



friendship force  
OTTAWA



### Executive Team meeting NOTES

Tuesday June 4, 2024 at 9AM (Zoom)

Present: Anna Van Adrichem-Rochon Vivien Runnels; Marie France Horton; Joan Kinnie; Pierrette Benoit; Gertraude Martin and Colin Leech.

- 1) President Welcome and Comments – Anna Van Adrichem-Rochon  
Anna thanked everyone for joining. She explained the outline for the agenda also included preparation for the general meeting next week (30 minute meeting and then our guest speaker)
- 2) Secretary – Vivien Runnels  
Nothing to report.
- 3) Treasurer – Colin Leech  
Nothing to report.
- 4) VP Membership – Marie France Horton

Marie France contacted Gloria L. but she has left the city. Julie Breeze is organizing a lunch for a couple who is interested and new members Janice L., Philippa and Nancy B. will attend. This will be before the general meeting next week.

Joanne Curran has sent the promotional article (noted in last meeting's notes) to Fifty-five Plus magazine and to FFI as well. The article includes a couple of photos. The date of publication is not yet known. It is suggested that we don't send it to the membership at this time. We will let everyone know when it is published.

The most recent membership list includes all new members. We are waiting until after the lunch meeting with Julie to send the membership list out. All members should then have the most recent membership list.

It has been almost a year since the directory was updated. Wendy Adams wrote to let Marie France about possible changes to the membership list. Marie France assured her that it's up to

date. Wendy Adams will update the directory. Some people (those going to Costa Rica) wanted their pictures and bios changed. Bryan will send this Costa Rica list to Wendy so she can use them to update the directory. Anna and Wendy agreed to wait until after the lunch and the general meeting to update the directory. Anna will make the request to members to think about their bio and photos in the old directory and make any updates as they wish.

- 5) VP Journeys – Joan Kinnie
  - a) Update on Journeys for 2025

Joan has contacted coordinators and asked for more information about the 2025 inbounds and outbounds but hasn't heard anything back yet.

Inbound Curran County, California (which FFO previously visited) – have asked to come in June 2025, but this is not quite clear yet. We want to know if we can offer space for 12 or more (to be discussed).

The Turkey inbound (Bursa) came as a bit of a surprise. It will be our second inbound. We will be asking for October 2025. Joan has sent an email to them as well but hasn't heard back yet.

#### Outbound Medicine Hat AB and Missoula, Montana.

Joan has received an email back from Medicine Hat, and they are recommending June although we had asked for August. There will be a 'carriage contest' (possibly barrel-racing) for one of the races at the Calgary Stampede. Joan has developed some forms to assess interest for the trip at the upcoming general meeting.

Second outbound journey is Missoula Montana – it's a little further from Medicine Hat than we originally thought. The order of the visit (Missoula or Medicine Hat first) has yet to be determined. Joan hasn't heard back yet from the Missoula president.

Outbound Volta Lake, Ghana. Recommendation from FFI was for March, 2025. Joan did hear back from the coordinator but it was a quick note and they will carry out a Zoom call. In March/April there is less humidity. We don't have another journey in West Africa, but we could do a tour of our own e.g. Morocco.

Anna made a suggestion that we have to be careful with dates because journeys (both inbound and outbound) can be stacked.

Numbers suggested by us for inbounds are a minimum of 12. We may be able to take more people if there are more couples than singles.

Colin noted that Mary Jane has been taking books out of the library (Morocco, Egypt – Nile Cruise etc.) to investigate a possible tour in Africa. Leonard has been to the FFI conference in Morocco.

## Inbounds 2024

### Mexico/Memphis journey and “Lessons Learned”

The Mexico/Memphis inbound journey was cancelled because few people were coming and even that was vague. Joan had a meeting with Barb Smith to discuss things we could consider for journeys in the future. Joan will be pulling a draft together of lessons learned, and will send it to the board and will welcome comments. Anna said it was a lot of information. Joan said it is at 4 pages already. The broad issues were the numbers of ambassadors, timelines (including the (lack of a) drop-dead date), mobility and health issues; night hosting; coordinator and back-up coordinator; volunteer fatigue; when to host the journey (if people want to come in July or August – our club members are reluctant to host in July/August): early preparation for an itinerary (basic) so we don't start from square one; determining the members who are going to be helping out etc.; offering ongoing communication and training (e.g. training session once or twice a year).

