



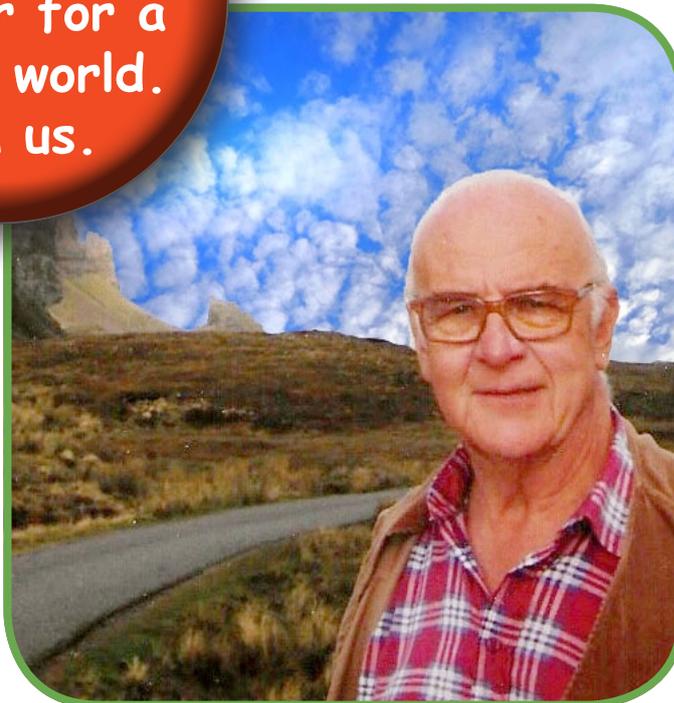
News

BULLETIN

From the Servas International Executive Committee



We
are all
Servas folks
- eager for a
better world.
Join us.





BULLETIN

From the Servas International Executive Committee

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Super Servas hosts in 2020: See p.13.

Gender Equality – now at the heart of Servas business

by Jonny Sågänger, SI President

Gender equality has during recent years become one of the main areas of activity in Servas International.

Let me explain why I make this claim.

At the recently finished 65th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, UNCSW65, on March 15-26 there was a record number of participants representing Servas (read more on page 5). The Servas representatives have grown from six in 2019 to a record 32 this year. This is promising news since the work for women’s empowerment and gender equality is at the very heart of both the Servas foundation of values and our mission.

Gender equality is one of the three United Nations sustainable development goals (UN SDGs) that Servas International is proactively supporting.



At the Servas International General Assembly (SI GA) 2018 the delegates from the Servas member groups made two major decisions with implications on gender equality:

Decision 1: During that meeting it was incorporated in the preamble of Servas International’s statutes

https://servas.org/sites/default/files/uploads/other_files/2019/Servas_International_Statutes_SI_GA_2018.pdf

that one of the fundamental principles of the organization is the belief that equal rights of all human beings is needed for a more peaceful world.

This principle means that it’s part of Servas’ mission to support women to get more power to influence decision making on all levels of society; locally, nationally and globally.

Decision 2: Servas International should be committed to the active pursuit of gender balance in all the organisation’s work and at all levels of governance.

Gender equality – now at the heart of Servas’ business



SI President Jonny Sågänger (Sweden, right) doing dishes with former SI Exco board members Pablo Colangelo (Argentina, left) and Venkatasubramanian Lakshmanan Subramanian (India). This photo was taken pre-pandemic (before physical distancing became important to avoid the spread of the corona virus).

It's my firm belief that SI GA 2018 was the moment when women's rights and other gender equality became a major movement that contributes to the overarching and long-term vision of Servas International: a more peaceful world. I participated at the SI GAs in 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018. I have seen gender issues gather momentum.

Servas' hospitality program is also contributing to a world with more equal opportunities for women and men. The program gives women a possibility to travel with a greater degree of safety while offering homestays with certified members. The SI News Bulletin has in previous issues published articles written by women who describe their experiences travelling with Servas.

The hospitality program also gives women an opportunity to get personal insights in societies and countries where gender equality might be more developed than where they themselves live. This can give them inspiration to keep on striving to improve their own rights and conditions.

I'm extremely proud of being part of an organization that is actively supporting women's advancement and helping to forge gender equality with the goal to build more inclusive and caring societies.

Why do I believe gender equality is important?

- Societies that value women and men as equal are safer and healthier.
- Gender equality is essential for economic prosperity in a society.
- Gender equality reduces violence against women and girls.
- Gender equality is a human right, says the UN's Declaration of human rights.

Despite these facts, most societies around the world are painstakingly slow in offering women and men equal rights. It's been 110 years since the first International Women's Day. At the present rate of change, it will – says the World Economic Forum http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf

– take nearly another century to achieve what the organization call gender parity*.

I agree with the organization's statement:

“That's a timeline we simply cannot accept in today's globalized world, especially among younger generations who hold increasingly progressive views of gender equality”.

* The terms gender parity and gender equality are sometimes used interchangeably but gender parity differs from gender equality in that it is a descriptive measure only and does not involve value judgements or argue for policy changes in the way gender equality does. Source: Wikipedia: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gender_parity

—Jonny Sägänger

President, Servas International



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Record SI Participation at Women's Empowerment Conference



By Jonny Sågänger, SI President



The global yearly event, United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, UNCSW, has over the last years become one of Servas International's main peace activities.

In 2019 Servas was represented by six registered persons. Last year 20 had registered but the meeting was cancelled because of the pandemic.

For the sixty-fifth UNCSW – which took place on March 15 to March 26 – Servas International had registered a record number of members for active participation.

The UNCSW eventually allowed all 32 interested Servas members to participate digitally, and others were involved in the preparations. The UNCSW65 used a hybrid format with mostly virtual meetings.

Servas International's web based co-working space *Confluence* that was launched in 2019 has been an important digital tool for the planning, preparations and the execution of Servas participation at UNCSW65.

"We've been using *Confluence* as a hub for sharing information and a place where we have written our biographies and descriptions of our focus on women's issues. *Confluence* was also used for posting summaries of the live sessions which we attended," said Paige LaCombe.

The plan is that *Confluence* will have an even more important function for next year's UNCSW.

About UNCSW and Servas International

UNCSW is arranged by UN Women which is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. As a global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.

Servas International is allowed to designate representatives to attend the annual sessions of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women since Servas is a non-governmental organization. The NGO is accredited to and in good standing with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, ECOSOC.

