



# Servas Monthly News



June 2006

## Will Football to solve all the world's disagreements .....

This was suggested by a 13 year old student when the class was looking at countries coming together to play in the World Cup. We were looking at world news and noting the problems of fighting. We were also noting how countries were mixing together during the World Cup. So the 13 year old (boy!) suggested that when countries disagreed with each other, then they should each provide a football team. The two teams would have a football match and the country of the winning team would then have won the argument.

It would have been good if we could have discussed this concept to look at its flaws. Time did not allow it, but perhaps another lesson .....

However in Servas we can look at this idea as part of our ways of Conflict Resolution. Would a football match solve the problems? What about people like myself, who dislike football and will keep away from watching things like World Cup. Would we agree to this to solve problems? What would happen to the winning country, would they then take it out on the losing country? Would the losers accept their loss? Who would referee? Would that referee be fair and unbiased? What about the attitude of other countries? Is it fair to depend on the skills of people who are nothing to do with the initial problem? Supposing a country does not specialise in football? Supposing a good player is off sick? Is it really solving the problem or just pushing it to one side? .....

Come to think of it, is this not like two armies fighting to try and prove a point? .....

So how shall we solve problems?

## SI News 2006 & Thank you

to all those people who have been sending me the post cards and emails to say that SI News 2006 has arrived and the state of the package. It is really useful to know when they have got to you and helps me with the planning.

For your information, if it arrives in a post office bag it does not mean it is damaged. It is because that is the way I packed it for a cheaper postage rate.

## Languages:

In the article on communication on page 2 it is noted that those looking at the Servas web site are generally from areas of the world designated as North and West. Looking back at the language pages it can be seen that the same generally applies to the languages that have been given to me so far.

Please can people from the South and the East provide me with some languages to fill that page - but please can they be in European script, just as the Arabic languages have been put into European script.

I look forward to being inundated with a wide range of languages from Africa and Asia.

Thanks, Asante, Xiexie.

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## Contact

We welcome articles for SI Monthly News. We do not guarantee the article, or any part of it, will be published. This depends on the theme for the month along with the number of other articles also available for publication.

Preferred method of contact is email at:

[newsletter@servas.org](mailto:newsletter@servas.org)

or [jgiffould@aol.com](mailto:jgiffould@aol.com)

Please make sure that Servas: Monthly News is part of the subject heading. Otherwise if the email address is not recognised it may well get deleted before being read.

The postal address is:

Jane Giffould, SI Monthly News Editor  
20 Weavers Row, Halstead, Essex, CO9 2JX, England.

# International News and Comment

## SERVAS INTERNATIONAL

### Posts and names of elected persons

#### President

Gary Sealey - Canada

#### General Secretary

Pramod Kumar - India

#### Treasurer

Ömer Özkan - Turkey

#### Vice President

Mary Jane Mikuriya - USA

#### Peace Secretary

Nandasena Amarasinghe, Sri Lanka

#### Host List Coordinator

Anna Flammini - Italy

#### Conflict Resolution committee

Luigi Uslenghi - Italy

Julie Dotsch - Canada

Chris Slader - Britain

#### Development Fund Committee

Laura Ragucci - Argentina

Judy Shotten -

Sheldon Weeks Botswana

Michael Johnson - Canada

Sercan Duygan - Turkey

#### Audit Committee

Miroslav Wasilevski, Poland

Rita Torsvik, Norway

Florentio Gomez

L.V.Subramanian - India

#### ICT

Uwe Federer - Italy

Ömer Özkan - Turkey

#### Job Descriptions and Statutes Committee

Eda Guzeldemir, Turkey

Pramod Kumar - India

Diana Sweet, Surinam

Chris Jones - Canada

#### Nominations Committee

Michael Johnson - Canada

Evren Özkan - Turkey

#### Archivist

Grant Barnes - USA

#### International Youth Coordinator (YP)

Pablo Chufeni YP, Argentina

#### Mentor of Int. Youth Coord.

Laura Ragucci, Argentina

#### Youth Project Coordinator

Ann Greenhough Coordinator

#### SINews editor

Jane Giffould

## Servas Global Changes and Challenges

Many of us in Servas are now using new Internet systems to connect with each other, at no charge, or very little cost. International committees are now so dependent on email and free calls over the internet, that postal mail is almost no longer used. Expensive meetings are mostly replaced by teleconferencing.

