



friendship force
CENTRAL VIRGINIA
Changing the Way You See the World

The Ambassador Winter 2026

Presidnet's Message

As the club starts the year 2026 let us remember that the friendship force is about strangers becoming friends through experiencing other people's cultures. By putting our feet under their table we get an understanding and appreciation of their culture. Please read the newsletter as the newsletter provides you with information about the outbound trips. Our inbound trip from Peru as been canceled. Please pay your dues to friendship force international directly. thank you

Officers for 2026

At the December meeting the following officers and committee chairmen were elected to their positions:

Officers

President	Alan Drinkwater
1st vice president	Tom Baugh
2nd vice president	Nina Flynn
Treasurer David	Lea
Secretary	Deana Winslow

Committee chairmen

Events	Nina Flynn
Memberships	Helen Ida Moyer
Journeys	Deb Winslow
Website	Michael Argie
JAG Cordinator	Willow Drinkwater
Newslette	LeRoy Moyer
Fundraising	Linda Gehle
Publicity and Outreach	Patty Sclater

UpComing Event:

The March Meeting will be at the Independence at Pantops (350 Portico Lane) March 21 from 1 to 3.

The theme will be Saint Patrick's Day. Please bring your favorite Irish appetizer or dessert and drink.

Some of us have traveled to Ireland, with FF and privately. If you have and want to share any stories, and/ or memories please let me know. If you want to share pictures, Tom Baugh will be able to display them on his equipment if you share them with him before the meeting.

Please RSVP and let me know if you are coming. (Ph: (434) 806-4717, email: n1997flynn@gmail.com) If you are coming and know what you are bringing please let me know that as well.

Hope to see everyone for a fun gathering!

Cheers!

Nina

Up Coming Exchanges

Outbound 2026: We have 2 outbounds – one domestic and one international. Our domestic journey is to the San Francisco area which will take August 5-11.

Our international is to Montreal, Canada June 3-10 with an extension to Quebec City after our journey.

Inbound 2026: We will unfortunately not be hosting Tarapoto, Peru. There were concerns about the immigration situation and folks didn't feel comfortable visiting at this time.

Note from Peggy

I would like to take this opportunity to Thank each of you for your support and forgiveness during my years as Membership and Events Chairpersons. You now have a fairly new board with Alan Drinkwater, President; Tom Baughan, V. President; Nina Flynn 3rd V. President as well as Events Chairperson; Helen Ida, Membership Chairperson and Deana Winslow, Secretary.

I truly believe in this organization and with us all pulling together we can continue to build and support the ideas of FFCV. Programs such as the JAG Students which Willow Drinkwater is doing a Great job in placing UVA JAG Students with sponsors as they experience our USA. Last but not least, how we represent our organization as Ambassadors.

Sorry, I was not able to do the Mystery Dinner this year, maybe later on this year or if it is wanted maybe next year. Al and I will not be traveling that much in the future but that does not mean we can not still enjoy seeing each of you and catching up at the Membership meetings. Hope to see you there – in the meantime stay take care and stay safe.

Submitted by Peggy Colville

Up Coming Event of Interest

Thank you for saving the date! As promised, here are the details of the **Interfaith Gathering to Show Support for Our Immigrant Neighbors** on **Sunday, March 29th, at 2pm on the Downtown Mall** in Charlottesville. We will gather at the West End of the mall (toward the Omni Hotel). There will be group singing, inspirational readings, and a procession from the West End to the East End (near the Free Speech wall). There will be tables with information about volunteer opportunities and ways that you can help to support our immigrant neighbors.

There is strength in numbers! Please share this invitation with members of your faith community and your friends and come express your support. In the event of rain, please bring your umbrellas!

JAG Events

The last day of February (28th) Lewis Mitler opened his home with memories of his many travels for a potluck luncheon for five of our present six international JAG students. COL Oscar Paulino from Angola (sponsor, Lewis Mitler), MAJ Noya Kobayashi and newly arrived Ryo Takagi from Japan (Tom Baughn and Linda Gehle, sponsors), MAJ Inhye Jo - nickname JOY from South Korea (Patricia Sclater and Steven Cooley, sponsors), and Wing Commander Chidinma Eve Ojukwu from Nigeria (Alan and Willow Drinkwater, sponsors) attended. It was a lovely warm Springlike day with the doors open to birdsong as we shared a game and enjoyed rigatoni, salad, garlic bread and brownies. Ryo, a three month Basic student will graduate in May, and the others in the ten month program will graduate in early June. Another student, MAJ Abdullah Alshammari from Kuwait, also in the three month course was unable to attend due to Ramadan.



