

Servas Canada

Newsletter 9 - March 2004

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Sincerely,

Any host receiving questionable requests from Servas travellers is encouraged to contact the Servas Canada Board.

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One good example relates to bathing. In some parts of the world, water is in very short supply, and so water use needs to be minimized. In cold climates, the North American habit of daily showers may be considered excessive. In hot climates, one a day may not be enough!

Bottom line - read the introductory information in the host list, be considerate and culturally sensitive. Even if you think you know, check with your host!

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Following her recent travels, Doris Maron offers this open letter to Servas members:

Dear Servas members,

In June 2003 I traveled through Pakistan and met the National Secretary, Muhammad Naseem and his family. I stayed with the Naseem family for about six days and was treated wonderfully. Mr. Naseem took the time to introduce me to several Servas families who were all very gracious. Many of them invited me for dinner and some requested that I come stay with them a day or two. I would have needed a couple of months to fulfill all the invitations.

I must say that the people of Pakistan are the most hospitable people I've met so far on my trip around the world. I'm not just referring to Servas hosts, but also the general population. Everywhere I went I was offered Chai (tea) or a cold drink. Even when people didn't understand me they tried hard to help.

Since Pakistan I have traveled through Iran, Turkey, Greece, Slovenia, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Lithuania. In Turkey I stayed with a wonderful young host named Tugrul. He made me feel very welcomed and also introduced me to other Servas hosts. It was great to be in the company of some wonderful young people.

I would like to say THANK YOU to all the people I've met through Servas and tell you how much I appreciate your generosity.

*With best wishes,
Doris Maron, Canada*

4. Travelling to popular areas

This information is taken from a note from Jo Verwimp, the Area Coordinator in Europe:

In the past, hosts in Greece received (too) many requests, and as a consequence, they stopped hosting with Servas. The list became invalid, until I updated it.

Now the host in a remote village [became] "bombarbed with faxes at all hours of day (or night sometimes). Since it is impossible to [host] them all here, we would like to choose among them, which means they should write a letter and/or send a copy of their Letter of Introduction. No fax, please write."

Would you also tell travellers about the situation in those very touristy areas - not only Greece, but also towns like Rome or London: inform the host about yourself, "sell yourself", well before; don't expect to meet hosts there.

5. Email Buddies

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As a trial, the Servas Canada Board has agreed to try out a 'buddy system' for those hosts who do not have email addresses registered with Servas. The intent is to 'buddy up' hosts without email with hosts who do have email. The host who does have email, and ideally who lives close to the non-email host, would print a copy of the Servas Canada newsletter or bulletin, and arrange to get it to the non-email host. Details would be left up to the two 'buddied' hosts.

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Servas Canada and Servas Germany are initiating a special program to allow youth who are 14 - 17 years of age to travel unaccompanied by adults and stay in Servas homes. Negotiations are underway with Spain, France, Austria, and the USA. In the near future, the program may be extended to other countries.

All unaccompanied youth will need to be interviewed and oriented separately as travelers to determine suitability and ensure safety. Parents of youth are responsible for arranging contact with every host that their child will stay with, for arranging a schedule of host visits and for being available by phone or e-mail during the entire time of the youth's travel. They also must sign a liability waiver for Servas and the hosting family. The hosting family must agree to take care to know the whereabouts of their Servas youth visitor at all times, to have a schedule of the youth's visits for the entire trip and to take every safety precaution reasonably possible. This is an exciting opportunity for youth to be in safe environments learning about other cultures including languages, ways of life, beliefs and customs.

Servas Germany has agreed to all the requirements laid out. Servas Canada hosts are asked to consider accepting a youth into their home, and to encourage their children to visit Servas homes. It is anticipated that youth would stay in hosts for longer visits.

For more information about this exciting initiative, contact your local interviewer, National Secretary or Julie Dotsch, Youth Coordinator.

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Michael Johnson, past National Secretary added: "Sorry to hear of Tom's passing. He DID keep all the Servas Canada host data for several years. He would always send me a copy of

the list on disk so we were never stuck in case his computer crashed, etc. Tom never complained, nor did he ever fail to get the list done on time. He took over from [the former list editor who had provided] corrupted [computer] data, so Tom had to re-enter the entire list. He was always willing to sort the data, and make labels for me for mailings to specific groups, such as all the interviewers, and he would make mailing labels for host coordinators too. We recognized Tom and published a photo in the Canada news a few year ago, of him receiving a gift from Servas, presented by a nearby host."

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Servas International News appears once a year. The tasks of the editor are:

- Collecting, selecting and editing copy and illustrations
- Layout in a form a commercial printer can work with
- Contacting and working with the printer
- Sending of SI News to the member countries
- Correspondence with readers and contributors

Requirements are a good command of the English language and ability to use a layout program. The present team has two editors and a layout person. The new editor is free to change the style of the newsletter. The majority of the work is from the deadline, December 15th, to February or March when SI News is put into the post. Office and travel costs are compensated.

For more information, contact canada@servas.org.

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Hello everyone! On behalf of the contributors and translators, I thank you for taking some time out from your day to read the latest news and views from your fellow Servas members in Canada.

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Web site: www.canada.servas.org

Email: canada@servas.org

Servas Canada Board:

Penny Pattison - National Secretary

Benny Beattie - Asst National Secretary

Elizabeth Sebestyen - Treasurer

Sandy Yudin - Host List Coordinator

Lesley Regnier - Peace Secretary

Julie Dotsch - Youth Coordinator

Michael Johnson - past National Secretary

Sylvia Krogh - past Asst National Secretary

Carole Bayard - Francophone Liaison

Robert Dar-Woon - Newsletter Editor

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Some hosts do not want their email address published in the host list, and that option has been built into the database. There are also hosts who do not use email at all, and we

definitely respect their decision.

