Dear Servas Members,

2014 promises to be great for Servas Canada. Every three years, the board meets to get to know each other better and make plans for the next three years. This September, it was our pleasure to spend a few days together to create new directions and develop strategies to make these plans a reality.

We are developing new ways to help members connect. With our new Facebook page, members can exchange stories and tips. We are also hoping to encourage more local gatherings of Servas hosts and travelers; this helps us build peace closer to home.

We appreciate all our members and are looking to find ways to involve returning travelers who are not able to host.

Additionally...

In January, three new members will officially join the board and bring unique perspectives, skills and energy. They join our committed Servas Canada board who has worked diligently to make sure that Servas runs smoothly—indeed, this takes many volunteers! There are host coordinators, interviewers, host list distributors, translators, web masters, and newsletter editors. These combined efforts allow travelers to visit hosts around the world and for hosts to meet travelers from near and far away.

All the best,

Julie Dotsch,
National Secretary, Servas Canada
What’s up in Servas Canada

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YOUTH
Find us on Facebook!
Find out more about hosts in other parts of Canada and Servas events at facebook.com/ServasCanada.
KEY POSITIONS IN SERVAS CANADA

2014 BOARD

Julie Dotsch  National Secretary  oneworld@sympatico.ca
Chris Brennan  Deputy National Secretary
Alison Reid  Treasurer
Barbara Rufo  Peace Secretary
Judy Bartel  National Host Coordinator
Suzanne Stirling  Youth Contact  servascanadayouth@gmail.com
Sara Lippman Walsh
Liliana Szwarcberg

NON-BOARD POSITIONS

National Host List Coord. west  Herman Bakker
National Host List Coord. east  Marion Copleston
Newsletter Editor  Michael Johnson
Host List Data  Jim Leask
Webmaster  Alvaro Barba
Traveler Feedback Coord.  Chris Brennan
Facebook Coord.  Suzanne Stirling
Outreach Committee  Suzanne Stirling, Alison Reid and Sara Lippman Walsh
Communications Committee  Liliana Scwarcberg Martinez, Alvaro Barba, Suzanne Stirling

Frosty’s friends warned him of the risk, but in the end he decided to go ahead with the laser eye surgery.
SERVAS CANADA STRATEGIC PLAN 2014

by Julie Dotsch (on behalf of the Servas Canada board)

In September, board members came from all across Canada to create a strategic plan for the next three years. (Members who couldn’t come connected through SKYPE or sent their ideas by email.) Huddled in Julie’s living room, we looked at what our priorities would be for the next few years. Overall, we discussed how we could:

• increase involvement from more members (including returning travelers)
• improve accessibility for people signing up to join Servas
• target outreach to appropriate groups of potential members
• improve communication amongst Servas members

Here are some key points from each discussion.

Involvement

• smaller, relevant and more frequent newsletters and bulletins
• survey of hosts to gather information on how they might like to be more involved
• enhancement of our Facebook presence to encourage intercommunication
• encouragement of local host gatherings
• ensure that travelers see themselves as Servas members (e.g. encourage them to become involved upon their return)
• gather more information during traveler interviews and have automatic email when they return
• using targeted outreach, attract youth to join Servas (e.g. club days at universities)
• ensure that information about international SYLE, youth and family events are easily available
• ensure that every board member feels connected to the strategic plan and vision (e.g. every person has a role)

Communication

• communication will be more broadly developed including newsletters, website updating including visual appeal, outreach tools and encouragement to connect with others
• opportunities for host and traveler input will be sought

Outreach

• all board members will need to be part of a successful outreach plan (e.g. responsibility for posting on Facebook, having Servas promotional material at appropriate events)
• promotional materials are being created and pilot-tested at a university club day
• encourage returning travelers to share their Servas stories with their peers or on Facebook or through the newsletter
• everyone is encouraged to write a brief article about Servas for a like-minded organization’s newsletter (e.g. for a peace group)

Accessibility

• joining Servas needs to be more streamlined (e.g. access to local interviewers list)
• the website and Facebook page need to be updated frequently with accurate, visually appealing information
• when issues arise, there needs to be quick response and assistance

We are appealing to all Servas members to be part of the plan. We also encourage members to let us know what they think about it and voice any other ideas that they have for making Servas even better. Email me (oneworld@sympatico.ca) with your thoughts!
Sandy Yudin has been a corner post for Servas Canada for the past 40 years. She has served on the Servas Canada board since its inception over 30 years ago, taking on the Canadian host list coordinator and interview coordinator roles. After all her years of service, Sandy has decided to leave the board, knowing that it is in good hands with a dynamic, committed team.

