

### April and May: Celebrating a return to travel

The programs offered to members in April and May helped us feel that travel was possible once again. Two years without a safe way to experience the outside world and meet new friends have been a major challenge for our club.

In April, we heard about the services and travel packages available through the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) from our guest speakers, Novella Troia and Kathy Tinkler. CAA offers flights on its private jet, bus tours in Quebec, the Maritime provinces, and the Rocky Mountains as well as cruises. Members were encouraged to consider using the services of a travel agent during these uncertain times, especially as the restrictions seem to change frequently.



*Novella Troia, travel agent with CAA  
Kathy Tinkler, Supervisor at CAA's St. Anne  
location*

In May, we were inspired to check out Churchill in northern Manitoba – a destination of choice for travellers from around the globe. We are the lucky ones to live so close! Gale Simpson, an experienced traveller and photographer, showed us how to enjoy the local wildlife, history and flowers in this northern region through her photographs and engaging tales. Think polar bears, beluga whales, seals, Fort Prince of Wales and vibrant fireweed! A hint: Use your Air Miles to fly there as there is no road access and the train is very, very slow and unreliable. Please note: During most outings, an armed guide is essential in case of a close encounter with a polar bear!

Upcoming events include the year-end gathering on June 23, the bus tour to the International Peace Gardens on July 27, and in the fall, reports from club members on their travel experiences over the summer.

The Program Committee encourages everyone to go somewhere fun and participate in these upcoming, amazing club activities.

*Contributed by Lynne Foley*

### June/July Events

#### **Membership Dinner Thursday, June 23**

Hosted by Diane Schipper  
429 Beaverhill in Southdale  
5:30 Cocktail hour / 6:30 Dinner  
Please wear your FFM membership badge!

#### **International Peace Gardens 90th Anniversary Visit – Bus Trip**

Wednesday, July 27  
Times and cost tba



*Gale Simpson and Joan Boyd*

## World Friendship Day

We celebrated World Friendship Day at the Norwood Hotel on May 27. There were 82 members and guests from four clubs: Brandon, Manitoba, Winnipeg and Los Angeles. The inbound ambassadors, who were hosted by the Winnipeg club, were on the first inbound journey to Canada since the pandemic began in 2020. Following a welcome by Manitoba Vice President Denise Lawson, Winnipeg President Jim Ryan introduced the inbound ambassadors and their home hosts. Members visited with friends and met the incoming ambassadors over a delicious meal followed by a Friendship Force cake which was served by executive members from the four clubs.



*John Einarson and Susan Monroe  
of FF Winnipeg*



The keynote speaker was John Einarson. His presentation on the musicians of Winnipeg during the last half of the twentieth century was very informative and brought back personal memories for everyone. John shared anecdotes about the Beatles and their half-hour visit to Winnipeg and about the late, great guitarist Lenny Breau. His profound knowledge of our city's music scene kept everyone spellbound. His book, *Heart of Gold – A History of Winnipeg Music*, which was on sale after his presentation, is a treasure trove of information!

*Contributed by Gail Keeley*

## Talk up FFM on social media!

Join us on Twitter (@ffmanitoba), Instagram (ffmanitoba), and Facebook (@Canadasheartbeat) or go to our webpage [www.friendshipforcemanitoba.org](http://www.friendshipforcemanitoba.org) and use our direct links from the three icons found at the top of the home page.



Help us promote our club by following, liking, retweeting, commenting, adding pictures, reposting, and sharing your experiences, travels, travel tips and ideas!

Check out our FFM webpage for information concerning Friendship Force Manitoba news and updates!

*Marilyn Ouimet, Website Manager*

## IN MEMORIAM

John Prysiazna, a long-standing member of our club, passed away on March 6, 2022. John was very active in FFM as well as an FF club in Texas, to which he arranged an exchange with our club. He participated in many exchanges (Germany, Netherlands, Japan, etc.) both as an ambassador and a host. John was creative and liked to work in wood carving. We are thankful to him for the wonderful logo he carved for our club, which is displayed at many of our meetings.

