



NEWSLETTER

Servas South America

June 2005

number 1

Editor: Pedro Puente R.
Ovington.

English translation: Susan

EDITORIAL

With great enthusiasm we present our first regional Servas newsletter. We are convinced of the importance of having a medium of communication through which we can give information, share our opinions and to make known the individual or collective work that is being done.

Our South American Newsletter is intended as a tool for integration and development of Servas in South America. And although its first goal is to be an information channel, we hope it will also make Servas members and national groups feel closer and better represented.

It is evident that we are not all at the same level of development, nor has there been sustained growth in South America. We are the reflection of what is happening on a world scale in Servas. We know the causes; they have been analyzed and discussed. But, many people have stopped at the point of evaluation and complaints and don't know much about the successes achieved and the actions taken to reverse the situation. Through this medium we can make known the individual and collective work of members or groups of members who, instead of complaining, are taking action. With the motto, "action, not complaints" they are working for the development of Servas in our region and making achievements to show to our community.

Our objective is to make known all the good things that are being done, to share our personal experiences, to support each other, in order to respond together to the needs of a world which is becoming more and more insensible and individualistic. It is in this context that institutions like Servas are needed and the people involved are called upon more than ever to expand their

frontiers. Above all, those directing the organization must teach by example, since only that way can they transmit and spread the principles of peace and friendship among all human beings. We are aware that it is a long term project. This bulletin is a part of the task and now we have started.

I am grateful for the collaboration which I have received, which has made possible this publication and will enable us to make it better. I apologize for the fact that because of space we have not been able to publish everything that we have received.

Pedro Puente

SERVAS NEEDS MORE CONTACTS BETWEEN HOSTS AND TRAVELERS

In general terms, we can say that the number of Servas members has not grown in recent years. On the world scale, the number of travelers, which was once around 10,000 a year, has in the past few years stayed at an average of 6,000. The number of hosts, or rather the number of host addresses (since there is usually more than one person per address) should be around 10,000. We feel that we need more travelers, since we know that many hosts (mainly those who live in more remote areas) have hardly any requests.

In South America we estimate that in 2004, around 300 travelers visited the approximately 700 South American host families. And around 100 South American travelers (the majority from Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay) visited Servas hosts in their travels within and outside of this continent.

In order to grow we need to have more travelers. South America has the potential of approving many more than 100 Servas travelers per year. For this, national groups need to be thinking of ways of better publicizing Servas. To do this we need to create a workable structure of volunteers to

interview and provide orientation to interested people.

And if we want to receive more than 300 visitors a year, we must try to promote South America within the Servas universe. This bulletin is a step in the direction of increasing our visibility and making ourselves known.

Roberto Borenstein
Area Coordinator, South America

NATIONAL GROUPS ASK FOR EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Executive Committee (Exco) confirmed this month the plans for a Servas General Assembly from April 2 through 8, 2006, in Italy. According to Exco this Assembly, initially scheduled for Frankfurt in January, 2006, was postponed so that there would be more time to work out the agenda.

The Assembly will meet at the request of 29 national groups, that is 37% of the 79 national groups which at present have the right to vote. According to the Servas by-laws, an Extraordinary General Assembly must take place if more than 20% of the established national groups ask for it.

The reasons given by the countries requesting the Assembly are multiple: changes in the by-laws, revisions of the minutes of the 2004 Assembly, revision of past financial records, ethical questions, election of members for work committees of Servas International, etc.

The following national groups asked for the Extraordinary Assembly General to be called: Hong Kong, Brazil, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, France, Germany, USA, Pakistan, Peru, Poland, Turkey, Uganda, Singapore, Italy, Croatia, Guatemala, Uzbekistan, Israel, Morocco, Portugal, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Mauritius, Iceland, Russia, Honduras, Rumania, South Korea and Malawi.

New Zealand and Chile abstained.

The following national groups considered that the Extraordinary General Assembly was

not necessary: Spain, Argentina, South Africa, India, Belgium, Luxemburg, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Japan, China, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, Samoa, Nepal, Netherlands, Denmark, Botswana, Ireland, Austria, Venezuela, Estonia and Paraguay.

The following national groups did not give an opinion: Lithuania, Panama, Switzerland, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Gambia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Malaysia, Mexico, Dutch Antilles, Nigeria, Senegal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Surinam, Thailand, Togo, Uruguay, 9-Aug-05 Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The web site www.siexco.org gives more information about the organization of the General Assembly, as well as information about all the activities coordinated by EXCO. This is an important source of information, and it is accessible to all members.

On the web site www.servasforum.org one can participate in the discussions about the organization of the General Assembly. From South America, we note the active participation of Pablo Chufeni (from Argentina), Fernando Ugarte (from Peru) and Gaston Lux (from Chile) in the discussions. Servas International invites all the National Secretaries and other members to participate in the discussions and in the elaboration of suggested topics for the Assembly agenda.

ELECTION OF NEW AREA COORDINATOR FOR SOUTH AMERICA

Roberto Borenstein is the fourth South American Servas Coordinator

From the 70's to the beginning of the 90's the coordination was in the hands of Jorge Zopollo; from the 90's to 2001 the coordinator was Marisa Contini, and from 2001 to 2004 the job was done by Anita Kalbermann, all members of Servas Uruguay.

In this case there were 3 candidates: Fanny Belo, National Secretary of Venezuela, Mauricio Rivera, National Secretary of

Colombia, and Roberto Borenstein, Regional Coordinator of San Paolo, Brazil.

Because of some faults in planning and organization, the election was marked by an atmosphere of chaos and of conflicting opinions about the established rules. By the deadline established for the closing of the election (October 31, 2004) only 4 countries had sent their votes: Brazil, Chile, Peru and Uruguay. EXCO then decided to prolong the voting period until December 14, 2004, by which time Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay sent in their votes.

By the new deadline date, 7 national groups had submitted their votes: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay. The final result was 7 votes in favor of Roberto Borenstein. Since their National Secretaries were candidates, Servas Colombia and Servas Venezuela did not vote (criterion established by the former coordinator A. Kalbermann). Ecuador did not vote, because Servas is not yet established in that country.

Roberto Borenstein took the job of coordination of South America with much enthusiasm. Roberto has been a member of Servas since 1985, when he was living in Haifa, Israel. Enthusiastic about the aims of this organization, he signed up initially as a traveler. At that time he had very positive experiences visiting hosts in Israel who lived in small towns that he had not visited. Later, he took a year-long trip through Europe. The experiences he had during his travels ended up influencing him in an important way, not only in his way of traveling but also in his way of life.

