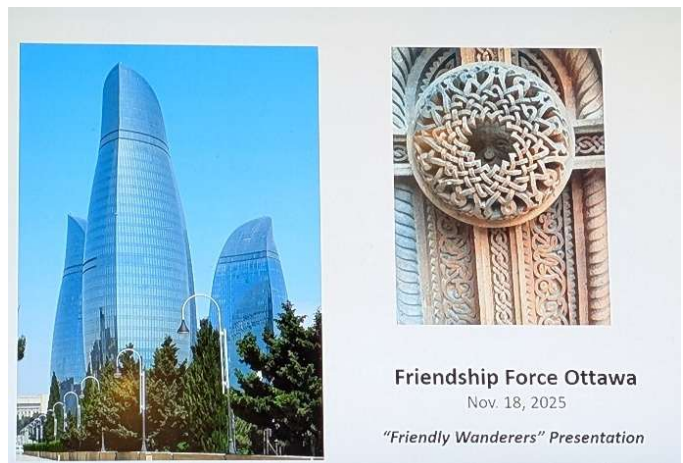


Guest speaker James Powell: *Ottawa's History*

This author/co-author of 3 books and the author of the blog *Today in Ottawa's History* (a day-by-day account of local history) has agreed to speak at a Friendly Wanderers event on **Tuesday, February 10, 2026**. Let me know whether you're interested in attending

Location: Summerhays Grill, Private Room @ 1971 Baseline Rd. Ottawa (across from College Square) from 11:30am to 1:00pm

- Lunch menu available at summerhaysgrill.ca
- **RSVP by Feb 01, 2026** - email eventsffo@gmail.com



FFO DINERS' CLUB

CLAIRE FORTIN

This club is well underway and many of the groups have met for the first time. With FFO 38 members organized into 7 groups, there is a wide variation in meeting times and menu items to suit the group members, but there is always good food and good conversation with friends.



Each 'team' of two members hosts 1 dinner and there are a total 3 dinners (or 4) for the year. The hosts prepare the main course and others contribute the appetizers, vegetables/salad or dessert. Inevitably, there is wine.... and that can be discussed within the group. Dietary needs are addressed. If a group member plans to be away for an extended period of time, a new FFO member (we have 12 new members this year!) could be invited as a replacement.



BUILDING BRIDGES - Here is the 2nd story in CapCon's new column about making friendships.

In 2008, our club was hosted by the Friendship Force Moscow. Our hosts, at least ten years younger than us, kindly offered us their bed, while they slept on a couch in the living room. They lived in a small apartment with an even tinier kitchen, where they made the most delicious dinners.



Over the years, we stayed in touch. A few years later, they told us that they had entered a nation-wide contest with a complete kitchen renovation as the main prize. They had to submit an essay about their activities and hobbies. They decided to speak about their experience with Friendship Force, specifically, our stay in their home. They asked us to participate in a video exchange to speak about our impressions of our time in Moscow. This Zoom exchange took place while we were in Tofino, spending two days totally fogged in.

Later, we received a copy of their submission, showing our exchange. They had won the kitchen renovation! Despite the political upheavals, we continue to stay in touch with them. We avoid any reference to the war in Ukraine and anything of a political nature.

By staying in touch in these difficult times, we demonstrate that our continuing friendship supersedes the political turbulence confronting both Russia and North America (read: United States).

By Jaap and Maria Schouten

BUILDING BRIDGES: Send to Joanne Curran your own experience of how FFI's mission and vision have played out for you while involved in an INBOUND or an OUTBOUND FFI/FFO journey. Include a photo if one is available!