



News Bulletin

Vol.32 • No.2 • 2024

Produced by and for members of the Servas community



**Travel, Travel, Travel to:
New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Canary Isles...**



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Thank you members who shared
your stories and photos.

Your editor, Michael Johnson
newsletter@servas.org



President's Message

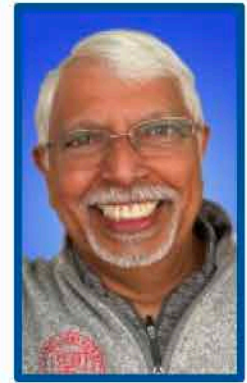
By Radha Radhakrishna

Dear fellow members,

2024 is shaping up to be a very active year. I am delighted to see that the event calendar on Servas.Org is quite full. I hope you are planning your travel and hosting activities, and taking advantage of various Servas peace events and get-togethers. I did.

I had a chance to travel with my family and stay with Servas friends in Europe during Easter. It was, as always, a wonderful experience, and made me feel how lucky I was to learn about Servas and become a member 30+ years ago. Please give the gift of Servas to your friends, family and to whomever else you can. Servas is truly amazing for what it gives to us.

My family had a delightful stay with Françoise and Laurent in Paris. We had long conversations deep into the night.



Photos re: *My family and I staying with Servas in Europe.*

Photo: Richard and Erika sing.

Photo bottom: From left: Françoise, Laurent, Radha and Nila.



François fed us such wonderful dishes, while the two of them introduced us to a side of French cuisine that we had not experienced before. In Strasbourg, Richard and Erika made us feel totally at home. Richard took us on long walks and narrated the history of Strasbourg to us. This allowed us to appreciate the unique nature of this lovely city on the border of France and Germany. While we were there, we went on walks, boat rides and tram rides, and enjoyed trying out local specialties like Tart Flambe. We enjoyed every minute of it. Finally, we went to Zurich, where René and Heidi hosted us. I have been to Zurich many times because of my job, but I have never seen it like I did on this trip. René and Heidi spent the entire day with us and took us to so many historical places. They were amazing hosts. Thank you, all.

I would like to draw your attention to three things.

1. **The next SICOGA** will be held in Dijon, France from 3 Oct to 9 Oct. I hope you have marked those dates on your calendar. We will be sending out more information in the coming months. However, if any of you would like to volunteer to join any of the Servas International committees, or attend some of the committee meetings to learn more, **please contact me**.

2. **Copyright issues.** As a law-abiding not-for-profit organization, it is incumbent upon us to ensure that we do not infringe any copyrights when we publish our bulletin. That means that we do not publish somebody else's photo or article without getting permission. If you saw it on Facebook (or any other social media) it does not imply that it is free to use. It is always important to verify that we have permission to use it. Sometimes, that may require the payment of a license fee. If you submit any pictures taken by others, please check to see that you have permission. We implicitly assume that anything you submit is your work (your words and pictures taken by you) and you are giving us the right to publish it. Also, if the picture contains faces of people, ensure that those who are in the picture do not object to their pictures being published.

3. **Getting the correct information.** During my trip to Europe, I was asked by some of my hosts if Servas is planning to go in a different direction. I was a bit surprised by this question till I realized that there was a concern for some that Servas was looking to become a more "volunteer-oriented" organization. Apparently, this concern arose when some people got to see some web pages (still in construction for Version 2). On behalf of SI Exco, I would like to assure you that we are not planning any such major changes. To find out what SI Exco is thinking or doing, please go through the minutes of the monthly meetings, which should be accessible to all members who log into Servas.Org. This is a better source of information about SI Exco than web pages that are under construction.

Thank you for all that you do for Servas.

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Results of the Extra-Ordinary General Assembly Vote

**By Jonny Sågänger,
SI General Secretary**

Servas International conducted a May 15-25 2024 Extraordinary Servas International General Assembly (EO-SIGA 2024) to vote on three motions. 58 SI Member Groups (SI MGs) out of the 63 currently eligible to vote, did vote. This was a substantial increase compared to the November 2023 SI Distant Vote (SI DV) when 47 out of the then 60 eligible SI MGs voted. All motions received at least 50 votes in favour of each proposal.

