

2026 Minutes

FF Southwest Florida Meeting Minutes

January 16, 2026

Present: Kim Cullinan, Jo & Jack Cooley, Mary Montagne, Joanne & Richard Collins, Diane Gooding, Bev & Dennis Haggerty, Jane McDonald, Susan Hills, Kathleen Davey, Michelle Kemps, Carol & Chris Nasby, Terese Libby, Joanne MacPeek

Guest: Wendy Fowler

1. Terese welcomed new members Kathleen Davey, Susan Hills, Suzy Riddle, Jan Murphy, Lois Hillman

2. Recitation of the Friendship Force pledge.

3. Treasurer's report:

General account: \$2016.47

Incoming: 1526.70

Outbound: 2639.70

Total: \$6182.87

4. Dues: FFSWFL dues are \$15 and can be paid by check to FFSWFL and given to Jane McDonald. FFI dues are \$100 and can be paid online. Terese reviewed how to pay FFI dues.

5. Journeys:

a. FF Baku, Azerbaijan. Inbound. November 8-13, 2025. JCs Michelle Kemps and Marcia Ellis

b. FF National Capitol, Washington DC. Inbound. February 1-7, 2026. JCs Carol Nasby, Susan Hills, Kathleen Davey. A special thank you to Kathleen Davey for sponsoring the welcome brunch.

c. FF Cornwall, UK. Outbound. May 18-25, 2026. Pre-trip Wales, UK. Post-trip Scotland, UK. JC Joanne Collins

d. FF Eastern Club of Sri Lanka. August 2026. JC Maureen Butt. Send \$100 deposit to Maureen if interested.

e. North American Regional Conference. April 24-27, 2026. Hyatt Centric Hotel, Memphis, TN. Post-trip cruise the Mississippi to New Orleans.

6. Social Events

a. Jan 17: Memorial service in Bonita Springs for Luvvy Kovacic.

b. Jan 21: 15 members are going to Mote Aquarium. Diane Gooding.

c. Feb 15: The Play That Went Wrong. 2pm Ft. Myers. Carol Nasby.

d. Feb 22: Red Sox game. Kim Cullinan.

e. Nov 2026: Inbound. A club from Indonesia

7. Terese asked club members to vote for 2027 outbound destinations.

8. Meeting was adjourned.

Terese gave a presentation on the FF Napa Sonoma Valley journey with a pre-trip at

Crater Lake National Lodge in October 2025.
Lunch: Athenian Restaurant in N. Fort Myers.
Marcia Ellis
Secretary FFSWFL

Friendship Force of Southwest Florida

General Membership Minutes

February 20, 2026

A general meeting was held at the North Fort Myers Library beginning at 10 am.

1.

Welcome New Members & Guests with Introductions

Terese Libby, president, welcomed guest Joy M. Perez from Fort Myers, who told us that her friend from Washington DC Capital Group urged her to come to our group. She is a current member of Servas US International and a retired educator. (She later completed the Membership Form, joined our local club and will join FFI once the information is given to her on how to apply on-line.)

2.

Friendship Force Pledge recited by all

3.

Treasurer's Report

Jane McDonald, treasurer reported that as of 2/20/26, the club has \$1,834 in its General Fund; \$2,586 in its Inbound Account; \$4,871 in its Outbound Account, which is currently being spent on the Cornwall, UK Journey. Recently the club wired funds to Cornwall for its 14 Ambassadors' club fees and will pay FFI its portion in March. Total is \$9,292.

4.

Update on Inbound and Outbound Journeys

- Carol Nasby, Host Coordinator, reported that we had a very successful Inbound with National Capital Club with a new venue agenda that was very well received.
- Joanne Collins, Journey Coordinator, reported that all fees as budgeted have been collected by 14 ambassadors who are going to Cornwall and everything is in motion for a great visit. This destination is in high demand and recently she was contacted by 2 Australians who wanted to go with our club. They are now on a Wait List containing 6 hopeful applicants.
- All Club Morocco Opportunity in October 11-25, 2026 – Some club members who may go and are interested are Lois Hillman, Mary Montagne and new member as of today, Joy Perez.
- Memphis April 24-27, 2026 Regional Conference – Terese is attending a strongly urges all who might have an interest to go.
- Maureen Butt, Journey Coordinator, discussed plans for Sri Lanka. We are no longer going with the New Jersey Club. We plan on 6-8 ambassadors from our club to go in October 2026. There will be a pre-trip to Singapore for 3-4 days. It is about a 3-4 hour flight from Singapore to Columbo, Sri Lanka. We expect to do the home visit with a club on the east side of the island. After that, we are looking at tours for a post trip that will include a safari to visit the elephant/jaguar park, a beach visit with optional snorkeling, a train ride to see the tea plantations and visits to historical landmarks. Tours are very inexpensive; e.g., participants should plan on a \$1,200 budget for a

6-7 day guided tour including some meals and all accommodations. She urged club members to contact her if they were interested.

5.

Membership

Terese Libby and Joanne Collins, Membership Chair, discussed the fact that we have a 55% reduction in membership this year as a result of FFI changing the fee structure to \$100 annually. We had 36 members. Now we have only 17. It is a sad state of affairs.

There was a motion from the floor, "Since the club has a small amount of money given to it in tribute of Luvvy, the membership chair, at her discretion, will offer a those who have not rejoined, a matching offset of club dues. This opportunity will be available until March 1, 2026"

Discussion occurred and Kathleen Davey suggested asking those members why they have not joined FFI. There were comments that we need to educate members on the value of the national organization and the fact that those who do not join will be suspended on March 1 and will not be able to host or go on journeys. Joanne Collins expressed that through the years our club has tried so hard to obtain and retain club members and we do not want to lose so many. Perhaps an offset in funds could help in persuading some of them to rejoin. Joanne agreed she would contribute \$100 to the fund and Terese said she also would contribute. The club currently has \$50 in the general fund from Luvvy's tribute. Eventually the motion was seconded and motion passed.

New Business

March 13 – In lieu of a meeting, we will celebrate International Friendship Force Day by having a **Pot Luck Picnic** at Lakes Regional Park, Fort Myers from noon to 2 pm. Bring an international dish to pass and your own "picnic basket" of plates, napkins and utensils.

April 15 – Trip with lunch to Solomon's Castle

7.

Presentation

Terese gave the presentation on Travel Insurance and we all went around and discussed our travel tips. The meeting adjourned at noon and a great lunch was enjoyed by some members at a little Australian café, Café YOU.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Joanne Collins

Acting Secretary for Marcia Ellis