Roberto returned to Sao Paolo in 1987, and started collaborating with the coordinators of Servas Brazil. Then he was made Deputy, a natural step. In 1991, he took on the job of National Secretary of Servas Brazil, and served until he went to live in Chicago, USA. He became a host in Chicago and did some work with the coordinator of the state of Illinois. He returned to Brazil in 2000 and took the post of Regional Coordinator of the state of Sao Paolo in 2002. Finally, the 15th of December, 2004, he was elected Area Coordinator for South America.

LET'S NOT CONFUSE PACIFISM WITH PASSIVITY

In the first 6 months in his job, Roberto has tried to understand the potential of Servas in each of the countries and also to understand their deficiencies. His aim has been to make his coordination work transparent, so that communication (at all levels) is always valued. It is essential that we communicate adequately. This informative newsletter is a step in that direction. Roberto hopes that, in addition to being a means of communication, the newsletter functions also as a channel for discussion, for interchange and increased closeness between South American national groups.

Contributions from members will always be encouraged. Also contributions of articles for the newsletter, and participation as volunteers. There is much to be done in Servas. Let's not confuse pacifism with passivity. Each member who wishes to collaborate by taking on a specific task in South America is welcome. Please contact us as: southamerica@servas.org.

NEWS FROM ARGENTINA

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH MEETING IN BARILOCHE (JANUARY 2006)

At the Barcelona Conference, Servas Youth was created with Pablo Chufeni from Rosario, Argentina as one of the coordinators. (pablochufeni@yahoo.com.ar).

Servas Youth, together with Servas Argentina, is organizing this meeting in Bariloche in January, 2006. The meeting will last for a week, from the 14th - 21st Jan, and will cost US \$230. This will include transport costs from Buenos Aires, all meals (4 per day), workshops, lodging in huts or tents, and total access to the facilities and Servas activities that will be organized. However, if someone wishes to come to Bariloche independently the cost is US \$160.

There will be three types of activities directly related to Servas Youth.

1. Matters of future development, concrete actions already developed and the action plans, design of possible

- activities, the projects that have already been developed, and other topics.
2. There will also be a set of activities focused on tourist attractions of the region.
 3. Recreational and social activities.

It will be a real Servas feast. We will mix together, work hard and have the opportunity to live and experience being together in the spirit of Servas. We will be sharing our time in a place of incredible beauty, Patagonia.

Youth is not defined by age, but by the spirit.

SERVAS GROUP IN ROSARIO IS A PIONEER IN THE YOUTH EXCHANGE PROJECT

SERVAS YOUTH, under the coordinator Pablo Chufeni, created a language exchange program for young people from adjoining countries with different languages. The pilot project was developed in the month of May with great success, when the Servas group from Rosario (Argentina) hosted a Brazilian girl for an intensive cultural and social program, which included Spanish classes and classes in an art institute. As a next step, Servas Youth plans to export this idea to other cities and other countries.

DETAILS OF THE PROJECT

Activity: exchange of young people for language study between adjoining countries with different languages.

Organized by: Pablo Chufeni, International Youth Coordinator

Collaborators: Servas Rosario (Argentina), Cesar Baron (Servas Brazil) and the Foundation for Arts and Culture (Argentina).

Pilot project: Nayara Nehring Prado Santos (18), from the city of Curitiba, Brazil, went to the city of Rosario, Argentina for one month with the aim of studying Spanish.

Description:

Growth of an idea: In the year 2003 Servas South America announced a literary

competition of articles related to the role of Servas. Pablo Chufeni (Argentina) applied and won first place. As the winner, he attended the South American youth meeting that was held in Montevideo (Uruguay). Later he went to Santa Teresa (Uruguay) where activities were held for three days. In this setting Pablo Chufeni met Camile Costa from Sao Paulo (Brazil) who had taken a Spanish course in Chile. From this came the idea of using Servas as a platform for youth exchange for language study.

Evolution of the Program: Upon his return to Rosario, Pablo Chufeni started working on coordinating efforts to develop this activity without involving any money. The idea was that the person who travels need not pay anything other than transportation and that those who participate in the program as teachers or tutors do not ask for any pay. This was the first problem, but the aim to have the program at no cost was maintained.

At the Barcelona conference '04, Pablo Chufeni got to know Cesar Baron, and discussed with him ideas for developing the program. Brazil was to be the country sending, and Argentine the country receiving.

This program was included among the activities foreseen for SERVAS YOUTH in other parts of the world. Servas Rosario, a dynamic, active group, functions as the core of the project. After long negotiations the Rosario Foundation for Art and Culture granted Pablo Chufeni a complete scholarship, so that the beneficiary of the program can take classes in theater arts.

Development of the activity: Pablo Chufeni coordinated the dates and the resources of Servas Rosario, the roles of the hosts and language teachers, the scholarship from the Rosario Foundation for Art and Culture, and other matters. Pablo made up an agenda of activities which he sent to Cesar Baron once Servas Brazil had identified the young student, Nayara Santos from the city of Curitiba, Brazil. They jointly approved the agenda.

Nayara arrived in Rosario from Buenos Aires on May 2. Pablo Chufeni and Soledad Segovia went to the airport and took her to a

welcome party at the home of Marta Pilnick, organized by Catalina and Leonardo Horny. The party was a barbeque, the most typical meal of Argentina, and served as a way for Nayara to meet all the Servas members who for a month would be her hosts, as well as her teachers.

During the first week, Nayara stayed in the home of Pablo Chufeni, who provided her with a cell phone. The program was organized in four sections, each with respective classes. All the classes were held weekly and each lasted one and a half hours. The sections were:

- A) Language: Spanish Grammar class (Prof. Celeste Avendano), Spanish conversation (Pablo Grassi) and oral comprehension (Soledad Segovia).
- B) Arts: Classes in Tango, Theater, Singing, Dance and Stage production. All the artistic studies were carried out in the Estudio de Comedias Musicales, in the "El Circulo" Theater of Rosario, under the supervision of Pablo Chufeni.
- C) Social: Theater going in Rosario (Catalina Horny), getting to know the city (Maria Jimena Zaeta).
- D) Special events: Welcome barbeque (Catalina and Leo Horny), boat trip to the islands, trip to Oliveros.

The program also specifies that the visitor should bring material from his/her country and city of origin and instruct the hosts about his or her country.

Note: It is necessary to emphasize that all this activity is carried out with no financial aid from any Servas delegation, either at a national, regional or international level.

