



friendship force
CENTRAL VIRGINIA
Changing the Way You See the World

The Ambassador

July 2025

President's Message

We did have a relatively quiet period with one very interesting presentation from the International Rescue Committee. We are looking forward to a lot of outdoor activities in the coming months, many involving our connections with the JAG students at UVa. We hope you will join with us in many of these activities.

Al Colville
FFCV President

Up Coming Exchange Events

Outbound 2025: Domestic: A group of us are heading to NE Ohio at the end of July. The itinerary looks amazing.

Inbound 2025: Domestic: Oklahoma will be arriving September 9-16. Be on the look out for some Google forms about activities associated with this visit. Anyone interested in being on the planning committee let me know.

Outbound 2026: We have 2 outbounds – one domestic and one international. Our domestic journey is to the San Francisco area. Our international is to Montreal, Canada

Inbound 2026: We will be hosting Tarapoto, Peru. Our club journeyed there in 2024.

Deb Winslow

Gardening Presentation for Members

Just to catch everyone up, let's go back to our April 24th Membership meeting when Tom Baughn, Master Gardener, shared his knowledge on plants, trees and general information we all needed to hear to make our efforts pay off. We had a wonderful group there listening and asking many good questions which Tom was more than capable of answering. Thanks to all who brought such delicious snacks for all of us to nibble on while listening to some great ideas for our gardens and yards.

Also, I would like to thank Tom for sharing his knowledge with us.

Peggy Colville

Membership Meeting - June 21st - Independence

Wow, what a great presentation we heard. Saturday, June 21st from Elizabeth Helmke from International Rescue Committee (IRC). I did not know what all that organization did and cannot believe how much man-power and hours they each put in making everything come together. Not only day-to-day caring but how they follow up for years to make sure these people get back on their feet and have the freedom we all enjoy every day. We had a very small gathering, but the information delivered was very powerful and enlightening.

Thanks to all who got the very late notice of some supplies that they needed and made sure she received them at the meeting. She was most appreciative.

Some members gave her a donation afterwards and I am sure they will put all donations to good use.



One small note she sent to me afterwards – you may be receiving this too late to attend but I still wanted to include it with this newsletter.

From Elizabeth --“I forgot to mention that the IRC will be hosting an event this Friday evening. I have attached a flier for the event, but here are the details:

Refuge & Renewal- Stories of Hope
Friday, June 27th- 6:30pm
Vinegar Hill Theater
Panelist Stories and Discussion”

Thanks to all who attended and brought such good snacks that were enjoyed by all.

Peggy Colville
Membership Person

JAG Student News

Three month JAG graduation was held Thursday, May 15th attended by Alan Drinkwater, Linda Gehl and Tom Baughn. One student, Ryotaro from Japan, sponsored by Linda and Tom was on his plane back to his home the same day. Two weeks later, five ten month JAG students had their graduation on May 29th.

All five students spoke at the graduation about their ten month stay. Here, Takumi from Japan speaks while LTC Paul Cheng from Taiwan, LTC Gustavo Arellano Echanove from Mexico, Major Aisha Suleiman from Nigeria and Major Matan Mass-Mehaber from Israel look on. Their sponsors this year were Al and Peggy Colville (Japan) Linda Gehle and Tom Baughn, (Taiwan) Judy Lesiak (Mexico), Alan and Willow Drinkwater (Nigeria) and Bing and Joyce Spitler. (Israel).



Major Aisha Suleiman who has returned to Nigeria for the summer and in the Fall will be working at the UN in New York City and hopes to return to Charlottesville with her daughters in Fall of 2026 to earn her Ph.D. from UVA.

Major Takumi Yamada has returned to Japan, seated here with sponsor Peggy Colville sitting in the Generals' chair after graduation.



After graduation several sponsors took their students to lunch at Sedona and the new three month student, Jamal from Cairo (first on left) joined us. Jamal will be cosponsored by the Drinkwaters, Linda Gehle and Tom Baughn with a trip to Montpelier after lunch, BBQ for dinner then the Gordonsville Rodeo at Oakleigh Farm on Saturday, July 12th.

Linda and Tom had taken Ryotaro and Paul, their 10 month student to the Frontier Culture Museum in Staunton two weeks ago, where they even got to use a two man saw.



I want to thank all the sponsors this year for their gracious hosting of our students, and I look forward to four new students coming in late August, unfortunately after our Friendship Force picnic, but we are hoping to gather over Labor Day. Let me know if you wish to be a sponsor or get involved in any way.

Willow Drinkwater

ANNUAL AUGUST PICNIC
AUGUST 16TH 11:00 am to 2:00 pm

I wanted to remind you that Willow and Alan Drinkwater graciously agreed to host our Annual Picnic again this year on August 16th. It will be held at their home - 11232 Cedar Hill Rd., Gordonsville, VA. 22942. The turn off of Route 15 to the farm is on the west side and 1 mile north of the circle in Gordonsville. Then a 1/2 mile of gravel road!!! If you have trouble call Willow at 434-249-6892.

It will be a potluck luncheon starting at 11:00am to 2:00 pm. The club will be supplying the main dish which I believe will be fried chicken.

Remember we usually take the month of July off. So, enjoy this hot weather and get all rested up for our annual picnic in their very cool swimming pool.

Peggy Colville
Membership Person

r

2025 FFCV Calendar

	<u>BOD Meeting</u>	<u>Event/Speaker</u>	<u>Event Date</u>	<u>Events</u>
January	23th/Nahor	Sandy Radford, speaker Taxes	Sat. 18th	Membership Soup & Salad /Independence
February	14th/Nahor	Memory of Love	Sat. 15th	Cancelled due to snow
March	27th/Nahor		Sat. 22nd	Mystery Dinner/Host-Tom & Linda, Vickie & Mike, Patricia & Steve, Al and Peggy
April	24th/Nahor	Tom Baughn, Master Gardner	Sat. 19th	Hellebores-Flowers in the Winter/Independence
May	22th/ Linda and Tom's House			
June		Elizabeth Helmke	At. 21st	International Rescue Committee/ The Independence.
July	24th/Nahor		July 30 -Aug. 6th	Out Going Exchange - Ohio
August	28th.Nahor		Sat. 16th	Annual Picnic - Alan and Willow Home – 11 am – 2 pm
September	25th/Nahor		Monday, 1st	JAG Picnic - Bing and Joyce Spitler Home--Noon-3:00
October	23rd/Nahor	TBA	TBA	
November	27th/Nahor		Sat. 15th	Friends-Giving/Independence – Noon - 3:00
December	18th/Nahor		Sat. 20th	Christmas Party- Independence-- Noon - 3:00