Name This Newsletter

By Editor, Michael Johnson, Cambridge, ON

Years ago I chose the bilingually-understood title “Bulletin” for the Servas Canada Newsletter. If you have a better one, please tell us and win a prize. Canada’s National Secretary [Nat Sec], Michael Silbert, is offering a copy of either of Rita Golden Gelman’s travel books - so “Name This Newsletter” and win.

When I became Nat Sec in 1986 there was no newsletter editor, treasurer or Board. When I wrote my first newsletter I got two letters [yes, in my mail box, before email]. One letter said essentially, “Who has time to read all this.” The other person wrote: “We want more details please.”

In an effort to please both readers, this newsletter will have a synopsis or lead-in to each article to please those in a hurry, plus details in a smaller font. I encourage all hosts to at least read the large print. According to the article on page 5, most of us can only see large print.

...
What’s inside?

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Have Your Say

We would love to hear about your travels, your visitors etc. Please...

1. Include your contact information, but unless you request it, nothing but your name and city will be published. Remember this is a newsletter that can be seen by the general public.
2. Include a photo of yourself that we may reproduce. Email it as an “attachment,” not a “photo,” to retain HIGH resolution. This applies to any photos you submit.
3. Do not include any personal information of those mentioned in the article, first names only unless those mentioned agree to more being published.
4. If you want others to contact you, you might set up a new email address with g-mail, hotmail, etc. to protect your personal email address.
5. We reserve the right to edit, take excerpts and correct your words, and crop your photos.
6. We look at everything we receive, but not all will be printed. Items may be held for a future issue.
7. PROOFREAD and send text as a file in MSWord, etc. Send photos as jpgs if possible.

This is YOUR newsletter. Please send items to: canada@servas.org.

SI Newsletter

Please read the Servas International Newsletter from this summer, if you haven’t. I had the honour to do that issue, normally handled by Ally from Argentina.

My Servas visitors and hosts from 2009 appear on pages 18 and 19 of that issue.

Please go to www.servas.org, click on SI July 2010 Newsletter and click it again.

This is Ally Tessarolo, SI News editor. Look for her next issue later this year.
Currently hosts can’t update their host listing online, BUT they will soon be able to access the whole Canada host list online.

**Question:**
Laura Jackson from St. John’s writes...
Can I update my national host directory entry by email? (I go away for considerable periods of time, now and then, and am afraid I may miss the next official updating request.)

**Answer:**
Unfortunately, Laura, the answer for the moment is “no”. Servas Canada acts as a trustee for the personal information that you provide for your host listing. Since you have entrusted us with your personal information, it is our responsibility to do our best to protect it. As such, we try to strike a balance between security and ease of access.

By making the new Servas Canada host list available online, we have embarked on a change that could ultimately lead to allowing you to update your own host listing whenever a change is necessary. This will only happen when there is a system in place that maintains the security of the information you have entrusted to us while allowing for improved ease of access.

**Coming soon:**
Access the Canada host list online

This year, Servas Canada hosts and Servas Canada travellers who are travelling within Canada will be able, for the first time, to access the 2011 host list by going to a secure website. The address for this website will be provided to you once the system has been set up. All of your communications on this website are automatically encrypted for security reasons which will be confirmed, in most cases, by a lock appearing next to the address bar or in the lower right-hand corner of the window.

In the window you will be asked to enter the security key that you will be given. The key is just a combination of letters and number like a password. This key will be unique for each authorized host or traveller. This allows us to create a record of who has had access to the host list as well as when. This will provide us with the ability to assist members who encounter difficulty in accessing the host list.

Once you have entered your security key correctly, you will be taken directly to the most up-to-date version of the Servas Canada host list. Stay tuned for the system to be activated.

**Why do this now?**

First, over 98% of Servas Canada hosts have active email addresses, so almost all hosts have access to the worldwide web.

Second, the security issues that were a concern in the past have now been addressed. While there are likely thousands of old Servas Canada printed host lists that were not properly destroyed or that are still hanging around members' homes, electronic files can be easily deleted.