The coordination of the interviewers will be taken over by Judy Bartel. The host list coordination is being done by Herman Bakker (west) and Marion Copleston (east). Sandy is relieved to finally find such excellent people to take over her tasks. Sandy will continue to answer the email questions that come through on canada@servas.org. She will also continue to be available to give support and advice as needed.

We all thank Sandy for her exceptional work for Servas, Where would we be without her?

Norm Yan (Sandy's husband) has been the board secretary for many years. He has been superb in this role. He always created the minutes right after every meeting and had the back copies of the minutes readily available. He also ensured that new board members received board policies and procedures. Norm added a non-board perspective on occasions and was very helpful. Norm is retiring from this position and will be sorely missed.

Did you know that the SYLE (Servas Youth Language Experience) program has expanded? Now, Servas members of any age can apply to any other Servas country for a one month experience to learn or enhance a new language, volunteer or learn about a special interest.

Each Servas country considers these extended SYLE requests and determines whether they can meet the request or not. Sometimes the traveler will stay in a few different homes during the month.

The host country will arrange for the learning opportunities according to the request from the traveler. Most countries are in the process of designating a person who will follow up with requests.

In Canada, Suzanne Stirling and Julie Dotsch are the contacts for this program.
Host News: Sweet Swedes Stay

by Nancy Palardy, Toronto

In June 2013, our family had the pleasure of hosting our first travellers through SERVAS. We are not strangers to hosting, having hosted many foreign language students who have come to Canada to learn English.

Through Warm showers.org, we have shared many long distance cycling stories with other cyclists. So, we were excited to meet a family of five from Sweden who stayed with us for two days during their tour of Eastern Canada and the USA. Upon their arrival, we immediately connected well.

They are an active, outdoor-loving family and so I knew that they would likely enjoy a bike ride to the Toronto Islands. Since we are an avid cycling family with our two tandem bikes, three regular bikes we were able to outfit everyone with a couple of borrowed ones! We had a wonderful afternoon showing them a unique part of Toronto. Their youngest son, Egon, loved being on the back of a tandem so much that I suspect he may force them to buy one when they return to Sweden! A great first experience with SERVAS and one we hope to have repeated many times over.
Host News: Cont’d

Servas Strikes a “Match”
by Michael Johnson, newsletter editor

Dafi, of Cambridge Ontario, interviewed Randi, who was planning to travel to Israel. Dafi, having lived most of her life in Israel, gave Randi a lot of tips and suggested hosts.

Coincidentally, a few months later I met Randi in Ottawa at her friend, Paola’s home. Paola, a Servas member, was hosting me. I reminded Randi that we wanted to hear about her Israel trip.

Soon after, Dafi and I invited her to lunch at our house, where I introduced her to my friend Lou [left], a Servas traveller in the past. Lou and Randi “hit it off” and are very happy together. At dinner at Lou’s house this year, they serenaded me with their own personal version of “Matchmaker.”

Host Steps Down

Unfortunately, at 88 years of age I find my strength dwindling – I am not the man I was. My wife is not with me, having died 9 years ago. So although a ‘Servas’ man at heart, my body is giving me problems. But I hope to make it back For the 70th anniversary of my D-Day landing site next year, as a DUKW [amphibious vehicle] driver with the British Armed Forces.

—Deepest regards, Alister.

A message from Joan Winwood

I have been a Servas member since 1988, and hosted many here in Calgary. I also was a traveller to Mexico City and the U.K.

After my partner Alf retired last summer, we made plans to spend our winter [their summer] downunder. Alf, originally from Sydney, Australia, misses his country and family very much. We headed down in November with a plan to purchase a little apartment along the coast south of Sydney.

Our second host in Australia was Anne from Tura Beach and while staying there we found a 2-bedroom apartment in Merimbula, a lovely coastal tourist town of 6,000. As often is the experience, Anne has become a good friend and once the deal was established, she took me to a couple of garage sales to start our “furnishings.” All of it stayed in her garage while we left to see family over Xmas in New York.