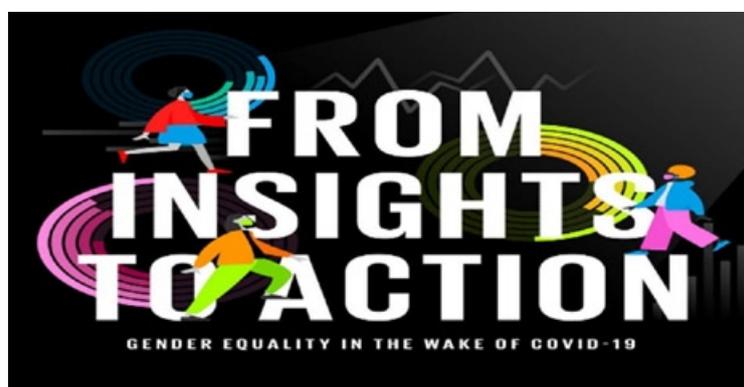
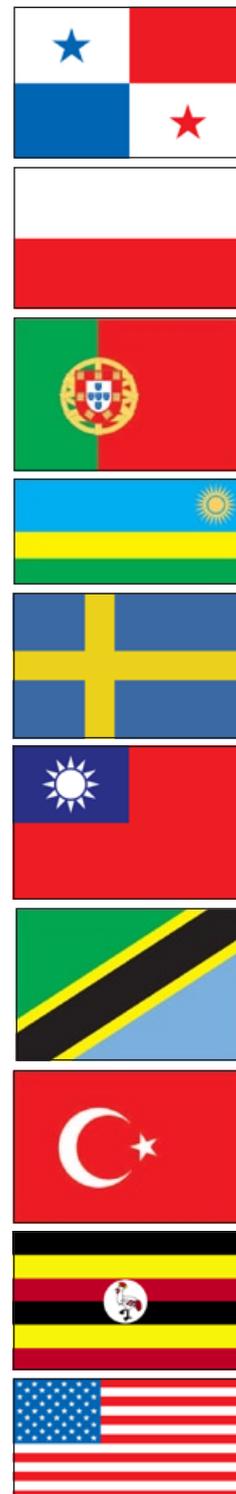
Gender Equality is one of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2015-2030.

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32 Servas designated representatives attended this year’s United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. They were:

- Chloe Mason, Australia (Peace Secretary)
- Angelika Hofmann, Austria (Rep Servas UN-Vienna)
- Keletso Patience Mopati, Botswana (Member)
- Alvany Santiago, Brazil (Regional coordinator/SI Conflict Resolution Committee)
- Larissa Sousa, Brazil
- Barbara Mitchell-Pollock, Canada (Peace Team)
- Kent Macaulay, Canada (Rep Servas UN – NY, Recording Secretary)
- Julie Cormack, Canada (Past National Secretary, 2016-2020)
- Danielle Serres, France (UN Coordinator)
- Helga Merkelbach, Germany (Rep Servas UN – Geneva)
- Simin Bakhtiar, Iran (Member)
- Zahra Karimi, Iran (Peace Secretary)
- Tomoko Hirai, Japan (National Secretary, till March 2021)
- Suwako Nagata, Japan (National Secretary (from April 2021))
- Yukiko Namariyama, Japan (Youth rep)
- Lilly Kerekes, Mexico (SI Translation Team)
- Eufrazio Centella, Panama (Peace Secretary)
- Genowefa Jagoda Watrak, Poland (Regional coordinator 20 years)
- Cristina Figueiredo, Portugal (Servas Peace Group)
- Fidele Rutayisire, Rwanda (National Secretary)
- Erika Juhlin, Sweden (Sweden youth Representative CSW65)
- Hsueh-mei Wang, Taiwan (National Secretary)
- Terry Place, Tanzania (Peace Secretary)
- Esra Alev, Turkey (Member)
- Prossy Nampija, Uganda (Member)
- Jeanne Devine, USA (Rep SI-UN – NY)
- Yosi McIntire, USA (Peace Secretary)
- Alison Telsey, USA (Rep Servas UN – NY)
- Paige LaCombe, USA (SI Peace Secretary)
- Brita Schmitz, USA (Rep Servas UN – NY)
- Ellen Krause-Grosman, USA
- Joanne Ferguson Cavanaugh, USA (US Servas board member)

Shown are the flags of the countries of the attendees.



SERVAS Peace School Program 2020

by Aynur Gül Şahin, a Learning and Impact Specialist.



The project coordinator for this program is Mehmet Ateş. Thanks to the Servas International Development Committee and Servas Turkey for their support.

This is our evaluation of the SERVAS Peace School Program 2020, held online July 2 - 20, 2020. The main purpose of this summer program was to learn about each other and exchange cultural values. The SERVAS Peace School has grown every summer since beginning in 2009. Attendance is free.

All workshops are based on the volunteers' interests and backgrounds. The schedule is flexible and the program was run by 45 volunteer facilitators from 13 countries. 64 children, aged 5 to 14, participated in 46 workshops on a wide range of topics.

Analysis of the Workshops:

The volunteer facilitators listed the objectives of the workshops, which included learning about:

- Mayan culture through its music and languages
- Canada
- Uganda's culture for peace
- Italian Culture (landscapes, body language, traditional food)
- Arabic language, and the culture and diversity of Morocco

Activity-oriented students learned about:

- creating a story based on their own folklore
- traditional, recyclable local toys and musical instruments.
- basics of Chess
- animal species in Africa
- reusing different materials for ecology

To increase knowledge of sciences:

- the night sky, gravity, the solar system
- the 4 seasons, day and night, time zones
- health, birds, ecology, and nature.

Intended Learning Objectives

All facilitators observed that the **content was relevant** and the Children **were curious**.

Improvements

For future programs, it has been observed that **Online group work is possible, interactive content is always interesting and fun, and an alternative plan is always necessary.**

Feedback from Participants

The favorite workshops were astronomy, Bingo, dances from different cultures, origami, culture sessions, ecology related activities and language classes. Some challenges for participants were language, internet connection, duration of sessions and different facilitator styles.

Conclusion

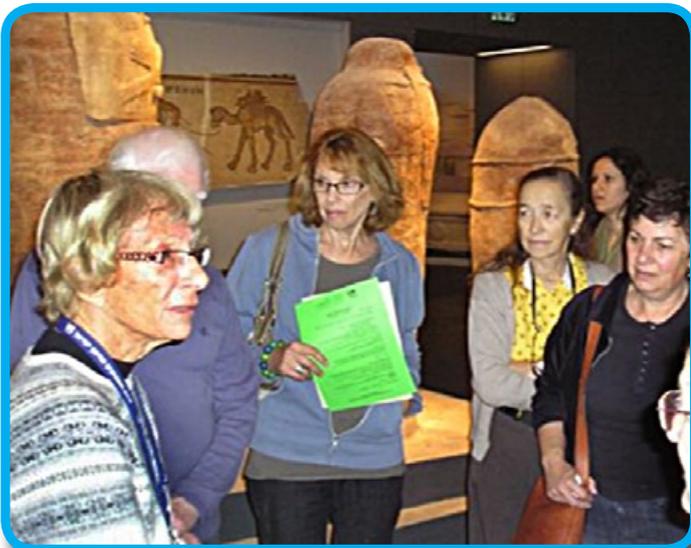
SERVAS Peace School Program 2020 was a great opportunity for participants and facilitators to practice 21st century skills. Students also developed a good sense of global citizenship that respects key universal values such as peace, sustainability and awareness.

Ways Forward

An international network of SERVAS volunteers can impact people and their culture policies by showing the cultural diversity of our “global village”. Attendees still keep in touch as new workshops keep running, maintaining ongoing learning. For the full report, please click on the link at Academia or Researchgate.

Researchgate: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348993983_SERVAS_PEACE_SCHOOL_SUMMER_PROGRAM_EVALUATION_REPORT

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Judy Shotten was very involved in Servas. She lived most of her life in Israel, and passed away recently. I had the pleasure of staying with her in Jerusalem some years ago.