Third, host lists have always been updated once a year due to the costs. With a single location for accessing the most recent Servas Canada host list, we can update host information more frequently than before.

Fourth, since the number of printed host lists will be significantly reduced, there will be fairly significant cost savings that could be used to underwrite other valuable projects.

Finally, looking at the demographics of the various other “host/traveller” groups that have sprung up with the advent of the Internet, Servas has a significantly older membership and is the only group — of which I am aware — that is not operating on the Internet (although the majority of member countries have moved away from being print-based). Whether this is “cause and effect” or just “coincidence” is an open question.

• • •
National Host Coordinator 
REPORT

By Michele Doctoroff

Thanks Host Coordinators for your work and thanks to hosts for updating.

One of the tasks in the newly created role of National Host Coordinator is to communicate with and support our 27 local host coordinators. As such, I have created a comprehensive manual outlining tasks and responsibilities. Through this collaborative process, I feel that I know each of these committed volunteers a bit better now. Many have been doing their jobs for countless years, and their commitment to their host group is commendable. Servas isn’t just a group of members, but truly a community of friends. Thank you so much to all of you, for your ongoing work, time and effort.

HOST BOOK UPDATE

I (as well as your host coordinator) thank all hosts for their prompt replies in updating their listings for the 2011 host book. It is a huge process to update all listings so your reply makes a big difference in supporting the volunteers who have to compile all the data and chase down those who do not reply.

I would love to hear from you if you have any ideas about the host list book, or want to be involved.
—in peace, Michele Doctoroff, National Host Coordinator

I ♥ Servas

By Maggie Flostrand, host

Great visitors but wish younger people were more interested.

We have been Servas hosts on northern Vancouver Island for about 15 years. We have also been travellers and almost always enjoyed our Servas experiences.

We would like to see more young people getting involved with the organization. While talking with the few younger visitors two of them said they prefer the less formal organization of Couchsurfers, even though one of them had had a difficult situation arising from a visit. I certainly would not want my daughter travelling that way and value the way Servas is set up. We have felt some younger members are more “on the take” for free accommodation.

This year we had three Servas visits:

One visit from a Canadian couple who are Servas hosts who live on Saltspring Island in B.C. We were hosted by them about 5 years ago, they are now good friends as so often happens.

One visit from two delightful and very musical Canadian sisters from the south end of the island.

One visit from a German Servas traveler presently living in the USA.

We look forward to more Servas visitors in the future, thank you for all that you do for the organization.

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Travellers from China

Their interviewer was 3,000 km. away.

This past summer, a number of Canadian hosts opened their doors to welcome Xiaoshan “Sylvia” and her husband, Chao, into their homes. Sylvia comes from Zhejiang province in the southeast of China, her husband comes from Heilongjiang province in the northeast of China.

They were classmates at Harbin Institute of Technology. While Sylvia works for Proctor & Gamble (China) her husband is a visiting scholar at Ryerson University in Toronto, investigating geothermal energy. While Canadian hosts/travelers have to sometimes go some distance for interviews, one needs to look at this from a global perspective.

China currently has 21 hosts in a population of roughly 1.35 billion people and the person responsible for interviewing Sylvia was over 3,000 km. away!

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Warm up this Winter: Visit Servas Overseas

My good friend Amir took this photo Jan. 20, 2011 in Haifa, Israel. Does his winter look inviting?
In an article last year in the Toronto Star, Arthur Frommer, the dean of budget travel authors classified Servas as an organization suited for older people seeking free hospitality.

“Servas has been in existence since 1948 and has a mainly mature membership; the more-recently founded Couchsurfing caters to a more youthful set.”

That led me to wonder, how true was Frommer’s claim?

I took the 2010 Servas Canada host list and did a tally of the ages of all Canadian hosts. What follows is a series of questions and answers about the findings.

The median age for hosts is 61 years old. This means that half of our hosts are 61 or older.

In the first quartile are our youngest hosts – under 52. Thus ¾ of hosts are 52 years old; half at least 61 years old. It is interesting to note that one quarter of all hosts are in a narrow age band from 61 to 67.

