



Alan Cassels, Editor

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Michael Johnson, Designer

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Message from our new National Secretary, Julie Cormack

Dear Servas members:

As an anthropologist, I love to share and listen to stories. With mass migration of tens of thousands of people over the past couple of years I think of the many stories to be told by these war-torn weary travellers. Westward-bound families *walking* from Syria and Afghanistan; thousands of Africans attempting long and dangerous crossings over empty Mediterranean seas, only to await border processing on European islands bursting their coastal seams with the constant flow of human migrants.

We focus on the tragedy of departure, leaving one's home for overcrowded tented refugee camps, originally conceived as temporary shelters but now blossoming permanent cities where children are born, health care is basic, and economies are created. These exhaustive treks carrying one's belongings stuffed into a single knapsack must be painfully hard and arduous.

We should focus on the arrival of these persistent souls to our homeland. For newcomers entering Canada brings many storied gifts: of cultural traditions to be shared, of languages to be learned, of a drive unmatched and tested through their travels, and of a commitment to actively participate as new Canadians. I think of Canada's commitment to welcome 25,000 Syrian refugees, and to those friends, neighbours, and strangers working together to collect the minimum \$30,000 to support a single family for their first year. We strive to be a nation that welcomes newcomers, but our past failures have led to several government apologies. As with any history, we learn from our errors in hopes of building a more positive future.

When you open your door to a Servas traveller or you yourself are welcomed by a Servas host share these stories of departures, adventures, arrivals, and futures. Recognize that wherever we are from, we all wish for the same: love of family and friends, peaceful relations, good health, opportunity, and freedom to enjoy these gifts. Global peace involves public engagement and dialogue about and with each other. Respect, cultural tolerance, and making an effort to understand another's culture; these are the ideals of Anthropology and, with my understanding, of Servas.



Because of these shared ideals, Servas' purpose and aims warms and invigorates my anthropological spirit. I believe passionately in the importance and promotion of (inter) national travel and intercultural dialogue through my own travel experiences, and my involvement in orienting and working with Canadian university students participating in the Madaba Plains Project archaeological dig in Jordan, or in the shared teaching of Canadian university students in Kenya and Uganda through the *Study in Africa* programme.

My vision for Servas Canada is to build on these intercultural communications by:

- nurturing ongoing dialogue between hosts and travellers through shared stories;
- bringing an awareness of Servas' mandate of (inter)national peace and goodwill;
- encouraging communications through the Servas Canada website, social media and the e-newsletter;
- assisting members, especially youth, to share in the global Servas community through an efficient online access and registration process;
- promoting Servas travel and language exchange opportunities;
- targeting Servas outreach to new communities such as campus connections; and
- most basically, supporting member involvement in Servas Canada activities.

As National Secretary, I hope to bring to Servas Canada a readiness to listen and act on ideas, and a leadership to the community that supports "how things work" ^[1] recognizing that there is always room for growth and improvement. I look forward to working with an involved Board of Directors and non-Board officers who share a passion for Servas, and of hearing from Servas Canada members. We are, after all, one world.

^[1] *The Tao of Leadership* by John Heider 1988.

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Hellos and Goodbyes by our former National Secretary, Julie Dotsch

All year long, a multitude of volunteers across the country interview new hosts and travellers, coordinate updating of the host list, answer inquiries to Servas Canada, and direct prospective members to the interviewer in their region. Our sincere thanks go to all those volunteers. At this time of year, we like to take time to especially thank those who have retired from service and welcome new ones. Special thanks also go to those volunteers who find and orient their replacements!

After many years of service, *Richard Proulx*, host coordinator in eastern Quebec, has resigned so he can put more energy into other volunteer endeavours. In his place we welcome *Liv Ouellet*. *Jennifer and Robin Harrison* on Vancouver Island have decided to scale back their activities and will no longer coordinate the host list. However, they remain as interviewers.

We are also saying farewell to long time interviewers *Donna and Jim Robinson* of Waterloo, and to *Vickie Bjorensen* of Calgary, who has entered retirement and hopes to travel the world! Vickie is replaced by the very capable *Brette Ehalt*.

Much earlier in the year, we said goodbye to long time host coordinator/interviewers *David Ross* of New Brunswick (replaced by *Michelle Banks*), *Cheryl Kawaja* of Whitehorse, (replaced by *Alison Reid* and *Carol Ann Gingras*), *Charlotte Burgess* of Ottawa (replaced by *Chantal Jolicoer*), and *Stephen and Madge Sharpe* of Newfoundland (replaced by *Willow Jackson Anderson*), and host coordinator *Leslie Regnier* (replaced by *Barbara Rufo* on Montreal island and *Claude LeFrancois* and *Gilles Sabourin* on the south shore). *Manfred Petz* stepped in to fill a host coordinator vacancy in Toronto.



