



friendship force  
OTTAWA



FFO board meeting Tuesday April 29, 2025 9am ET by Zoom

Present

Joan Kinnie (President), Valerie Wright (Member-at-large), Vivien Runnels (Secretary), Julie Breeze (Journeys), Pierrette Benoit (Member-at-large, and media), Colin Leech (Treasurer).

Regrets: Lynne Deachman (Membership); Anna van Adrichem Rochon (Past President)

1. Welcome. Joan greeted the board members. The agenda was reviewed and approved.
2. Journeys - Update, Journey Assignments & Domestic Journeys – Julie Breeze
  - a. Julie contacted FFI and asked to be put on a waiting list for a second outbound journey. FFO was offered a one week journey to Perth, Australia likely in November, 2026.
  - b. To raise awareness and facilitate communication, and encourage member engagement with respect to the special (formerly global) journeys, Julie suggested sending an email to FFO members. Interested members could then let Joan and Julie know for them to coordinate any response. If someone was looking for a travel companion(s), a group might then develop. This was thought to be a good idea in principle.  
There was some concern about new members' access to special journeys because of the way that the journeys work, and the FF terminology and processes. FF can be confusing at first, and many might have questions. The board recognized the usefulness of a mentor, and how it could give members a sense of support. Board Members reported their experiences and different configurations of special journeys (for example, one experience included 2 weeks home-hosted and 2 weeks on a bus tour). The Board was very supportive of this idea of supporting members interested in a special journey.
  - c. The Western North Carolina club which will be coming to Ottawa on September 2026, wants to know the numbers that we can support. There was much discussion about our club's capacity.
  - d. As an aside to discussing numbers of incoming ambassadors, Pierrette suggested having a meeting for new members. Joan talked about ways of helping new members get a sense of what actually goes on. People are worried about what hosting means, and also being in someone's home. The new members' meeting was thought to be a good idea. Pierrette will follow up and Joan would be happy to help.
  - e. Returning to the discussion about numbers for a potential inbound journey, Julie thought if we started with a maximum of 14-15 to give us some flexibility. At the next general meeting we can ask who would be willing to host and when members are NOT

available. Because of the May long weekend, it's a challenge with Kern County. (This is something to think about when planning dates. May and September are generally good months for our club).

f. Previously, a question had been raised for the Hungary inbound group, which was 'do we get credit for the extra half week?' Julie asked Taryn FFI this question. Although the activity is acknowledged, there's no guarantee that this will act as a club 'credit' for future inbounds. Associated with this question, FFO has received a request for a club from Brandon, Manitoba as to whether any club in Eastern Ontario could host them in 2026. This potential third inbound would be in addition to the two currently determined journeys.

Julie can ask Brandon if they would be receptive to doing a few days with us and a few days with another club. For a full week, it was suggested that we could link with other clubs such as the French FARC club. Our journeys with FARC in the past have worked out well. We can also encourage more clubs to join in e.g. Haliburton. We need to know what Brandon wants to do, and at the same time, we also want to see how many people want to be host coordinators in 2026 as they are very much needed.

g. Joan reiterated the usefulness of having a session with new members so they can learn about what a coordinator is (and/or co-coordinator), to alleviate some of the anxiety about hosting. Pierrette noted we used to have a new members' meeting with the board members. This was an informal get-together and we told stories about journeys, with drinks and food. Joan thought an information session might be better and we might have some documents to support this.

h. Julie will ask about host coordinators next week at the FFO General Meeting. We need coordinators for the two inbounds from the United States. It's a good time to get people to think about the future, not necessarily to get them to commit now. It was noted that the host coordinator is in charge of timing, and any date has to work for them. We can also tell the new members we're going to have a session about these issues and introduce a little bit of information at a time, but to prioritize the incoming journeys at the moment.

i. With respect to 2025, Ghana now has a full complement of ambassadors. Kern County planning is going well. Medicine Hat and Missoula (note that Medicine Hat has the Tucson club joining as well) – everything is OK, and the Ghana planning as well. Hungary is going well.

### 3. Membership

Joan reported on membership on behalf of Lynne. There have been no new members just recently but we have had 8 or so this year. Other people are showing some interest. Each time we get a new member, we have been sending out a new list to the membership. Joan asked Lynne to consider a way to cut down on emails.

One possible solution is to put the membership list on the website with a password. Discussion about the membership lists and their distribution ensued. Board members are concerned about privacy, the amount of work it will take to set up a members' section with passwords, and security in general. There was an objection to using Google docs for security/privacy reasons. For the present, we can send the membership list out

3 or 4 times a year. Any other change to distribution would be discussed first with the membership.

Joan will follow up on this with Lynne, Bryan and Wendy Adams to send out the membership list every quarter, and to make sure that Julie and Joanne get this information too.

#### 4. Treasurer's report – Colin

Recent activities have been processing membership-fees and paying for name badges – all this is going well. Julie has the cheque book for when Colin is away. Colin will send Julie instructions for the next general meeting at Riverside Church on May 6, 2025. (Joan requested a copy of everything to be sent to her).

Colin suggested that we let members know about FFI's additional flat payment to be added to FFI journey fees (US\$25 per night). Joan had mentioned this at a previous meeting. The FFI organization needs money.

Notes for the financial review have been circulated. The discussion will be postponed to a later date.

#### 5. Secretary

Vivien had sent out all outstanding minutes to be reviewed, and suggested a batch approval. All board members approved the minutes. These will now be sent to website and to the Archive manager (Alain Dawson).

#### 6. Events - Trivia game social

Julie reported that the attendees had a very nice time and there were some excellent trivia questions. New members and prospective members also joined the social. The idea initially was that this would be a small fundraiser for FFO. There was a profit of \$205.97 which will be donated to FFO's account. Julie will send the income/expense sheet to the board.

Some of the trivia questions were asked with FFO in mind, e.g. ideas for welcoming/attracting new members, places for events, and ideas for host gifts. Julie took all the answers and made a list. After Board members have reviewed the list, it will be added to existing documents and made available to members through the website (Resources), and. Vivien will also share the journey information documents that she put together already, and send these to the Board.

#### 7. Other items

Joan was asked to remind people about the 50/50 draw (i.e. bring cash!) at the AGM.

Next Board meeting set for May 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025 – (to talk about the treasurer's report etc.).

Meeting closed at 10:18am.