We got possession Feb. 1st. Our friend Anne helped us again to move in. Since we hope to be Aussie residents almost half the year, we became hosts in Australia as well as Canada. While waiting to get possession, we toured Tasmania & stayed with 5 hosts who were just amazing and hospitable.

Servas helped us develop beautiful friendships. We are looking forward to returning the favour when downunder again.

—In peace, Joan Winwood & Alf Smith.
Servas Spring Meeting

By Lucie Garneau

An invitation was sent to Servas members of Quebec region for a spring meeting on March 9th 2013. Eight people answered the invitation + a little one, Milan, 4 months, who came with his parents. He would not have wanted to miss snowshoe hikes around the Jean Larose River in Mount Saint-Anne, more precisely to St-Ferréol-les-Neiges.

Lucie Garneau welcomed us at her home, helping us discover her place, like she does for her Servas travelers. A small sugar bush party followed the hike. A community dinner completed the lively meeting during which we told our experiences as hosts and also as travelers.

The group made the most of this time together to express interesting ideas to help hosting travelers in our region. Not having missed a word of our conversations, Milan took advantage of the moment to close the meeting with a promise to renew this nice experience in August!

Barbara Rufo Joins Servas Canada Board

I lived for a long time in France, and have now lived in Montreal for almost 15 years (with a stay in Mali). I work as a psychosociologist in a Co-op where I accompany non-profit organizations and social economy businesses. I am involved in the fight against poverty and the defense of rights and I am interested in the social and political issues of the world. With my lover, we have been Servas members for 5 years and we like reading, travelling and enjoying good food in good company and to chat, laugh, dance and change the world (with my accordion)!

Recipe for a beautiful tradition you can copy!

Choose a date way in advance, find a Servas member who can host the group, inform all the Servas members of the same region, wait until they confirm (eventually you can follow up by phone) and put on a meeting.

On the day chosen, all those who will have confirmed you their presence will arrive with a dish to be shared. Then, chat in small groups “who are you?”, “did you enjoy the salad?”, “did you read the last article about the African Central Republic?”, etc. This way we learn to know each other, Servas members of a same region.

When everybody is fed: we gather in a group and each one tells his Servas adventures of the year (as host or traveler). It often brings back to our memory how Servas is unique and extraordinary and we leave the place saying: “see you next year!”

Montreal - December, 2013

La Belle Province
Host Meetings

London-Waterloo Area Meets in Stratford Ontario

By Art & Danette Webster, Host Coordinators

Thanks to Carolyn & John Jenkins for hosting the Kitchener-London 2013 Fall Servas Potluck. [Our region usually meets in May and October annually.] A total of about 34 of us shared stories and some great food. Thanks to John for leading a group around the beautiful, swan-filled lake, right on their property in the middle of Stratford, Ontario. The National Host Coordinator asked if Danette & I could also look after the Niagara Peninsula and the Windsor area. We have accepted – a total of five households.

Learning Massage

Korean visitors illustrate their techniques to their host Dafi.

London-Waterloo Area Meets in Cambridge

Our spring 2013 host meeting, held at Michael and Dafi’s house, included a visit to Langdon Hall, Ontario’s best restaurant.
Victoria meeting

Debbie Craig and Eric Koob

Thanks to you for hosting the Servas get together last Sunday. As we have only been hosts a short time it was our first experience with a group of hosts and it was wonderful.

We’ve included a photo of one of our favourite [Servas travel] memories. The woman standing near Eric was our host, with her sister and their mother. It is their tradition to have the hosted persons be dressed in her parents wedding kimonos (it took more than an hour) and then take a photo of them. When we were leaving they gave us each an ‘every day kimono’ that had belonged to the parents. What amazing people we have met through Servas, in foreign lands and now, because of your kindness, close to home. Please remember us if you are ever in need of shelter – we are in Mill Bay.

Youth News:

By Suzanne Stirling

Find us on Facebook! Find out more about hosts in other parts of Canada and Servas events at facebook.com/ServasCanada.

We are looking for hosts for a Servas Youth Language Exchange participant! We have a girl from Italy who would like to come to Canada to work on her English.