Julie Dotsch [right]
met Taiwanese delegate, Mei,
in New Zealand in 2015.

Passing On:

Sadly, *Gijsbert Crelaard* passed away on January 23, 2016. Gijsbert and his wife Marlene were host coordinators and interviewers in Manitoba for more than 30 years. During that time, they hosted many guests from around the world, often developing lasting friendships and travelling abroad to be hosted by their former guests. Gijsbert's obituary can be viewed at <http://www.obitsforlife.com/obituary/1248025/Crielaard-Gijsbert.php>

We also want to recognize new volunteers *Brette Ehalt* who stepped forward early in the year to coordinate translation, and to *Carol Ann Gingras*, who recently took over responding to inquiries to Canada@servas.org and directing prospective members to interviewers.

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My Apologies:

Your newsletter is very late this year as new helpers become familiar with the routine. Please note dates of 2016 events, some already past, as most will repeat in 2017. Please contact the editor if you can translate from English to French.

Apologetically, Michael Johnson, designer

Servas Canada Board (2016)

Julie Cormack	National Secretary	jlc5440@gmail.com
Nancy Palardy	Deputy National Secretary	npalardy@web.ca
Alison Reid	Treasurer	areid@northwestel.ca
Alan Cassels	Newsletter Editor	cassels@shaw.ca
Paul Dunae	Treasurer (mentee)	paul@dunae.ca
Jaques Belik		jaques.belik@sickkids.ca
Gloria Baldwin Schultz	Peace Secretary	g_baldwin_schultz@yahoo.ca

Non-Board Positions

Website <i>Contact Us</i>	Carol Ann Gingras	
National Host List Coordinator (West)	Herman Bakker	hnbakker@yahoo.ca
National Host List Coordinator (East)	Marion Copleston	mcopleston@gmail.com
Newsletter Designer	Michael Johnson	unexpected@sympatico.ca
Host List Database Coordinator	Jim Leask	leask@rogers.com
Host List Production Coordinator	Judy Bartel	judy.bartel@gmail.com
Peace Secretary	Barbara Rufo	barbararufo@yahoo.ca
Social Media Moderator	Vacant	
Servas Language Exchange Coord.	Micki Stirling	mickistirling@gmail.com
Youth Coordinator	Vacant	
Volunteer Coordinator	Vacant	

Nominations Committee: Michael Johnson (Chair), Nancy Palardy, vacancies available

Outreach Committee: Alison Reid, Julie Dotsch, vacancies available

Website Committee: Jaques Belik, Judy Bartel, vacancies available

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Your Board Members:

Returning Board Members:

Alison Reid, Alan Cassels

New Board Members:

Julie Cormack, Nancy Palardy, Paul Dunae, Jaques Belik, Gloria Baldwin Schultz

Nancy Palardy, Toronto, Ontario

I have been a member of Servas for about three years now, along with my husband, but am a new Board member. I was keen to become more involved with the organization after some wonderful Servas experiences both hosting and travelling. Last year, my family had the good fortune to take a year to travel around the world and our travels were definitely enriched by the opportunities we had to visit with numerous hosts along the way in France, Italy, Turkey, India, and Australia. In France we were welcomed into the home of a couple who had stayed with us only a few months earlier; it was so marvellous to pick up with “old friends” on their home turf. In India, we put our cooking skills to the test while pulling together a typical Canadian meal for our hosts; lasagna noodles and mozzarella cheese are definitely not staples that are easily found on Indian store shelves! On a professional note, I work for the Ontario legislature on environmental law and policy with a focus on climate change.



Paul Dunae, Victoria, BC

I am a new member on the Servas Board and a retired military man. On retiring from the DND, I worked in finance, accounting, and real estate. My home is in Victoria on Vancouver Island – Canada’s evergreen playground! My favourite outdoor hobby is golf. I have been a Servas host for more than forty years. I have had travellers stay at my place from England, Scotland, France, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Italy, Spain, Israel, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Singapore, Costa Rica, USA and, of course, Canada. All of the travellers wished to live in peace and prosperity and their ambitions were to make the world a better place for their progeny; I guess that’s why they were Servas members.