Almost all of the other travel-cultural-exchange groups have sprung up with the arrival of the Internet and have attracted a large number of much younger people. This may explain why, within Servas on a worldwide basis, it seems to be very difficult to find volunteers who can do Servas work on the Internet.

If new Servas key people need technical know-how, we may need to focus our attentions on developing new leadership from amongst those younger hosts if we are to continue to flourish in the future.

The information may encourage discussion and debate to keep our organization vital and help us face the future with our eyes wide open. Feel free to share your thoughts and observations with all of us. Email: canada@servas.org.

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Mean = mid-point. With most Servas hosts over 60, we can be called a seniors’ travel group. Here is a detailed report...
London/Waterloo Host Coordinator Change

Carl & Roseann Branston replaced by hosts Art & Danette as regional host coordinators.

For many years, Carl and Roseann have done a wonderful job of bringing local hosts together and have welcomed travellers and hosts from neighbouring regions. They have arranged for Art and Danette of Cambridge [below] to take over their role.

Thanks to the dedication of Carl and Rosann, hosts in the region have been getting together twice a year for a variety of different activities, to share experiences and to learn from one another.

Because the Branstons email AND PHONE hosts, they are in good contact with everyone, which shows by the big turnouts and enthusiasm for each of the two meetings per year.

Calgary Annual Get-Together

The Southern Alberta Servas annual potluck.

Calgary hosts look forward to the invitation from our host coordinator Frans, and this year we graciously thank Kirsten who generously offered to host the evening on Sunday September 26.

With the table most eloquently set we indulged on fresh salad, Thai curried shrimp, rice casserole, chicken wings, and a fruit truffle. It was lovely sharing stories of memorable summer visits, reminiscing about past Servas experiences, learning about some new Servas initiatives reported by Michele who had just returned from a Servas Board meeting in Ontario, and just relaxing with friends. What was evident at our gathering was the diverse age range, with long-time members and new members. We did miss the presence of some of our members. Come join us in future meetings.

Host Happenings in Canada

London/Waterloo Host Meeting

By Host Coords. Carl & Roseann Branston

Udderly Delightful Farm Tour & Dinner

Our potluck get together was really successful with about 30 attending. Marilyn [shown here] along with her sister Catherine, a new host, co-hosted the event at Catherine’s dairy farm near Fergus, ON.

Catherine’s husband, Pat [see photo] let members "lend a hand" at the chores. There was an art tour nearby. The hosts provided BBQ beef for all attending. Members brought delicious salads and desserts.

We had a “business” discussion and shared information, travel tales and Michael J. challenged everyone with travel trivia questions, giving DVDs of inspiring movies, like Invictus, as prizes.

Our hosts had Servas travellers from Italy, Germany, France, Israel, England & Sweden.

Editor’s Note: At this meeting, members we were asked how many travellers we had hosted. My total was 16 overnight Servas visitors from three continents over a 9-month period. Only one person was a stranger on arrival.

What was your total in 2010?

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Host Happenings continued...

Teen visits Quebec for a Month in 4 Homes

By Rebecca Crispin

I am 15-year-old Rebecca. In July I went on a 5-week exchange to homes in Quebec.

I wanted to learn more about the Quebec culture and language. I stayed at four different Servas homes for about one week each.

I transferred between homes by bus or by host family. I was surprised at how much English my host families knew. They know more English than we know French.

For the first week I stayed with Charlaine in Saint-Foy. Charlaine’s house is only a ten minute bus ride from “Old Quebec” so we walked around and she explained things to us. While I was with Charlaine we also went camping, to the aquarium, the Festival d’été, and saw a French movie.

The next ten days I spent living with Blanche in La Patrie. At first it was hard to switch families because I didn’t know what my new one would be like but after a few hours everything softened up and I wasn’t as shy. In the first place I didn’t understand much French but after hearing the language I could understand parts of what people were saying. I learned more about the language part of the culture in my stay at Blanche’s house. With Blanche I made a keepsake box, painted bowls, a dream catcher, went to the beach and horseback riding. They live in a rural area (similar to my home) south of the St. Lawrence River.