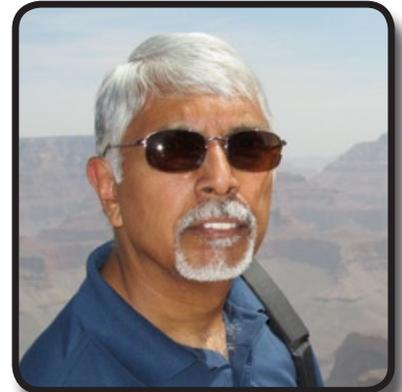
She led many museum tours. One day while showing some Servas members Caesarea in Israel she bent down to casually pick up something. I asked her what she found.

“Oh, just a Roman coin, they often appear after a rain.” —Michael Johnson.

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Servas International Financial Report

**By Radha B. Radhakrishna
Treasurer, Servas International**



In my last report (SINB 2020-3), I wrote about our budget and how Servas International gets funded. In this report, I am happy to write that we have proposed a new method for funding Servas International. Key people will have a distant vote in May 2021. There are 5 motions in the vote including the new funding proposal.

The funding proposal is based on the following:

(a) The amount that will be charged each year will be based on the SI budget that was approved for that year by the general assembly (GA).

(b) The amount payable by each member group will be calculated as follows... The total SI budget will be divided by the total number of members worldwide. Then the amount payable per member is adjusted for the Human Development Index (HDI) score for the country (The index is published by the UN). Therefore some countries will pay a little more, some less, and a few nothing.

The EXCO and the Servas Community believe the result will be just and equitable to all members, ensuring the financial security of Servas.

The year 2020 has been very difficult due to the pandemic. We have been very careful about our expenses for the first 11 months of our fiscal year (1 April, 2020 – 28 February, 2021) as shown in the Table below.

Also, I am pleased to report that almost all countries have sent their dues for 2020. Of the total amount of CHF 56,280 that is receivable for the year (as approved by the General Assembly), at the time of going to press, we have already received CHF 55,047. I would also like to thank Servas Australia, Servas Canada, Servas Switzerland and Servas Spain for their generous donations this year.

I have a few comments about our cash flows this year. Usually, our expenses each year are in the CHF 75,000 range. However, we have spent only about CHF 22,000 so far. A big reason for this is that our spending on IT is significantly less than budgeted. The reason for that is that the IT team is still putting together the specs of Version 2 of Servas Online. This is being done by volunteers so the expenses have been low so far. When the Version 2 build starts, we expect to spend about CHF 75,000 on it. So we need money in the bank to fund this new software system. Fortunately, we have enough to fund it. Also, I am hopeful that we can fund a general assembly meeting next year.

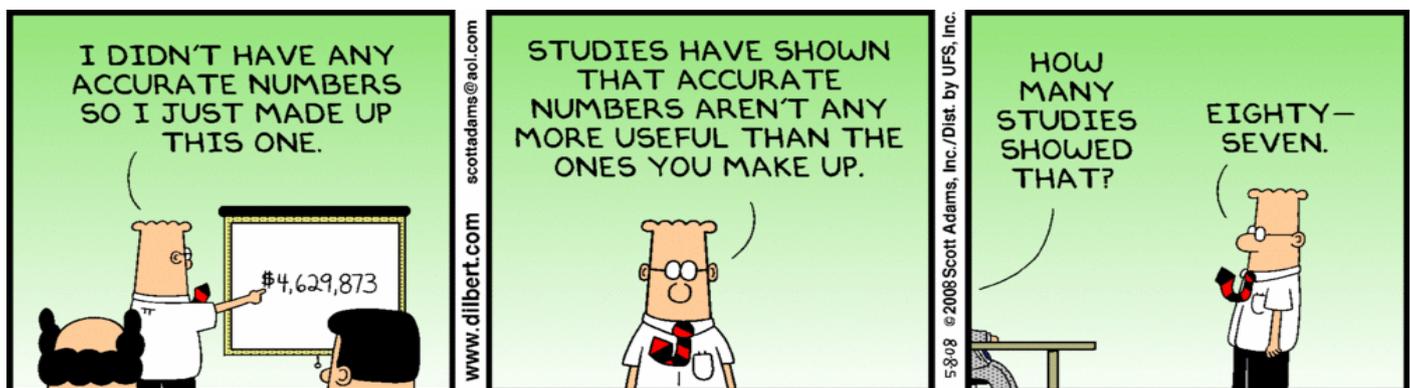
I will be keeping an eye on all expenses and our cash flow and reporting to you periodically. We do not want our expenses to be more than our inflows.

It is wise to hold sufficient resources on hand for Servas to function. As a rule, it is good practice to have at least 3 years of expense money in the bank account at any time.

I thank everybody for their continued support of Servas and look forward to a return to normal. I am eager to begin traveling and hosting and promoting peace.

Warm regards,
In peace, Radha
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PRELIMINARY CASH FLOW STATEMENT (1 April 2020 – 28 February 2021)		CHF
Receipts		
Stamp receipts		53,894.74
Donations		5,310.00
Interest		25.00
Total receipts to date		59,229.74
Payments		
Youth/Regional meetings		-
Information Technology expenses		14,626.79
Other operating expenses		2,626.78
Development reserve disbursements		325.65
Capital Work in Progress		460.00
Legal fees/ Servas Registration		3,555.25
Bank Charges		186.05
FX Loss		
Total payments to date		21,780.52
Excess of receipts over payments		37,449.22
Beginning bank balance		368,676.26
Ending bank balance		406,125.48



Zoom Reunites Two Families

By John Whidden

(Online Administrator and Regional Host Coordinator, Servas Canada)

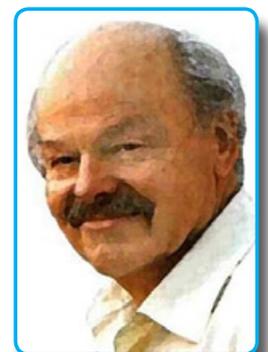
The warm Galilean evening was in sharp contrast to the frigid Canadian morning, as smiles, laughter, reminiscing, and a Zoom meeting, brought two families back together.

Nine years earlier, my wife and I were looking for a cultural experience for our young teenagers. Luckily, we found a Servas family in Tzipori, a moshav in Northern Israel. We contacted Adar and Anna who said that they would be more than happy to host us for a few days. The fact that they had recently welcomed their third child and would be celebrating Shavuot did not seem to bother them so we agreed on a date.

When we arrived, our families bonded immediately. When the time came for us to leave, Adar and Anna insisted that we stay. We had arranged another visit with a wonderful Servas family in the Golan Heights so we had to go. But, a few days later we were missing our new friends and returned with freshly picked cherries for a second visit. We pitted, stewed, and cooked the cherries into jam and pies; even the children got into the action. After more fun-filled days, we were allowed to depart only when we had promised to consider another visit. Our longer stay put us on a tight travel plan, but we missed our friends so two weeks later we arranged one more night together before heading home.

It is these unexpected delights which make Servas so special to us. And when our now 21 and 23-year-old daughters chose to take time out of their work and exam schedules to join the Zoom reunion, we realized that it truly had been a valuable cross-cultural experience; one which would bring a smile to the face of Servas founder Bob Luitweiler.

Photos: The children making cookies together. Adar and John making cherry jam.



Bob Luitweiler

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Servas Canada Corner

By Nancy Palardy, National Secretary



After a break of nearly 5 years, Servas Canada has revived the Servas Canada newsletter, which we hope to publish a few times a year. www.canadaservas.org.