Jaques Belik, Toronto, Ontario

I have now been a Servas member for over 10 years and felt that the opportunity of joining the Board in 2016 would facilitate even greater experiences with this fine organization. I first heard about Servas from a local friend that had nothing but interesting stories to tell and pictures to show about his travels. I was intrigued enough to join and I can nowadays be as eloquent and enthusiastic about all my past and present wonderful visits with Servas members all over the world. Every one of my interactions with Canadian and international Servas members has been unique and enlightening. When explaining to non-members what Servas is all about, I try to convey the extra pleasure that I derive from not just visiting a new place, but being welcome by “strangers” in a way that feels more like being with old friends. Never boring, sometimes anxiety provoking before getting there, but always amazing. After making myself available as a host to many travellers from abroad, by joining the Board I felt that I could further help disseminate what Servas mission and goals, as well as, facilitating its further growth.



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Traveller's Report: Two Servas Stays in Bath by Tanya Lester

"I travelled with my journal and enjoyed the chance encounters, the moments with nature, retold the stories of the homeless, the dreams of people trying to reinvent their lives. Perhaps in important ways, we are all homeless, on our way to somewhere else."
—Peter Please

The Singing Gate: European Travelling Tales

There must be something in the Bath water (pun intended) that inspires creativity and innovation to flow in this southwest English town if the Servas hosts with whom I spent time are typical representatives of the area.

My first Servas stay in Bath was with Kirsten Bolwig, a healer/author/weaver/story teller, and Peter Please, an author of 14 books, who breathe and flow with a mandala of creative life. Peter and Kirsten told me a then-and-now story of the town as we trudged down to its centre to explore the famed Roman Baths (only part of the Roman remains; the rest is a Victorian makeover).

Kirsten took me to her choir practice where I was gifted with a concert of high-quality amateurs. (They have toured Calgary and Vancouver Island in Canada and a tour of Quebec just might happen as well). My spirits definitely lifted with the songs offered by the angel-like voices.

After the concert, Kirsten drove me around a Masonic-inspired key shape housing complex of flats, designed by a local architect of note. The delicious meals Peter and Kirsten served me were the fruits and vegetables of their garden allotment; sometimes picked the very same day.

Peter, who stayed with Servas hosts often when he was bike riding in Europe, including on the El Camino, is an enthusiastic supporter of it. I agreed but said my house sits often allowed me to stay in areas longer. He reminded me that it is possible to negotiate longer Servas stays in one place by "making deals."

My remedy for staying longer in Bath was to arrange for another stay with a different Servas host. Carenza Ellery came across as sort of "no nonsense" in her email correspondence with me. Peter assured me, though, that "Carenza is fun."

He was so right. Carenza, who is well travelled but is staying put with a job as an art and drama teacher at an international school, her house, lodgers, bunnies, gardens as well as her Austin mini car and vintage motor bike collections, told me that she travels vicariously through her Servas stays. With me in tow, she got theatre tickets at a fifth of the price at £6 each for "She Stoops to Conquer" and we were upgraded to the ground floor level that ended with a Q&A with the excellent cast of actors.

Next day was a car show at a summer fete where people came up and told memorable stories about minis in their past lives including one woman who was chauffeured to her wedding in one.

That night we volunteered to work the bar at a semi-professional play about people trying to find real connections with other people in New York City. I really enjoyed pouring drinks for the polite British theatre goers who, due to some bylaw, were able to take their alcohol, tea, and coffee right to their seats. It was nice to hear the actors using Canadian-like (read American-but-not-New York) accents.

Another day and another car show with Carenza. This one was bigger as was the dog show but the judges were not as professional. I joked that I was doing research for future house sits to see which dogs were the most even-tempered and loveable. Poppy, a huge German shepherd mix, was a favourite and we cheered for him uproariously when he won for something-or-the-other.

Carenza decided to drive me to my next house sit in Bristol and, on the way, I even got a glimpse of Stonehenge in the late afternoon sun standing strong in its distant field (I have seen it up close and personal in the past). Somewhere in all this activity, we also did a walkabout at Bath University. Set next to a pasture dotted with grazing sheep and filled with samples of vegetables and fruit as well as flower gardens and enormous shade-giving trees, I am sure this university is a draw for professors and students alike over many other post-secondary institutions.

What I saw and did in Bath is only a fraction of what can be done there by visitors with viewing numerous art galleries being there as well.

At both my Bath and Bristol stays, I heard from Servas hosts who say numbers were down with cancellations being more frequent, which could reflect the shortage of travel money and high European prices (even when Servas accommodation is free) right now. . . .



Servas International General Assembly Report by Julie Dotsch

I attended several sessions with Bernard Andrieu, head of SOLSYS (Servas Online system) and Penny Pattison and I discussed Canada's conversion to the system. Delegates were given an opportunity to view and critique/offer advice for the system. It is anticipated that it will be ready for data entry by March, and ready to use (to search for hosts) later in 2016. Canada will be among a number of countries piloting the system in the first year.