After that, I lived with Véronique for ten days. Vaudreuil-Dorion is approximately a twenty-minute drive from Montréal so we did many activities in Montréal. I never knew that Montréal was actually an island and that it was built for defence purposes a very long time ago. In my stay with Véronique we went to old Montréal, La Ronde with roller coasters and saw an art display, the Cosmodome, Labyrinthe du hangar 16, helped out at a summer camp.

For the last seven days I stayed with Emma in Joliette. One of the places they took me to was Val-Jalbert in Lac Saint-Jean to tour the abandoned paper mill. There I learned that they used the river to send logs back to the mill instead of using horses. I also went to a party, and tried Indian food.

On August 6th two of my host partners returned to Ontario for a week and we went camping, water skiing, and canoeing. We saw Niagara Falls, in Toronto toured the CN Tower, went to the Science Centre and north of Toronto toured the Scenic Caves.

This exchange was a great experience and I learned a lot about the French-Canadian culture and the language.

Thanks to Servas I had an experience of a lifetime.

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Note: Longer stays are sometimes possible, especially with hosts who list the symbols “Fam” or “Long Stay.”

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Hosts you can rely on?

By Pablo Colangelo, Servas Internat. Host List Coordinator, hostlistcoordinator “at” servas.org

The GA* asked EXCO to set up a testing system to correct a growing unreliability of Host Lists in certain countries.

*GA=General Assembly of Servas countries

This system would be operated by telephone by the "Host List Coordinator" or a person from outside EXCO. It would consist of confirming the validity of the "status data" of a random sample of the Hosts of each country.

The Host list of each country could thus be checked at least once every two years.

The results of this testing would be communicated to all national groups. It would be up to the "unreliable" countries to correct their Host List as soon as they are informed of its unreliability.

Next Steps

We all would like to know whether your country has a reliable list or not, so we may have new 2011 host lists available as soon as possible.

So I will be working in 2011 giving support to countries without updated host lists and also national groups, (countries not members of the GA), in cooperation to the Development Committee in order to get those countries closer to be proposed for membership status in 2012.

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Soul of Servas: 1 Book 2 Reviews

By Michele Doctoroff, Calgary, AB

Michele recommends “the autobiographical narrative of a woman who, at age 48 and on the verge of a divorce, looked around and thought: there has to be more than one way to do life.”

When you open up a book and the chapter is titled “My Favorite Organization Ever”, and it states... “Being a part of Servas is like having family all over the world. It’s actually better than family. People join Servas because they want you to visit them when you are in their country. Not always the case with family.” ... you feel you just have to share this with your Servas family.

Rita Golden Gelman is the author of Female Nomad and Friends. The book is a compilation of short stories written by women who have travelled and have interesting experiences to share. Interwoven in this compilation are enticing recipes which will draw you away from your reading and into the kitchen to try them out. As you learn about these women you will be touched by their honesty and appreciate their openness, even if you don’t always agree with their approaches, which I found at least for me made the book even more interesting. You may have heard about Rita as she is first a writer of children’s stories. She has previously written Tales of a Female Nomad, in which she brings us into her world of travel and reaching out to people. She is truly a unique woman, and has captured the essence and soul of Servas so eloquently.

Tales of a Female Nomad: Living at Large in the World, by Rita Golden Gelman, was first published in 2001. An excerpt: I first realized that something was missing about five years ago when a woman wearing a floor-length muumuu and sandals sat next to me on an airplane. She told me she was in the business of booking sailing tours for captains around the world and was returning from the Mediterranean, the Adriatic and the Gulf of Mexico. As she was telling me about her trip, tears started streaming down my cheeks.

“I’m sorry”, I said, embarrassed. “I don’t know where that came from.” I wiped my eyes. But I did know. I was crying for my lost spirit.

Gelman’s second book, Female Nomad and Friends: Tales of Breaking Free and Breaking Bread Around the World, 2010. In this sequel, Gelman continues her life narrative with stories of the surprises, experiences and connections that have arisen as a result of living a nomadic life.