Servas Canada has had a few online events: a “Happy Hour” social, two discussions about Women, with plans for more events: “Servas encounters” and trivia quizzes.

Sponsoring Young Writers

Servas Canada and other countries donated money to Servas Brazil to buy prizes for a writing contest. The latest winner was Julia Renata Mesquita de Brito. Her essay title was “environment peace and the new normal.” The contest was called: “**Environment, Peace and Covid-19: What has it got to do with me?**” The Organizing Committee wrote: “We are reminded that Education takes place in different settings.”



Fees around the world

Some Servas countries have lifetime Honorary Members. Others have an annual fee that includes hosting and travel for the year. Some nations have a membership fee, but you pay extra to travel. If there is enough interest in sharing information about this, we may put an article in our next issue.

This is your newsletter: we have nothing without your input. Thank you.

Tales without Travel

by Valerie Liske



Because of a Servas initiative, Angela in Italy, and I in Canada, email regularly. This keeps her English fluent, and we talk about everything. It will be wonderful to meet one day (in Canada or Italy).

To learn more log into your Servas account, click on **My Servas** and choose **News** and then look for the Servas International **Virtual Travel Initiative** — a new way to travel.

Photos: Valerie [left] and Angela.



Super Servas Hosts in 2020

By Michael Johnson, Servas Canada

My wife and I met several superb Servas hosts in Vietnam and Thailand. We spent all of March with wonderful Servas hosts in Mexico. Thanks so much to all of them.

In S.E. Asia we met our hosts during the weekend or in the evening, rather than stay overnight. It was often easier for everyone.

One host travelled 5 hours by bus to visit us in Bangkok just for lunch.



Photos: Hosts took us to lunch in Chiang Mai, Thailand. [above]. The sons wore sweaters at 37C. Left: The past National Sec of Thailand treated us to a 500 km. tour of: sun-loving bats, temples and massages.



In March we flew to Mexico where we were given our own house but shared meals, movies and cooking daily with our hosts. Our other Mexico friendship started with the “Best Mistake I Ever Made.” Three years ago, I missed our flight home. But our hosts invited us to ‘housesit’ their home overlooking the ocean. We agreed and stayed another week. Three years later they invited us again. We had 10 days together in March 2020 before the Covid lockdown.



Photos: Sampling homemade ice cream with our hosts in Mexico, pre-Covid. Later, we were then “forced” to isolate at our hosts’ hotel.

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Our “Doubles” in New Zealand



By Michael Johnson, SI News designer.

We all have a gold mine at our fingertips: servas.org.

Michael and Daphne in Canada, found their “doubles”

Michael and Daphne in New Zealand.

The Canadians write: Although we are a 30 hours flight apart, each couple has two grown children, and speaks English and Spanish.

We live in Cambridge, a short drive N. W. of Hamilton, Canada.

They live in Hamilton, a short drive N. W. of Cambridge, New Zealand.

We have had the pleasure of hosting over 500 travellers in 40 years. We have visited about 200 hosts worldwide, spending most of March 2020 with two Servas couples in Mexico. And we hosted the same Korean couple.

During two trips to New Zealand. I found it especially moving to see Christchurch before and then after the devastating earthquakes.

I feel so blessed to have a world full of “friends to be” in Servas.

Maybe next year we will get to visit our “doubles” in New Zealand.

I found over 100 Michaels on SOL. Find your “doubles”.

— Michael and Daphne, Canada.

Photos:

2012: Daphne (Canada) gets Korean massage.

2014: Chairs represent lives lost in earthquakes.





Our “Doubles”: Michael [Mike] and Daphne in New Zealand write:

Living in a remote country we have valued and enjoyed our Servas journey.

Amongst our first Servas visitors was a California couple with whom we later travelled in Bali and visited them in San Diego. We are still in touch. Our most recent Servas travellers were the delightful Lee family from South Korea. We have hosted other Servas travellers, and happily visited hosts in the US, Guatemala and Europe.

Daphne began travelling early, spending a year in high school as an AFS student in Minnesota, USA. Later she spent two years in Hawaii studying social work. [AFS has intercultural programs worldwide: afs.org]

As a family we hosted AFS students from Japan, Italy, Spain and Colombia. Our son, Simon spent a year in Argentina with a lovely family. Our daughter, Julie studied in Spain, lived in Switzerland for 12 years, and now runs a Latin American dance school in Auckland.

We look forward to open borders, post-Covid, and welcoming more Servas travellers.
 ---Daphne and Mike Bell, Hamilton, New Zealand

Photos: Family and friends welcome Columbian refugee family: far right Daphne & Mike. Daphne & Mike dining with the delightful Lee-Kim family from South Korea.

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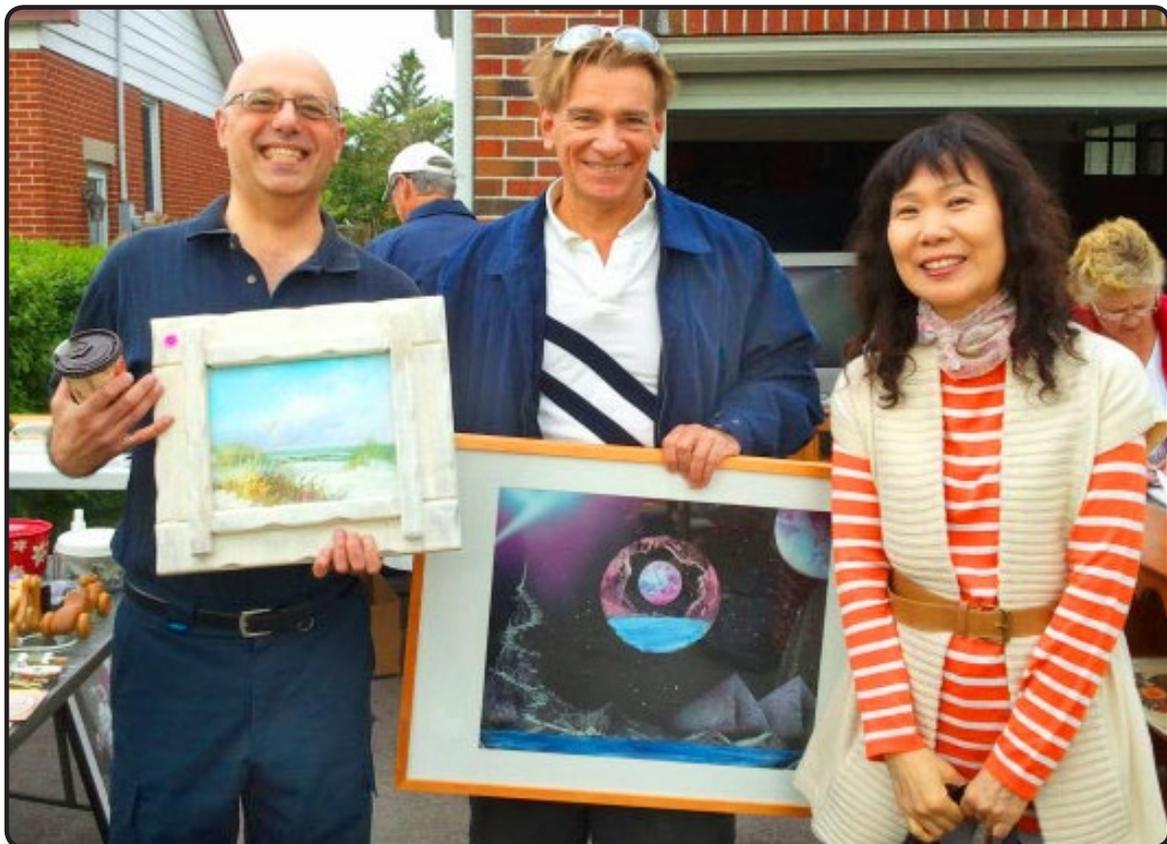


Never-Ending Story

The Korean family in the previous story, wrote: “Daphne and Mike put up the flags of both countries (Korea and Australia) to make it easier to find their home. We will always remember your warm hospitality and look forward to when we can meet. We wish everyone health and happiness. —Lee-Kim family, Servas Korea.”