I think that most people will be very pleased with the system, both for what it can do and for its ease of use. Hosts and travellers will be able to enter/update their own data online, meaning that hosts can be available to travellers as soon as they are approved and travellers will be able to search hosts online, and communicate with them directly through the system (rather than waiting for next year's list to be published). Great care has been taken with security, and no information can be seen online until members have been approved as hosts or travellers (and then only by other members). In addition, hosts and travellers can control how much personal information is visible, and to whom.

It is also important and reassuring to note that the interview and approval system for travellers and hosts will remain unchanged, managed by each country according to their established procedures. Applicants will still need to obtain reference letters and be interviewed. The process changes only once members have been approved and have paid their fees (if applicable): the interviewer will activate the new member's file, and they will then be given access to enter their profile, details, and LOI information directly online. For the traveller, the interviewer will enter the "active" date range of the LOI, and the LOI can be viewed online or printed. Travellers and hosts can then connect and correspond directly through the website. There will no longer be a need (once the system is fully operational) for countries to purchase stamps to place directly on the LOI.

Host List Update 2016

Host coordinators have probably been wondering about host list updating for the 2016 list. As you know, we have been quite concerned after last year that the Gastiganto system (or at least the server it runs on) has become less than reliable. Jim Leask and I were both concerned about attempting to use it again this year. For this reason, I am very excited to learn that we should be able to use SOLSYS to do updating of the next host list. I am waiting for further information from Bernard Andrieu about details of how this will work, but have been assured that we will be able to produce formatted host lists from the system to upload to Dolphin (as we do now) for countries who won't immediately be online. For at least a year or two, some countries' host profiles will be online, while others will still use formatted host lists which can be emailed or printed.

One Night Stays

One of the motions brought forward at the General Assembly (proposed by Canada) was to include one night stays as an acceptable Servas option. While I recognize that some Servas members will be perturbed by this idea, it appears that one night stays are already occurring with considerable frequency and that many countries and individuals are very happy to accept them. The motion passed with a narrow margin, even though quite a few individuals didn't think a policy change was necessary simply because they felt that hosts and travellers could work it out themselves. There is still a definite recognition that while many hosts are happy with one night stays, some are worried that it will increase abuse (e.g., using Servas as a hotel) particularly in highly touristic areas. The expectation



is that interviewers will continue to stress the rationale for and encourage two night stays. **Hosts will be able to opt in or out of one night stays** by specifying this detail in their profile. A field for this option will be added in the database.

Foreign Travellers Applying While in Another Country

A motion was presented to formalize a process for dealing with applications of people who find out about Servas while travelling in another country and want to apply for membership from abroad so that they can continue their travels with Servas. This motion received strong support.

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Servas Canada Website

We have a new Servas Canada website: <http://www.canadaservas.org/en/home/>

Prospective members can get all the information they need to apply as hosts and travellers including downloading forms from the website. Information that you previously needed to provide to applicants in paper form is now all on the web along with a set of FAQs that should answer many questions.

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A Warm Welcome from a New Zealand Host by Julie Dotsch

I was excited to be returning to New Zealand after travelling to this magical land decades ago. My memories were hazy about the travel sites and even hazier about the names of my past hosts, but the memories of their friendliness and frivolity remained very clear. I used the latest Servas New Zealand host list to make plans for my visits and realized that travelling alone, these visits would be even more important. I decided to stay on the North Island and generally go in a clockwise direction staying near the sea as much as possible. I was nervous about driving on the "wrong" side of the road so my plans included bus, ferry, and train travel with hosts generously offering to pick me up at terminals or stations.

My first host, Tony, was a wonderful start! His garage is stocked with anything you could ever want for fixing things. As a serious gardener he has a huge wheel in his dining room where he tracks his gardening tasks. He tells me that he has some produce from his garden every day of the year. I learned about grafting fruit trees. Tony has many different plums growing on one tree. Amazing!

Although Tony is a great cook, he let me help him with the food preparations. I joined his line dance group when we discovered our shared interest. Ever generous, Tony drove his friend, Val and I to the seashore where we could walk along the rugged and wild beach. We went out to a local community dinner/dance where I could meet more of his friends. Across the room I heard "Julie!" I just had time to turn around as I was lifted in the air and swung around by my Servas friend from Russia. The cracked ribs from his enthusiastic welcome changed some of my travel plans! (Editor's note: she's not kidding)

The Servas New Zealand conference organizing team asked Tony and I to go to the Auckland airport to greet some of the national delegates arriving for the conference. The Taiwanese delegate, Mei, came back to Tony's place with us. I met Tony's neighbour Tui, who was hosting several of my Servas friends. Tui works with preschool children and she was very interested in my work with refugee children and my research on children's culture shock.