To quote from the introduction: Some stories here will make you laugh out loud, and others will bring tears to your eyes. They offer rapture and rape, the bizarre and the beautiful, insensitivity and tenderness. The stories are alive and pulsing. I hope that they will inspire you to break free, break rules, take risks, and take off. Happy journey...
Servas & Other Groups

By Florencio Gomez, Servas Venezuela

Including travellers, Servas has 20,000 members worldwide. Couchsurfers: 100 times more.

The following excerpt is from an article in a Venezuelan newspaper reporting on four of the major host/traveller programmes available.

The journalist said that SERVAS is the most formal as each host or traveler needs a personal interview. She also said that the success of Couchsurfing has been its simplicity through use of internet which enables travelers to arrange stays all over the world in just a few minutes.

AFS Intercultural Programs offers one-year exchange program for youth between the ages of 15 and 18. This program is the oldest of the programs and was founded in 1914, is established in 56 countries and has 100,000 volunteers and an enrolment of 10,000 students. www.afs.org.

SERVAS offers stays of 2 days duration and longer programs especially for youth. Servas hosts can be found in 130 counties with approximately 14,000 members in total. SERVAS, founded in 1949, was the first program with short-stays and has served as an inspiration for the other short-stay programs that followed. www.servas.org.

Hospitality Club was founded in the year 2000 and it has 326,629 members in 207 countries. It also works on the basis of 2-3 days exchanges. www.hospitalityclub.org.

Couchsurfing was founded in 2004 and is the largest short-stay program of its type with over 2,000,000 members in 238 countries and roughly 73,500 cities. www.couchsurfing.org.

Servas in the News, continued...

How is your Memory?

Do you know about the beginning of Servas in Canada?

They say if you can remember the 1960s, you weren’t there. Michael Johnson, believes Servas Canada started in 1960 and was called “Peace Builders”, but our archives placed in Ottawa by Duncan Meikle have proven to be elusive. If you can help please write to: canada@servas.org.

Did you Know?

• 328 Canada members officially travelled to other countries in 2009. [We don't have a number for Canada host-to-host visits.]
• Our busiest interviewers were Sylvia K. in AB and Claude L. in QC.
• There were more travellers from QC than any other province.

Servas Milestones...

Newsletters, since 2000, can be read at: http://canada.servas.org/newsletters.htm or in French: http://canada.servas.org/bulletins.htm

Former Nat Sec Michael Johnson notes these highlights from past newsletters:

1984: On the interviewer list were: Charlotte Burgess, Ed Blackmore, Jim Morgan and Sandy Yudin, still volunteering – 27 years later!
1985: Extended Stay was added to the host list, but a notation of hosts especially adapted for accepting people with disabilities was not.
1986: Monthly host dinners at a restaurant began in Toronto.
1987: New Nat Sec [from 1986] Michael J, made these changes:
• the host list was computerized
• host list distributor and treasurer added to a proposed Board.
• Canada starts to donate 3% of its income to a worthy cause.
1988: Volunteer Coordinator recruited - first to find a news editor.
1989: The Servas Canada Board was officially formed and met in Montreal, except treasurer Loy Tan, who gave birth days later.
• The Servas International conference was held in Montreal.
• Symbols: Fam (families) and Y (youth) added to host lists.
1990: 30-page Canada Newsletter for first time also in French.
• Sandy Yudin agreed to distribute foreign host lists. And still does!
• A complaints system and a phone warning system formed.
1992: SI stamp fee increased from 5 to 15 Swiss francs [about Cdn$13] - Canada fees goes from 40/50 to $50 person, $70 family.
1998: After 16 years, fee rise to $70, an annual increase of 2%.
Iceland:

Hosts, Hennie Marsh and Graydon Doolittle of Kingston, Ontario recommend Iceland.

We visited Iceland a couple of years ago and in our opinion it remains one the most beautiful places on earth. The tourist board is trying to get tourists back after the huge economic collapse (good for travelers as the kronor is devalued) and the recent volcanic eruptions. So go soon! If you like spectacular scenery, clean air, pure water, little traffic, friendly people and little crime, it's the place for you. Have a look at this 3-minute promo: www.inspiredbyiceland.is/iceland-video.