In their email they included this photo taken while visiting the Michael and Daphne in Canada.

Michael [centre] with friend, Lou, and Mrs. Kim holding “treasures” they found at a local garage sale in 2012.



The Kiwis, Mike and Daphne added later:
 What a coincidence hosting the same wonderful Korean family.

We have just returned from a great weekend: a 85 km. mountain bike Timber trail on the north island through remote native forest. It was 10 1/2 hours biking over 2 days with 8 suspension bridges.

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**Please submit your story to:
president@servas.org**

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What Servas Means to You

By Dagmar and Dirk Lübbers, Germany [Deutschland]

I used to think of Servas as a travel organization in the name of peace. Recently I went back to the roots of Servas as they were when Bob Luitweiler started Servas. He believed travel helped reduce prejudices, which had worsened during WWII.

At the time, there was no contradiction to the idea of promoting peace through travel encounters. In recent decades, however, such a contradiction has certainly arisen, because most who fly contribute to climate change.

I miss traveling very much and at the same time I think about my own responsibility and the direction in which we want to develop Servas.

I invite you to think about what Servas means to you, and what you can and want to do for Servas. (e.g. the minimum updating your own profile in SOL, preferably at the beginning of the year)... or perhaps some volunteering.

Do we want to be a grassroots movement to promote peace in the world or will we develop into a bureaucratic monster? Do we want to put travel in the foreground or peace?

Servas now goes beyond what volunteers can do. Servas On Line, SOL, requires world-level coordination and executing matters that only full-time staff can provide.*

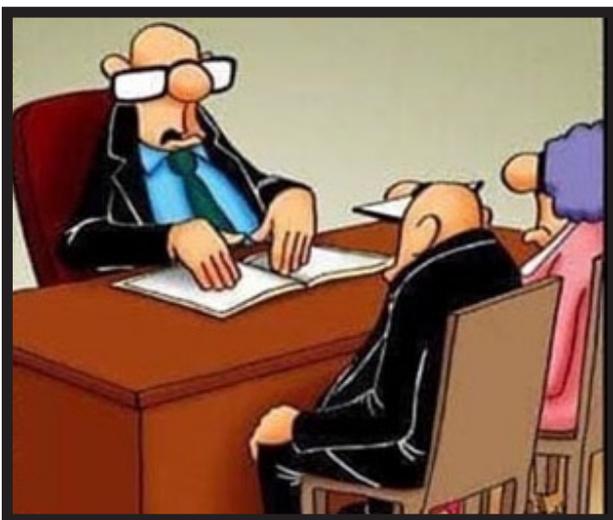
We should all should read “The Seeds of Servas” by Bob Luitweiler and discuss which basic ideas we want to continue and which are perhaps outdated, which are forgotten and should be revived.

I thank all volunteers very much for their commitment!

I hope that the year 2021 will make us more aware of our responsibility for peace and for the environment.

****Editor’s Note: The authors’ statement that Servas can’t work with only volunteers comes just as Servas USA ended decades of having paid staff.***

...



“I’ve carefully examined your retirement pension plan. Now all you have to do is figure out who will be wearing the mask and who will be driving the getaway car.”



Saskia and her Orange Dragon Foundation

By: Mehmet Ateş [right]



Saskia Van Goelst, from the Netherlands, became ill with ovarian cancer when she was working as an academic at university. She got encouraging results after enduring a heavy treatment. However, the cancer came back. She started to receive treatment again and the illness, surprisingly, got taken under control. At that very moment, Saskia decided to make her dream come true, by travelling around the world despite the current hard times. She founded Orange Dragon Foundation to turn the trip into a social responsibility event. The donations received will go to the research for this type of cancer.

Saskia, with her cute dog and her small orange car, started her trip from the Netherlands, passed through European

countries and now she is in Turkey. She aims to reach South Africa and take the ship from there to South America, on the first round of her trip.

Saskia is not in a hurry; she takes her time to talk to people with good projects, and stays with them. She brings those experiences into her own story. She is learning from other people but at the same time she brings goodness and hope to all the homes she stays in; and to the rest of the world with her posts that she shares every day. The world desperately needs such stories these days.

Saskia proves to us that dreams cannot be postponed, no matter the reasons. Who knows what will happen to all of us?

It was wonderful to talk to her, make hummus for her and be part of her story. We are connected now. Kaira, her sweet dog, looked well adapted to this trip. Saskia had a peaceful time with Enis, my son and our local animals. (I gave Saskia a Turkish name; Şefika).

We thank Servas.org for helping make our dreams come true. It's a warm feeling to know there are people with whom we can stay, and share our stories, all around the world.

<https://www.facebook.com/orangedragonfoundation/>

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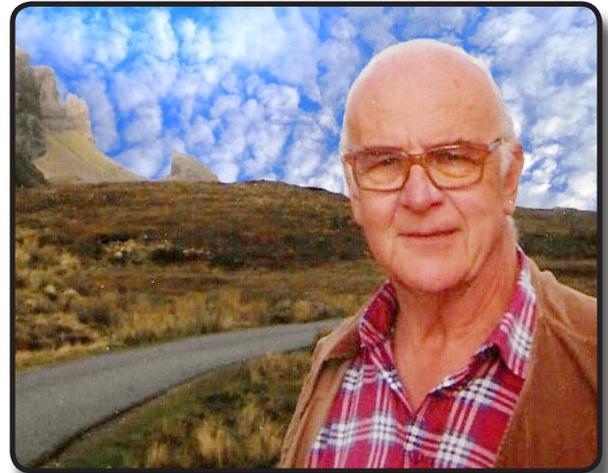
Servas citizens, 90 and 18 years old.

Using the wonderful SI website I searched for members 90+ and under 20.

Tale of Two Servas Citizens, A. 90: Paul Houdmont, Belgium

I presume I'm the oldest Servas member all over this country; 90. I travelled a lot throughout Western Europe — mostly Italy — enjoyed hospitality and offered some myself. I had a wonderful time.

Because of the crisis, I'm home almost all day, taking short walks and cautiously driving the car. Last Sunday I drove with my wife to the countryside. It had been snowing and the landscape was marvellous. Books are my friends. I am still a member, a very empathetic member.



Tale of Two Servas Citizens, B. 18: Carmen Többen, Switzerland.