Tony invited me to come back for a second visit, after the conference, and I did a little workshop on refugee children for some teachers. I also had a chance to meet two of his grandchildren and we made vegetable sculptures modelled after what the children created at their local fair. The final pot luck dinner was the icing on the cake. We came from every corner of the globe and shared ourselves. This feeling of connection is inspiring. It is the magic of Servas.

I had many other wonderful experiences with Servas hosts in New Zealand. Each one was unique and memorable. I can hardly wait to go on my next Servas trip. ...



Servas International General Assembly Report by Judy Bartel

My experience with the Servas International conference and General Assembly began with an unexpected 5:30 a.m. greeting at the airport, a ride into town and finally the spontaneous offer to be hosted by a lovely couple from Auckland!

As the official delegate, most of my days were spent participating in a very formal setting, discussing and voting on motions involving the nitty gritty of Servas International business. In keeping with the theme of the conference: "Servas in Transition" we spent a lot of time discussing how Servas can move beyond "two day hosting" experiences to promote longer stay experiences, cultural and language development programs, and ethical and sustainable travel.

The conference sessions were very interesting to me such as the one devoted to Servas Online, (SOLSYS), run by the program manager, Bernard Andrieu. I was very interested to hear about some of the activities happening in other countries. SYLE (Servas Youth Language Experience) is very active in quite a few countries (not just France, Argentina, and Canada, as I thought). Most countries ignore the "youth" aspect, and open it up to people of any age. The emphasis seems to be on gaining cultural understanding through a combination of hosting and volunteering experiences. From Spain, we got a presentation on a summer "culture camp" experience that involved families in many types of activities.

I was impressed by the youth who were involved in Servas, particularly from developing countries where more activity beyond the traditional hosting experience is happening. *If Servas is to thrive, we really need to focus on ways in which we can attract youth and involve them*, not only in travelling with Servas but in participating at the regional level and in the Board. We also need to involve them in a dialogue about how Servas should move forward in the future.



A New Website for Servas Canada!

Have you checked out the Servas Canada website lately? Login in to <http://www.canadaservas.org/en/home/> (if you go to the old site, you should be directed here). While it is still a work in progress (not all content is there yet), we hope the site will make it much easier to find the information you need, download or complete forms, and contact Servas Canada!

Questions about Servas and how it operates? Check out the FAQs.

We're still looking for content for our "About us" page. If you had a particularly good Servas travelling or hosting experience and/or photograph that you would like to share, please send it on to Canada@servas.org.

Consider helping with the website, our main communication venue! We are looking at bringing a webmaster onboard but we could use a volunteer to be the social media moderator. Or if you are interested in being part of the website committee or have technical skills, contact Canada@servas.org if you can assist us.

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An Invitation from Servas Israel



Servas **Israel** decided to organize this meeting about a topic of international interest - shortage of sweet water and implications on agriculture. The program includes visits to tourist sites in Israel to add to the experience. We hope Servas friends will find interest in this varied program. We appreciate you forwarding this invitation by email to all members in your countries. Thanks to those of you who have already done this.

Please accept this personal invitation to you and your fellow members.

<http://israel.servas.org/?CategoryID=143&ArticleID=50&Page=1>

Looking forward to meet Servas participants from your countries.

—In Friendship, Claudia Sagie, Servas Israel N.S.

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Invitations from Servas Spain and Servas Honduras



Spain

Servas **Spain** hosts its annual youth summer camp 2016. All information is on this link.

<https://www.servas.es/actividades/servas-jovenes/188-campamento-de-verano-internacional-servas-espana-2016>

We also organize trekking in the Pyrenees:

<https://www.servas.es/actividades/184-encuentro-servas-transpirenaico-2016>

Best regards and see you in Spain

—Florentina Sanchez

Coordinadora Nacional Servas España
(National Secretary Servas Spain)

servaspresidencia@gmail.com

www.servas.es

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Honduras

An invitation has been extended to Canadian Servas travellers to come to **Honduras**. The person in charge of the program is Mr. Melvin Flores: melvins@sulanet.net

The traveller would reside in his home in San Pedro Sula for two weeks and then spend some time at the Copan ruins, completing a month of Spanish language learning.

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Want to Learn the Tango in Argentina?