For instance the SI Executive Committee completed its regular free teleconference using GIZMO ([www.gizmo.com](http://www.gizmo.com)). Nandee, the Peace Sec, had no access to a computer, so we joined him, using VoipStunt, another nearly-free service. Quite often we use Skype, a free telephone service, especially when five or less. Skype has a convenient quick messenger and chat-line. When poor connections or regional accents challenge us, we type a short sentence to clarify.

All of these services were invented less than two years ago. Servas International has already saved thousands of Swiss Francs by using them. Rapid communications often yield quick responses.

We also use collaborative software. We can jointly edit a single file. For instance, when a Servas world team works together to contact national secretaries each team member can update the file on-line overnight, to spare the others from duplicate work.

Aren't all these services available globally?

No. Or at least I don't think so. The Servas Website displays a log. It shows the location of computer servers accessing the website. Today, when I checked the last hundred people who accessed [www.Servas.org](http://www.Servas.org) on June 28 and June 29 it showed:

- 69 were from North America (Canada 10)
- 4 from Australia and United Kingdom
- 3 from Italy and Sweden
- 2 - France, Germany, Austria, Belgium, Poland
- 1 each from Russia, Spain, Latvia, Netherlands, Finland, Brazil, Mexico

This does not mean that Servas inter-personal connections cannot flourish in other regions, but the main instrument we use for Servas coordination globally has a distinct North and West "tilt". We are at the Dawn of a new Distant Vote system. But, clearly we cannot rely on the Internet exclusively. We have to encourage face-to-face meetings and find ways to connect South to North, East to West and all between. Travelers make such connections, maybe they make more active use of Internet than residents. Perhaps Travelers are an under-used Servas information resource?

*Gary Sealey, President, Servas International*

## Meetings, Get together, Seeing each other

### Get together in London

The venue is **Pontefract Castle.**  
This is in Wigmores Street, London W1.  
The nearest Underground Station is Bond Street.  
Date: First Monday in every month.  
Time: 6.30 onwards.  
Look forward to seeing you all there.

### Servas Monthly Meeting, Belgium

Last TUESDAY of the month in the pub Le Cirio in the centre of Brussels, next to the Bourse/Beurs, 6 to 8 pm.

Hosts, travellers, visitors, friends, everybody can join us and enjoy with us one of the 500 famous Belgian beers!

On our annual Servas dinner in January the participants were of 10 different nationalities, all members of Servas Belgium & Luxemburg. We are 'Servas International' ! You can have a look at the pictures on [www.servas.be](http://www.servas.be)

We invite all Servas members from all over the world to visit Belgium & Luxemburg, two small countries in the heart of Europe which had a lot to offer to all of you.

We want more travellers!

More than 300 Servas hosts living in small villages or in bigger cities are waiting to give you a warm welcome. I'm sure your visit to Belgium & Luxemburg will stay in your memory for ever.

[www.visitbelgium.com](http://www.visitbelgium.com) [www.luxembourg.co.uk](http://www.luxembourg.co.uk)  
[www.belgique-tourisme.net](http://www.belgique-tourisme.net)

See you, *Rita Dessauvage*  
National secretary Servas Belgium & Luxemburg

### Troya Meeting, Turkey

Servas Turkey welcomes all to their:

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Euro Asian Meeting

Dates: 16 - 20 August 2006

Place: Troya, Turkey

website: [www.servas.org](http://www.servas.org)

### Camping Weekend, Netherlands

*Servas Netherlands* is organizing a camping weekend:  
from 4 pm Friday, 15 September 2006  
to 4 pm Sunday, 17 September 2006  
in Zeewolde, province of Flevoland,  
and would be very happy to welcome Servas members from neighbouring countries.

**For full detail see Servas Monthly News April**

*Ineke Takken, coordinator Servas-camping weekend*  
phone + 31 36 5352389

e-mail address: [itinholland@planet.nl](mailto:itinholland@planet.nl)

For the USA Annual Meeting

See p5

### Annual Meeting

Servas Germany e.V.

Fri, Sept 15<sup>th</sup> till Sun, Sept 17<sup>th</sup> 2006

" Kolping Familienzentrum ",

Duderstadt, Bischof-Jensen-Strasse

In the name of Servas Germany I would like to invite you to our Annual Meeting that will take place from September 15th to September 17th 2006 in Duderstadt, right in the middle of Germany. The motto of this year's meeting will be "**Conflict Management**".

The meeting will start on Friday evening with an informal get-together; on Saturday morning we will have some workshops with Servas relevant issues, in the afternoon (after a walk) there will be the General Assembly of Servas Germany, and in the evening - well, we will see...

On Sunday morning we will have workshops about conflict management.

