

# Servas Canada

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*Newsletter 14 - March 2007*

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### 1. Servas International Newsletters

Servas International has both annual printed and monthly on-line newsletters. They are available on-line at [http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/Servas\\_International\\_News](http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/Servas_International_News).

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### 2. SYLE Has Come To Canada

Servas has created a unique opportunity for younger travelers to experience another culture and learn a new language through the Servas Youth Languages Experience (SYLE) program. This program is open to youth and young adults between the ages of 18-30 who would like to experience another culture, while at the same time begin to learn a new language (currently Spanish, French, English and Portuguese). The program is now going into its third year and the results have already been incredible with SYLE programs taking place in Argentina, Mexico, and Brazil.

Servas Canada host Sarena Talbot is currently attending Simon Fraser University in Vancouver. Last summer she had the opportunity to go on a SYLE to Rosario, Argentina, the hometown of Pablo Chufeni, who is the International Servas Youth Coordinator and who came up with the idea of the SYLEs.

It was an amazing experience. She lived with five different Servas hosts in the month she was there. She took free Spanish lessons with one host and became involved in different community activities as well as sightseeing around the city. She is currently in the initial

stages of organizing a similar exchange next July for a young person to spend two weeks in Vancouver and two weeks in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island to learn English. This will be the first program of its kind in Canada.

If you would like more information about becoming involved in a SYLE in Canada as either a host or a traveler, do not hesitate to contact Sarena at [sailingsarenely@hotmail.com](mailto:sailingsarenely@hotmail.com). There is also a plan to expand the project to other areas of Canada next year, so if you are interested in organizing and hosting a SYLE in your community, get in touch.

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### **3. Day Hosts**

Most of you hosts take travelers into your homes for two nights and try to spend some time with them during the day to share in your activities, show them the places you love or want to share with them or take them to local events. However, many of you have a full- or part-time job and cannot take time away from work. This is where your local day hosts can fill a need.

Take time to examine the list of hosts in your area and note the day hosts. We don't have all that many but those you find will be more than willing to meet your travelers and show them around the city or spend time with them to exchange ideas and opinions.

According to Claude Dumont of Montreal, a long-time host and day host, it is a very rewarding role and it also relieves the pressure on a busy 'night' host. Claude recommends being a Day Host to anyone who cannot accommodate travelers but wants to meet and interact with Servas friends from around the world. It is also a role that might attract your friends or acquaintances who hear about us but cannot accommodate travelers under their roof.

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### **4. Using Email For Traveling Arrangements**

While email is cheap and swift, it can create upsets and disappointments if not used thoughtfully.

As a traveller, to avoid such situations, please make sure your potential hosts know you are writing to multiple other hosts in their area, confirm that you accept their offer and let the others you have emailed know you'll not be staying to them. For hosts, if you reply in the affirmative to an emailed request from a traveler, ask them to confirm they are coming to you (and to advise other hosts they have contacted).

If you are regularly getting 'mass requests' and are uncomfortable with it, please let us know at [canada@servas.org](mailto:canada@servas.org). We will communicate with the host coordinator of the country concerned to ensure interviewers include points to respect with emailing.

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## **5. Foreign Hosts Lists Are The Property Of Servas**

For those who are planning to travel this year, please remember that all foreign host lists are the property of Servas and must be returned at the end of the trip to Sandy Yudin, our National Host List Coordinator.

These lists contain very sensitive personal information for which Servas Canada takes responsibility. Upon your return, please complete the travel report (form T5) and return all host lists with a copy of your letter of introduction and a stamped self-addressed envelope it explained at the bottom of the form. If you have any questions, please send them to [Canada@servas.org](mailto:Canada@servas.org).

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## **6. Travel Reports By Hosts Visiting Within Canada**

For the last few years, we have been encouraging Servas Canada hosts to visit other hosts. To do this, there is no requirement for a Letter of Introduction. Simply refer the potential hosts to your listing in the book.

Frans Greebe, an interviewer and host coordinator in Calgary, has pointed out that it would be really useful to have travel reports from hosts who travel within Canada. You can get the travel report form from any interviewer, or from the Servas Canada web site (<http://Canada.servas.org>). There are instructions on the form about where to mail it. Alternatively, you can simply send an email about your travels to [Canada@servas.org](mailto:Canada@servas.org).