WORDS FROM THE ORGANIZER OF THE PROGRAM

Greetings. I am Pablo Chufeni and I work on developing SERVAS YOUTH. This program got started at the Latin American Youth meeting which Servas South America

organized through Anita Kalbermann from Uruguay. Then the work continued in Barcelona at the International Conference, and finally it was put into effect last May. It is a little baby which has just been born; for me it was a labor of much dedication and a lot of time, sustained by the belief that Servas is full of potential waiting to be used and it's a chance to really collaborate actively in constructing a culture for peace and understanding among people. I need to point out the invaluable collaboration of the folks of Servas Rosario, a group of friends and a work group who allowed me to develop this idea and made it theirs.

To work with the group from Servas Rosario is to work at a good rhythm, sharing responsibilities and at the same time laughter, joy and energy which comes from the mutual enjoyment that the members find in spending time together working out an idea. My thanks to them, for each of my great friends in Servas Rosario.

WORDS FROM THE TRAVELER

My name is Nayara, I am from Curitiba, Brazil and I am participating in a youth exchange program set up by SERVAS YOUTH with Servas Rosario. I arrived here on the second of May and I stayed until the first of June. In this period I had various activities, in part donated by Servas members.

The group of Servas members here in Rosario is really together. I was hosted for a short time in each house, and I was very well received in all of them. I am taking grammar classes with Celeste and conversation with Pablo Grasso, and I am understanding Spanish well. Pablo Chufeni got me a complete scholarship at the El Circulo Theater, where I am taking classes in tango, theater, singing, jazz and stage management, with excellent teachers. Every Tuesday Marini and I go around the city. With Catalina I go to see plays that are running in the city. They gave me a cell phone to keep with me, and city maps, and we have various dinners and visits to parks and fairs. We had a welcome barbeque and a farewell meal by

the river. Also I had extra activities like capoeira with Willi, guitar with Leo, film, history and Brazilian music with Pablo Grasso, folklore with Julia, drawing with Giuli and even a little astronomy at the city observatory. I fell in love with the city and with the hospitality of the people of Rosario. I am grateful to all the people who entertained me, taught me and helped me.

CHRONICLE OF THE FERIA DE MATADEROS

Dear friends:

Last Sunday, June 5, was for us a real Servas day. During the early afternoon we met at the very popular Feria de Mataderos, a neighborhood near the port, and in the evening there was a get-together of a group of young people in a cafe in Palermo Viejo. Going to the street fair was a lot of fun, even for those of us who already knew the place. The foreign visitors – a Scot and an Italian – really enjoyed the entertainment: “corrida de sortijas”, folkloric dances and songs and tango also, of course. There were plenty of grilled meat and drinks at lunch, all rather informal, but joyful and fun. Everybody did his own thing. Like Cintia, who went off to dance tango on an improvised stage under the roof of the Historic Museum. Like Pablo Chufeni who was fascinated by listening to a woman singing “coplas” and “bagualas”, or our Scottish friend, who really took to the local beer. Altogether, a warm autumn day, and not just because of the sun.

Roberto Gomez

Peace Secretary, Servas Argentina

Note: The Feria de Mataderos is a neighborhood near the port in Buenos Aires (former meat slaughtering district, today a street fair).

CUBA, A DREAM OF 4 LETTERS

It's been 10 years, and another 14 trips to Cuba, because of the love I feel for this land which now is also mine. Well, what country does not belong to us if the planet is one and the political maps a bad human invention?

So I'll tell you that on that first visit I carried my list of Servas Cuba: 2 members. Of course I also had lists of acquaintances of friends and of friends of acquaintances who were waiting for me (all unknown to me); I always love to make contact with members of Servas on any trip. Each time it's more clear to me that in Servas you feel like part of a family wherever you are.

Of the two members on the list, one was no longer in Cuba; I talked to the other lady and she was outside of Havana, in Varadero. I didn't get to visit her because of course in Cuba there is joyful music, affection, warmth and colors and dance and sea and sun and suddenly you are surrounded by countless good things, pleasant sensations and brothers and sisters who, right away, in the back of the bus, give you their address and say with passion, “Listen, sister, that's your house!!”

On the first trip to that lizard-shaped island with palms and greenery as intense as the aroma of roasted coffee and Havana cigar tobacco, the warmth filled me, and in everything I did I shared and enjoyed the feeling of being Cuban. Today much is said, written and told about Cuba and Cubans. I just say what I always say: places are their people and you can't talk about Cuba. You have to experience it! (And never in a hotel.)

If there's anything I learn with years, it is that life is PRESENT, a gift. The Cubans live that way, valuing the instant, the moment, “what is.” Because a lot of times there isn't, or there is little, or there's something but we want something else.

In Cuba you learn a lot. They say that Cubans are needy, that they look for what they can get. There's a salsa group called Charanga Habanera which sings, “Let's have an exchange; you give me a kiss and I'll give you warmth.”

I've seen and I've lived that in Cuba the overwhelming needs are not those of the Cubans, but on the contrary, they are the needs of empty hearts, the needs of the evils that create the large cities, brutal capitalism, the egoism of our societies. True needs are what the Cubans fill us to overflowing with: their laughter, their music, their affection, their time without time. I have precious

memories, so many crazy experiences in which I am indebted to the Cubans, who with the arrival of tourism have to learn that in our countries everything has a price. I have had experiences of this which as we say in Buenos Aires “break your head.” I won’t say a lot more. Just go!

I leave you with this good news: last year with efforts from Argentina and many wishes, desires, dedication and strength from Cuba, we have managed to bring Servas Cuba back to life! Ileana Rodriguez, my friend-sister who as a good Cuban is an essential “Servas person”, and who moreover has friends spread out all over the globe, did the reorganizing.

Last November, joining together in Lenin Park we added member number 16 from among our friends.

If you are blessed by traveling to Cuba and also by knowing a Cuban Servas member, I suppose you could have a Zen experience, so much talked about all over the place these days. Sit in the evening on the breakwater in the Havana harbor, legs hanging. Someone is practicing his music or his song, another comes up to you and passes you a sip of rum in a paper cup, you look at the sea and let the time pass, let the waves splash you, you hear laughter, an old woman offers, “Peanuts! Peanuts!” Live life. The instant. The present.

CUBA. A dream of 4 letters to make it reality.