We will have a special programme for the youngsters - they will probably develop a musical, dealing with our motto, and they can participate in the workshop "strong kids".

The place where we will meet is excellent for all people between 0 and 99.

If you are interested in joining us, please contact me ([nationalsecretary@servas.de](mailto:nationalsecretary@servas.de)).

See you in Duderstadt!

*Inken Resa-Thomas,*  
National Secretary, Servas Germany e.V.

### Detail

**Date:** Friday Sept 15<sup>th</sup> till Sunday Sept 17<sup>th</sup> 2006

**Venue:** Kolping Familienzentrum "Ferienparadies Pferdeberg", Bischof-Jensen- Strasse, 37115 Duderstadt, <http://www.kolping-duderstadt.de/>

**Accommodation:** single and double rooms, apartments with up to five beds

**Prices:** Adults: 55,- Euro single room, 45,- Euro double room

13-17 years old: 20,- Euro

3-12 years old: 10,- Euro

# Languages

**Language** is an important tool of communication. When we understand each other we are more likely to be peaceful. Think of the problems that have arisen just by the wrong interpretation of what someone is trying to say.

In this section the aim is to build up a selection of words and phrases to help hosts and travellers communicate with each other and with other people. If you have words or phrases you find useful then let us know. If you have languages you would like to share then let us know. For the moment the base language will be English. Any non-English words and phrases must be accompanied by the English translation of them.

In the long run it would be good to be able to publish a booklet of useful words and phrases in a range of languages for the Servas hosts and travellers.

Our **eleventh** language is **Jordanian Arabic** with thanks to Zafira from Jordan.

Zero

One

Two

Three

Four

Five

Six

Seven

Eight

Nine

Ten

Twenty

Thirty

Forty

Fifty

Sixty

Seventy

Eighty

Ninety

Hundred

Thousand

Do you eat meat?

Where do you live?

This is my sister

This is my brother

This is my mother

This is my father

This is my son

This is my daughter

What music do you like?

Have you visited the town?

Where are the shops?

Is there a market?

Thank you for your help.

sefr

wahid

ithnein

thalathah

arba'ah

khamsah

sittah

saba'ah

thamanieh

tisa'ah

ashrah

ishreen

thalatheen

arba'een

khamseen

sitteen

sab'een

thanmaneen

tis'een

mey'eh

alf

Btakol lahme?

wein btoskon( m)  
btoskoni (f)

hai okhti

hatha akhouy

hai ommi or mama

hatha baba

hatha ibni

hai binti

aya musika bet'hib (m)  
bet'hibi (f)

Zort (m) zorti (f) el-balad?

wein el-souk?

fi souk

shorkar li musa'adatak (m)

musa'adatek (f)hon?

Peace

Hello

How are you

Goodbye

Be seeing you

Have a safe journey

Best wishes to your family.

Do come again

Please

Thank you

That's nothing

Where is the toilet?

Left

Right

Straight on

Behind you

Where do I sleep

I am vegetarian

Where is the nearest  
telephone?

Marhaba

Kifak (for male)  
kifik (for female)  
Salam

Binshouffak (m)  
binshouffik (f)

Ma' Al salama

Sallem ala al-aila

irja' marrah okhra /  
zourouna

laou samaht

Shokran

Affwan

wein el hammam / el-toilet  
yassar / shmal

yamin

doughri

warrak

wein rah anam

ana nabati (m) ana  
nabatieh (f)

wein akrab telephone

## Host and Travel Reports

### Sentierinsieme/Pathways together 05

*Alanna, 18 yrs, "full of adventure and imagination"*

I'm sitting here at home in Australia, a world away from Italy, contemplating how to put into words an experience so unforgettable and beautiful there seems to be no words fit for it. A thousand pages would not paint the picture of that sunset, or recreate the laughter and conversation rolling up and down the Alpine slopes as we walked, or describe the crazy adventures or impress upon you the friendships that grew from nowhere... But as a promise to my dear friend Luigi, and as an honour for such a privilege, I will do my best!

Sentierinsieme 2005... Where do I begin! Well, I arrived in Milan, my first time in Italy, my first trip in Europe, 18 years old and full of "adventure" and "imagination" - and nerves! Of course I knew no-one, but that soon changed dramatically. I traveled in our Turkish friends' car to our weekend meeting place in Valsesia, Ömer and Ender I haven't forgotten you! Arriving late afternoon, riverside buzzed with people from every corner of the globe, introductions and exclamations of surprise and warm hugs and chatter circulating in at least five languages... a picture of Servas at its best!