Thailand:

Canadians in Thailand: strangers become friends.

Last winter, when Sheena and Redmond (Victoria, BC) were in Thailand, they learned that another Canadian host couple would be spending the winter there. Even though they'd never met, Pat and John (Hanover, ON), contacted them before their trip and made arrangements to get together. Pat wrote:

Sheena has invited us to travel (3-hour ferry ride) to the secluded area where they are off Phuket. We have accepted and will join them for a couple of days. SERVAS is wonderful - as we all know!

Uganda

Uganda Youth Meeting in Africa confirmed

Servas Youth and AAM Kampala/Entebbe Uganda 30 July to 6 August 2011. If interested, write to Area coordinator, Sheldon: gudrun "at" info.bw

Joy of GPS in Europe:

By Michele Doctoroff, Calgary, AB

Should we add GPS coordinates to host listings?

One of our Calgary hosts recently travelled with his family to Europe, and was interested to find many hotels, hostels and restaurants included GPS coordinates along with their address, in their advertising. He found this very helpful in navigating with his rental car and GPS. This led to his thinking that it would be a courtesy to Servas travelers visiting Canada, if they were provided with the GPS listing of their hosts, alongside the address.

While in well laid out cities a GPS listing may not be as critical, he does see a particular benefit for rural hosts whose addresses may be a little more ambiguous.

To learn more about this, or for a free Google Earth download go to http://www.google.com/earth/index.html. If you can locate your residence on Google Earth, you will also see the exact GPS coordinates (latitude and longitude). If you have any further thoughts on this idea, or any other thoughts you would like to share please forward them to canada@servas.org.
During two wonderful trips I met many friendly locals, but contacted few Servas hosts due to the outdated list.

This is only my second trip to India. Last year I traveled to the north part of India, the states of: Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. This year I went to the south, the states of: Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala.

I was preparing for both trips for a long time. I knew where I wanted to be but mostly I wished to meet Servas hosts. I had the newest host list ahead of time and wrote to about ten people via email before each trip. Last year I got only one reply but he wasn't available those dates. Some without email, I phoned and when I spoke with women they said I should speak with their husbands. I understand the culture of referring to the men but I do not understand why they say “call again when you are here” and “we shall see”. Also a host with an email address should at least reply.

A great host from Coimbatore Karnataka helped me, although we never met. He warmly invited me and wrote back with suggestions and helpful advice. Sadly, my schedule changed so I didn’t arrive to his city.

My trips to India were wonderful and I met lots of nice welcoming locals. But the only Servas member was a day host, “LV” in Bangalore. He took me to see his city, to shop for a sari, to taste the wonderful delicious food in a local restaurant and the great food he cooks at home. I met all his nice family and left with a good Servas feeling.

Photos:
Top right: Dafi buying spices in Fort Kochi, Kerala, Jan. 2011.
SI EXCO Meeting in Victoria, Canada – who we are and what we discussed

By Gary Sealey, SI President

When you join Servas Canada you become part of a world-wide network of about 15,000 Servas Hosts and 10,000 Travelers. The international aspect of Servas has always interested me – since I volunteered as representative to the UN in 1992. Day to day administration of the Servas network of exchange among country groups — management of Traveler’ Stamps, financial planning and controls, the Servas Peace programme and Host List coordination are supervised by the Servas International Executive Committee of six persons elected for a three-year term. You can see much more about SIEXCO and the inner workings of Servas International at: http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/Main_Page.

The current committee comes from: Canada, [me and Penny Pattison the General Secretary]; Argentina, Pablo Colangelo, Host List Coordinator; Italy, Luisa Cobetta, Peace Secretary; Poland, Miroslaw Wasilewski, Treasurer; and India, Pramod Kumar, Vice President.

Finding convenient times to hold two-hour teleconference meetings once or twice a month over such distant time zones is not easy. We lived from the Far West of Victoria to the Far East of Delhi! Despite big distances separating committee members, information constantly flows by email, unlike sixty years ago, when all coordination was by letter or at annual meetings.