Cristina Monmany

Servas – Argentina

NEWS FROM BOLIVIA

SERVAS NEEDS MORE HOSTS IN BOLIVIA

Since the printing of the last host list, in 2001, Servas Bolivia has gotten smaller. The fact is that the existing list no longer permits contact by travelers to local hosts. The obvious question is: from this list, who are the people who still want to be contacted by Servas

travelers? It is vital for Servas Bolivia to manage to issue an up to date list.

Reports from travelers indicate that people listed in La Paz are no longer part of Servas. They changed their addresses, and their names are not in the telephone directory. People listed in Santa Cruz de la Sierra perhaps can be found. At least their names can be located in the telephone book. Is there a volunteer to try to call them?

The good news is that the National Secretary, LilianMendez (lilianmendez@yahoo.com.mx) and the Deputy, Gustavo Molina (gmolina@upb.edu) are still hosts in Cochabamba. Their telephone numbers are the same shown on the host list, but with the addition of the number 4 in front of the phone number. Several years ago the phone numbers in Bolivia gained a digit in front of the number. Add the number 2 for telephones in La Paz, 3 in Santa Cruz de la Sierra and 4 in Cochabamba.

Servas needs more hosts in Bolivia. The Servas Coordination in South America asks the cooperation of anyone who can contribute to this effort, to contact more people who might be interested in being part of our organization. If you can help, please write to: southamerica@servas.org.

NEWS FROM BRAZIL

GENERAL VIEW OF THE VISITS TO BRAZIL DURING 2004

We asked Brazilian hosts to send information about travelers they received during 2004 (when possible name, country of origin and date of visit). This way, it was possible to understand better the flow of travelers to Brazil, where hosts are needed, and where travelers are needed, etc.

Of 163 existing hosts, 75 hosts, that is 45%, answered. Out of the 75 who answered, 48 indicated that they had received travelers. These 48 hosts received a total of 140 visits, made by 102 travelers. It is estimated that this information represents between 80 and 90% of the total number of visits to Brazil in 2004.

This questionnaire produced the following evidence:

- Generally we need more travelers; many hosts have received no visits, or have received few travelers.
- There is probably a certain number of inactive hosts. This shows up in cities where a few hosts received many visitors while many hosts received none.
- The greatest number of the visits (60%) occurred in the states of Bahia, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

Travelers (and hosts) need to try to visit hosts in the interior who receive few visitors.

SERVAS GROUP IN THE STATE OF SAO PAULO CREATES AN ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

With the election of Roberto as South American Area Coordinator, the members of the state of Sao Paulo were consulted in order to find someone to replace him as Regional Coordinator of the state. No one volunteered to take on this job but on the other hand there was a consensus that efforts were needed to maintain the activities that Servas has been developing in Sao Paulo in recent years.

Six persons offered to help in the work. The solution we came to was the creation of an Organizing Committee, so that the necessary work could be divided, taking into account the talents, the experience, the availability and the preferences of each volunteer. The committee ended up with the following structure:

Roberto Borenstein – continues to be the coordinator of the group on an interim basis
Flavia Araujo – responsible for helping interested new people

Juvenilson Kuninari – events coordinator and interviewer

Maria Fernanda Vomero – interviewer

Flavio Tsai – interviewer and treasurer of Servas Sao Paulo

Luci Braga – coordinator of the Servas yahoo discussion group, Sao Paulo. Luci is also responsible for the host list of Servas Brazil

Regina Costa – editor of the Servas Sao Paulo Newsletter

In the case of absence of any of the members, a substitute will always be available as a replacement.

The numbers of Servas Sao Paulo

- travelers received: 25 in 2003, 27 in 2004
- visits: 25 in 2003, 42 in 2004
- hosts: 31 in 2003; 33 in 2004

Average number of visits per host: 0.8 (2003), 1.3 (2004).

- visits in the capital: 22 (2003) and 39 (2004)
- hosts in the capital: 22 (2003); 24 (2004)
- average of visits per host in the capital: 1(2003), 1.6 (2004)
- visits in the interior: 3(2003); 3 (2004)
- hosts in the interior: 9 (2003) and 9 (2004)
- average visit per host in the interior: 0.3 (2003); 0.3 (2004)
- hosts who have received visits: 11 (2003) and 17 (2004)

Average number of visits per host who was visited: 2.2 (2003) and 2.5 (2004)

Hosts who did not receive visits: 20 (2003) and 16 (2004)

- foreign visitors: 23 (2003), and 20 (2004)
- Brazilian visitors: 2 (2003) and 7 (2004)

Number of Letters of Introduction issued in Sao Paulo: 9 in 2003 and 10 in 2004.

It is interesting to note that the number of visits in the capital almost doubled, (from 22 (2003) to 39 (2004)), although the number of visitors practically did not change (25 in 2003 and 27 in 2004). One of the reasons is that the Sao Paulo hosts are more united, having more dialogues and sharing visits more. Additionally, the events promoted during the year 2004 (ecology hike, happy hour, weekend get-together in the interior, dance evening, gathering in the house of a host) contributed to greater movement and energy in Servas Sao Paulo, extending the ties of friendship between the participants.

**NEXT EVENT:
MEMBERS' MEETING IN SEPT.**

The next event to be organized by the Servas Sao Paulo group is still being planned. It will probably be on a Sunday at the home of a host in Sao Paulo. Travelers who plan to be in Brazil during this period: mark your calendar. To confirm, check the event page on the Servas International website: www.servas.org or contact the events coordinator: Juvenilson K. (kuninari@uol.com.br).

The last event was on June 4: a happy hour in a traditional bar in Sao Paulo. Nine persons participated in this delightful gathering: 8 from Sao Paulo and 1 Canadian.

GANDHI IS IN SAO PAULO:

Travelers who pass through Sao Paulo and who want to better understand the ideals of the spiritual and political leader Mahatma Gandhi can go to see him in the theater. The actor Joao Signorelli is on stage in the one-man show "Gandhi".

When: every Saturday and Sunday at 7:00 p.m.

Where: Studio 184

Address: Praca Roosevelt 184 (near the metro station Republica)

Telephone: 3259-6940

Some quotes from Gandhi:

"The only revolution possible is within ourselves."

"My life is an indivisible Whole, and all my acts converge into each other; all of them come from the insatiable love which I have for all humanity."

"My concern is not in being consistent with my former affirmations on a certain problem, but to be consistent with the truth."

"Only when we look at our own mistakes through a magnifying glass and do the opposite with other people's mistakes can we truly evaluate ourselves and others."

"The world is governed by logic; life itself contains a certain amount of violence, and we must choose the path of least violence."

"He who is not capable of governing himself is not capable of governing others."