We also need to make sure people are aware of FFI guidelines.

Joan said it's time to engage new members (the same people continue to serve as coordinators), to help our club. We need different coordinators. Joan K has made a list of who has done it before, how they can help new coordinators, and members information e.g. cell phone numbers.

The “lessons learned” is a work in progress, and Joan is asking for help. Discussion ensued.

Anna said as far as the guidelines are concerned, FFI already has good guidelines. Mexico and Memphis couldn't follow the FFI guidelines for a number of reasons. Maybe for our club, this means not opening our doors so late e.g. the money has to be here for a certain date. In the recent journey that was cancelled, the Memphis group was an older group which may have contributed to the uncertainty. Colin said FFI has a 60 day deadline to pay their fees. The Memphis folks hadn't paid those. Payment of FFI fees shows a level of commitment that we didn't have from them.

As far as mentoring (supporting new coordinators) is concerned, it's good to have one person in charge and a second person as a back-up.

Another discussion item for the ‘lessons learned’ and in general, is with respect to expectations of ‘fitness’ to participate and health and mobility. This needs to be enforced with incoming people, and information needs to be sent to them with regards to mobility. Some considerations include: accommodation, e.g. many hosts have stairs in their houses; and laying out the expectations of what an individual needs to be able to do and what we can do as well to accommodate them. Although sometimes people may not tell the truth, how we approach issues like mobility limitations etc. must be carefully stated. Expectations need to be very clear,

including that ambassadors are expected to participate in every activity. For example, carrying your own suitcase is a fairly standard expectation. Wording is critical.

We also need to make sure that our members are able to deal with various and unexpected demands. On one journey, FFO people who were hosting certain ambassadors had challenges.

We have to be very careful. We want to be welcoming and not put restrictions, but we do have to consider impacts (of activities, accommodation etc.) on the travelling ambassadors, and also on the hosts.

In general, in order to participate, ambassadors must be able to participate in all the activities which will include things like walking up the stairs. (Noted that some hosts may not be able to participate themselves). It is really important for the coordinator as to what their responsibilities with respect to health and mobility are. Screening is important. You apply for the journey doesn't mean you will be accepted.

Pierrette was on a planning committee with an across-Canada journey. She noted that the committee looked at applications and screened some people out. For some people walking on uneven surfaces and cobblestones may not be doable. There is also the consideration that if you have to spend a lot of time helping people to be accommodated, others are not going to be happy.

It was noted that the journey application is first submitted to the potential ambassador's own coordinator, and there are notes with respect to the level of ability to observe; however, some applicants just sign and don't read the fine print.

It is worth sending a separate email with respect to the journey's requirements and these should be distributed to everyone in the club.

With respect to health and mobility for both inbound and outbound journeys, Pierrette has written documents that have been reviewed and approved by FFFI with respect to the responsibilities of both ambassador and host coordinators, and what you should do. She will send to all for review.

Colin gave an example of a challenging situation. Two (unrelated) ambassadors in the same room had different requirements. One needed radio and the other needed silence. This type of situation suggests matching should be done by the ambassador coordinator rather than the host coordinator. Some combinations of ambassadors don't work.

It was suggested that maybe it's a needed conversation with both coordinators (ambassador and host) to resolve the issues of suitability, and as to whom the potential hosts might be. A conversation between the coordinators can allow for additional information to be shared that isn't necessarily written down.

Ideally with today's technology, we have to make sure that people are talking. Email itself may not be sufficient, but we have the technology (Zoom, What's App etc.). Coordinators and others

should be in contact quite frequently before people arrive. Sometimes however, we don't get replies – we might wait for weeks to get a response.

Our club may not be able to host everyone. On the application, we can leave it to the ambassador to state their limitations etc., and then the coordinator can make the decision. (Use of a walker has come up a few times).

