

MESSAGE FROM FFI PRESIDENT

JEREMI SNOOK



Dear FFO members:

There is no escaping the headlines. Nearly every hour brings news of another foreign policy decision that is pulling the international community further apart. Against this backdrop, Friendship Force is evolving - not simply as an

organization, but as a movement.

Becoming a movement means that anyone, anywhere - regardless of whether they travel on journeys or belong to a local club can participate in and support Friendship Force through a shared commitment to our mission and values. It means taking the knowledge and experience we have gained over nearly 50 years of citizen diplomacy and transforming it into educational resources that extend beyond our physical programs. In doing so, we are positioning Friendship Force as a global leader in peace-building through human connection.

There is no question that Friendship Force stands at a critical inflection point - both in its own evolution and in its role on the world stage during these turbulent times. This moment, and the path forward it presents, will be explored in depth at the North American Conference.

Jeremi Snook, CEO and President



2026 Regional FFI Conference, April 24 - 27, 2026
Hyatt Centric Hotel in Memphis, USA
It's FFI's time to listen, learn and act together.

FYI - An **administrative glitch** in the FFI website has resulted in FFO member's accounts that are paid up for 2026, being listed as INACTIVE. This inaccuracy will be resolved shortly.

NEW FFO BOARD 2026-2027

President
Joan Kinnie

Secretary
Michael Curran

Treasurer
Liz Ford

Director-at-Large
Gail Sherman

VP Journeys
Barb Davignon

VP Membership
Lynne Deachman

Past President
Anna Rochon

Director-at-Large
Lorraine Chartrand

CALENDAR OF FFO EVENTS IN 2026

2026

- Feb 10 FW at Summerhays - Speaker James Powell *Ottawa's History. 11:30am-1pm*
- Feb 24 GM meeting, St Patrick's Day social, 1st photo session for members @ Riverside United Church. 12:30-2:30pm**
- Mar 24 FW at Summerhays. 11:30-1pm. Speaker Paul Rochon: *I took the First Step and the Camino Took Over*
- Apr 21-28 FFO Outbound to Leuven, Belgium
- May 26 GM meeting - a 2nd photo session for members! *Date TBC*
- Jun 08-14 Inbound FF Western N Carolina, USA
- Sep 21-28 Inbound FF Western Colorado, USA
- Nov 09-16 FFO Outbound to Perth, Australia

➤ Don't miss our club's St. Paddy's Day social following the GM on Tues. Feb 24th. Wear something **GREEN** and for a small donation of \$2.00 you'll be treated to coffee/tea with green whipped cream, pretzel shamrocks, Guinness brownies, and many other Irish-themed treats and music.



"May your troubles be less, and your blessings be more."

UPDATE: FFO OUTBOUND JOURNEYS 2026**a) Leuven, Belgium journey (April 21-28, 2026)**

This journey currently has 14 out of the 15 ambassador positions filled. **If you are interested in joining this journey, please email jocurran5@gmail.com.**

The local club's program fee and FFI admin fee combined comes to approximately \$920 CDN which includes all costs associated with transport, lunches, museums etc. while visiting the Leuven club.

The journey will likely include guided tours of Leuven, Brussels as well as another city in Belgium. Additionally, there will be a city visit of Ypres with a stop at the Passchendaele/Tyne Cot Cemetery as well as a possible visit to the Flanders Field Museum.



Flanders Field and Passchendaele Cemetery

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

12 members (including 4 new members) have currently signed up and planning has already started for the pre/post journey travel. Our best estimate is that the club and FFI fees will amount to about \$575 CDN for the week. **If you are interested in joining this journey, contact journeysffo@gmail.com.** A second virtual planning meeting is scheduled in the next month.



Skyline of Perth, capital city of Western Australia

UPDATE: FFO INBOUND JOURNEYS 2026**a) FF Western N Carolina, USA (June 8-14, 2026)****FFO Journey Coordinator: Petra Friedrichson**

Currently there are 14 members from this club (3 couples and 8 singles) who have registered to visit Ottawa. **4 VOLUNTEERS are needed** to coordinate the Welcome and Farewell Events and the day and night hosting assignments. Please email Petra at petra_rich@icloud.com with your offer to help!

b) FF Western Colorado, USA (September 21-28, 2026)**FFO Journey Coordinator: Pierrette Benoit**

Volunteers for the Planning Committee as well as night, day and dinner hosts are still needed. Those interested should send an email to benoitp@ncf.ca.



Rocky Mountains of Western Colorado

❖ 2027 OUTBOUND/INBOUND JOURNEY REQUESTS

FFO's top 2 outbound requests to FFI were the U.K. and Chile (potentially combined with a second journey to a Peruvian club). Turkey, Korea, Switzerland, Columbia, Thailand, Canada, France, Brazil and Austria were our additional top choices. FFI was advised that we can host 2 inbound journeys (1 international and another that is either domestic or international) in the months of May/June and September/October.