Argentina is organizing a three-week CSE (Cultural Servas Exchange program) focussed on the tango and invites candidates, both male and female, who want to practice their Spanish and tango. Candidates will pay for travel and meals/extras during the stay (classes, tickets for milongas*, taxis, etc.). Servas **Argentina** will provide orientation and accompany you to the tango classes and milongas, and help schedule Spanish classes. Please contact Ana Manghi Servas Argentina for details at info@anamanghi.com [*Milonga is a place where tango is danced.]

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Servas Promotional Materials by Alison Reid

Servas Canada now has a nice variety of promotional materials. Please consider using them in whatever ways you feel comfortable with and suit your community. Here are some ideas that we are planning to implement here in Whitehorse:

- an informal house party with a small group of interested people;
- a lunch hour presentation at the local college, preceded by posters around campus with attached flyers and local interviewer business cards to take; and
- articles (based on an already-prepared template) to local periodicals, including high school newspapers.

Here's what I can send to you electronically (full colour, in Français and English):

- posters
- flyers
- blank business cards for local interviewer contact info
- template articles for local media
- handouts on the adult and youth language exchange programs

You can have these printed locally. If you set up an info table somewhere, be sure to have some goodies and fruit on hand. Let me know your out-of-pocket expenses, and I will reimburse you. And please, let us know how your events went! Have fun!

—Alison Reid, Treasurer.

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Need for Volunteers

If you've read the list of volunteers who have retired or stepped up to take their place, you will realize that it takes many volunteers across the country to keep Servas running. As we work on our new website, develop new programs and outreach materials, our need for volunteers and specialized assistance such as translation or web-based activity increases. *Are you looking for a way to get involved?* Contact Canada@servas.org to talk to someone about how you can help. Our most pressing needs are:

- Host coordinators on Vancouver Island and in the greater Vancouver region
- Interviewers in the Waterloo region
- Language translators
- Toronto: Host coordinator
- Youth coordinator
- Volunteer coordinator
- Social media moderator
- Board members (an opportunity as a voice for change; six Skype meetings/year)

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Message from the new Servas International General Secretary, Penny Pattison

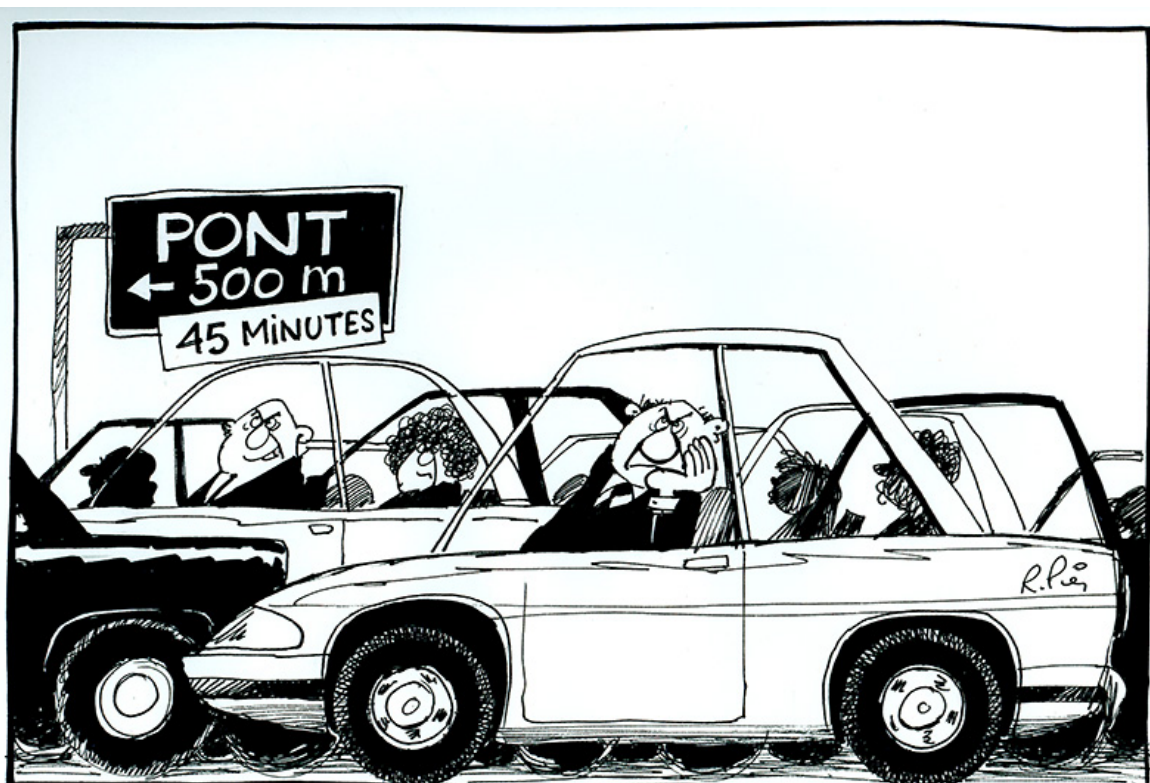
We have added an Events and Meetings section to the www.servas.org website under the heading Links and Events. Please go and have a look. National secretaries and main contacts, please also tell the members in your country. There are already some interesting events on the site, and Ann Greenhough and I are gathering more details that will be added regularly.