Also, are you a young person who would like to spend some time learning another language abroad? Contact servascanadayouth@gmail.com for more information.
While I have been a Servas host for many years, rural Manitoba doesn’t get many visitors, so I haven’t been very involved in Servas until joining the Canada Board in 2013. I’ve seen the number of Servas guests here drop from few to very few, and have looked to other organizations such as Hospitality Club, Warm Showers, and Friendship Force to fill my cross-cultural communication needs. Since becoming National Host Coordinator, I have talked to hosts across the country, and I hear many people echoing my need to feel more connected to Servas, so I thought I would share some of these with you.

Here are some of the suggestions I’ve heard:

**Share your visitors:** When friends had guests from Germany last summer, they brought them to a large gathering of our mutual friends and we had a wonderful time. That’s also a great way to introduce Servas to your friends!

**Enrich your non-Servas travel by contacting local hosts and inviting them to dinner.** At a host potluck in Victoria this summer, one couple who are newer members of Servas reported that they connect with Servas hosts when they do Home Exchanges, by inviting local hosts for meals and gatherings. Penny says “they raved about how much it enhanced their stays!” An added benefit—Servas Denmark, which they visited last year, told them that it strengthened their organization by bringing together Danish hosts who had never met each other. We experienced something similar in Brandon—a Servas member from Brazil visited Brandon with the Friendship Force club. When she got here, she immediately looked through the Servas host list, and at our welcome party, inquired of the first people she talked to whether they knew anyone on the Servas list. Imagine her surprise when she was told, “Judy is just in the next room”.

**Relieve the pressure on host coordinators by volunteering to host an event.** Potlucks are great—it’s really as simple as sending out the invitations and cleaning your house. For apartment dwellers who haven’t got the space to host an event, choose a restaurant or quiet lounge and invite Servas members. If your local host coordinator doesn’t have a contact list that you can quickly and easily paste into an email, I can provide it.

For some people, a *yearly gathering* is enough, but I’m hearing from others that they’d like more contact. One person suggested a regular monthly gathering in a local restaurant or bar. You wouldn’t necessarily go every time, but if 2 or 3 people show up, you’ve got a gathering!

**Invite Canadian Servas travelers to your meetings.** Beginning in the new year, we will be sharing the contact information of travelers who may not also be hosts with the host coordinators in your region, so they can also be invited and feel more a part of the organization. They’ll be a great addition to your gathering, with fresh traveler stories to share.

Servas gatherings are great places to meet like-minded people, share your thoughts on travel, peace, and other topics of interest, share travel and hosting tips and cross-cultural knowledge, and learn about places you haven’t visited yet.

**The Servas Canada Board would like to hear from you** and we’d like to share your experiences with others through the Servas Canada newsletter. Have you had an interesting gathering? An interesting hosting experience? An interesting travel experience? Tips for hosting an event? Great ideas on how to make Servas better? Send your thoughts, pictures and ideas to me. If you’d like to share but don’t like to write, talk to me, and I’ll write your story or include your thoughts in future articles. Thank you.

—Judy Bartel.
Just Do It

By Michael Johnson, news editor, Cambridge, ON

“We don’t get enough travellers.”

I knew whining wasn’t bringing me any more, so I contacted some Servas friends with whom I thought I would enjoy being for a few weeks. Initially the dozen or so who “committed” to coming, shrank as unexpected events happened, including two couples who discovered later that they were to become grandparents in September 2013, the exact time of my planned Tour of a Lifetime.

Because Marisa from Uruguay had to teach in September, I arranged a two-week July tour for her. In September we started out with 5 members; two stayed for only a few days. But I went on with Cintia Amor, the Argentine tango dancer [who is a professor and psychologist by day] and Californian entrepreneur Julie Monaco.

If you want travellers, invite them. If you can’t tour yourself, you could contact some hosts to arrange a good itinerary. I made a presentation with photos of some of the highlights, from the Ottawa changing of the guard, to whale-watching in Quebec, in order to entice travellers to choose my trip over other wonderful destinations they might be planning. I suggest you write at least a year ahead as people need to plan vacations in advance.