"I hate privilege and monopoly. For me everything which can not be shared with the masses is taboo, legend, myth."

"He who conquers the fear of death conquers all the other fears."

"A civilization is judged by the way it treats its minorities."

TRAVEL REPORT: BUENOS AIRES (ARGENTINA), SYDNEY AND MELBOURNE (AUSTRALIA) SEPT-OCT, 2004

Traveling with Servas was one of the best discoveries I ever made. I love people and I am ready to feel the atmosphere of each place I go. I had an interesting experience in 2003, when I met Lida, a Czech, with whom I met twice in Prague to take a walk and have coffee. 2004 was better than my expectations...

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

I arrived in Buenos Aires with the expectation of having fun. I was going to meet Argentine Servas members who were going to be meeting that night for the bimonthly gathering in the old Café Tortini. Before traveling, I had exchanged several messages with Elena, the local coordinator, and from her first reply I felt welcome. However, the week before my trip I was so busy that I couldn't contact any Argentine host other than Elena. So I decided to reserve a hotel room for at least one night.

The gathering was very nice, with a lot of Argentine beer and an exchange of experiences. All the hosts were surprised that I was in a hotel and not at the home of one of them. Jorge, who was very funny, took the opportunity to take his key out of his pocket, put it in my hand and say, "if you want to go to my house now, it's OK." Noting my surprise, one of the others said that Jorge was like that: the most popular host in the city. I kept the keys, but I preferred to go there the next morning. I stayed for four nights.

Those were excellent days, with good conversation, lunch with people Jorge knew, and lots of people around the house. I made several friends. One day another host, Pablo, took me to the Boca Junior tennis courts to see his favorite team beat the Gimnasia de La Plata. I also met friends of Servas members and when I left for Australia my heart was sad, I missed in advance all those people and I left with the best impressions of Argentine people.

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

Before I arrived in Sydney, I had already exchanged e-mails with two Australian Servas members. Felicity could not host me because she was getting ready to share her apartment with a new roommate. But she invited me to dinner with her on one of the nights of my stay in the city. Adam was in Jamaica, but he suggested I get in touch with his friend Peter, a new Servas host. So I did, and Peter agreed to host me. I stayed three nights in a hotel (I only managed to reach Peter on the second day I was in the city) and then I went to his house where I stayed for three more nights. It was also an exceptional experience, but different from the previous one. But that's an interesting fact about traveling with Servas: the modus operandi may be the same but the experiences are always different, nothing is repeated. So, we had so much in common that Peter and I became good friends. Trips to the Opera Quay and fish & chips shops in Palm Beach were memorable. Dinner at Felicity's house also was delicious! Again, it was difficult to pack and leave for the next destination.

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Susan was the only host I stayed with in Melbourne. She was on vacation but returned the day I arrived in the city. Since I had reserved a bed in a youth hostel for two nights, we agreed that she would put me up in her house after that. It was sensational. Susan is a really nice person, very animated. We took walks together, we went to the Fringe Festival, we had lots of conversations

along with glasses of wine, not to mention the classes in twist. The trip continued (Tasmania and Cairns), but without Servas. When I returned to Sydney, I stayed two more nights at Peter's. But then we were no longer host and traveler but two friends who met again after a long time (18 days).

It was one of the most "human" trips that I have ever taken. More than visiting pretty places, it was an experience of solidarity, friendship, and believing in people. I was delighted with the generosity and trust of the hosts that I met along the way, and with the joy of their sharing time with me. I felt totally gratified. What special people there are in the world! For this reason, living is worthwhile. I went home with my hope renewed, feeling sure that sensitivity and love for others still exists, and this will only die if we let it.

So thank you Jorge, Pablo, Peter, Felicity, Susan

Maria Fernanda Vomero

Servas traveler since 2003

NEWS FROM COLOMBIA

Only 5 Servas visitors in 2004?

Mauricio Rivera, the National Secretary, said that few hosts answered a questionnaire about travelers they received during 2004. Visits by not more than 5 travelers were reported. Since few hosts answered the questionnaire, we suppose that the real number was higher. Servas Colombia now has 50 hosts on its list, 40 in Bogota and 10 distributed among Calarca, Cali, Cartagena, Medellin, Cucuta and Popayan.

If it's true that the number of travelers is so far below the number of hosts, what should we do? This would be an important subject to be discussed by the members of Servas Colombia. How to increase the number of contacts between travelers and hosts? How to better publicize Servas Colombia? Would it work to encourage more internal visits within Colombia?

An important point within Servas Colombia has to do with personal differences. The National Secretary, Mauricio Rivera, is not able to work with the Deputy, David Roll, in coordinating the activities of Servas Colombia. As a consequence, the structure of Servas Colombia has been weakened. Could a meeting among members help to find a more adequate solution? This is an internal question for Servas Colombia to work on.

NEWS FROM CHILE

Servas Chile puts out a new host list.

The international Servas community was very pleased to get the new host list for Servas Chile, which was updated by a new working group. Gaston Lux, from Valparaiso, is the new National Secretary. Emilio Caicedo, from Coquimbo, is the Deputy. Host Alvaro Soto offers his contribution from Santiago, Chile. The majority of the Chilean hosts (18 addresses) live in the metropolitan region of Santiago. The other 9 addresses are distributed among Coquimbo, Concepcion, Vina del Mar and Valparaiso.

Gaston Lux has taken on the role of National Secretary for the second time. He was the first National Secretary, when Servas Chile was made a member of Servas International in the early 90's. One of Gaston's first actions was to put all Chilean hosts into a yahoo discussion group, which will make internal communication much easier for Servas Chile.

NEWS FROM ECUADOR

Servas again has hosts in Ecuador.

The interest and initiative of some volunteers has brought Servas back to life in Ecuador.

A couple of Argentine travelers, Laura and Roberto, were hosted in Quito at the home of Milton and Emy Chamorro. Laura reported that they were extremely well received: "We were welcomed by this nice family as if we had known them for a long time. We felt really comfortable in the company of Milton and his family."

A French traveler, Flarent, visited them recently and helped them to fill out the host registration form. Milton is a professor and his wife is a nurse. Their main interests are in the areas of communication, films, video, human rights and social movements (homeless movement).

Servas needs more hosts in Ecuador. The Servas South American coordinator asks all those who can participate to help us by contacting more persons who might be interested in being part of our organization. If you can help, please contact:

southamerica@servas.org.

NEWS FROM PARAGUAY

The National Secretary of Paraguay announced a new e-mail address.