Please find the motions and other details in English and other languages at:

[International conferences | Servas Online](#)

<https://servas.org/en/international-conferences>

Best regards,

Jonny Sågänger
General Secretary
Servas International (SI GS)

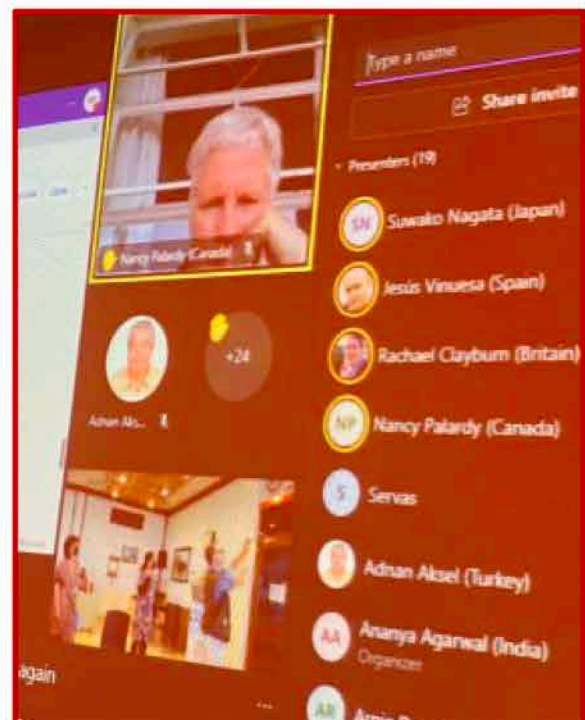


Photo:

The Servas International Member Groups have decided to develop a system of democratic, virtual decision-making voting to allow for a change of the organization's statutes.

The photo is from the SIGA 2022 where member group delegates could participate both virtually and/or in-person.

Photo: Jonny Sågänger.



Editor's Points

By Michael Johnson,
SINB editor

Dear submitters,

Please note any **copyrighted** photos or text when sending things to the SINB. Thank you.
newsletter@servas.org .

Singapore Stay

By David,
New Hampshire, USA

Lina and I stayed with Peter and Mary Rose in Singapore for two days on a recent trip through Southeast Asia. They are wonderful hosts. They took us on several walking tours in the evening, when temperatures had cooled, and gave us a terrific glimpse of the beauty and diversity of Singapore.

Wear your walking shoes ! Many thanks to you, Mary Rose & Peter.

Photo, top:

From left:
Lina & David (Servas guests)
and Peter & Mary Rose
(Servas hosts) at a satay
restaurant in Singapore on
February 17, 2024.
Photo: selfie.

Photo, bottom:

Lina [right] looking at the
colourful murals of Singapore.
Photo by David.



Fred's Films

Servas member, Fred in California, offers a film online preceded by a chat with the viewers. It's on Saturday evenings, west coast, USA time. Interested? Fred wrote:

"I would be glad to have more Servas members attend. The link changes each week. Have members contact me at sail1942@gmail.com and I'll add them to my email list."



Thanks from a Seasoned Swedish Traveller

Björn S. has been an active member of Servas Sweden since 1985 and in that time, he has visited many countries throughout the world. Björn, who is recovering from a stroke, wants to thank, most sincerely, all the people of Servas who have helped him, hosted him and travelled with him on his many adventures.



Besides SINB

There are dozens of great newsletters from many Servas countries. Google can translate them for you if needed. First have a look on **servas.org**, and many are found on national sites: e.g: a USA newsletter mentioned these peace events...

July 4-14

- 17th Annual Türkiye Peace Camp

July 19-25

- Peace Hikes in German Alps

July 22-29

- Georgia's 1st Summer Peace Camp

August 8-12

- Servas by Bike will take place in Lorraine, France.

Aug. 25-30

- First Peace School in Uganda

October 2024

- Servas Australia will host two 7-day peace walks



National Newsletters

Have you seen the hundreds of "pages" of news from various Servas nations that you can only see by going to their national websites? Servas Korea for example has a 12-page English newsletter: 2023 Servas Korea Newsletter.

I started checking websites alphabetically. Here are some "A" examples:

Where would you find a podcast about Servas Malawi?