*Contributed by Shirley Twerdun*



*At our May meeting, Barbara Main and Shirley Twerdun provided a varied display of items from their travels to Ukraine. Thanks to Barbara and Shirley for their expression of solidarity with our FF friends in Ukraine.*

# Travel

After a LOOOONG period of staying home during the pandemic, Friendship Force journeys are happening again! Our sister club FF Winnipeg just hosted a successful inbound journey with ambassadors from Los Angeles and a couple of other clubs. The weather may not have been particularly balmy for that journey, but sunny skies and warm temperatures have returned – and we are ready to host and travel too!

## **Inbound journey news**

FF Lower Columbia is still planning to visit FF Manitoba September 20-27, 2022. Earlier on they anticipated about 16 ambassadors. They are now down to six confirmed so are opening up the journey to other clubs. Our proposed program includes both regular events and seasonal highlights. How exciting it will be to take the Prairie Dog Central to the fall supper in Grosse Isle and observe the waterfowl migration at Oak Hammock Marsh again! Thanks to Helen Whetter, cochair, and committee members Diane Schipper, Thelma Sures, Denise Lawson, Lynne Foley, Yingke Li and Kathy Hansell for their hard work. We have ample day host volunteers but please let any of the committee members know if you would be willing to home host or dinner host for that journey.

FF Manitoba's 2023 assigned inbound journeys are an amalgamation of previously postponed requests. Our club normally hosts two inbound journeys a year. However, we hosted no one in 2020 and 2021, and we will only host FF Lower Columbia in 2022. For 2023 we expect three clubs! Journey directors and committee members are needed to plan all of these incoming groups' experiences.

First on the calendar is FF Lamphun, Thailand. As far as we know they anticipate coming in April to coincide with their school holidays. It's great that Denise, Peggy and Jacky have been keeping in touch with their hosts from FF Manitoba's pre-pandemic visit there. Further details will be forthcoming as the journey gets closer.

Prior to Covid we had also been expecting FF Mid-Willamette. You may remember Jean Hyrich's animated presentation about the club and some interesting facts about the area. The Willamette Valley is a 150-mile-long valley in Oregon. Portland is the closest major airport for both the Lower Columbia and

Mid-Willamette clubs. The Columbia River serves as the border between Washington, where the Lower Columbia club is based, and Oregon, where the Mid-Willamette club is located. Their proposed time frame is June 2023.

The FF Koriyama club from Japan has opted to reschedule their August 2022 inbound journey to 2023. Specific dates for that journey are yet to be negotiated. What we have heard so far is that they are looking at the period from July 21 to August 24 so they may be here to enjoy Folklorama and/or some of our other summer festivals. Stay tuned for more details.

## **Outbound journey news**

FF Manitoba's outbound journey to FF Ehime (Japan) has been postponed three times, but they still want to host us in 2023. Thanks to Denise Lawson for continuing to lead the planning for this long-awaited journey. Exact dates are to be determined but our goal is to be there in cherry blossom season. That's normally late March/early April.

FFI has been trying to deal with the backlog of journey requests so have only assigned us a single outbound journey/week at this time. However, we are hopeful we will be able to make arrangements with additional clubs in Japan to extend the trip. We want to make the 10+ hour flight time/16-hour time difference from Vancouver to Tokyo worth your while when you get there!

In the meantime, remember that the Virtual Experiences page has links to lots of interesting presentations from clubs around the world. Several of the recently posted ones focus on various aspects of life in Japan. <https://blog.friendshipforce.org/virtual-experiences/> will take you there. And if you just can't wait to go somewhere, keep checking the upcoming actual journeys available at "FFI Journey Catalog" at [my.friendshipforce.org](http://my.friendshipforce.org) for journeys with spaces available.

Have a great summer!

*Susan Finlay, Journey Coordinator*

# FFM: Brought to you by...

## President's Message

I hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful weather we are finally having. Time to get out into our gardens.

Although I was not able to attend, I have heard that the **World Friendship Day** dinner at the Norwood Hotel was a great success. What a wonderful experience for us to share this event with four clubs – Winnipeg, Brandon, Los Angeles and Manitoba. Thank you to everyone who was involved in the organization of this event.