As an Australian I have never been in an environment where English is not the main language, and I guess I took that for granted. To be involved in this group where language barriers are broken down and people manage to communicate outside words taught me something about people: that there is a connection beyond words and conversation, deeper than cultural differences, that allows us to build friendships, relationships which hold us together and really do make the world go round.

Our big group (a lot of people from ever age!) for the weekend explored the surrounding area, eating and sharing lunch on top of mountains - visiting churches older than my country's colonisation - arriving back in the evening to cool off in the emerald green waterhole, diving off the rock faces five at a time! Dinner was accompanied by animate conversations and life stories again in all languages, and followed by information/instruction sessions in French, Italian, German... Can anyone tell me what's going on? - New Years Resolution: learn another language!

Sunday 18th July 2005: A slightly smaller group congregates in Alagna as the starting place for our trek. Half of us will go 'harder' and the other half 'softer' but to me it doesn't matter where I go in these mountains as long as it is with good company, fresh air, and plenty of adventure! Our first day was only a short walk, but I'm sure Luigi, our Turkish boys, and Lena and Magdalena will all agree it was quite a crazy adventure! *"Where is Ender? I don't know, where is Mama? I don't know, why do you have their packs? I don't know I thought they were with you!...oh no..."*

Cecile and I slept in a tent with a postcard view of snow-capped Monte Rossa, after a night of 'polenta polenta polenta', hot mugs of tea and singing. Monday provided a stunning morning, but by noon when we reached the top of our pass the fog rolled in and the rain began. Out came the ponchos, and what a comic picture we all

... and another meeting

### Annual Meeting at the Jersey Shore, October 13 to 15

The US SERVAS annual conference will be held on the New Jersey shore in Brigantine on Saturday, October 14, 2006. Members who are not already 2006 electors who wish to vote must notify our office by August 5<sup>th</sup>.

The board is planning to meet on Sunday, October 15<sup>th</sup> and members are welcome to attend. A tour to Batsto Village in the nearby Pine Barrens is also planned for Sunday. On Friday evening, October 13<sup>th</sup>, we'll have a meet-and-greet session in Atlantic City (only 5 miles away). Please check our website [www.usservas.org](http://www.usservas.org) for the most current information; or if you are not internet active, please keep in contact with the office after July 1<sup>st</sup> either by telephone, 212-267-0252, or US mail, 11 John Street, Room 505.

For further information about the conference, contact Robert Allekotte, at [robabet@aol.com](mailto:robabet@aol.com) or (609)266-6065. A registration form is included in this newsletter.

were stumbling in a line like brightly coloured hunchbacks! But all these little battles and adventures and experiences only served to bring the whole group together. And the warm fire waiting for us was well worth it! And the food... mmmm!

The rest of the week blessed us with divine weather, plenty of mountain cheese (and polenta... never again!) a few blisters, lots of laughter, conversation for the mind and for the soul, and countless memories to pass on to the grandchildren!

Some of us continued on to Cinque Terre after very generously being hosted by Servas locals, and another addition to our group made us span four of the world's continents! Blessing came from Africa and definitely added a spirit to the trip. Europe, Africa, North America and Australia! Quite an extraordinary event in all aspects! The weather despite being very hot was beautiful, and again full of adventures and discoveries and singing (by torchlight on a moonlit stroll down the mountain!) and sunsets now ingrained in my memory.

There is so much more I could write about, but I will leave you here with this small taste of Sentierinsieme 2005 from the 'youngest and furthest' member's eyes. To all those who I shared these experiences with, I wish you all the best, to all my 'adoptive parents', and my dear friends and to those who showed me some of the world through bigger eyes, bless you and Molte grazie!

*Alanna Proud, Armidale, Australia*

## Country Reports

### Samarkand Celebrates

Hey, we're 2750 years old,  
so let's party!

In August and September, 2006, Samarkand residents, led by activists of the International Museum of Peace and Solidarity and the local Friendship Club "Esperanto" (almost all of them are members of Servas Uzbekistan!), will be holding parties to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the 2750th birthday of the City of Samarkand, listed in the World Heritage registry of UNESCO.

We invite you to party with us! Please send us your greetings, in whatever form and whatever language, for us to circulate and display. They can be letters, travel stories, news articles, books, brochures, poems, songs, photographs, drawings, etc., about Uzbekistan or Samarkand.

Anything, describing or portraying any aspect of life, including streets, stores, restaurants, hotels, communities, firms, and products, will be warmly welcomed. Everything we receive will be included in a special exhibit. Most interesting entries will be published in our national media. We are grateful for everything you choose to contribute.