Go to Servas **Australia** of course: <https://servas.org.au/podcasts.php>

To hear about Israel's 2024 annual meeting, see Servas **Austria**:

<https://www.servas-austria.org/wp/2024/03/online-bei-der-servas-israel-jahresversammlung/>



Thanks to Two SINB Teams

I'm sure everyone agrees the last SINB by Youth members was excellent. They blew me away with their editing, great graphics and layout. Well done. May I retire now?

If you have any comments or praise for the youthful editors, I can pass them along.

We are certainly in good future hands with such talented members “of young Servas members from Brazil, India, Italy, Malawi, Peru and Portugal”.

Our “regular” SINB team also appreciates knowing that you are enjoying our work. Thanks for this email ...

Hello Michael,

Thank you (and everybody contributing) for the news bulletins. I found 3-2023 really good, full of interesting information. Looks like a lot of work.

It is good to receive mail about the latest issue as a reminder, otherwise I would not bother searching the website for it.

Also it is nice for new members, so they know Servas is more than travelling and hosting.

Dagmar

(Servas Germany and IT team)

...



SYLE in New Zealand

by **Celia R, Servas Spain**

We invite all members to support Youth exchanges and share these wonderful experiences.

Hello **Servas people**, I went to New Zealand for one month to see the beautiful nature, share experiences with people, to know about the culture, and try to improve my English.

Saskia, who lives in Hamilton, New Zealand, hosted me for the first 5 days (starting July 27, 2023). She helped me to correct my English (even though she could speak perfect Spanish). We enjoyed seeing a football match, the Women's World Cup, in Hamilton. She invited me to paddle a dragon boat with her team. She guided me to see the Hamilton Gardens and the art museum. On the last day we went to visit Raglan, a town famous for its ceramic shops, artisans, beach, surfers, and beautiful sunsets.

Photo: Saskia [left] with me, Celia, at the Women's World Cup in Hamilton. >

Skye, who lives also in Hamilton hosted me for the 5 next days. We shared interesting conversations and dinners with Spanish wine. She invited me to see her friends of the theatre acting. And we went to a class of aerobics in a swimming pool.

After some days on my own...

Julie, who lives in Napier hosted me for 3 days. We share the profession of teaching, so we enjoyed exchanging ideas. We went to an Irish pub to support the Women's World Cup. She also invited me to join her artistic friends to learn handcrafts. Her sister guided me in her car to the capital city, Wellington, before crossing to South Island.

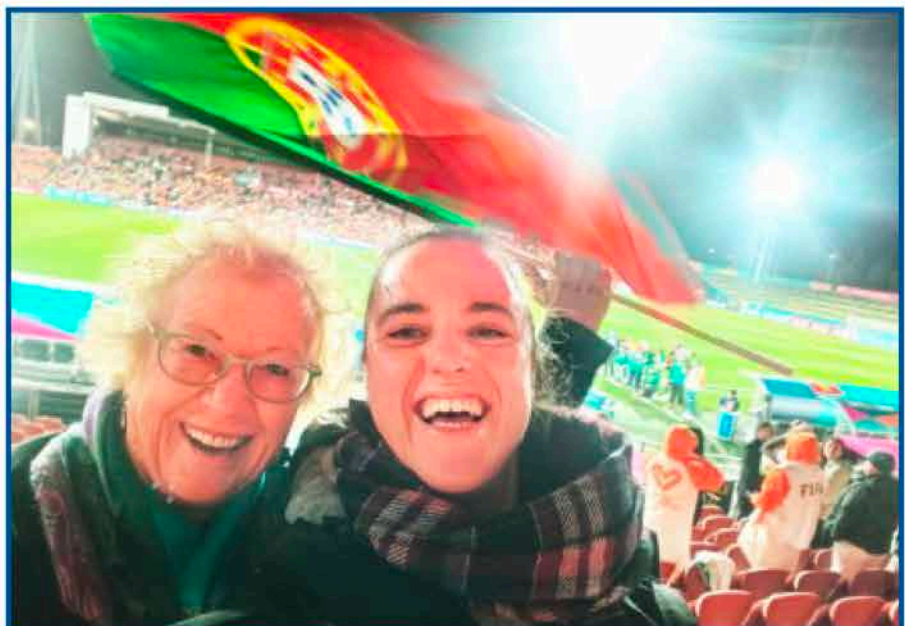


Photo: Celia [left] with Julie at an Irish pub. >

Rene and Leonie, who live in a house in the country, hosted me (from 15 to 18 of August). I shared daily life with Rene (Leonie, a physiotherapist, was working). On our last day, we all went out for dinner and a night quiz in Blenheim.