❖ A **WELCOME SESSION** was held in November for new FFO members and will likely become an annual event. General information about the club, journey options, and volunteer opportunities was shared. We are currently working on an information package to welcome new members.

VP MEMBERSHIP

LYNNE DEACHMAN

SMILE FOR THE CAMERA!



Donna Nicholson and Vic Hudon have volunteered to update the photos of our club's members for the FFO Directory. The cameras will be set up and ready for

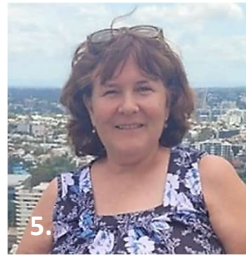
you at each of the next 2 GM meetings on Feb 24th and May 26th (tentative date)

Welcome to NEW MEMBERS in 2025-2026:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Adam Menger, Conny | 8. Liew, Chaim |
| 2. Berry, Kathy | 9. McMahon, Nancy |
| 3. Chartrand, Lorraine | 10. Rochon, Sylvie |
| 4. Chartrand, Rick | 11. Sherman, Gail |
| 5. Datars, Cathy | 12. Sherman, Peter |
| 6. Davignon, Barbara | 13. Southall, David |
| 7. Halpenny, Jim | 14. Stewart, Audrey |



No photo:
Audrey
Stewart
& Jim
Halpenny



FRIENDLY WANDERERS FEB 10, 2026 11:30am-1:00 PM

**Guest speaker James Powell:
OTTAWA'S HISTORY THEN TO NOW**



It's difficult to imagine the Ottawa that we know now as a rough-and-tumble backwoods lumber town. But that's exactly what Ottawa looked like 200 years ago!

To mark Ottawa's Bicentenary and the arrival of two of FFI's American clubs to our fair city this year we've invited historian James Powell, author of the blog *Today in Ottawa's History*, to take us back to Ottawa's beginnings!

**Location: Summerhays Grill, Private Room
1971 Baseline Rd. Ottawa (across from College Square)**

➤ **RSVP BY SUNDAY FEB. 1, 2026 @ 4:00 PM**

➤ **Eventsffo@gmail.com**

**SAVE THE DATE FOR THE NEXT FRIENDLY WANDERERS
PAUL ROCHON: Mar 24th, 11:30-1pm at Summerhays**

I Took the First Step and the Camino Took Over

Paul will share with us his experiences walking the 700 km camino in Portugal and Spain in the fall of 2025.

Paul has said that walking the camino is "addictive" and that must be true, as this was the 4th time he made the journey, sometimes with family members and other times on his own. Each year, 500,000 people make the pilgrimage using various routes, staying in hostels and making new friends along the way.



BUILDING BRIDGES - Here is the 3rd story in CapCon's new column about making friendships.

A Small World and a Bag of Milk

Paul and I joined Friendship Force Ottawa in 2008, and not long after, we welcomed our very first ambassadors, a lovely couple from Colombia, into our home. At the time, our youngest daughter, Tina, had recently returned from her Rotary Youth Exchange year in Costa Rica. Her Spanish was excellent, so we invited her to join us on the first day to help bridge the language gap. It was a good thing she did, as their English was about as strong as our Spanish! With a mix of gestures, smiles, and enthusiasm, we began learning the basics about one another.

During those early conversations, our guest Eduardo mentioned that he owned a dairy in Colombia. He was fascinated by the way milk is sold in Ontario - in plastic bags. He was clearly in the right place to learn more, or so I thought. Having grown up on a dairy farm myself, I knew where local milk was processed and decided to try to arrange a visit on our free day. I called Ault's in Winchester several times, but each attempt ended the same way: a polite but firm "no" from the receptionist. Undeterred, I suggested we simply show up. After all, how could they refuse when we were standing right there?



We arrived at Ault's bright, spotless reception area and - sure enough - received the same answer. As we stood there discussing our next move, a person in a white lab coat walked through the lobby. What caught my eye was the name stitched on the coat: *Eduardo*.

I immediately approached him and explained that we had a Colombian ambassador with the same first name. To our amazement, he replied that he, too, was a visiting staff member from Colombia. The two Eduardos launched into conversation on the spot - and talked for at least an hour. Our guest was absolutely delighted by the unexpected connection.

Today, milk in Colombia is sold in bags, much like it is here in Ontario. Paul and I like to think we may have played a very small role in that journey. While we didn't exchange enough information to stay in touch with our ambassadors, we did build a bridge - one conversation, one coincidence, and one bag of milk at a time.

Anna Van Adrichem-Rochon



FFO DINNER/LUNCH CLUB 2026

Another season of good food and friends together is well underway with many of the groups already planning their second meal for this year.

Travel commitments sometimes make it difficult to find an available date, but the meal is held at the time, place and date agreed upon by all members. So far, most groups enjoyed a mid-day meal.