My parents have been Servas hosts since 1999, years before I was born in 2003. This is my cat, Sally.

I love meeting new people and traveling the world. I grew up meeting different people, even if I couldn't speak their language and I was too shy to talk to them. When older and more confident, I started talking to our guests in English and French. For me Servas is a way I can learn about the world and different cultures, although I'm staying at home.

In 2020 I wrote for my hotel apprenticeship. My topic was: "change of perspective," about tourism in hotels, and being a Servas host and traveler.

Because of Covid-19, I decided to travel only in Switzerland, my home country, visiting 3 different hosts.

At first I was really nervous, since it was my first time travelling completely alone. But it turned out absolutely wonderful. Everywhere I was welcomed, like part of the family. There was always a big age difference between

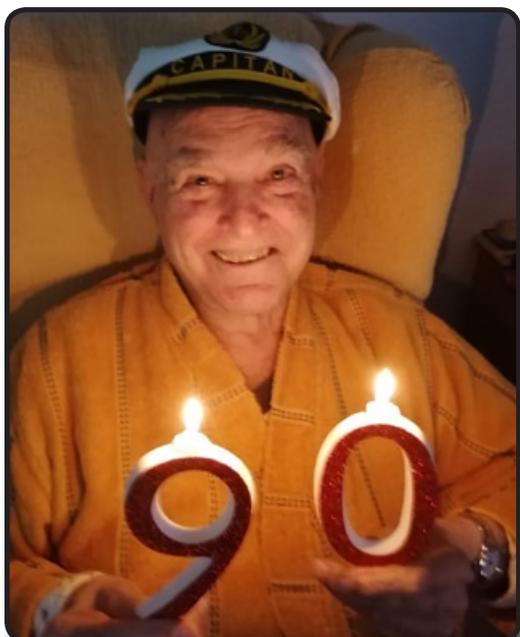
my hosts and me, but for me this is one of the reasons why Servas is so special. You can make friends with people that are the "opposite" of you.

I'm very grateful for all the experiences and I hope to travel with Servas again soon!

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Congratulations to Jacinto Gonzalez, Spain

By: Servas Spain



Jacinto González turned 90 years on March 5, 2021.

Jacinto has served for so many years with Servas International, and Servas Spain, (as President, Vice-President), as well as European Coordinator.

He has been very active in welcoming travellers, participating in meetings, international assemblies, interviews, etc.

Hi son Jorge and his grandson Paul are also involved in the organization.

Jacinto and Paquita, his wife, represent a family of Servas, to whom we are thankful.

Their warm smiles entered the hearts of those who shared time with them.

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Other Members who are 90+

Using servas.org I contacted members born before WWII. They wrote:

I am 92 years old. My husband and I became Servas members around 1990.

We've lived in many places in the world mostly because of my husband's work. I did interviews in English, French and Spanish. We left Denmark for a small house in France where we could enjoy the sun and make new friends. So that is why I have many Servas friends in France and Spain who still call me after my husband passed away in September. — Greetings, Inge, Servas France

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I am 97 plus. My travellers have included:

A Romanian, educated in the UK, who visited twice. He ran a school in New Guinea. He was an Archeologist with a big beard. One day in Ethiopia he met some people while walking down the road. They all bowed flat on the ground, thinking he was Haile Selassie (Emperor of Ethiopia for 44 years, shown here).

I hosted a guy from Darwin, Australia who couldn't stop talking – we kept feeding him so we wouldn't go deaf.

— All the best, Will, Servas Australia.

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SI at a different session at the UN in Geneva

**By Daniela Dönges,
Servas International Representative
to the UN in Geneva**

The 45th regular session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) took place in September 2020. Ahead of the session, as *Servas International* representatives to the UN in Geneva, we submitted a written statement in which we laid emphasis on the increase of racism during the Covid-19 crisis and the way the pandemic hits already marginalized people. We then decided our participation during the session should focus on the points raised in our written submission.



Due to the restrictions of the Covid-19 crisis, participation became challenging. Only one SERVAS speaker (out of usually five) was allowed to attend the HRC discussions in person, which (other than in the past) took place in the Assembly Hall of the *Palais des Nations* (photo of building), instead of the renowned *Room XX* (round blue ceiling).

In September I therefore was the only representative who could attend the session in person and was in charge of the preparation and delivery of our statements, yet everything was discussed and aligned with the team.

The agenda of the Human Rights Council consists of 10 items, each of them focused on a different aspect. Some speaking slots are limited, so we decided to focus on General Debates, where usually all NGO speakers are accepted. In line with our statement a couple of months earlier, we took what appears to be a challenge, as an opportunity to reflect on what kind of world we want for the future.



For details click the link:

<https://servas.org/en/news/september-2020-different-session-un-geneva>

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Critical Problems of the 21st Century, their Global nature, and Civic Education

By Gopal RAJAN, Servas International Representative at UN NYC

[With support and feedback from Jeanne Devine, Danielle Serres, David Menham and Radha Radhakrishna]



For the last couple of decades, a growing number of academics, commentators and public intellectuals have been lamenting about the lack of emphasis on Civic Education and its severe ramifications on society, both locally and globally.

As schooling has become almost mandatory across the globe, it is the ideal time frame for reinforcing again, the teaching of Civic Education. Given the uncertainties in the world today, Servas could focus on Civic Education as an appropriate avenue for promoting peace and justice in society.

For a start, Civic Education as a subject be given the same importance as Science, Mathematics or Literature and a similar time devoted to it on a weekly basis from elementary-school until high-school, emphasizing how it helps us to understand and search for solutions to problems that have a local, national and/or global impacts.

Otherwise, Peace and Justice will remain simply slogans taken for granted by the majority, the mighty and the powerful and the rest of us will continue to be disillusioned by not having seen much progress, till a searing crisis like Police brutality witnessed in Minneapolis last year, finally brought the matter to a head.

Just like everyone needs food, clean water, and fresh air to breathe, Civic Education can help society ensure that everyone not just breathes more freely but also enjoys a higher degree of wellbeing.

To me the issues of Peace and Justice need continuous reinforcement and perhaps Civic Education on a continual basis is the needed glue.

The only issue I have with Civic Education is its focus on Citizenship... because while the focus is necessary, the problems of the 21st Century require a substantial global emphasis. In today's lexicon as humankind is increasingly used instead of mankind, perhaps we need to start emphasizing global citizenship (implying, compassion to all our fellow humans) especially due to the growing phenomenon of multicultural populations throughout the world.

As members of Servas, an organization founded after the terrible ravages of World War II, we need to laud the foresight of our founders for emphasizing Community and Global Citizenship

However yet again, the world is facing a myriad of problems such as inequality, climate change and global pandemic in the form of Covid-19. Sadly, in addition a toxic Us vs Them, attitude prevails between countries and even among peoples within the same country. Also, organizations and world bodies such as the UN, WHO or the ILO have been left with little or no power to ensure the wellbeing of the world's citizenry.

Hence, as Servas members residing in more than 100 countries around the world, it behooves us to reemphasize the need for Civic Education to become a permanent feature in our schools, in our communities, and in our countries.