Please don't wait until August; you can send your letters and other memorabilia right away to:

*Anatoly Ionesov,*  
Director International Museum of Peace and Solidarity

P.O. Box 76, UZ-140100 Samarkand Republic of Uzbekistan.

Phone/ fax: +998 (66) 233 17 53.

Web:

<http://www.civilsoc.org/nisorgs/uzbek/peacemsm.htm>

<http://peacetur.freenet.uz>

<http://peace.museum.com>

<http://www.aliaflanko.de/urbo/samarkand/muzeo.html>

E-mail: [imps86@yahoo.com](mailto:imps86@yahoo.com)

Dear Cintia, thank you for writing and telling about the good news of 400% growth in group of the Province of Cordoba. I definitely agree that Servas meetings are the way to bring enthusiasm, volunteerism and growth to Servas. We have monthly meeting here in San Francisco and about 20% - 40% of the attendees are individuals who want to learn more about Servas, a concept too good to be true. Visitors are enthusiastic and join Servas.

### Strengthening Servas through Cross Border Ties

One of the topics of the USA-Mexican Bi-National Servas Conference held in Cuernavaca Mexico June 2-4, 2006 was the prejudices each country may hold toward the other. In our workshop, it became clear that there were negative attitudes toward our fellow country men and women as well as toward those in other countries. Many without a factual basis.

We wondered out loud why we in the USA had not received Servas travelers from Mexico. Perhaps it was not prejudice. Perhaps it is that there are 12 million Mexicans in the USA and Servas members from Mexico tend to visit friends and family when visiting the USA. Because US Servas has very few Hispanic hosts, it was proposed that when Mexican Servas members visit the USA, they introduce their Mexican friends and family to US Servas hosts. In this way visitors can help broaden US Servas membership and develop stronger cross boarder ties. We then wondered how many Servas hosts in Germany were of Turkish origin. Perhaps Turkish Servas Members could introduce their friends and family in Germany to Servas hosts in Germany. Perhaps African Servas members living abroad could introduce their families and friends to Servas in their home country. In this manner, Servas could expand by solidifying a personal "buddy" link between national groups.

This support for Servas could be something individual Servas members could do the help Servas become a multinational organization within each country.

As the Vice President of Servas International, I would like to learn what individuals and what groups are doing to expand and strengthen cross cultural understanding in Servas and/or in their own community. Please contact me, Mary Jane Mikuriya at [mikuriya@aol.com](mailto:mikuriya@aol.com). Be sure to put the word Servas in the subject or it may be assigned to my aggressive Spam box.

I look forward to hearing from you.

*Mary Jane Mikuriya, USA*

## Comment on Growth

### Project of Growth in Servas

Brief description to be considered by those who find in it elements or concepts that could be considered important.

\* General Considerations:

This Project is the result of the analysis and observation of more than twenty years both as a Servas Host and Traveller.

I analyzed –and still do it- either hosts and travelers from my country and in other ones whenever I had the chance to travel myself. I could notice that the phenomenon of the meeting between Host and Traveller usually is, in a high degree, excellent.

Normally, the basic process of the application of the general rules expected by Servas takes place.

But, at the same time, I could see, in most cases, serious problems of harmony, communication and participation for the necessary integral growth of Servas.

'We, in our city, are so confronted and so separated that whenever we run across each other we do not greet ourselves, and we never hold meetings. This is very sad'. These are the comments of a foreign Servas person that I received at home.

There is a serious problem which starts from the very beginning and concretely it arises from the interviews.

During the interviews each candidate to Host, Day Host or Traveller should clearly learn about the 'obligation' to give an answer whenever his/her Coordinator calls for meetings or to take part in some event. The interviewer should not only lay stress on it but he/she should make sure that the candidate has thoroughly understood this concept. Besides, he/she should provide the candidate with the name of the coordinator of his/her area.

'Peace building begins in the attitude adopted by each individual with either in front of or together with the other'; which part of his/her best this person is willing to give to the others. And this is the point that we have to work on whether we wish to be called Peace Builders 'since nobody can give what he/she does not possess'.

If the Servas groups leave behind their individual selfishness and meanness in order to work together as a 'team', then the results referred to integral growth really work, since we are already growing as a 'team'.

This item deserves a deep and detailed explanation separately because it is necessary to create a plan with targets to achieve.

Thus, growth in a whole gets much easier with common targets with common basis, the only task left is to select and to adequate the most effective strategies to let new members to join Servas.