Servas Paraguay has also been experiencing a reduction in the past few years. The host list was last printed in 2002, and so it is obsolete. The chief task of Servas Paraguay at this time is to put out an up to date list. The National Secretary, Victor Hugo Gonzalez, announces a new era for Servas Paraguay, in which he wants to maintain more current communication with Servas throughout the world. Victor Hugo says that he intends to work for Servas in a coordinated and effective way. The new e-mail address for Servas Paraguay is:

servasparaguay@yahoo.com.ar.

Ciudad del Este: alternative lodging with Servas hosts for those who wish to visit the Iguazu Falls.

The famous Iguazu Falls are much visited by Servas travelers visiting Brazil and Argentina. What few people realize is the possibility to include a Servas experience with this visit. Right next to the Brazilian city Foz de Iguazu is the Paraguayan city Ciudad del Este, home of engineer Rafael Ortiz Moreno and his wife Magdalena. Rafael and Magdalena, who are also active in the Catholic church, like to learn about other cultures through new friends. From Ciudad del Este you can easily reach the Paraguayan capital Asuncion. The distance is 300 kilometers.

In June, 2005, Rafael and Magdalena went on a trip around several European countries. That was their first experience as Servas travelers, and we hope that it was a positive one.

NEWS FROM PERU

NEW CHALLENGES FOR SERVAS

The present delicate situation of Servas, which we didn't want to accept for some time, obliges us to work harder to assure the future of our organization.

The next meeting of the Extraordinary General Assembly (EOGA) poses several challenges, and I consider that it is time for the directors of EXCO, Areas Coordinators and National Secretaries to make a greater commitment to Servas.

We need to have more active and responsible participation in the preparation of the EOGA, since it requires a lot of advance planning. It would be ideal to be able to count on receiving all the material long enough in advance for all the National Groups to have the opportunity to read it and make decisions. This means being able to identify, through dialogue and consensus, the points that are considered most important and that require priority, so that the agenda is not overloaded (Statutes, absentee voting, etc.)

On the other hand, some advances are being made through forums for discussion and presentation of proposals and opinions (www.servasforum.org). On a subject as important as absentee voting, there seems to be consensus.

It would be interesting for the South American area to start to work on contributing to this very important process. After the experience at the last Assembly in Barcelona, we need to try to achieve an atmosphere reflecting the basic principles of Servas: peace, friendship and tolerance. Several countries in northern Europe are already working on that aspect.

I consider that if one attends such an important event, it is principally to make vital

decisions for Servas, but also to strengthen the bonds of friendship. Differences on certain subjects should not be a sufficient reason for having confrontations of a personal nature, which in the end not only destroy the atmosphere but also hurt our feelings.

During recent years we have witnessed disputes and confrontations at the highest levels of Servas leadership, and the majority of the efforts to resolve issues have only accentuated the differences, pointing out who won in a dispute or who has more power to decide on a particular issue.

This has occurred basically because we have not known how to listen to each other or because we were unable to be tolerant and accepting when another person was right, or to respect the decisions of the majority when they differ from those of a smaller group of people. I hope that the next EOGA we will learn to listen to proposals and decide on what is best for Servas and that those decisions will be respected.

Servas spends a lot of money and resources on its administration, management and events, when it could invest more in the great "human chain" of travelers and hosts which are the beginning and end of our institution. We must strengthen our bases and not construct statues of lead with feet of clay.

We gain nothing by having leadership if we do not advance and develop Servas. We need to have more countries join us and find ways to help countries that have not grown for years.

Personally, I consider that there is nothing more gratifying than to be able to find, in cities far from each other, people who share our ideas and who join with much enthusiasm, bringing growth and development to our institution.

I believe that one of the new challenges of Servas in the coming years will be to find ways to have better relations between the top leadership (EXCO), the Area Coordinators and the National Secretaries. This in turn should spread within each national group.

This implies more horizontal and fluid communication, in both directions, that is, an organization less vertical and also less centralized. Communication should be channeled toward the bases - the national groups and their members - who should feel integrated and be able to participate in the work of Servas.

For this to be possible, our leadership needs to understand that Servas is not an organization designed for personal advancement, and that to have a leadership role is not a goal but only a means or a tool for guiding the members' efforts toward the aims of our institution.

I would like to see South America have an active role, as much as possible, both in the work of planning, presentation and discussion of proposals, and also during the process of voting, whether in person or absentee.

Let's participate in the making of decisions that will permit Servas to regain its course and work better toward our ideals of peace and friendship.

Felipe Azana (Servas, Lima)
Former National Secretary

REFLECTIONS ON BEING A SERVAS MEMBER

Dear Servas,

I address you to ask for a few minutes of reflection. I want to start by making a small analysis of what has happened in our country, Peru, which was hit hard for many years because of bad management by the authorities, and a series of things happened where people were mistreated and persecuted as never before. Today the same thing is happening with some members on the international level, and all because of the desire of some people to be important.

This happens because there are people who, for motives that I still don't understand, have the idea that without them nothing works well, thinking that they are the Messiahs sent to lead us, putting themselves ahead of other people whom they use for their own interests, rather than working on behalf of Servas.

I consider that Servas does not need Chiefs who "guide" our steps but rather needs leaders and members more committed to the principles of Servas, the essence of which is to give: yes, to give friendship, human warmth, a space where each person can grow by having contacts with another person he doesn't know, forging bonds which with the passage of time become stronger and lead us toward achieving Peace and Friendship among all people.

I wonder: Are we really an organization which seeks Peace? If our response is yes, then what are we doing to achieve it? Why do we seek the most comfortable position and not commit ourselves? Or is Servas a big Tourist and Housing agency? Why can't we learn from our errors? Why are we afraid of change?

Personally I don't believe this is the way. The people I've known during 10 years have shown me the value of being a Servas member; people of different cultures, races, languages, customs, etc. have left behind them their marks of love, affection, wisdom, enthusiasm, energy, evidence of the worth of a human being.

I think that it's time to start to change our passive attitude, it's time to show and express our thoughts and points of view; there's much more to do than to look for people to blame; there's much to give; it's time for us to unite, leaving aside all personal interest and looking out for our national, regional and international organization; let's first grow from inside in each country and region, in order to grow globally.

Servas Peru is today an organization with a more clear vision, thanks to many members and especially to each of the national secretaries who preceded me who left a solid path, something difficult but not impossible to achieve, and there is the challenge. Today our numbers are decreased but we aim to grow through people dedicated to having peace and harmony, who know how to give without expecting anything in return except a frank and sincere smile from the person they

have looked after, a hug from a new friend, a look from a person who knows he has a friend he can count on.