As you can imagine, official expectations and understandings sometimes need personal explanation. Even though we all use modern apparatus, we Committee members live quite different lives in very different cultures. Part of our meeting dealt with our own personal outlooks and styles – what you would expect of a Servas meeting!

At our meeting in Victoria 10-16 November, 2010 we also covered administrative essentials, of course: the Budget (it seems Servas operational revenues may be reduced by the global recession); Host Lists (a major “reliability project” is being completed, to identify and follow up weaknesses); the Servas Online project updates and options; Servas as a Peace-builder; Servas Outreach to communities, and Servas policies on respectful communications.

We discussed the registration of Servas as a non-government organization. Although Servas is more than sixty years old, the international Servas network has never been incorporated. Indeed, Switzerland, the legal seat till now of Servas, requires very little documentation from volunteer groups, which is in some ways an advantage; but it leaves Servas with very little to show to potential donors, new prospective groups or to government, on who we are and what we do.

With the re-emergence of post-Soviet nations, and following the “War on Terrorism,” governments and UN bodies are calling for more documentation and controls. Some countries, like Canada, have established modern laws governing non-government organizations including non-profits and charities.

But tradition requires respect. How to travel forward without risking awkward stumbles is the goal of everyone working for global Peace and Friendship.

• • •
Hosting the SI Executive on Vancouver Island

By Penny Pattison, General Secretary, Servas International [Past Nat Sec of Servas Canada]

The six persons in the Servas International Executive Committee (EXCO) live all around the world – in Italy, Poland, India, Argentina and Canada. We meet frequently by telephone, but there are some things you really need to discuss and deal with in person. In analyzing the cost, because of the great hosts here and the fact that our house is big enough to meet in, Victoria won as the location for the 2010 face-to-face EXCO meeting!

We found hosts close to us to house all EXCO members. And the catering at the house went smoothly – people ate breakfast at their host’s and we had lunch at our home. The evening meals included a complete turkey dinner with all the trimmings produced by my husband Chris and a fine spread put on by Gary’s host, Ted. Other days we did takeout, including a delicious Indian feast on the last day chosen by Pramod, and also attended by the EXCO hosts.

EXCO met for 5 days – with a weekend in the middle as a bit of a break! The discussions were wide ranging and productive – and we came away with renewed energy to push forward on the decisions made at the General Assembly. You can find the 22 page minutes at: http://www.servas.org/siexco/index.php/Exco_Materials#EXCO_meeting_minutes.

Unfortunately, Luisa, the SI Peace Secretary, could not attend at the last moment for medical reasons. Canada’s Peace Secretary, Sylvia K., was in Victoria, and attended much of the meeting for Luisa (with whom we had a brief discussion via Skype!)

We all met Vancouver Island Servas members on the Friday evening. On the Saturday, we packed the five of us into my car and did a bit of sightseeing up the island, culminating in a dinner in Comox with Servas members there. Sunday was a day off, allowing EXCO to spend time with their hosts, or just rest!

I was pleased that I had volunteered to host the meeting. Sure, there were endless details to deal with, but one of the best parts of the meeting was that it was a Servas experience as well as a business meeting. And Chris and I reinforced our friendship with, and respect for, the EXCO team – including the ever-present Servas experience of discussing cultural similarities and differences.

The renewed energy that we feel, having working together in person, reinforces why we volunteer the many hours for Servas – because it is an organization that we truly believe in!

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Exco members travelled far to attend this meeting in BC. In front is Penny and Chris’ dog, Riley.
Don Fawcett

My personal friend Don Fawcett, a long-time key person in Servas USA, suffered a heart attack and died on Feb. 15th, 2010. I first hosted Don in Toronto when he was SI President, en route to Montreal to preside over the 1989 SI Conference. He later hosted me in Los Angeles after I attended a July 2007 Canada-USA-Mexico Servas meeting. This photo is of Don showing me Greystone: “a popular filming location” in LA.

Don’s wife, Aleyne wrote me:

Don was an art director and creative director at a number of legendary ad agencies and wrote for Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. However his 35 year involvement with US Servas was what made him the most proud.

The people he hosted, interviewed and visited contributed to a very rich 84 years of life.