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## **7. Culturegrams**

Did you know that in 1991 a mummified body from the Stone Age was found in the ice of the Otztal Alps on the Austrian border? Or that Austrians are reputed for their Gemütlichkeit?

You can find these and other interesting facts along with information on the geography, history, economy and population of any country by going to <http://www.countryreports.org/> and typing in the name of the country. The site also contains photos !

So there's no excuse now for arriving at your place of destination and declaring that you don't know anything about a country or its people.

Please note that this web site requires a paid subscription.

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## **8. Yorkshire Pudding Anyone? (Youth Event In England)**

As the editor knows only too well, having been born there herself, Britain has far more to

offer than her famous pudding! For those Servas members looking for an interesting place to go for their holidays this year, here's one that might just tickle your fancy.

Servas Britain and Servas Youth are hosting an International Youth and Family event to be held near Settle in Yorkshire in the north of England.

Following on from the Youth meeting in Patagonia in January 2006, this event represents an opportunity for all young travelers and hosts aged 18 to 30 to get together and to share their Servas experiences. While it is also open to other Servas members of whatever age, it will offer a special welcome to Servas families with children and teenagers worldwide. Servas members under the age of 18 are welcome if accompanied by an adult.

If you are interested, keep an eye on the Servas International newsletter site where information will be updated as it is obtained, or email Ann Greenough at [DASHER1949@aol.com](mailto:DASHER1949@aol.com).

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## **9. Youth Travel Award And Tips For Young People Traveling In Britain**

A new Servas International Youth Travel Award will be available this year to help one young person attend the Yorkshire '07 event. Applications will be accepted from Servas members worldwide (between the ages of 18 and 25 at the time of travel).

The aim is to offer sufficient resources (£1000) for a young person to participate in an international Servas event combined with a program, ideally over a few weeks, in the country or region where the event is taking place. In a small way, it is hoped that the award reflects something of the spirit of the early days in Servas where emphasis was on 'work study, travel'. Taking part in an international event, the young person will have chance to meet with other young Servas travellers and contribute ideas about how youth in Servas should develop in the future. For more information, please contact Ann Greenough at [DASHER1949@aol.com](mailto:DASHER1949@aol.com).

If you are a Servas traveler wanting to meet with other young Servas travelers and hosts in Britain, contact [L.L.Asher@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:L.L.Asher@newcastle.ac.uk). Young people who are visiting Britain for the first time can be linked with a host family before they arrive and arrange a longer stay than two nights

In the summer months there are many opportunities in Britain for young people (aged 18-25) to join a work camp where they can live and work with an international group of young people.

These camps are usually for 2 to 3 weeks and are either on social or environmental projects. There is a small fee to take part otherwise food and accommodation are all provided.

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## **10. Fancy A Summer Vacation In California? (San Diego Conference)**

If you would like to spend some time in San Diego, consider hinging it on the U.S. – Mexico – Canada tri-country meeting to be held Friday, July 20 through Sunday, July 22, 2007, at

the San Diego State University campus in San Diego.

The program includes interesting activities and workshops in support of the Servas mission, including an interviewer/key person workshop, and sessions and tables with interesting local peace and social justice groups and purposeful travelers. Other sessions will focus on open society, peace and faith interfaces, language learning and diversity, what each country's members think of the other, visa issues and freedom to travel, climate and environment, and governance models in Servas.

The organizers are also planning events for the entire family before and after the weekend conference, such as visits to Sea World, the legendary San Diego Zoo, a wine tour of the Temecula Valley, and an excursion to Tijuana or Escondido.

If you are interested, keep an eye on the US Servas web site ([www.usservas.org](http://www.usservas.org)) or contact Darleana McHenry at [dmackhenry@yahoo.com](mailto:dmackhenry@yahoo.com).

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### **11. Want To Gamble On The Best Way To See Niagara Falls?**

Most visitors to eastern Canada dream of seeing Niagara Falls. Michael Johnson, a long-time host and dedicated Servas Canada Board member living in Cambridge, Ontario, has uncovered a way to do so, and save a few dollars.