Thank you for letting me think out loud, for giving me a few minutes of your precious time and for leaving a grain of sand in the search of what we call **SERVAS, A BIG FAMILY**.

In Peace and Friendship
Fernando Ugarte – National Secretary

MY CITY AND MY MEMORIES

I live in the city of Puno, located on the shores of Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world (3,810 meters). Puno also is known as the Folkloric Capital of Peru. Within this state are many beautiful provinces and districts and one of them, 84 kilometers south of Puno, approximately 1 hour and 25 minutes by car, is **JULI**, called “The Aymara Rome”. That’s where I spent my childhood. Because of its very beautiful churches: San Pedro, San Juan, La Asuncion and Santa Cruz, which were all constructed in the 16th and 17th centuries, this place is a center of attraction of the first order. It was an important district for the Jesuits who settled in this area, setting up a model center to train missionaries in Paraguay and Bolivia. This city is surrounded by lovely hills and caressed by the waves of the sacred Lake where there are beautiful beaches and marvelous landscapes. Servas friends, this city awaits you!!!

I have very good memories of Servas travelers, like Eva and Mira, and recently Iris from Canada, but also I remember the lady who died in Cuzco, Margalit Levy from Israel, who spoke Spanish very well and told me that in Palestine there are also Servas members.

**TINKUNA KAMA KACHUN TATAY
ALLILLAN RISUCHUN** (in Quechua)
**YAQKA URUKAMA WIRAQOCHA.
ASK SARAWI** (in Aymara). This means:
**HASTA OTRO DIA SENOR QUE TE
VAYA BIEN** (in Spanish)

**WE’LL SEE YOU AGAIN, SIR. MAY
ALL GO WELL FOR YOU.**

Abigail Carrasco

Servas, Puno

CARRYING OUT A MISSION

I have always been sure that everything that happens to me, good or bad, is for a reason, and I accept everything...Now, without protesting, after many trials in this life, I consider that I am harvesting part of what I was taught (especially by my mother) to sow in life: “**LOVE**”, which I am sure is part of Servas and which I inherited, since she taught me how to welcome visitors like brothers. I remember when I used to come home from school, I’d meet 4 or 5 strangers who were washing their clothes, then they would have lunch with me, they would take pictures with my mom, they would leave...and then at Christmas there used to come postcards and photos...so for many years there were a lot of people, among them some who were bothered by that. What! Why were we giving them everything? We didn’t even know them, etc., and the response was, “What’s everything? This is nothing”...sharing is the main thing, to give what we receive...and that multiplied. Well, for a long time I have been enjoying life fully and I want to share the great love that I feel for all, knowing them, getting to know Servas, this has marked my life and I feel happy.

In February I had the opportunity to have my first Servas visitor, Ralph Hammond; it was incredible. As the day approached I was nervous; for him also it was the first Servas visit. But when we met personally I felt that something happened, we recognized each other with an unbelievable harmony. We were very anxious waiting for him, my friends and I, because everybody knew he was coming, and he did. The most important thing was that everybody was interested in him; he shared our customs, practiced his Spanish, danced salsa very, very well. We told each other things and shared confidences in a way that I am sure will never leave us. We didn’t know if we’d see him again or not, so we wanted to take advantage of the time with him and let him feel the affection we felt for

him. We enjoyed his presence to the maximum and when he said he would return we said we would always be waiting for him. We're still waiting for you, Rafa, wherever you are, FRIENDS FOR LIFE.

Thanks to Hilaria Valdez for teaching me to be a Servas member. At that time Servas was new in my city, there were no forms to fill out and we were not so well organized...but this was to be Servas, the opportunity to share and know people from different places who feel and want the same as us, not to be divided by frontiers.

A kiss and a hug for all who feel the same.

Kareen Rios

Servas – Tacna

The city of Tacna is located in the extreme south of Peru near the frontier with Chile. The distance from Lima to Tacna: 1,348 kilometers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM A HOST TO OTHER HOSTS AND TRAVELERS

Greetings to all the members of Servas. Having seen the latest notice from the National Secretary, it seems to me that it's a good idea for all travelers who want to visit a member of Servas to send their Letter of Introduction in advance to let people know who they are and to confirm that they are members of Servas who fill all the requirements, and also to see that the letter has not expired.

I say this because experience has taught me that there are many "Servas travelers", certainly not all, who only use Servas as a travel and housing service, and at times they don't spend time with the family or the Servas member or host.

I would also like to mention that there are those who travel with friends who are not Servas members and they ask for accommodations for them as well; the host can decide whether or not to receive them.

Also there are some who have their Letter of Introduction and forget to show it when they arrive, saying later when they are asked for their letter that "they forgot it" or something.

Also I did not know that there are some members of Servas in Peru who sometimes send visitors to the houses of friends who are not Servas members. This is not a great problem, it is the decision of the host or of the traveler, but if someone talks to a member from another city or region about their visit, knowing that he will send the traveler to the house of friends, this is not good and is not appropriate to the ideals of Servas, because the host expects a traveler and has to say no to another who wants to come. This happened to me, I said I couldn't host a visitor because they told me that another one was coming and finally no one came, the one who they said was coming didn't come and I had unfortunately told the other one that I could not host him. We need to maintain unity, friendship and comprehension, but this is achieved through good and adequate communication to avoid this type of inconvenience.

I hope that everyone will reflect on this and that from now on we really think about what it means to be a Servas member.

I hope that these recommendations will be taken and I am delighted to receive Servas members from Peru and from the World.

Emulating the National Secretary: In Peace and Friendship, I remain,

Ludwig Mercado

Servas, Arequipa

When you feel that you are overflowing with joy,
when you feel that you are a better person,
you must have been born with a burning spirit,
but when you fall into routine sadness,
when there are no ideals, only cycles of the sun,
you will have died with no one to mourn for you.

Diego Puente

NEWS FROM URUGUAY

The National Secretary of Uruguay Travels to Brazil

Karin Guerrero and her husband Gonzalo traveled to the North East part of Brazil during their summer vacation. They visited hosts in the states of Bahia, Pernambuco, Ceara and Rio Grande do Norte. According to Karina, the trip was lovely and they were delighted with the friendliness of the hosts.

While in Sao Paulo, Karina met with the Area Coordinator of South America, with whom she talked at length about the situation of Servas in Uruguay. Servas Uruguay is one of the oldest Servas groups in South America, but at present it is going through some organizational weakness. Karina needs help in carrying out her work. She is doing the coordinating work alone, since Deputy Magdalena Vidal left her position in 2004, the same time that Peace Secretary Carolina Balestra went to live in Europe.