Pru and Peter, who live in a small village near Dunedin, showed me beautiful places including a beach and a forest. Pru invited me to join a volunteer group planting trees to have this Kiwi experience. We shared a passion about sports, especially skiing. We went to a beer bar and had dinner from a food truck. We watched the final of the World Women's Cup, supporting the Spanish team in a neighbour's house with Spanish wine and churros with chocolate. They guided me



to see Dunedin, the university, street art, a museum, and food. Pru is a good cook, I tried to learn her recipes. I borrowed her ski equipment, and went to Queenstown to ski on my own during my last days.

I would like to thank so much these five families for hosting me. I also would like to host you in my house in Spain and see you again. So, welcome everyone to Calatayud!

Best wishes, Celia.

• • •

SERVAS IS OFFERING SYLE OPPORTUNITY TO
ALL YOUNG MEMBERS
TO STAY FOR AN EXTENDED HOSTING AT SERVAS.

It can be a youth- exchange and /or it can be joined to volunteering experiences.

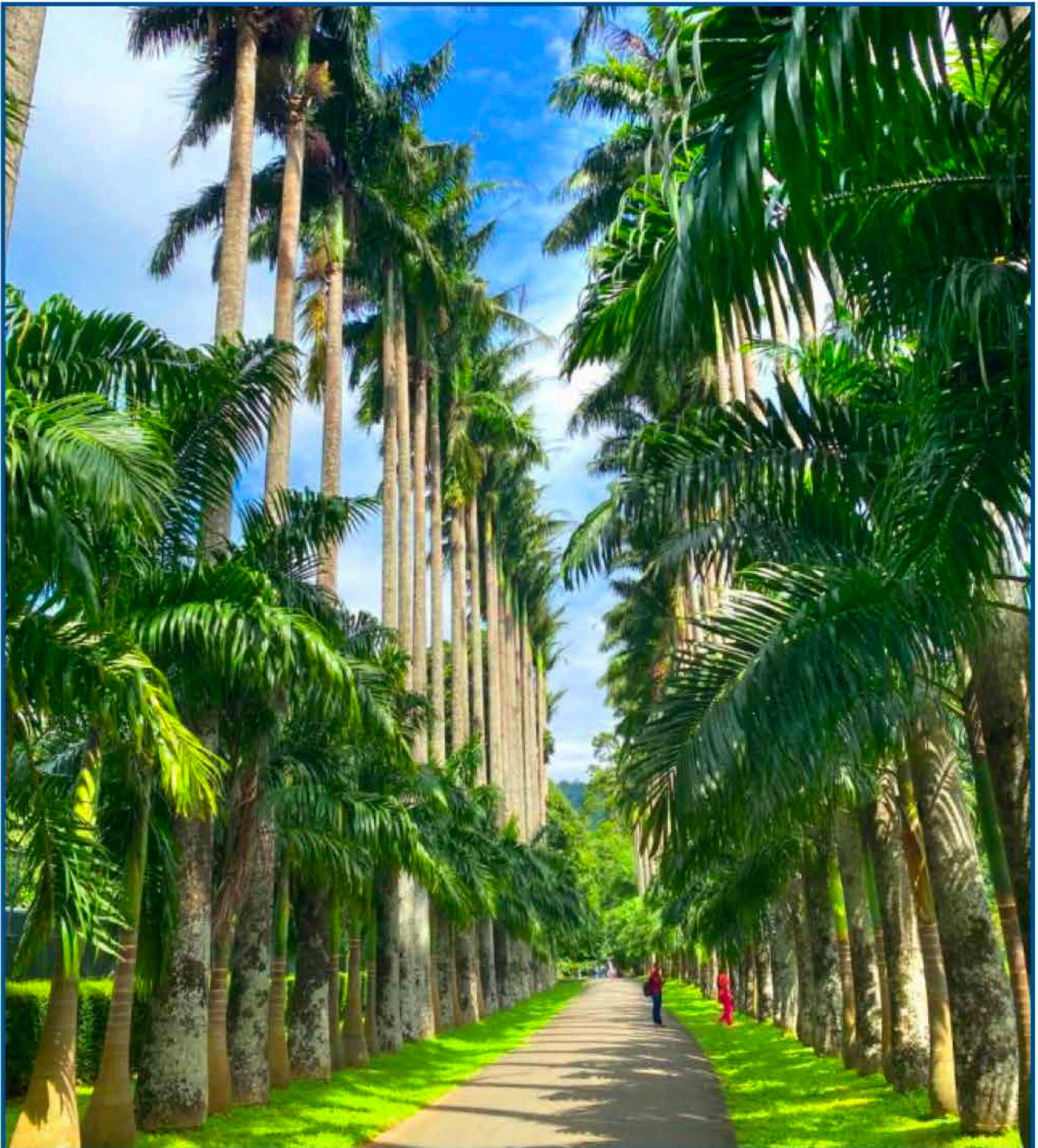



Why travel to Sri Lanka?

By Isabelle Girard

