



# friendship force

## CENTRAL VIRGINIA

Changing the Way You See the World

# The Ambassador

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*Vice President*..... *Pam Hokanson*  
*Treasurer*..... *David Lea*  
  
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*Al Colville, Peggy Colville, Deb Winslow*  
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*Fund Raising* ..... *Dave Zabransky*  
*JAG*..... *Linda Burns/Bing Spitler*  
  
*Journeys*..... *Deb Winslow/*  
*Susan Roberts*  
*Membership*..... *Monica Notaro*  
*Outreach*..... *Carol Donahue*  
*Webmasters*..... *Al Colville and Dave*  
*Zabransky*

## SPECIAL EDITION

### President's Message

*Patty Sclater*

I hope that everyone is safely sheltering during the COVID-19 pandemic. I sure miss seeing our members at various events. Amidst all the negatives, there are some creative ways to "travel." With many museums offering free virtual tours and orchestras streaming free concerts, I've recently been to the Louvre and listened to Easter music performed by the Berliner Philharmoniker.

Of course, there's nothing like being there in person. And I look forward to new explorations with Friendship Force in the future. That future, however, is uncertain at present. With much of Friendship Force International's (FFI) modest annual budget of \$1.2 million coming from traveling Ambassadors' fees and the cancellation of most remaining 2020 journeys, you can imagine the devastating affect this has had on its financial situation.

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We are very fortunate that our club member and a past president, Dave Burns, is an FFI regional representative. As liaison between FFI and more than 20 East Coast clubs, he has great insight into what is happening at FFI. This special edition of the Ambassador includes his recap of the latest meeting regional representatives had with Jeremi Snook, FFI President and CEO, and several staff members. It outlines the steps FFI is taking to mitigate the lack of operating funds, what the FFCV board has and is doing, and what our membership can do.

Thank you for your continued support of our club. Let us know your thoughts and any suggestions you have to continue its and FFI's continued success.

## **FFI FINANCIAL STATUS**

*David Burns*

Below is a recap of a meeting regional representatives had with Jeremi Snook, FFI CEO and President, on what is happening with the organization. The key to understanding and following the situation is through the FFI website [www.friendshipforce.org](http://www.friendshipforce.org) and particularly a blog that has been set up for that purpose.

### The Current Situation

- FFI is primarily funded through fees from journeys, unlike many similar and other non-profits, which are funded largely through membership fees. Membership fees only amount to about 10 percent of FFI's budget. As we all know, journeys came to a halt in March and likely will not resume until 2021. This means that FFI has no current income and will not until then. A minimum of \$340,000 needs to be raised to keep the organization running. If financial difficulties are not resolved, FFI may have to go into a hibernation status.
  
- FFI recognizes that many members are involved with multiple charities needing funds or taking care of their families who are having financial difficulties. The focus of the appeal is on those clubs and individuals who have the capacity to give.
  
- The FFI Board would like those who are able to donate the cost of one FFI international fee of \$170. If this were to happen, the \$340,000 requirement could easily be met. If unable to make a lump sum, monthly contributions are a possibility. For those who cannot afford such a sum, any donation, even a note saying you are unable to donate, is appreciated.
  
- For those who are faced with an IRA required minimum distribution (RMD) each year, donating your RMD would have positive tax implications in terms of reduced taxable income. This is the same as RMD donations to churches and other non-profit organizations.
  
- As for club donations, whatever is possible would be appreciated as the Board recognizes some clubs are doing very well financially by having large fund-raising programs or hosting numerous Open World visits. Some clubs have worked out what they can afford and told their memberships that they will match individual donations up to at least that level.
  
- Fundraising is not restricted to U.S. clubs and is an international effort. That said, about a third of FFI members reside here, and we are expected to carry the load. Truth is, some countries simply do not

fundraise at all. On the other hand, others are doing what they can. To date, clubs in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan have been very generous.

#### What Steps Is FFI Taking?

- FFI has been pursuing all grants and loans through the recent federal stimulus package. However, it is turning out to be a bureaucratic quagmire with little help in sight. Simply put, it appears banks and other organizations are not set up to handle the thousands of applications flooding the system. If the system works as claimed, it could be of considerable help, but for now the FFI Finance Department has a rule that it is not real unless it's in our account.
- FFI currently is operating on a shoestring budget with minimal staffing. The hope is that they can sustain salaries and operational expenses for at least the next 90 days.
  
- Requesting donations from foundations and corporations is also possible
  
- If we do not meet fundraising goals, plans have been developed to go into a hibernation mode, with assets secured until a time it can be re-engaged. The reality of doing this likely would result in a 100 percent loss of staff.
  
- FFI recommends clubs continue meeting, but in a virtual mode using Zoom, GoToMeeting, etc. applications.
  
- Jeremi is available to visit virtually with clubs to have face-to-face discussions with members

#### Concluding Comments

The situation really is pretty bad, and your club leadership really hopes this is not the end of Friendship Force. As Jeremi stated, "FFI has had to face all sorts of problems in the past such as SARS, volcanos shutting down airlines, the 2008 recession and so on, but most of these were more or less local or impacted only certain parts of the world. This time everybody everywhere is impacted."

We strongly agree with what the FFI Board said, that the plea for donations should be focused on individuals who have the means to contribute what they can, and recognize not everybody is able to do so.

FFCV has already donated \$1,000 to FFI, but we would like to do more. Your club leadership would greatly appreciate you considering a personal donation to FFI and will match personal donations up to an additional \$1,000 through May 31st. If you can do so, we request you send your contribution to our Treasurer, David Lea.

David Lea  
139 Stribling Ave  
Charlottesville, VA 22903


Make your check payable to FFCV and put FFI Donation on the memo line. David will provide you with a receipt for tax purposes and deposit the money into FFI's account.

We all want to see Friendship Force continue its mission of promoting global understanding across the barriers that separate people and your assistance is needed in seeing that this is achieved.


# Member News

Copies of the Ambassador Newsletter are available on our website: [www.friendshipforcecv.org](http://www.friendshipforcecv.org)

The BOD meetings are open to anyone who would like to attend. We welcome your participation.



Monica Notaro	5/4
Albert Colville	6/16



Monica and Sal Notaro	5/4
Dave and Linda Burns	5/9
Mark and Margaret Dryer	5/16
Pam and Paul Hokanson	6/12
Bob and Dee Schwagerl	6/16

*Did we miss your special day?*

Let Monica Notaro know so we can update our records  
 608-358-0352 or [salandmonie@yahoo.com](mailto:salandmonie@yahoo.com)

