

Volunteer Spotlight Interview



BERNIE BEATON

(Bernie is a FIN volunteer driver and has been with us for at least four or five years. His quiet demeanor, knowledge of the city and friendly disposition makes him a wonderful ambassador for FIN and the city, welcoming guests from around the world. He always has a kind word and is eager to help make the FIN Transport Team the best it can be.)

Amy: What is your “day job,” what you do when you’re not volunteering?

Bernie: I am retired! I retired in 2010. I was working with the credit union system of Nova Scotia, primarily as an analyst, which basically means you interact with credit unions, monitor them, if there’s any issues, give them advice, correct any weaknesses, give us benchmarks, follow the benchmarks, when they meet them, we go away. That bit was my role up until 2010, when I retired early. I’m now doing contract work with the same system. I help them do audits of credit unions in the province, about eith months of the year, I work about two weeks a month. It’s a nice blend. It’s sort of a dream job, because you get lots of time off and I don’t work, generally speaking, from mid-June to about the end of September. I have a lot of outdoor interests, mostly summer related. It gives me opportunity to do that.

A: And when you're not doing that, you're driving trains! That is the life, I think.

B: Well, actually, you know, that all came about through volunteering!...

A: So, how long have you been volunteering with FIN?

B: I only started three years ago, actually. It all started – I didn't do a lot of volunteering up until 3 years ago. It started with the Rotary Rib Fest. I'm not a Rotarian but I know one, and they can't possibly put that on without a lot of outside help and so she asked me if I would be able to volunteer and I said sure. I volunteered, and I thought, "I like this!" So, I started looking at other festivals and putting my name in. The Jazz Festival came up and I put my name in, then the Film Festival came up and I put my name in, and so it just kind of evolved from that.

A: Did you go to the Festival previously before volunteering, or have you just seen the Festival from the volunteer view?

B: I've got to admit I haven't been to the festival, but I have been taking advantage of the perks. I have been going, these screenings – the advance screenings, I went to the last one.

A: If you were suggesting things for someone new to the Festival, what would you suggest that they check out?

B: I think that if they can take in a gala. Unfortunately, that part isn't normally included in the perks. That definitely would be one, people would appreciate that. There's such a variety of films offered – I really enjoy the short films because it's a variety pack.... It's really rewarding to go to it [the Festival], particularly when it's here in Halifax.

A: Do you have a favourite film?

B: You know, actually one that I saw here! REMEMBER with Christopher Plummer.

A: What's the most memorable moment you've had while volunteering with FIN?

B: I had a moving experience. The moving experience was the appreciation film last year was [Gord] Downey, LONG TIME RUNNING. And, I looked around and people... [a man] was bawling, tears streaming down his

face, so emotional! I think that's what sticks out in my mind when you ask me, the emotional impact that film had on some of the volunteers.

A: What's your favourite movie snack?

B: You know what it is? Whatever I can sneak in! I'll go to Shopper's and put licorice nibs in one side and Goodies in the other.