We have activities to look forward to in the coming months:

- Our June 23 wind-up party
- Peace Gardens bus trip on July 27
- Inbound Journey from Lower Columbia, September 20-27
- 2023 outbound journey to Japan
- Opportunities to travel again – check out the new Canadian website, [friendshipforce.ca](http://friendshipforce.ca)

I would like to thank my nominating committee of Helen Whetter, Shirley Twerdun, Esther McKenty and Paul van Leeuwen who are busy phoning members to put together our list of nominees for the 2023 FFM board. Please consider volunteering as it is a rewarding experience to help our club and get involved.

Take care and enjoy the summer!

*Peggy Smith*

## New Friendship Force Canada Website

We are pleased to announce the new Friendship Force Canada website [friendshipforce.ca](http://friendshipforce.ca), which replaces Canffex.

I want to extend a huge thank you to Bill Harkness for his years of dedication as our Canffex webmaster. He designed, developed and maintained the site with efficiency, dedication and friendliness in the true spirit of Friendship Force.

Our new webmaster, Jim Kubas of FF Winnipeg, has worked diligently to design and develop our new

website; working with him is such a pleasure. His background in information technology is a huge asset as well as his knowledge as a longtime member of Friendship Force. The website is designed to clearly identify it as Canadian; it is simple and attractive, functional and user friendly with easy navigation and it's mobile ready.

The Club Profiles section provides information on every club in Canada including contact information, website and Facebook links.

In the Undersubscribed section clubs can invite members from other Canadian clubs to join their journeys.

The Ideas Corner enables clubs to share ideas, initiatives, tools, etc. At the moment it contains information and ideas shared by club members in Eastern Canada who attended a workshop on recruitment/retention and another on planning and managing an inbound journey. Clubs are encouraged to contribute to this section by sharing their ideas and tools; I look forward to receiving your input at [fffieldrepcanadawest@gmail.com](mailto:fffieldrepcanadawest@gmail.com)

*Gail Keeley, Western Canada Field Rep*

### Board Members 2022

**President:** Peggy Smith [phsmith448@gmail.com](mailto:phsmith448@gmail.com)

**Vice President:** Denise Lawson [frdelaws@mts.net](mailto:frdelaws@mts.net)

**Secretary:** Lynda Walker [lyndadawnwalker@gmail.com](mailto:lyndadawnwalker@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Thelma Sures [thelma@escape.ca](mailto:thelma@escape.ca)

### Committee Chairs and Members

**Journey Coordinator:** Susan Finlay [sufinlay@shaw.ca](mailto:sufinlay@shaw.ca), 204-339-7956

**Past President:** Gail Keeley [gailke@hotmail.ca](mailto:gailke@hotmail.ca), 204-257-9837

**Program Committee:** Lynne Foley [lynn\\_foley007@hotmail.com](mailto:lynn_foley007@hotmail.com), Dallas Bagby, Brenda Barbour, Joan Boyd, Marina Grinko, Kathy Hansell, Diane Schipper, Gail Shimonek

**Communications Committee:** Gail Keeley, Doug Jackson, Helen Norrie, Marilyn Ouimet (website), Bev Phillips (newsletter), Shirley Twerdun, Lynda Walker

**Newsletter Editor:** Bev Phillips 204-942-5453,

[phillipb@mymts.net](mailto:phillipb@mymts.net)

**Website:** Marilyn Ouimet [mouimet1@me.com](mailto:mouimet1@me.com)

**Historian:** Jacky Molyneux

**Journey Director:** Denise Lawson, Koriyama (inbound) [frdelaws@mts.net](mailto:frdelaws@mts.net)

# FFM Members on the Road



## Kayaking with the Belugas

At 6 a.m. on Wednesday, August 19, I picked up my girlfriend Lilian and off we drove to Thompson. From there we took the 15-hour train ride to Churchill. Our bucket list included “Kayaking with the Belugas” – a tour that had been prebooked for Friday the 21st. But with the weather less than ideal, our Churchill River kayaking jaunt was postponed until the 22nd, then the 23rd. The tide and currents had settled down enough by 5 p.m. on the 23rd for kayaking conditions for the least experienced of kayakers (of which I was one).