Although it is true that not all human beings can identify themselves with Servas, I believe that the ones that are already Servas are interested in discovering in the other that side willing to be his/her best as a Servas member.

The point is not to understand or to see Servas as a means and not as a purpose itself. I must not take advantage of Servas but I must give Servas an answer of participation and commitment beyond respect for its outlines.

This is another item which deserves a detailed and deep explanation with its pertaining action plan.

The 90% of the Servas all over the world with whom I talked about these matters through twenty years told me that ABSOLUTELY NOTHING had been carried out on the issues mentioned above...

That not even during their interviews anybody had told them about this neither in scheduled or occasional meetings. Nobody meditates about growth. It seems that growth would depend upon Chance and not on a scheduled action plan intended to be carried out.

But intention restrains when there is no trust in those who lead the organization either to a national or international level.

This trust depends on many factors:

- . Fluent communication in one of the principal ones
- . Permanent updated information is another
- . Seriousness and transparency in procedures
- . Enthusiasm and motivation
- . Acknowledgement, encouragement and support etc.

So to say, this is another subject that deserves a separate development in another opportunity whether this presentation is taken into account by the pertinent officers.

I decided in my life from the moment I joined Servas in 1984 to dedicate it the seriousness and participation that such an important Organization like this deserves. I think that Servas should be a reliable individual responsible for all its actions...

I have an absolute willingness to find the time to promote meetings. Meetings that could enable us to form strong teams capable of making action plans in order to accomplish an integral growth of Servas wherever it may be needed...

That's why, if those who have the responsibility to evaluate this project believe that it could be of any benefit to our Organization, I OFFER MYSELF to make a similar project for Latin America or where the International Board may considered it necessary and convenient. When the project for the National Meeting in Córdoba of all the areas of the country was launched, it was made with the idea of asking area representatives from other countries to come also. But the National Secretary suggested to leave this invitations for other event.

*Julio Audino Rodríguez, Servas Regional Co-ordinator  
Córdoba – Argentina*

## A Host report

### Greetings from Myanmar.

In late 2004 Myanmar was first added to the long list of countries with resident SERVAS hosts. My family and I have met a wide variety of SERVAS travelers since that time, and recently I reflected on our past year of SERVAS visits.

I am a teacher in Yangon with two teenage children, and live with my mother and brother in the type of extended family dwelling that is common in my country. Up to the recent past, overnight visitors have not been allowed in Myanmar homes, and for that reason we registered as day hosts. In fact, as it turned out, a SERVAS traveler did spend a night at our home, and another "Burmese enthusiast" friend of a SERVAS traveler spent about six.

Our first SERVAS visitors were a German couple. They made an appointment with my mom and walked up to our house on the way back from Shwe Dagon Pagoda. We served them supper that evening, I was sad to miss this as I was working late at school that night, and arrived home shortly before my Mom had our driver take them back to their Hotel. But all was not lost as they were a wonderful introduction to SERVAS encounters for my Mom, who enjoyed entertaining our visitors. After I had a short but pleasant chat, my Mom arranged to show them more of Yangon on the next day.

We were surprised by them on their last day in Yangon, when they directed the taxi driver that was taking them to the airport to stop by our house. They left us some gifts, including the Lonely Planet book that we had not previously seen, and is an amusing and fascinating read for a Myanmar native.

Siriporn from Thailand is the SERVAS secretary for her country, and it was through her that I had first registered as a SERVAS traveler, and then as a host. When Siriporn first visited Myanmar, we briefly met at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, but she could not make a visit to our house as her schedule was too tight. Nevertheless, when she came for her second visit to Myanmar, she stayed at our house for a night and toured meditation centers and Scott Market. We had a chance to learn a lot more about SERVAS during her visit.

We also hosted Maria, a friend of a Danish SERVAS host that contacted me when I was working as a guest teacher at a Danish Efterskole in 2005. The Danish SERVAS host had seen a letter about my visit in the SERVAS newsletter and told Maria, as she knew Maria had often visited Myanmar and would be most interested in meeting me when I was in her

country. Without me ever meeting Maria's SERVAS friend, Maria hosted me in Denmark, and has since stayed with us in Yangon on 3 occasions. Maria was a wonderful host and visitor, so curious about our culture and so generous with help when I was in Denmark.