There are other changes on the website as well, including a new page for *Servas and the UN*. We will continue working on it a lot in the next months.

Once ServasOnline (SOLSYS) is implemented, then this information will be included in the ServasOnline website.

In peace,
Penny Pattison
SI General Secretary

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Servas International Events

Pathways Together 2016

This meeting will take place from 1st to 7th of July at Contamines Montjoie in the Mont Blanc region of France. The programme, description of the treks, and the pre-registration form are at: <http://servasra2016.webnode.fr/>

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SERVAS Biking along the Adriatic Sea

(Ravenna & Rimini) 2-4 June 2016. If you would like to be part of an international group of Servas friends that will ride a bike and enjoy local Servas hospitality, then contact this group from Servas Italy, which is promoting an experience of "Peace Riding" to share the values of simplicity and peace. There is place for 25 riders and if you are interested, contact the organizers (rota.raffaella@gmail.com)

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SYLE

Servas Youth Language Exchange opportunities around the world are being compiled for the coming year. National Servas groups are invited to propose opportunities offered by hosts in their country for young Servas members to take part in a language learning and cultural experience in 2016. SYLE experiences are for young people between 18 and 30, lasting up to a month in all. They can be organised in various ways. Usually hospitality is offered by a group of Servas hosts in a city or region. There is no expectation that formal language teaching will be provided. If you would like to put forward a SYLE proposal in your country please contact Roberto Capezzuto from Servas Italy who will be coordinating and publicizing the list of SYLE opportunities. Contact him at robertoservas@gmail.com

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Your Letter of Introduction (LOI) is your Servas Passport

Many travellers find that they must contact many potential Servas hosts before finding one that can accommodate them. A variety of factors can account for this challenge, many of them beyond a traveller's control. However, one thing a traveller *can* do to increase the chances of getting a response is to provide as much information as possible in the first contact, which includes sending your LOI when you first email a prospective host.

According to reports from some countries, some hosts receive many requests from travellers, and simply don't respond unless presented with the LOI. The LOI reassures your prospective host right from the beginning that you are legitimate Servas traveller. A well-constructed LOI can do a good job of presenting you, making the host eager to meet you and quick to respond!

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Calgary Peace Prize

by Imogene Roulson

The Calgary Peace Prize, awarded through Mount Royal University's Peace Studies Initiative "recognizes outstanding individuals from the global community, who work toward making the world a more just, safer and less violent place. Past recipients include Dr. Tadatoshi Akiba (2006), Prince El Hassan bin Talal (2008), Louise Arbour (2009), Sally Armstrong (2010), Dr. Vandana Shiva (2011), Dr. Izzeldin Abuelaish (2012), Emmanuel Jal (2013), Dr. Samantha Nutt (2014), and Lieutenant-General the Honourable Romeó Dallaire (2015)."

This year, Servas Canada made a financial donation to the Calgary Peace Prize so that several Anthropology or Sociology students could attend the ceremony. Here is the report from Imogene Roulson, 3rd year Sociology student on the April 7th event.

Attending the 2016 Calgary Peace Prize ceremony, was attending a moment in Canadian history. Honourees of this year's Prize were the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Dr. Marie Wilson and Chief Wilton Littlechild the three commissioners who worked tirelessly for six years to unearth Canada's true Creation story. It was inspiring and moving to be able to be a part of a transformative moment for Canada!



*Dr. Marie Wilson
would prefer to call it the "disrupting the peace" prize*

**L-R: Commissioner Marie Wilson, Commissioner Chief Wilton Littlechild and Commissioner Justice Murray Sinclair.
Photo: Adrian Wyld, The Canadian Press**

I would like to share one of my favourite moments from the ceremony, which comes from Dr. Marie Wilson's speech. As she was accepting the Prize she mentioned that she would prefer to call it the "disrupting the peace" prize, as she feels that ignorance can be a very peaceful state of mind. This idea made me reflect upon how sometimes we must upset the "peace" or *status quo* in order to shed light on truths that have been buried deep in history. "It takes initiative to build peace" Dr. Wilson stated, and I believe that sometimes this initiative must come from the courage to take a stand and try to disrupt the peacefulness that often accompanies ignorance. "Peace takes more than a wish and a prayer" she continued, quoting her father. Indeed she is right, for once a disruption of ignorance has been created we must remember that reconciliation is a sustained effort, not lasting a day or a week but instead a continuous process of creating and maintaining respectful relationships leading to peace. It is about listening, not just hearing, and doing something about what we have learned. It is about balancing the tipped scales, ensuring that Indigenous peoples in Canada are standing shoulder to shoulder *with the rest of us*. In this activity we should never fail to lose sight of our goal of peace.