Is it worth traveling to Sri Lanka? When my husband Claude and I chose to spend two weeks visiting Sri Lanka last December, a few persons almost deterred us from

traveling there because of violence, famine, train strikes and so on...we were worried to read a Canadian government site of the high risk for travel to Sri Lanka.



But several Servas hosts gave us reassuring real time information about the situation. During our trip, at no time did we feel insecure, or witness any violent behaviour. On the contrary, people were extremely welcoming and kind, doing their best to help us travel from one place to another. We were hosted by three wonderful Servas households, starting with Sandhya. It is always mind-opening to leave one's comfort zone and discover other ways of living.



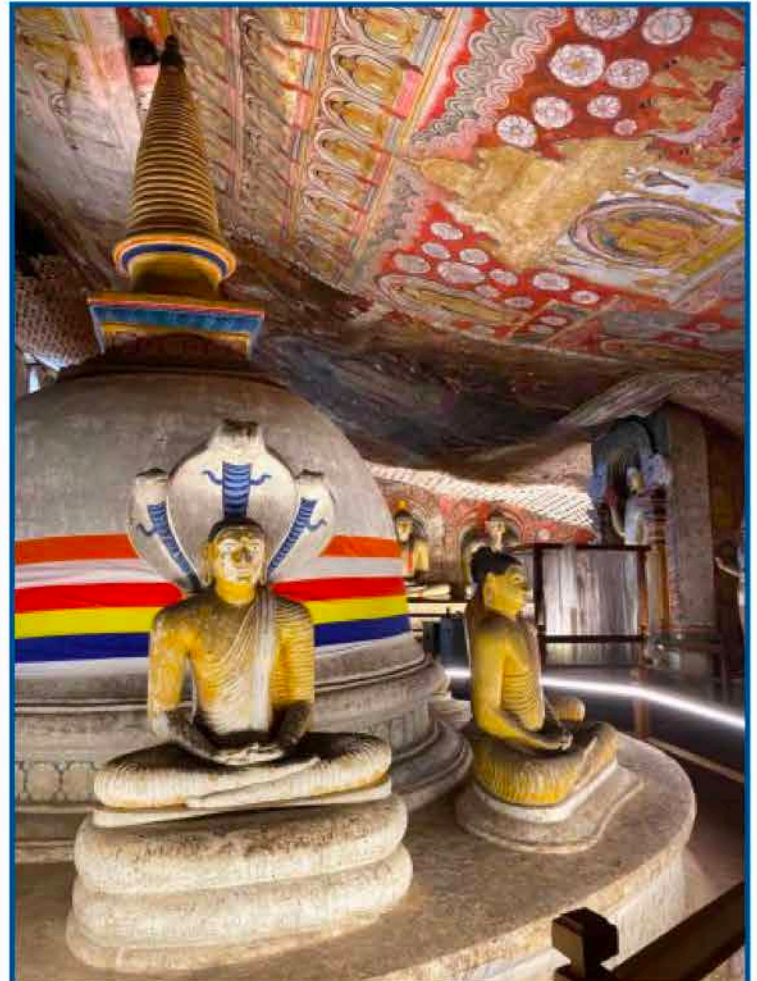
Photo: from left: Isabelle, Sandhya, and Claude

We visited one of the most beautiful botanical gardens in the world [photo preceding page], near Kandy. We could appreciate the work done to preserve endangered species. We were amazed by the works of famous architect Geoffrey Bawa who built 'sustainable architecture' well before his time.