Our next visitor was a solo American traveler. He left a message on our phone when he arrived, and my Mom and I met him at his hotel and took him to a local Indian restaurant for dinner. With an intense interest in world politics, he was an excellent talker with many ideas on each country's sovereignty and the principles of non intervention in others' affairs. Then we took him to the river side near Botahtaung Pagoda and back to his hotel. The next day, he came to our house, which is very convenient to drop in, being quite near to Shwe Dagon Pagoda. We went to a nice clean restaurant where we could get Burmese food for dinner. He was widely traveled, and had spent many years in Taiwan. He startled our neighboring Chinese diners at the local restaurant when he engaged them in animated discussion in their native tongue! We had a very nice chat and I could see that he had many different opinions and a way of thinking, unlike any other US guys I have ever met. This wide range of ideas is one of the factors that makes SERVAS so attractive to my family.

Gabriele and Peter, another German couple, have been our most recent visitors. They came to our house for lunch on the second day of their trip. Then they went North to see the country and my Mom made Hotel reservations for them in Inle Lake and for when they would return to Yangon. On return I and my mom took them to dinner for Myanmar food, which Peter enjoyed a lot. The next day, my Mom escorted them to a meditation centre and several interesting places. They were very nice and we shared our ideas and thoughts of our different societies and cultures.

We know that we will never get a large number of SERVAS travelers in Yangon; who would get a travel paper when there is only one host in a country - but we have really enjoyed meeting the people that have contacted us, and hope to meet more over the coming years. Most travelers find Myanmar a picturesque and very welcoming country, and the chance to meet a local SERVAS host is possibly an extra added bonus.

*Soung Sandar Aung, Yangon, Myanmar*

### TRIP REPORT 2006 SPAIN/ ANDALUCIA & IRELAND

I recently travelled in both Andalusia and Ireland.

#### SPAIN

Andalusia was decked out in springtime flowers and pleasantly hot in the midday sun. The days spilled over into long warm evenings, perfect for cafes and street life. A SERVAS family in the Sierra Nevada welcomed me with classic SERVAS hospitality. Marisa and I went for a long walk, and watched the sun set behind blue mountain peaks. We then cooked the evening meal together. One highlight was a huge cured ham clamped upright on a wooden platter. A deep valley had been carved in its top surface as the family sliced off ham for each evening meal. Their daughter arrived from Madrid, and neighbours from across the valley.

Glasses of red wine in hand, we discussed Servas, Spain, summer gardens, bad droughts, Belgium, and many other topics. They are expanding the house using traditional methods, with environmentally friendly modifications. The architect's drawings show that they will have a lovely abode when all the labours are finished.

#### IRELAND

In Ireland, I was treated to 6 days of sun and only one of rain. The landscape and culture could not be more different from Andalusia, but the SERVAS hospitality was the same. I stayed with one host I met last year while on the SERVAS Sentieri Insieme hike in Italy, and then with another host further north in Westport. We took walks, cooked together and went to pubs for Guinness and music. We compared lives, travels, political views and future plans, and profited greatly from one another's company. One memorable evening in Westport, my host and I attended a talk on "Culture, Politics, Democracy and Sustainability", dropped in at two different pubs to share drinks with friends and locals, spent 10 minutes at a dance party give by someone's relative, and then an hour at a house party in honour of a recent graduation. We tumbled into bed at 2 am, tired but well fed, well entertained, well informed and full of well being. SERVAS continues to offer me a window on other cultures, the friendship of "strangers", and the sense that warm-hearted people who care for their fellow man and for this planet are not a rarity. Vive SERVAS!

*Paola de Rose,, Brussels, Belgium.*

### Our experience with Servas Lima, Peru, summer 2005

In 2003 we travelled for the first time with Servas. At that moment Bram studied in Wien (Austria). We went to the mountains and visited some Servas Families. Discovering Servas was for us as discovering "another world", a world with very hospitable people. We still remember the very interesting discussions we had.

In 2005 when we decided to travel to Peru, it was the most normal thing for us to contact the national secretary of Servas Peru to inform him about our arrival. We were very surprised when the national secretary, Fernando Ugarte, invited us to stay with his family. The hospitality of the Peruvians is very extraordinary: the secretary Fernando and his brother came to the airport and brought us to there place. We got a very warm welcome and from the first moment we felt at home.

The destination Peru and the arrival at Lima were very special for us: we travelled to Peru with the intention to work for two months as volunteers in the north of Peru. Bram and I as well are grown up as 'ecologists'. To work as volunteers in an ecological organization has always been a dream: we wanted to see and experience the ecological reality at the other end of the world. No doubt that the reality is completely different of the ideas we had. The struggle of thousand of people, of so many organizations, of engineers,... against pollution produced by mine activities, made us conscious of the fact that international cooperation is very important. When we were back in Belgium we were convinced that the biodiversity of Peru is very important for the the rest of the world and it has to be protected.