For those who want to go to Niagara by bus, check out the Casino buses. You'll find many leaving from Toronto that will cost you only a few dollars. From Cambridge, the buses leave Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays at 10:00 from a parking lot near Hwy 401 and Hwy 24, returning at 19:15. This means that you are at the Casino, just 100 m from the Falls, from noon to 17:15. Then you can do whatever you like – visit the Falls or gamble (!) - for 5 hours. The return fare is \$19, but you get \$5 in Casino chips! (If you want to redeem the chips at the Casino, you need your passport.)

Good luck, if you decide to gamble!

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### **12. Letter From A Contented Traveler – Servas Canada Offers A Warm Welcome**

Dear Servas friends,

Here is Chandra writing you, an Italian Servas activist, weaver and networker living in India. I am visiting Canada for a month of work-study-travel experiencing the old spirit of Servas.

I was very impressed by Bob (Luitweiler) who offered the Servas movement to the world as a creative system of social networking of human resources with the aim to build the foundation for a global understanding and brotherhood.

It is a great experience and I am glad to all of you, Servas members in Canada, for offering this opportunity.

I arrived in Toronto on 12th October and was welcomed by Florence and Greg Coutts. I knew them and their children from many years of correspondence. Their son Jonathan is a great traveler and writer and he is well connected through his blog ([www.prayagaworld.com](http://www.prayagaworld.com)). I found a very familiar atmosphere and I regret that I was with them for a only very short time as my flight was delayed.

On 14th October I and my friend Bailey attended The Textile Society of America's Symposium held in Toronto. Here we met Hazel Lutz, a professor at the University of Minnesota who promotes khadi, the cotton fabric loved by Mahatma Gandhi. We were delighted to also interact with Mrs. Urzamma, a textile historian working to return khadi production to Gandhi's vision of self-reliance.

I spent a few days in Ottawa with Gary, Hugh and Bruce. They are all very active and busy in their work for social transformation. I enjoyed the time with them and I am glad for the gift they gave me: a Palm Pilot to store all the addresses and encourage me in my networking activity. I appreciated my visit to the cooperative where Hugh is working. There was a guest, Jeff, talking about Fair Trade and sharing the story of Camino chocolate, distributed by La Siembra. It was inspiring to listen to their story ([www.lasiembra.com](http://www.lasiembra.com)).

I then spent a period at Coady Institute, Nova Scotia, interacting with the students and the professors of the Diploma course in Development Leadership: "Citizen Engagement in a Changing Global Context" ([www.coady.stfx.ca](http://www.coady.stfx.ca)). Unfortunately there are no Servas members in Antigonish yet but I was lucky to interact with the Indian community and to celebrate the holy festival of devali in the first Hindu Temple of North America (dated 1972).

I am now with Bailey and Kary. They came to know about Servas through me and they may become members. They are a couple of artisans, making teddy bears, rabbits and toys. Bailey has a loom and we set up a warp on it, I am enjoying cooking for them and I feel the childhood joy of a child while watching the forest covered by the snow and deer playing in it...Snow is a memory of my childhood: I am now living in India but even when I was in Italy snow was not common in Tuscany.

I was just a night in Halifax with Jane Gordon. It was a surprise to me to discover that in 1966 she lived in the same village in India where I am based ([www.gandhigram.org](http://www.gandhigram.org)). We shared our ideas on Servas. We believe in reciprocity. Travelers who are not hosts and hosts who are not travelers are losing the chance to explore the beauty of Servas. Servas is a Movement with two doors and two rooms, you can enter it as a traveler or you can enter in as a host but do not stay just in your room...open the door of the nearer room and let us break the wall which is dividing them. TRAVELLERS AND HOSTS ARE ALL SERVAS MEMBERS AND THEY CAN BE ACTIVE IN PROMOTING ITS CONCEPTS!!!

You are welcome in our community center at Gandhigram, south India.

Thanks again to all of you  
Love, Peace and Joy

Alessandra L'Abate

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## **Credits**

This edition of the Servas Canada newsletter was written and edited by Lesley Régnier and compiled by Penny Pattison, with contributions from Sarena Talbot, Frans Greebe and Alessandra L'Abate. Translation to French was provided by Jean-Guy Charland, Jean-Guy Hamel, Daniele Monfette and Lesley Régnier. Host list addresses were provided by Jim Leask. Robert Dar-Woon took care of e-mail distribution.

If you have ideas or contributions for the next Servas Canada newsletter, please forward them to [canada@servas.org](mailto:canada@servas.org).