One Servas couple took us to see: a famous Buddhist temple, [see photo] a Catholic church, a mosque, and a gigantic Hindu temple nearby; communities living side by side in peace.

Flooding threatened the next rice harvest. And to make

things worse, the year 2024 started with a new tax on all products, so many products are not affordable for the majority. The drastic measures taken to reduce the national debt has



the strongest impact on those who fight for a living. Now people are hoping for more tourists to improve the economy.

One long time Servas couple, Ken and Visakha, appreciate the world coming to their house, in Kandy, while they devote much of their time to help numerous social projects. I asked them to write an article for the SINB to explain how Servas travelers can help by bringing in their luggage some small items that are missing there. I have been really impressed by them; they are real artisans of Peace, in their daily life.

I'll let them explain the situation better than I can in the next article.

Photo:
Sandhya [left] with Isabelle.



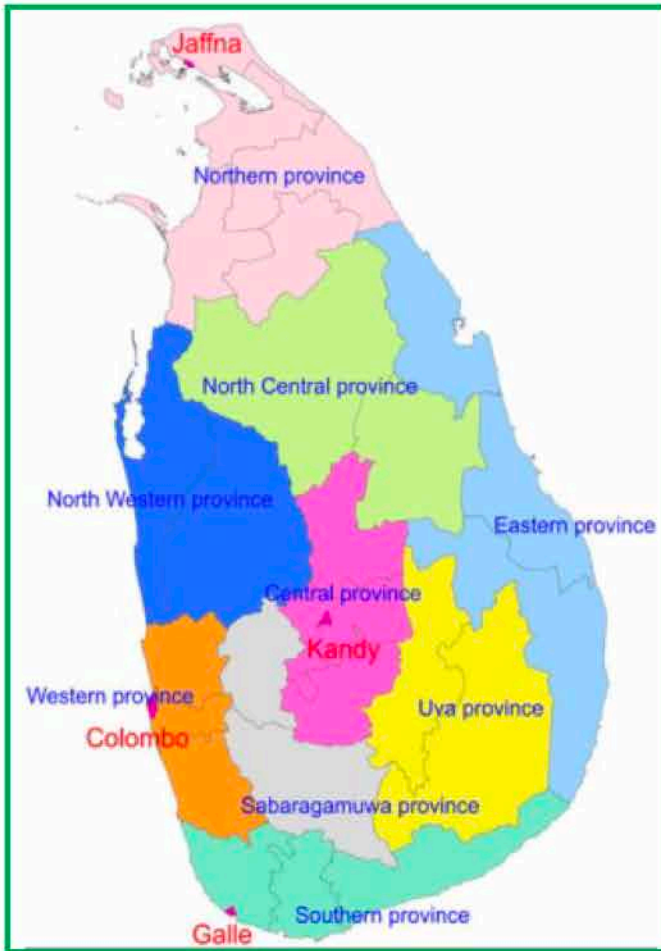
Welcome to Sri Lanka !

By Ken and Visakha Kawasaki



We have been Servas members since 1975. In Japan, the USA, and now in Sri Lanka, we have hosted more than one hundred travelers. During our one-year trip in 1978-9, we stayed with Servas hosts in more than ten countries. Servas has been a meaningful part of our lives for 48 years, and we still maintain contact with many of these friends.

Due to Covid-19, we had not hosted for three years. We are delighted that in just the **past two months, we have already had eight guests.**



Recently, several physicians have asked whether we could help them obtain much-needed equipment which they are unable to get here. Several Servas travelers and visiting friends and relatives have kindly brought small items, such as digital blood pressure meters and stethoscopes, and donated them to the local hospitals. The doctors and staff were extremely grateful for these life-saving gifts. If you're coming to Sri Lanka, we can send a list of urgently needed items. We may arrange for donors to meet the doctors and see our hospital facilities.

Sri Lanka, where we have been living for eighteen years, is a beautiful country, and we welcome all Servas members. Unfortunately, for the past two years, Sri Lanka has suffered from import restrictions, currency devaluation, high inflation, austerity cuts (IMF demands), and a newly imposed VAT of 18%. Since the crisis began, we have received generous donations from around the world and help from friends to provide food and essential items to many institutions and to hundreds of destitute families.