I’ll let the photos tell the rest of the story.
Julie M. & Cintia A., Kingston hosts, Colleen & Gerry, Fort Henry guard at the start of 3-week September Tour. Below ladies near USA border.

Right: Dafi sari shops in "Little India" Toronto. Below: Pyramids discovered in Vermont.

Haskell Library, Quebec, is half in Canada, half in USA.

^ With two Quebec area hosts. v Exploring the Diefenbunker.
International News:

Where next for Servas?

By Ann Greenhough, Vice President Servas International and Jean Seymour, National Secretary Servas Britain

A Servas event is to take place from 16th to 23rd June 2014 at the Dalesbridge Centre in the Yorkshire Dales, UK, the same venue used for the 2007 Servas Youth meeting. This will be a joint venture between Servas International and Servas Britain.

It will be a chance for Servas friends, old and new, to enjoy time together whilst also thinking about where we go next as an organization.

In the year before the next international GA, it will be an informal meeting with no motions, votes or decisions. Instead there will be time and space to explore and debate important issues about the future of Servas:

What makes Servas special?
What projects would promote Servas as having ‘added value’ as an organisation?
How are SOL [Servas online] and the new website looking following their expected launch in 2014?
What still needs to be done?
What issues would benefit from imaginative and workable proposals at the next GA?

Not everyone who is interested in contributing will be able to come so we plan an on-site internet link to include a wider group in our discussions.

The Dalesbridge Centre offers potential for a small or larger group to come together. There is a range of comfortable low-cost accommodation, including camping.

Alongside workshops there will be a social and cultural program. Set in the Yorkshire Dales there is easy access to beautiful walking and outdoor activities at all levels. In the second part of the week a series of more challenging walks is planned in the nearby Lake District National Park.

Following the meeting Servas hosts will welcome travellers wanting to explore more of the north of England. If there is sufficient interest there is also the possibility of an extended walk for a small group, along one of the region’s long-distance paths.

The event will be largely self-funding or through sponsorship by national groups, with the possibility of an application to the Development Fund to encourage a diversity of participants.

We would welcome expressions of interest from anyone who would like to attend. Then we can decide on the scale of the meeting.

So let us know at vicepresident@servas.org if you would be interested in joining the event.

Give us your ideas for contributions to the programme.

Note: If you can’t attend we also want to hear from anyone via skype during the discussions.

Servas Africa Area Meeting

Saturday, November 15 2014 - 08:00
To Monday, November 17 2014 - 17:00

Following the experience and success of the previous Africa Regional Meetings, this is the opportunity to increase the development, interaction and communication within the area, regardless of which part of the world you come from. The interaction of different people and cultures worldwide is one of our goals.

International participants can fly direct to Johannesburg, South Africa if this is the cheapest, (often it is) and then come to Botswana by bus. There are also direct overnight and all-day buses from Windhoek - Namibia, Lusaka-Zambia and Harare - Zimbabwe to Gaborone- Botswana. We will soon be sharing the venue and agenda for the African Regional Meeting. It will be an excellent moment to increase our synergy and outreach. More information will be provided through various channels:

You may contact: Moses Kigozi, Servas Africa Area Coordinator africa@servas.org.
Financial appeal:

We hope that 2014 can be a time of increased interest in Servas with our mission of fostering peace through hospitable exchanges. The Servas Canada Board would like to reach out to Canadian residents, especially young people, through a more vibrant website, Facebook page and booths at post-secondary schools. Some of these activities will take volunteer effort, and some need money.

Can you help us? Please donate to Servas Canada! We are not a registered charity, but our Board works hard to use your donations effectively.

Send your cheques to our treasurer: Alison Reid at Box 20889, Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 6P1. Thank you so much and happy 2014!

JANES, Dorothy “D.J.”
(Long-time Toronto Servas interviewer)


Over the years Dorothy’s varied careers included law librarian and nurse at Toronto’s Don Jail. She was very active as a volunteer for World University Service of Canada; Rose Avenue P.S. and a member of the Quakers. Dorothy acquired a BA, BLS (Library Science), and an RN. She liked tai chi and was a cat lover, swimmer, bicyclist, square dancer, reader, knitter and traveller. In 2010, Dorothy was the oldest performer in the play The Best Sex I’ve Ever Had presented at the U of Toronto, and she also performed it in Germany.

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