Karina mentioned that not all members actually participate, and it is possible that the Uruguayan list will decrease in size when it is brought up to date. Servas Uruguay has a total of 83 addresses on its list; 69 are in Montevideo and 13 are distributed throughout Pando, El Pinar, Logomar, Maldonado, Punta del Este, San Jose, Parque del Plata and Salto.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, 2004, "LA CONRERIA" SPAIN

It was a beautiful place on the side of a mountain from which you could see the Mediterranean Sea. La Conreria is located half an hour by train from Barcelona. We spent a splendid week there from the 18th to the 25th of July, with my friends from Servas Uruguay: Carolina Balestra, Anita Kalberman and Marisa Contini.

There were participants from many different countries, such as Thailand, Turkey, Nepal, Curacao, Egypt, etc.

Activities were very well organized: in the morning the Secretaries got together at the General Assembly and there were workshops in Spanish and Catalan, meditation, body movement. We Uruguayans presented a session on CANDOMBE with illustrations, photos and a dance demonstration, and also we took a trip to the city of Girona and saw its museums.

I met a lot of charming people. Arriving at the Montgat station I had my first encounter; I met two charming people: Jorge Martinez (volunteer from Alicante) who was waiting for travelers in his car (what a joy it was to see someone waiting for me there!!!) and Akos Piros from Hungary. We introduced ourselves and made friends, and we talked in the garden or in the reception room since Akos speaks Spanish. The sweet way he speaks my language would warm your heart. Afterwards, at the end of August, he visited us in Montevideo, Uruguay with his choir. With a volunteer from Valladolid we went to the beach at Mongat one very hot morning, we didn't find the swimming area but we had a wonderful lunch. Also I met Anne from Denmark with whom I shared a room. With Fanny from Venezuela we spent a whole Saturday at the FORUM DE BARCELONA. I had a great time with her since she's a very entertaining person; I have an invitation to her house. I had the pleasure of meeting people from Servas Italy, all really nice, especially Luigi Uslenghi. On the trip to Girona we had lunch in a beautiful park. At my table there were people from the Philippines, Thailand, Czechoslovakia, Turkey and Carolina, and me from Uruguay. At lunch and dinner I always sat next to Manolo and his friends from Seville to listen to their stories and share wine with them. Those were times when we all got together to talk and laugh.

I also had a very nice meeting with Marta from Honduras, Renee and Marie Andre from France. I visited Montpellier, France, since Renee invited me to her house. In La Conreria I got to know the Coordinator of Catalonia, Rafael, and his wife; we had talked previously on the phone. They invited me to

their house at Canet de Mar, a beach on the Mediterranean which I visited after the International Conference. With this charming couple I shared some good times.

It was an unforgettable experience, although I would have liked the activities to be in Spanish, since that is the language of Spain and of many Servas members who went to the Conference.

The final party with dances and songs from around the world was very moving. Thanks for that unforgettable week, Servas Volunteers of Spain.

“Acts of love are acts of peace” (Mother Teresa of Calcutta)

Norma Daleiro

Servas Uruguay

FROM URUGAY TO THE OLD CONTINENT

Not more than 6 months after I became a member of Servas, I embarked on an enthusiastic adventure of contacting members in this friendly organization, to share something of their lives with them.

My first destination was Berlin, where I had previously made so many contacts by e-mail that it was impossible to meet all of them in such a short time. So, by chance I selected Nina and Jasper, a great couple who were also starting their experience of hosting visitors and who received me with open arms.

As I made my way to their house I had a thousand questions: would I like them (by e-mail they seemed nice but what would they really be like?), would the conversation go easily, would they be interested in knowing about Uruguay as much as I wanted to know about Germany? Would a couple of years of study permit me to speak their language fluently?...So there I was, a potted plant in hand (it occurred to me to take them a plant with purple flowers), climbing the stairs of their apartment in a bohemian section of Berlin, very picturesque, full of little shops and old houses. When I met them I felt

immediately that there was good energy between us. We shared a delicious home cooked dinner, with sausages, baked vegetables and mashed potatoes, all accompanied by a delicious national wine. Thanks to the German custom of dining early (around 7:00 p.m.) after dinner we had time to go out for a beer in a bar in one of the “artificial beaches” on the River Spree and listen to Jamaican music.

The next day, Jasper took me around Berlin; we visited art galleries in old bomb-damaged buildings, saw small streets and sculptures outside of the tourist circuit, the part of Berlin that you don’t get to know except with someone who lives there, as well as visiting some typical tourist spots.

That night the 3 of us shared good beer in a pub near the apartment, a place where, to my amazement, all the decorations were for sale (this custom has not yet arrived in Montevideo) and said goodbye, until our next meeting here or there, but surely soon.

I never felt the so-called “German coldness”, on the contrary, there was human warmth, friendliness and sincerity, which all left a memory in my heart that I feel every time I think of Berlin.

Carolina Herrero

Servas Uruguay

NEWS FROM VENEZUELA

Servas Venezuela has offered to host the General Assembly

National Secretary Fanny Bello has expressed interest in having Servas Venezuela be a candidate for the site of the General Assembly in 2007. According to Fanny, she would have the possibility of getting support from the government of Venezuela for having the Assembly there. It’s not yet clear what kind of support Fanny refers to but in any case it would be a first for Servas. How should Servas, which is a non-political organization, have dialogues with governments and political organizations? This is an interesting theme to be discussed. The President and the Peace Secretary of Servas International will surely be interested in having more details about how Servas Venezuela communicates with the Venezuelan government.

Probably there will not be a General Assembly in 2007, since the Extraordinary

General Assembly is now scheduled to take place in Italy from the 2nd to the 8th of April, 2006. Exco decided on Italy after evaluating requests from Venezuela, Germany, India and Italy. There is no impediment to Servas Venezuela preparing a proposal offering Venezuela as a location for the following Assembly.

Servas Venezuela has a total of 35 addresses on its list, of which 20 are in Caracas and 15 in the following cities: Puerto Ayacucho, Puerto La Cruz, La Victoria, Cagua, San Felipe, San Rafael de Buena Vista, Ciudad Ojeda, Tia Juana and Maracaibo.

Any activity becomes creative when he who is doing it is concerned about doing it well or better.

John Updike

Happiness is in ourselves.
We are happy because we love,
not because are are loved.

Mother Teresa of Calcutta