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NEW SERVAS KEY PERSONS

SERVAS TANZANIA

The Servas Group of Tanzania held its first election among the 26 members. This is the new committee until 2022, from left:

National Secretary: Lourenco Gonsalves (Zanzibar)

ServaOnline Administrator: Grace Francis (Dar-es-Salaam)

Treasurer: Hamis Samike (Arusha)

Peace Secretary: Terri Place (Arusha)



Lourenco

Grace

Hamis

Terri

Important note:

Servas Tanzania is meeting all criteria for becoming a Servas Member Group. Distant Voting of May 2021 will give the Servas Member Groups the opportunity to accept Servas Tanzania as a Servas Member Group.

Highly recommended by the SI Membership Team.

SERVAS MEXICO

On January 13, 2021 Servas Mexico held its National Assembly. The Assembly was postponed from June 2020, due to the pandemic.

This is the new committee for the period 2021-2023:



Hector

Francisco

Ofelia

Rosalinda

Patricia

Cynthia

President Emeritus: Dr. Hector Peralta
 National Secretary: Francisco Solomón Luna
 Deputy Executive Secretary: Ofelia Perdomo
 Treasurer: Rosalinda Cázares
 Peace Secretary: Patricia Fuentes
 Youth and Art Coordination: Cynthia Granados
 ServasOnline Administrator, HLC: Roxana Aguilar
 Development Coordination: Fabián Trejo
 CDMX Coordination: Brenda Velasquez Díaz and Patricia Flores
 Coordination communication: Jorge Rendon
 Outgoing board member: Ana Paula Jimenez



Roxana

Fabián

Brenda

Patricia Flores

Jorge



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SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS BULLETIN (SINB)

SI EXCO appointed Michael Johnson (Canada) as Editor-in-Chief of the SI News Bulletin. Michael will fulfill the role starting 1 April 2021. Photo: left.

Thanks to the persons who left the board, we are grateful for your contribution to the development of Servas.

Congratulations and warm welcome to all persons who joined the board or a team.

—Rita Dessauvage, SI Dolphin Team, Member of Servas Belgium & Luxemburg. Photo: right.



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Violette Impressed Me

By Alexey Tereshchenko



I am very thankful to the team of Servas News for making an interview with Violette Ginger of Servas France. I met her only once in my life, eighteen years ago, and she made a very strong impression on me. It was a great discovery that she is still alive and hosting at the age of 103. I met her in 2003 when I decided to join Servas France. Edith Sigg, the then coordinator of Servas Paris, sent me to Basile and Violette Ginger in order to interview me. This was a lovely elderly couple.



Basile Ginger was born in 1924, and Violette was seven years older. They asked me many questions about myself, about my reasons to join Servas, about my Servas past. Basile was visibly uncomfortable that my parents never participated in a pacifist movement. I saw Servas as an opportunity to meet people rather than to fight for peace. Yet I made an overall good impression on him. “Are you of Anglo-Saxon origin?” I asked Basile. “Your surname is not French.”

“I find it rather funny that you, of all people, ask me this question.” answered Basile and he started speaking a perfect 19th-century Russian. “You see, I am Vasili Ghingher, a son of Russian emigrants. My father was a Russian Jew. Violette also belonged to a minority. She was a descendant of French Huguenots.” He explained that she delighted in the history of her family and was very critical of French Catholics (being married to a Russian-Jewish man, she was much more sympathetic towards Jews and Orthodox Christians). She spoke more about everyday life and gave me a lot of advice. Some of her

recommendations were obsolete: for instance, she advised me to feed myself on fruit thrown away by traders (in 2003 Paris I never could see such fruit, everything was eaten). Other recommendations were more useful. But her best piece of advice came out inadvertently. Like many old people, she was critical of the youth. “We live in awful times. Some young people forget to hold a door when somebody is coming behind. And some even enter a shop without saying *Bonjour*, and leave it without saying *Au revoir*”.

I was very ashamed to hear this: as a real Soviet boy, I never greeted people working in shops. Starting from that day, I tried to be a polite Parisian in a way preached by Violette. I was approved by Basile and Violette and became a member of Servas France. In the next five years, according to my own estimate, I would visit over forty Servas homes in this country. I never saw this couple again. Basile died, but Violette is still alive – and still continues to receive people in her Parisian flat, as I learned from Servas News.

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Two new websites for Servas France



At last, good news! On January 28th we had the great pleasure to inform our members about the birth of two new websites for Servas France, one accessible to everybody, the other for members only.

But let's go back to its history. In France, we had one website, created in 2011 by a company with whom our previous webmaster, Jean-Marc Eyot, and our president at the time had cooperated. That website had totally fulfilled its information function, but, like everything else, it had aged and couldn't be renewed because updates were no longer possible.

A small team gathered in June 2019 to work on the creation of a new website. The webmistress, Magali Morel, the coordinator of Brittany (a French region), Maryvonne Kerampran, and the general secretary, Geneviève Aubert, began the job.

Photos: From top: Magali, Maryvonne, and Geneviève.

The architecture and articles were completed by the end of the first lockdown in France, in May 2020. All activities being stopped, they had plenty of time to devote to it. After the summer, the team was reorganized with its new webmaster, Didier Trotoux, and the general secretary.

One website was planned, but eventually, two emerged. We are rather proud of them. It's up to you to judge. They must be developed, of course, but according to the feedback we received, they are beautiful, well-structured, easy to access and user-friendly. What more could we ask for? We hope our members will be eager to immerse themselves in it and that you, foreign friends, will be curious to browse the public website, which of course is only in French! *

Thank you – The team of the two Servas France websites.

**Editor's Note: Google will translate: <https://www.servas-france.org/>*

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Cuba, the UN, and Servas

By Yosi, US Servas Peace and Social Justice Secretary, Dec. 24, 2020

The UN General Assembly has repeatedly expressed its concern about US sanctions against Cuba, and their consequences.

In 28 separate resolutions, the General Assembly has called on the United States to end the economic, commercial and financial embargo against Cuba. The only countries voting with the US were Israel and Brazil. 187 countries voted to end the embargo.

In December 2014 President Barack Obama engaged with Cuba to “normalize” relations. This aligned with Bob Luitweiler’s belief that cross-cultural, people-to-people interaction is an essential tool for learning how to live in harmony and to avoid war. National polls have



Yosi McIntire

indicated that an overwhelming majority of Americans favor the restoration of normal diplomatic relations. Trump undid most of Obama’s efforts and introduced new punitive policies. These sanctions have created hunger among the Cuban people.

US Servas is pleased to announce an “affiliation” with [The Friendship Association](#), a non-profit, all-volunteer organization dedicated to promoting a spirit of friendship between U.S. and Cuban citizens. The association promotes educational exchanges and participation in meaningful projects that benefit Cuban civil society and communities.

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US Servas: Great Things in April and May

By David Schwartz, US Servas

Many happenings are open to everyone, including non-members, for example:

Sat, April 10, 4pm PT [Servas stories: Share Your Favorite Travel or Hosting Tales](#)

Sat, April 17, 10am PT [Discover Israel Through Servas Travelers and Hosts](#)

New ideas are springing up in US Servas such as:

Want More Travelers?

Inviting hosts whose profiles state “Want More Travelers” to search for travelers for a virtual event.

Hosting RVs and Tents

Offering a parking space for safe hosting of travelers in a self-contained RV. Or tent camping with a bathroom that can be safely accessed.