The week before I took our three month student, Otgee to Monticello, had lunch at Michie Tavern, stopped at the Gristmill Gift Shop, and took a trip up Carter Mountain for apple cider donuts while overlooking the clear view of the mountains over Charlottesville. CPT Otgongerel Dugersuren (Otgee is her nickname) was here for three months and was the only international student in her class that graduated Thursday, February 26th. Her journey home to Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia on Friday took over 31 hours but every flight was on time. I miss her buoyancy and goodwill!



Larry Moore, the JAG Coordinator for the Judge Advocate Generals Legal Center and School is retiring the end of May, and all former sponsors in our Friendship Force are invited to attend his Retirement Party, Thursday, May 28th. Please contact me if you were a former sponsor so I can forward you the details when I get them. We also appreciate that Bing and Joyce Spitler will be having the new 10 month students welcome luncheon on Labor Day, 2026 as they have in the past. The ride on their pontoon boat is always a hit with the students and their families..

The JAG program has created many international friendships over my past two years as coordinator. During this time of world upheaval, former students have been in touch with me from as far away as Cairo, Baghdad, Israel and Ulaanbaatar, capital of Mongolia. If you would like to be a JAG sponsor, please email or text me so we can arrange extraordinary connections for you. (willowdrinkwater@gmail.com, 434-249-6892 cell).

FFCV BOARD MEETING, MINUTES
February 19, 2026, The Independence, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Called to order by President, Alan Drinkwater at 2:00 p.m. In attendance: Alan Drinkwater, Tom Baughn, Linda Gehle, David Lea, Nina Flynn, Willow Drinkwater, Helen Ida Moyer, LeRoy Moyer and Deana Winslow

Rule established for meetings: no crosstalk and speak when recognized.

Secretary's Minutes: Minutes read and approved

Treasurer Report: Nothing new to report

Old Business: We had further discussion about how to approach advising all members of the changes in the annual dues and how to go about paying the FFI portion on their website. A list is being established to show who has paid FFI membership and who has paid local dues. Amounts for FFI that were collected by FFCV will be refunded so that they can make payment directly to FFI. Deb will be requested to add an additional user on FFI.

New Business: Discussion for subsidizing the FFI membership fee for those who cannot afford. A new committee was formed in order to set the criteria for subsidizing.

Events: The Valentine meeting/party for Saturday was cancelled and changed to a St. Patty's fellowship on 3/21st. Mystery dinner was cancelled as well. Discussion of keeping events and business meetings separate.

Membership: Inquiries about how to communicate the fee structure and listing of who paid so far.

Journeys: Outbound: Montreal, June 3 to June 10 with extension to Quebec June 10 to June 15 Outbound: San Francisco, August 5 to August 11 Inbound: Peru, asked for opinion on dates - chose August 28 to September 3.

Communications: Newsletter will be worked on with intent to come out around March 6 as a quarterly newsletter. LeRoy requested a current list of officers and committee chairs.

Fundraising: Fridays After Five - probably 4 events Possibly ticketed events

Publicity and Outreach: Patty sent a note of support to FF in Minnesota and received a thank you note back in appreciation.

JAG Program: We have our 3 month students. 1 from Mexico, 1 from Kuwait and 1 from Japan. Discussion about Lewis' pot luck at his home.

Next board meeting on March 19th - 2pm to 3pm

Meeting adjourned at 3:09pm

FFCV BOARD MEETING, MINUTES
January 15, 2026, The Independence, 2:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Called to order by President, Alan Drinkwater at 2:10 p.m.

In attendance: Alan Drinkwater, Tom Baughn, Linda Gehle, David Lea, Nina Flynn, Deb Winslow, Deana Winslow, Patty Sclater, Willow Drinkwater and Peggy Colville

Secretary's Minutes: There were no November minutes. The October minutes were moved to approve by David and seconded by Deb. All in favor.