The story of the two months we spent in Jaén (Cajamarca) is a a complete other story. ( Have a look at [www.vima.org.pe](http://www.vima.org.pe))

Before leaving Peru we have lived two months with hard work, with so many interesting experiences, although sometimes very cruel (as there were the killed people during the pacific protests).

The three days we spent with the family of Fernando Ugarte were very welcome and important, it were days of adaptation and acclimatisation

The family Ugarte introduced us to the Peruvian culture. With Fernando, the national secretary, we dicovered interesting and special parts of Lima. Without him we'll never have had the chance to know them.

**These are the very important moments that only Servas can give you: discover together with the host the real city, the real country you are travelling in.**

Thank you!

*Ilona Plichart and Bram Moeskops, Belgium*

## Youth and Peace

### SYLE

#### (Servas Youth Language Exchange)

Hello my beloved Servas, here it is me again to present to you the Servas Youth latest data.

- The international Servas Youth Coordinator is sending a report to EXCO of activities of this first term of the current year 2006. I will share that report with all of you through this amazing channel that Jane has built for us. Here now I am sending the news about the "Servas Youth Languages Exchange" surely you heard something about it, if not, please "visit [youth.servas.org](http://youth.servas.org)" our Web site, well... is under construction but you will find some info and in time, not so much, you will find everything about Servas Youth there.
- **SYLE** (Servas Youth Languages Experience) This program is growing and now is in its second stage of life, and we're already thinking and working towards the third and the fourth stages. Working directly with several Servas youth volunteers, we can now announce that this year (July) three young travelers will participate in a SYLE.
  - Sarena Talbot (Servas Canada) is traveling to Rosario City.
  - Anaëlle Josse (Servas France) is traveling to Mexico City.
  - Georgina Teglia (Servas Argentina) is traveling to San Paulo City.
- The SYLE have different organizers in each city working directly and daily with the International Youth Coordinator.
  - Maria Jimena Zaeta is organizing Rosario City.
  - Marina Maluly Pacheco is organizing Sao Paulo City.
  - Lilly Kerekes is organizing Mexico City.
- I am already in touch with other cities that may host a SYLE in the third stage of the program, and improving the information available about the program. Montevideo (Uruguay) Torino (Italy), Vancouver (Canada). Guatemala (Guatemala), La Plata (Argentina), Renne (Francia) and others could be the next cities to host a SYLE.
- For me it is a very important goal to develop this program that was first a while idea, after an adventure and now is a growing reality. If you want to help me in any way to promote the SYLE feel free to write me to [pablochufeni@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:pablochufeni@yahoo.com.ar)

Lots of love to you my friends and remember that we do have the chance to improve this world, just choose a way and do it.

*Pablo Chufeni, Youth Co-ordinator, Argentina*

### REPORT OF THE 'PEACE GROUP' 'DAY OF PEACE' 18<sup>th</sup> June 2006

Two years ago I joined the national team of Servas Belgium and Luxemburg as Peace Secretary. Since one year, Servas members answered the announcement of creating a peace group.

Their concerns are the following:

- What do members feel about Servas and its connection to peace?
- How could we create dynamics within Servas?
- How could we define the general core of Servas?

**The answer and the result were:** Let's make a group and let's get to know each other better.

**The specific actions were:**

- Inquire from our members as to what Servas as an organisation means to them.

**The general answer is:** Servas is an organisation to approach others and by this create a peaceful mind without fear of being different.

- Inquire if Servas members were ready to give hospitality to people active in peace organisations but non-Servas members.

We already have 15 families willing to invite in their home non Servas members active for peace. The inquiry is still going on!

- Organize a mega picnic with the theme: "I would like to know you better!"

The purpose is to stimulate visits between our own members, the national group of Belgium & Luxemburg. More than 30 members presented themselves to participate to this exchange.

The picnic itself was a great success. More than 80 participants came to meet each other, to express their wish to be more active within Servas and to create more dynamics within the organisation.

The peace group is also getting bigger, we have 3 more members to organize the 2007 Peace Day. This will take place in the region of Ronquières/Ecaussines (Southern Belgium)

**My conclusion is:**

When people get to know each other better they feel part of something in common and positive energy is emerging. Start small, within your own country and develop the positive mind of a peace network within an international peace organisation.

Peaceful regards to all Servas members.

*Julie Pesesse, Peace Sec., Servas Belgium & Luxemburg*