To check out what appeals to you, go to their newsletter click:

<https://us4.campaign-archive.com/?u=296df58c019df3450d69f5f53&id=40714d0823>

US Servas virtual events include: documentary film screenings and discussions, book chats, lectures, workshops on social issues, holiday parties and a type of gathering we call “Meet My Host!”

In “Meet My Host!” travelers connect with a former host (or vice-versa) and several host-traveler pairs “meet” and talk about their travel experiences and issues of interest. We encourage other national Servas groups to do something similar. Many US Servas members would be happy to participate in your events, if invited.

Photo: Joquim de la Mata (with white hat), who hosted my wife and me in Catalonia in 2016. In 2018, when this photo was taken, Andrea and I hosted him in the USA and we took him hiking in the Sierra Nevada Mountains where we happened to run into a group of Catalan people. They didn’t know about Servas until they met us; and they enthusiastically promised to join after returning home.

• • •



How was Your Year?

Will you please tell us what you have been doing in the last year?
Jonny has an odd family tradition. —Thank you, Michael Johnson, SINB designer.



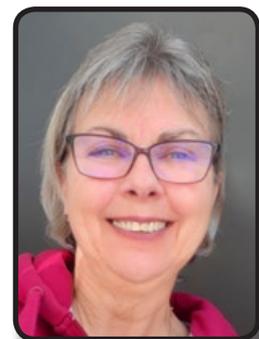
SI president Jonny enjoys an icy bath with his family; Agnes, Kristina, Hanna and Gustav. Jonny says: “The cold relieves sore muscles after a run and, together with a hot sauna, relaxes the mind.”

Michael Johnson, says of his last two years with Servas hosts in USA, Europe, Africa and the Middle East: Before Covid my wife and I met a very helpful Servas couple in Morocco. They arranged for a friend to drive us to the Sahara. The camels were fun, but the brilliance of the stars and absolute quiet were magical. We stayed with newly-wed hosts, played bocce with others, and loved the peaceful desert. Thank you all.



How to approach “the beast” ... the Servas International (SI) Annual Report!

By Christine Fernie, Servas Canada Treasurer



As the volunteer treasurer for Servas Canada since 2017, I have found that the more involved I get with Servas, the more I like this organization. I want to encourage others to be more involved too and one place to start could be by exploring what is currently happening in Servas worldwide by reviewing *the beast*.”

We are a **grassroots organization** and I think you will be impressed with some of the initiatives the members of this worldwide organization have taken. Shall we join them?

First, my heart goes out to the SI General Secretary who assembled the 322-page Annual Report. Here is my approach to tackling it so I can **be informed without being overwhelmed**. First, print the Table of Contents and find areas that interest you.

Click on *SI Financial Report 2019-2020* at:

<https://servas.org/en/community/board-and-management/administration>

Start with the first 18 pages of the SI Annual Report 2019-2020 to find what is happening at the International level. Critical reading would be Pages 13-18 which is the **SI Exco Summary Report** and the **SI Financial Report 2019-2020**.

The **Executive Committee Reports** may be of interest to get a high level overview of the organization. I always read the treasurer’s report to stay abreast of financial stability of an organization and to see where the money of the organization is earned and spent. Fees from member groups used to be based on the sale of stamps to travelers, but the formula was simplified in 2018. This led to Canada introducing a membership fee in anticipation of declining traveler fees and anticipated increases in SI fees. SI must raise funds to build and run Servas Online (which replaced host lists in most member countries) and to raise money to host the SI General Assembly (SI GA) which will now be held in 2022, possibly online for the first time ever.

Interesting and not surprising, the **SI Peace Secretary section** is extensive (page 31-49) because we are a peace organization and have seats at the United Nations. Read how we can support the work of volunteers at the United Nations. Page 47 explains the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, otherwise known as the **Global Goals**, which are a **universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity**.

The fourteen **SI Committee and Team Reports** cover pages 50 to 90. Each committee explains its responsibilities, plans, activities outcomes, finances (if any) and feedback. Lengthy reports normally have lots of pictures. The pictures are terrific and once you get used to the format, you can move more quickly through the data.

The 2019/2020 SI Annual Report contains fifty-five **Annual Member Country Reports** (pages 90 to 316)... seventy-one reports (2018) the most ever received. These are a great resource for data mining information.

Take time to see what this organization is really all about. SI needs volunteers and leaders. Do you have a great idea on how to make the reporting process faster, easier and more readable? If so, we need you! Send an email to your National Secretary to see how you can become more involved.

If not you, then who? If not now, when?

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SERVAS, A GLOBAL COMMUNITY WITHIN VIRTUAL REACH

Discover the Servas community here on the world wide web:

Social Media	Location	Administered by:
Official website	https://servas.org/	Servas International
Facebook page	https://www.facebook.com/Servas.International/	Jonny Sågänger, Carla Kristensen
Facebook group “Servas International”	(members only) https://www.facebook.com/groups/117649068294944/	Arnoud Philipppo, Paige LaCombe, Tawny Foskett
Servas group “Travelling for Peace”	https://www.facebook.com/groups/servas/	Jonny Sågänger, Carla Kristensen, Park Jae Kwoang
Servas Peace Page	https://www.facebook.com/groups/ServasPeacePage/	Paige LaCombe, Danielle Serres, Raleigh LaCombe Tomlinson, Francisco Salomón
Instagram	Ex: servasturkiye, servasmexico, servaspeaceschool, servasbritain, servaschile, servasbrasil, servaspeace, servas_australia, servasgiovani, servas_italia, servasiran, servasportugal, servasfrance, servasyouth, servas_youth_in_africa, and many more	Many Servas groups or teams
Twitter		
Servas International president on twitter.com	https://twitter.com/servasinternational	SI President
@ServasI	https://twitter.com/servasi	Servas Britain Regional Co-ordinator, Area N (Yorkshire)
Blogs & national websites	See “Servas Websites” at www.servas.org	
Digital Communication		
SI News Bulletin	https://servas.org/en/newsletters-bulletins	SI President and the SI Media & Communication Team
Servas Confluence	A digital co-working and cooperation platform for internal Servas volunteers.	SI Tech Team and SI Exco

The SI News is sent in digital format to all National Secretaries and Key People, who distribute it to their country/group members. It is a quarterly publication and contains articles of interest such as communications from SI ExCo, stories of Servas experiences, articles about Peace, Servas and the UN.

—By Carla Cristensen (SI VP) & Jonny Sågänger (SI President)

ABOUT THE SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS BULLETIN

The Servas International News Bulletin (SI News Bulletin) is a newsletter from Servas International Executive Committee (SI Exco), which is the organization's global board. The SI News Bulletin contains a brief report about current issues and decisions.

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Picot Cassidy, Servas Britain

Itzcóatl (Jorge) Rendon, Mexico

Graphic Design/Layout: Michael Johnson

What would you like to read about in the SI News Bulletin? Let us know.

Email: president@servas.org

We encourage Servas key people around the world to forward this bulletin to individual members. Feel free to quote this bulletin but please mention Servas International News Bulletin as the source.

SI EXCO 2018—2022

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ABOUT SERVAS INTERNATIONAL

Servas International is an international, non-profit, non-governmental federation of national Servas groups, supporting an international network of hosts and travellers. Our network aims to help build world peace, goodwill and understanding by offering opportunities for personal contacts between people of different cultures, backgrounds and nationalities.