As a trial, the Servas Canada Board has agreed to try out a 'buddy system' for those hosts who do not have email addresses registered with Servas. The intent is to 'buddy up' hosts without email with hosts who do have email. The host who does have email, and ideally who lives close to the non-email host, would print a copy of the Servas Canada newsletter or bulletin, and arrange to get it to the non-email host. Details would be left up to the two 'buddied' hosts.

Anyone wishing to volunteer as an email-enabled buddy should contact his or her host coordinator. Later this year, we will be extracting from the database a list of all hosts without email addresses, and will work with the host coordinators to set up the 'buddies'.

This edition of the newsletter is being printed and mailed to hosts that do not have email addresses. We hope to migrate to an electronic delivery of newsletters and notices, with the assistance of email buddies.

6. Youth Travellers

For years, Servas International has been trying to build its programs for youth. Servas hosts are gradually aging, and traveler numbers are down. The urgency of ensuring that Servas continues to thrive and grow makes building initiatives for youth vital to the organization. In many European countries, there are Servas youth work camps, cycling trips, forums and projects. Servas Canada is looking for youth interested in developing some projects and ways to connect with other youth both inside Canada and abroad.

Servas Canada and Servas Germany are initiating a special program to allow youth who are 14 - 17 years of age to travel unaccompanied by adults and stay in Servas homes. Negotiations are underway with Spain, France, Austria, and the USA. In the near future, the program may be extended to other countries.

All unaccompanied youth will need to be interviewed and oriented separately as travelers to determine suitability and ensure safety. Parents of youth are responsible for arranging contact with every host that their child will stay with, for arranging a schedule of host visits and for being available by phone or e-mail during the entire time of the youth's travel. They also must sign a liability waiver for Servas and the hosting family. The hosting family must agree to take care to know the whereabouts of their Servas youth visitor at all times, to have a schedule of the youth's visits for the entire trip and to take every safety precaution reasonably possible. This is an exciting opportunity for youth to be in safe environments learning about other cultures including languages, ways of life, beliefs and customs.

Servas Germany has agreed to all the requirements laid out. Servas Canada hosts are asked to consider accepting a youth into their home, and to encourage their children to visit Servas homes. It is anticipated that youth would stay in hosts for longer visits.

For more information about this exciting initiative, contact your local interviewer, National

Secretary or Julie Dotsch, Youth Coordinator.

7. Obituary for Tom Brigham, long time Servas Canada host list editor

Tom Brigham, the Canadian National Host List Co-coordinator for many years, passed away this past summer in a single person auto accident. Many hosts knew him as the man who sent us little pieces of paper each year, as part of his host list updating process.

David Ross, Host Coordinator in New Brunswick wrote: "He ♦ seemed to single-handedly do the national list each year."

Michael Johnson, past National Secretary added: "Sorry to hear of Tom's passing. He DID keep all the Servas Canada host data for several years. He would always send me a copy of the list on disk so we were never stuck in case his computer crashed, etc. Tom never complained, nor did he ever fail to get the list done on time. He took over from [the former list editor who had provided] corrupted [computer] data, so Tom had to re-enter the entire list. He was always willing to sort the data, and make labels for me for mailings to specific groups, such as all the interviewers, and he would make mailing labels for host coordinators too. We recognized Tom and published a photo in the Canada news a few year ago, of him receiving a gift from Servas, presented by a nearby host."

8. Servas International Newsletter Editor Needed

As stated in the last SI News, the job of editor will be handed over to a new enthusiastic Servas member at the international conference in Spain. This challenging position requires dedication and hard work, offering in exchange much satisfaction.

Servas International News appears once a year. The tasks of the editor are:

- Collecting, selecting and editing copy and illustrations
- Layout in a form a commercial printer can work with
- Contacting and working with the printer
- Sending of SI News to the member countries
- Correspondence with readers and contributors

Requirements are a good command of the English language and ability to use a layout program. The present team has two editors and a layout person. The new editor is free to change the style of the newsletter. The majority of the work is from the deadline, December 15th, to February or March when SI News is put into the post. Office and travel costs are compensated.

For more information, contact canada@servas.org.

9. New Newsletter Editor - Robert Dar-Woon

Hello everyone! On behalf of the contributors and translators, I thank you for taking some time out from your day to read the latest news and views from your fellow Servas members in Canada.

I was introduced to Servas in 1991 when one of my neighbours learned that I would be visiting the UK and France with my community band. He and his family had hosted many Servas families over the years, which explained the constant stream of visitors to his house every summer who stayed just a few days before leaving!

I have many fond memories meeting Servas hosts and their families, including a bright lad in Wales who demonstrated to me how to melt aluminium in his homemade furnace, a host in France for whom I was the initial Servas visitor, and a wide-eyed student in the ESL class taught by my Hong Kong host. I have enjoyed welcoming to my home Servas members from France, Italy, Switzerland, Holland and Hungary.

Feel free to send me questions and comments related to the newsletter. I certainly welcome submissions for future newsletters!

10. How to contact Servas Canada

Web site: www.canada.servas.org

Email: canada@servas.org

Servas Canada Board:

Penny Pattison - National Secretary

Benny Beattie - Asst National Secretary

Elizabeth Sebestyen - Treasurer

Sandy Yudin - Host List Coordinator

Lesley Regnier - Peace Secretary

Julie Dotsch - Youth Coordinator

Michael Johnson - past National Secretary

Sylvia Krogh - past Asst National Secretary

Carole Bayard - Francophone Liaison

Robert Dar-Woon - Newsletter Editor

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