It is my hope that the 94 *Calls to Action* the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has put out to Canadians will help Canada break free from its ignorance and usher in a new wave of peace between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in this country. . . .

Strategic Plan 2016

by Julie Cormack, National Secretary

(on behalf of the Servas Canada Board)

The year 2016 has been designated *The International Year of Pulses* by the 68th Session of the United Nations General Assembly and also the *International Year of Global Understanding*. Both of these designations recognize the need for global awareness of, in the first case, environmental stewardship and, in the second case, cultural tolerance and peace.

In April, Servas Canada Board members from across the country met in Montreal for a three-day retreat where we created a three-year strategic plan



Julie Cormack in her archaeological field clothes standing at the Roman citadel, Amman, Jordan.

(2016-2019) involving: improved communication; streamlining our administrative processes; and encouraging recruitment and participation. In light of the international designations above, Servas Canada seems to be on par with the global plan for 2016. But this year is also a *time of transition for Servas Canada*. We have a number of new Board members, and are *seeking volunteers for a variety of positions*.

I want to thank most sincerely the commitment of the Servas Canada members who attended the Montreal retreat: Nancy Palardy (Deputy National Secretary), Alison Reid (Treasurer), Judy Bartel, Jaques Belik, Alan Cassels, Julie Dotsch, Paul Dunae, Carol Ann Gingras, and Kathy Lewis.

Carol Ann and Kathy have decided to leave the Servas Canada Board; I would like to thank them most sincerely for their contributions to the Montreal meeting. Carol Ann is staying on as our website contact for Canada@servas.org. In particular I thank Julie Dotsch for her long-standing insights into Servas Canada operations, her mentoring and her ongoing suggestions as this new team transitions into 2016 and beyond.

Beyond these goals in our strategic plan, most significantly Servas Canada wants to promote and instill those values that make Servas different from other travel/host groups for

we are a conscientious hosting community that encourages cultural tolerance, peace initiatives, environmental stewardship, diversity, and inclusion.

In terms of *improved communication*, we agree to:

- expand our website visibility by making the website more accessible and easier to use;
- encouraging feedback opportunities through active social media;
- marketing and promoting Servas Canada through distribution of outreach materials and engaging in community dialogue;
- building partnerships (e.g., recently, a financial donation to the Calgary Peace Prize)

Streamlining our administrative processes through a Board-approved revised Constitution;

- clarifying Board and non-Board officer job descriptions;
- creating an Operations Manual that outlines policies and procedures;

- soliciting engaged Board and non-Board officer activities as Servas International SOLSYS gets up and running

In terms of *encouraging recruitment and participation*, we agree to:

- engage and inspire youth to be involved in promoting Servas Canada values;
- be inclusive by supporting a diverse volunteer community;
- support our volunteers by allowing them to identify their strengths in their contributions;
- foster open dialogue of Servas Canada membership through various means;
- revitalize our youth and language exchange programmes through membership feedback;
- assist new volunteers in their shared commitment to Servas Canada growth;
- promote family involvement through Servas International's Making Connections communities

I think that we are all engaged with Servas because of positive and often, life-changing travel experiences through our shared Servas friendships. I hope that you will consider building on those shared values and friendships by becoming part of the Servas Canada plan. Please feel free to voice your ideas or concerns to me at jlc5440@gmail.com. We look forward to your approval of this revised Constitution as a Servas Canada member by the end of this summer. Thank you, Julie.

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Feedback on the Newsletter

I'd be happy to receive any news, stories or other items for the next newsletter, as well as any feedback you might have on this one. We are likely going to phase out the newsletter to be replaced by a strong Servas Canada web presence, with a blog and frequent updates. If you'd like to help out with this please let me know. —Alan Cassels cassels@shaw.ca



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Donation?

To make a donation to Servas Canada, which is run entirely by volunteers, please make a cheque out to **Servas Canada** and please send it to Alison Reid, Box 20889, Whitehorse, YT Y1A 6P1.

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