Treasurer Report: David reported that we have \$2,727.77. He has added a line item for Local Dues, of which we had 18 people that have paid local dues. Willow moved to approve the treasurer's report, Linda seconded. All in favor.

Old Business: We had further discussion about how to approach advising all members of the changes in the annual dues and how to go about paying the FFI portion on their website. Some still opted to give checks to David for him to forward funds to FFI.

New Business: Tentative calendar for meetings. The January general meeting will be 1/24/26, upstairs in our usual room. Speaker Sandra Radford will discuss taxes. Time 1 - 3 pm. Alan requested a Vice President to prepare a calendar in a spreadsheet. Willow requested an addition on the calendar for 9/7/26 Spitlers will be joining and will have the JAG picnic.

Events: Peggy gave Nina a written help sheet and gave some general information to help. It was brought up to have a membership drive. Possibly at Northside Library. Possible date Saturday, May 23rd.

Membership: Approved as corrected Deb and Helen Ida resolved who would do what. Tom suggested that Helen Ida call all that are on current membership to discuss membership dues increase. Willow suggested putting out something for anyone interested in sponsoring JAG students, they could become members to sponsor them. Bing & Joyce rejoining.

Journeys: Nothing new. Montreal from June 3rd to June 10th. Extension to Quebec City from June 10 to June 14th or 15th. Have not heard from Montreal what club fees will be. Last heard they will be able to take 12 people. Communicated that there will be 12 people and 10 rooms needed. 2 couples and 8 singles. Nothing heard back on Peru trip. Tentatively it will be the end of August/beginning of September when Peru is coming. San Francisco dates sent for mid August or mid September, but have not heard anything.

Communications: Peggy suggested that Nina get with Michael and share information. Calendar should be included in the newsletter.

Fundraising: Linda had nothing much to report. Lita Flowers offered to volunteer.

Publicity and Outreach: Patty did not have anything since nothing is set for dates etc.. Willow inquired if a club was located in Minneapolis. We should be reaching out. There is a club, we should send a note. Willow suggested putting out something for anyone interested in sponsoring JAG students, they could become members to sponsor them.

JAG Program: Larry, the coordinator at JAG, is retiring. Graduation was wonderful. Students honored Friendship Force in their speeches. New students in February, do not know how many or from where. Anyone who wants to take on a 3 month student, this is the opportunity to do so. Lewis Smitler wants to have an event at his house in February for JAG students. He would make food.

Discussed feeding information or having a zoom meeting to Michael Argie so he did not have to come in for meetings.

Next membership meeting on January 24th - 1pm to 3pm

Next board meeting on February 19th 2pm - 3pm

Meeting adjourned at 3:19pm

FFCV Tentative Calendar for 2026

MONTH	DATE	TIME	EVENT	SPEAKER (if applicable)	LOCATION	COORDINATOR
JANUARY	24	1 PM	Snacks	Sandy Radford - Taxes	Independence	
FEBRUARY	21	TBD	Valentine's Party		Independence	
MARCH	Weekend		Mystery Dinners		Hosts Addresses	Peggy
APRIL	18	1:00 PM	Hear about JAG student's Countries	JAG students tell about their Countries	Independence	Willow? Snacks Deb
MAY						
JUNE			3-10 MONTREAL OPTIONAL QUEBEC 11-16	NONE	MONTREAL	DEB
JULY						
AUGUST	22	12-3PM	ANNUAL PICNIC AT DRINKWATER POOL	NONE	11232 CEDAR HILL FARM GORDONSVILLE	WILLOW DRINKWATER
SEPTEMBER						
OCTOBER	17	TBD	HALLOWEEN PARTY W/SNACKS		INDEPENDENCE	
NOVEMBER	21	TBD	FRIENDSGIVING – POT LUCK		INDEPENDENCE	
DECEMBER	12	TBD	CHRISTMAS PARTY		INDEPENDENCE	

FFI – FRIENDSHIP FORCE INTERNATIONAL
 JAG – JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL
 TBD – TO BE DETERMINED