Thank you very much,
Ken and Visakha Kawasaki
kawasaki@brelief.org

Please visit our websites
Buddhist Relief Mission:

www.brelief.org/

and

Sri Lanka reports: [http://](http://www.brelief.org/reports/)

<http://www.brelief.org/reports/>



Servas Towns Partnership

25th Servas Towns Meeting, 2024 in Strasbourg

by Erika Cabassut

In 1998, two Servas friends Ursula Schaufele and Erika Cabassut, had the idea to create something like a Servas Towns Partnership between Frankfurt and Strasbourg. So, for the first time, a group of about 12 Servas members from Frankfurt came to Strasbourg and spent a weekend with local

hosts. Other Servas friends from other towns heard about this town partnership and wanted to join, so the following years Utrecht (Netherlands), Basel (Switzerland) and Trier (Germany) also joined this partnership and the *2 towns meeting* quickly changed into a *5 towns meeting* and then a *multiple towns meeting*.





Photo: Preceding page: Tour of the European Parliament

Photo: Above: Meeting “old” and new friends for 25 years.

Now, every year, between 20 and 30 guests come to one of the partner-towns. The local hosts prepare a nice cultural program, and everybody enjoys a good time. After some years and some rounds in the partner towns, we were looking for a new Servas town and asked our Belgian friends in Leuven, who happily joined the Servas Towns meeting. So did some friends from Mainz who also joined. We met this year, 2024, for the **25th Servas Towns meeting** in Strasbourg, where everything began.

Although it was the 6th meeting in Strasbourg, we still prepared a program with new highlights. This year, we had: a guided tour of the European Parliament; a boat trip around the old city of Strasbourg; a daytrip to Sélestat to visit the Humanist Library; and enjoyed an organ concert at the Abbey Church of Ebersmunster.

Like every year, we had a great time, meeting old and new friends, exchanging and discussing, learning and discovering a lot of new things, laughing and singing.

That is what Servas is about: creating a network of friendships over the borders, meeting these friends, having good times together and keeping wonderful memories in our minds.

Many are looking forward to next year and the next Servas Towns meeting.

Photo:

Why don't you initiate a Servas Towns Partnership?

...



As Good as Bread

By Luigi Uslenghi



To mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of Servas, we asked Luigi Uslenghi, the Honorary President of Servas Italy, to give a talk. It was not only a recollection of the first steps in establishing Servas in Italy, but an explosion of enthusiasm and joy at belonging to a network that is 'as good as bread'. Here is a very condensed version of that talk.

—Raffaella Rota



Thanks to Servas for existing

Among the many papers in our Servas archive there is one that summarized all the goodness of the experience: 'Thank you to Servas for existing'.

There are moments in life that mark you forever. For many of us, such moments are experiencing Servas, this great institution that is now seventy-five years old.

Over the years Servas is building, maintaining, and updating our worldwide network in a world that we embrace in peace. It is in our daily actions that we contribute to world peace... our welcoming, our willingness to listen, and our tolerance.

Forty years ago

There were still twelve of us, representing more than four hundred Italian open doors, when we decided to form an association in 1984.



We all sang 'Bella ciao', the song that symbolises freedom in Italy and the world.

Bella ciao and the daily bread

We still sing 'Bella ciao' together, at the top of our lungs, clapping our hands, with the enthusiasm of being in Servas, with enthusiasm for the good and beautiful things in life.

Servas is simply a good thing, so good that someone at the end of a travel experience rightly called it 'as good as bread'. The good daily bread that accompanies our journey.

Bella ciao performance:

<https://youtu.be/tP98RImh55g?si=ImcMbX63qiy9PGS9>



...

Israel's Annual Meet

By Claudia S, NS



On Friday, March 22, 2024, 35 members of Servas Israel met for Servas Israel Annual Assembly in Atid Bamidbar Hall in Yeruham. **Atid Bamidbar** (meaning: *future in the desert*) **works to create a more pluralistic Israel that values diversity and maintains solidarity among individuals and groups.**

Over ten Servas members from different countries and some members from Israel who could not come, joined by Zoom.

We heard the story of Yeruham and the Atid Bamidbar project in the desert from Debi G.

Also, we brought some learning materials and educational toys, as donations to the Bedouin and evacuee children [see photos of donated gifts and the Bedouin handwork on the next page].

We held the Assembly according to the rules of the association: that is, we presented recent activities, planning, financial summaries, and audit reports.