Well, folks, know that kayaking the Churchill River is like kayaking the Lake of the Woods: any breeze affects the waves and currents. The roughness of the water is the first challenge for the novice kayaker. The second is the fact that a beluga might decide to bond with your kayak. Unnerving, but not my concern. The waves and the impressive view of the river emptying into Hudson Bay was my real concern. I truly did not

want to become Sea North Tours’ first swimmer of the season. I connected with my higher power at this point. We pushed off and panic – high waves, strong currents and the sheer expanse of the river – immediately set in. Off I went, straight toward the sea wall. A guide in a Zodiac came to my rescue and instructed me on the fine art of paddling. This time I seemed to get the hang of it.



I’m feeling the tippy craft but tell myself not to do anything stupid nor in a hurry. But then, a snorting and bubbling noise behind me is followed by a gentle nudge on the rear of my kayak. Yes, indeed, a ten-foot beluga I named Ralph has decided to bond with my kayak for the entire two-hour experience! Out of 12 kayakers, my kayak was the only one enticing enough to attract a Ralph. Go figure.

My kayak and Ralph became true friends, with Ralph bumping and nudging the kayak and me concentrating on keeping the craft upright. Twice he managed to actually lift the kayak a few

inches off the water. A guide in a Zodiac came by and asked if he should chase Ralph away. I responded that his only job was to fish me out of the river should I capsize. I was teased by the other kayakers about my developing relationship, and Ralph never did stray until the water became too shallow as I paddled back to shore. All this while we were surrounded by belugas, frolicking and showcasing themselves, simply enjoying our company. The guides commented that they had “never seen the whales that active.” The belugas had welcomed us to their home.

I consider myself so fortunate to have had this truly remarkable experience and, of course, to have in some unique way gotten to know Ralph a little bit. I’m sure he’s begun his migration north by now and, in my mind, I hear him regaling his buddies with tales of this strange human he attempted to meet on the vast Churchill River.

*Gail Shimonek*



*Gail’s companion, Ralph the beluga*

# The Back Page

## FF Basics

**Membership renewals** Memberships run from January to December: **Renewing member:** \$60 / **New member:** \$60 / **Associate member:** \$30

All members are being asked to complete a membership renewal form at the time they pay their membership. Please see Vice President Denise Lawson if you have paid your membership and did not complete a renewal form. This will allow us to update our membership list. Also, contact Denise with any inquiries about membership.

**Address changes** Have you changed your address, email or phone number? Please tell our VP Denise Lawson right away so she can update our membership list.

**Club website** *friendshipforcemanitoba.org*

**Club property** If you have any items belonging to the club (books, paper records, etc.), please tell our Secretary, Lynda Walker.

**FF Canada website** *friendshipforce.ca*

**FF International** Go to **friendshipforce.org** for up-to-date information.

**FFM and Canadian Blood Services' "Partners for Life"** If you're planning to donate blood, please contact Diane Schipper at 204-257-1101 for details on our partnership with CBS.

**Newsletter** To contribute to the Keystone Klippings, contact Gail at *gailke@hotmail.ca*.



## Barbara's Hike

To my Friendship Force Friends:

Thank you, everyone. Through your support, my fund raising for Palliative Manitoba through "Barbara's Hike" surpassed my goal for the 2022 campaign! Your generosity helped me raise \$13,807.00. The Hike was held on Sunday, May 15, and we celebrated my 18th year campaigning, but especially the generosity of all the donors.

The funds raised in the Hike will enable Palliative Manitoba to help people with life-limiting illness to live each day with compassion and comfort. On behalf of Palliative Manitoba, I express thanks and appreciation for your support.

*Barbara Main*

## EDITORIAL

It's been wonderful seeing FFM members in person the last few months and enjoying the informative programs. In April, even longtime CAA members were surprised at how many services CAA offers. In May, we were reminded repeatedly that while everyone wants to see the polar bears at Churchill, they are dangerous at close range, and you have to take the right safety precautions. At World Friendship Day, we enjoyed Manitoba's preeminent pop music historian, John Einarson, sharing his knowledge and personal encounters. I look forward to the rest of this year's events!

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue and the last one, and to Gail Keeley for coordinating the content. We have a wealth of experience in our club and it's a pleasure to share it with our members.

*Bev Phillips*