Remember you are applying to participate. For example – in Nepal – there were many conversations that led to the realization it was not going to work for them. It's not just about younger people and people with limitations, many just don't think about these issues.

There isn't a perfect solution. But minimally we should flag the issue(s) ahead of time.

Other comments included that it is the responsibility of the ambassador coordinator who should know the person in her or his club, and can indicate as to whether the person can participate. There are ways of doing things that are respectful and carried out in a sensitive manner.

The extension of this discussion is that some people fill seats in a journey, but they should have been vetted better. Coordinators can call the President of the club and ask for a reference. Although everything might look right, conversation can give you a different answer. Different people take different approaches; however, when the right things are in place, problem situations should be minimized. There's a whole variety of fitness levels, and this can be dealt with.

Returning to the 'lessons learned', it was suggested that perhaps Joan can consider help from the volunteers on the board. Joan can send out the draft and we can do this over the summer and afterwards (September and October)

With two inbounds and two outbounds in 2025, we want to be good as journey ambassadors as well as journey hosts.

We are reminded to look at the FFI documentation – much of this discussion has been written already – we don't need to reinvent the wheel. On our website, we can find the FFI policies and procedures.

Joan's report is for the target audience i.e. members of the club. It will deal with the lessons learned (not dealing with the possible, but what actually happened), and offer recommendations. It was also noted that if you haven't booked the flights, you have to question the commitment.

Marie France said that the FFI Town Hall meetings is another place to ask questions.

There has been a lot of anxiety (angst) among the journey coordinators and planners for this cancelled journey. The report will raise general issues, to start the conversation.

b) Updates on Costa Rica, 2024 and Nor Peru (inbound) 2024

14 ambassadors for Peru have been confirmed. We have already received the information. 6 ambassadors are under 65. The oldest is 74. The group has 5 couples and 4 singles. Joanne has volunteers.

Joan didn't have the update from Costa Rica from Julie. Marie France said 15 are going. Costa Rica ambassadors have received a list, some information about costing. The details about the trips have not been sent yet. Sue Wheeler cancelled and has been replaced by Nancy Wood. Joan will send the update to the board.

6) Members at Large – Pierrette Benoit & Gertraude Martin

Pierrette reported that the FFO website dovetails with the FFI website. There are a lot of documents on our website. We will need to see that they are relevant and accurate. Based on our discussion today, with respect to upcoming journeys and health and mobility issues, Gertraude noted that there is no information on the signup sheets. Anna said that at this stage, the sign-up sheets are for those who are just showing an interest in participating.

7) Preparation of Items for General Meeting June 12 at 1:30 at Riverside Church

Colin can provide a Treasurer's update e.g. balance; Marie France will update on member numbers and provide a general update; Anna will provide an update on bridge money.

Joan will put up the sign-up sheets for inbound and outbound journeys and the general sign-ups for 2025. She can also give an update. She will also provide some words for the 2024 inbounds.

Joan has offered to let her name stand for President at the end of Anna's term. But this means that we are looking for someone to take on VP Journeys. To make the transition work, and considering the work that is being done currently, it will be helpful to have a person prepared for this.

It is really important to help people to volunteer by providing a transition and a mentoring period. We can help to make guidelines.

Marie France added that co-chairing is another possibility for the Chair and VP Journeys or even journey coordinators might co-chair. They should be people who know each other and can work together.

For the June 12<sup>th</sup> – meeting, we can add that the president's role is open at the end of this term.

AGM date. Joan's cruise starts in December when there is an AGM. Anna will work on changing the date. In addition to Anna, Colin will also have done 6 years this year, two and a half years as Treasurer.

General meeting need for audio-visuals. Just in case it's required, Anna can bring the portable equipment. Meg Stickl may need something for her presentation. She will need to let us know if she needs anything. Based on the fact that we have a speaker – a microphone might be needed. She is going to talk and show – 'get ready for travel', which will likely involve both talk and exercise.

#### Meeting close

As a result of the discussion with respect to the membership list, Anna will send out the most recent membership list to everyone with the agenda for the general meeting.

Meeting ended at 10:23 am