Having served as Captain of the Military Tribunal Guard at the Nuremberg War Crimes trials, he had a small private burial with full military honors at Riverside National Cemetery.

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Long-time Interviewer

Dorothy Bloore, born 1927, died 25 Dec. 2010, surrounded by her family.

I have had the pleasure of knowing Dorothy for many years. She interviewed for Servas in Toronto for decades, which she did well – interviewing for companies was her paid profession.

Dorothy hosted some great Servas meetings with a large canoe hanging in the living room of her “bohemian” house in the Beach, in south-east Toronto. Later she moved to a condo.

Dorothy really enjoyed life and we shared a great laugh once when I mistakenly posted her obituary over ten years ago in the Servas Canada newsletter after reading that her ex-husband’s second wife, also Dorothy Bloore, had died. She then quoted Mark Twain: “Reports of my demise are greatly exaggerated.” Unfortunately this time, the report is true.

I spoke to Dorothy’s daughter [Jan. 3, 2011] who told me that her mother really enjoyed Servas and travelling.

She was unique and we’ll miss her. Many Servas travelers got their introduction to and passport for, Servas from this fine lady.

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Norine Gavin

Hamilton, ON host, Norine, April 11, 2010, after a lengthy illness, wife for 45 years of Marty Galvin. Much loved by her family, based mostly in Ontario.

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Ariana Kosok

Kari Kosok, Past Nat Sec of Servas USA, whom I have known for over two decades and flew in his plane, grieves the loss of his daughter Ariana, 18 years old. She died in September, 2010.

• • •

James Patterson

Our thoughts are with a very good friend of many years, Claudia P. of Brazil, a past SI Exco member. Her husband, James battled cancer, treated on two continents, until his death October 27, 2010.

My wife [2nd from left] and I visited them twice in the summer of 2009 when James [left] was in Detroit for treatment. During this time, James helped work on a vaccine against pancreatic cancer, by donating tissues and finding a mathematical model for it. Donation of his corneas gave two persons their sight. What a gift. What a man.

• • •

Remembering Lorna Brown

by Michele Doctoroff, Calgary

Lorna Brown died in Victoria, BC on Jan 11, 2011. Lorna and I worked closely together as Servas interviewers in Calgary for many years. [She later hosted, with her daughter Lynn, for a few years in BC, after moving there in 1999.] She was a lovely hostess, always having the Servas gatherings in her Calgary home, and taking pride in her beautiful garden. I admired her sense of adventure, going off on her own camping in her wonderful VW Westfalia. I enjoyed working with her, and, like many hosts, I was so sorry to hear of her passing. In her obituary, it was touching that they mentioned she was a Servas member.

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Great Danes

By David Parker, Edmonton, AB

I was in Copenhagen last December for the climate change conference and staying with a wonderful SERVAS couple named Gregers & Elizabeth.

Left: Elizabeth in their kitchen.

Right: A placard of a very prominent vegan advocacy organization that was at the conference. I am vegan myself and was very well accommodated by my hosts.

Fast Foul Food?

Ruth, from Ottawa, has a recipe...

“A favourite around our place is something we call ‘salsa chicken’.

Take a package of chicken breasts and place them in a glass baking dish or on a glass pie plate, depending on the number of pieces. Cover the chicken breasts with salsa, place in a preheated 375° F oven to bake. After 35 minutes, sprinkle grated cheddar cheese over the chicken and return to the oven for about 5 minutes or until cheese is melted. Remove and serve.

Ruth continues by saying, “The chicken, cooked this way, is quite moist. If you have any leftover chicken, it is wonderful in sandwiches and in salads.”

Mingle!

by Michael Johnson

Why limit yourself to one host meeting?

My wife Dafi and I [left in photo below] attend meetings wherever we travel.

Photo: Michael Silbert [blue shirt] is among the Hamilton, ON members at the 2010 host meeting.

Canada Board Met, Sept. 2010

Michael Silbert, Servas Canada’s National Secretary, and all the Servas Canada Board met in September 2010, hosted by Julie in Ennismore, ON. Expect a full report in our next issue.

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