We voted and elected members for various positions.

Everyone congratulated the new and old volunteers, who work tirelessly even in our current difficult days.

Later, we toured Yeruham Park and Lake, with Shai. Then we went to Mount Avnon to see the great crater with Orli R. [see photo, on the preceding page]. We heard more Yeruham stories from both.

We finished with lunch [see photo] at Shula's, one of Yeruham's "Culinary Queens" and heard the story of her life and her community.

We got to know the place, the environment, the communities and the projects. Thank you to everyone who participated and to those who brought reading materials and gifts for the Bedouin children in the area.

[Note: Yeruham, Israel, is a town in the Negev Desert with a population of about 11,000.]

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Argentiniens in Asia

By Ana Manghi

I'm an Argentinian Servas member since 1997.

In 2024 I organized a trip to Southeast Asia, where four Servas members traveled together for 45 days. Since we live so far from Asia, we wanted to make the most of the trip. Many Servas friends helped me design the itinerary. Kiat was one of them, and I'm so grateful to her for that!

We arrived in Bangkok 32 hours after leaving Buenos Aires, and a Servas host was waiting for us at the airport to take us on a sightseeing tour of the city. We used flights, sleeper buses, ships, and cars to travel from one place to another. The whole trip was like a road movie, full of surprises due to the many cultural differences and the unexpected events that arose constantly. Flexibility was essential to adapt to changes along the way.

We were very fortunate to meet another host in Ho Chi Minh City and to be hosted in Indonesia by Amin, who was one of the highlights of our trip.



Many people who know him will understand what I mean—he is unique.

In Kuala Lumpur, Richard and Carol made our stay wonderful, even taking us on a guided tour of the history museum to understand the evolution of commerce and population in Southeast Asia. In this city, we also had the chance to meet other Servas members whom we knew beforehand, and it was fantastic.





Some days, one of us wasn't feeling well, the weather wasn't ideal, and there were frequent delays.

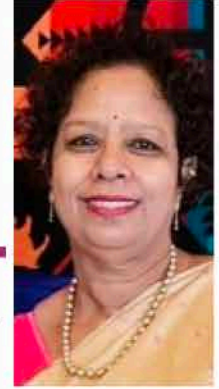
Despite these challenges, I'm so grateful that we had the chance to make this trip. It was unique, and I now feel more encouraged to pursue whatever I want.

After successfully navigating such a challenging trip, I feel more confident in myself. I believe that everyone who travels extensively shares this feeling: the certainty that, despite our differences, we are all human, sharing a planet and experiencing many similar things.

We can share, laugh, eat, and enjoy together; and through these experiences, we learn more about ourselves.

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A Parallel Event at CSW68

**By Dr Hamsavahini Singh, SI Coordinator to the UN,
National Peace Secretary Servas Foundation India**

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was established by the UN’s **ECOSOC Resolution** in June 1946. This principal intergovernmental body was especially dedicated to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. The main focus of this body was to change discriminatory legislation and to foster awareness of women’s issues at a global level.

From 1947 to 1962, the commission focused on setting standards and formulating international conventions. Thus was born a commission

which worked for elevating and improving the lives of women and girls in the world. I had the opportunity to attend CSW66 and CSW67 virtually. It was a bucket list moment for me to see so many events taking place over the period of two weeks.

The knowledge gained and the priority theme, *“Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective”* motivated me to present a parallel event

The poster features the Servas International logo (PEACE AND UNDERSTANDING THROUGH TRAVEL AND HOSTING) and the CSW68 logo (10 - 22 MARCH 2024). It includes two circular portraits: Prof. Lilly Kerekes (Former International Translation Coordinator for SI, Member Servas Mexico) and Prof. Hamsavahini Singh (SI Coordinator to the UN & National Peace Secretary, Servas India). The event details are: Tuesday, March 19, 2024, 8.30 AM-10.00 AM, New York Time.



in CSW68. In the CSW, women from various backgrounds with different experiences shared their ideas about a spectrum of issues impacting women. The experience gained here could be shared back home in our countries.

I presented a joint event with Dr Lilly Kerekes from Mexico on 19 March, 2024. We shared firsthand information and deliberated upon the theme which was “*Women, Poverty and Discrimination: The Nomadic Tribes of India and Indigenous Women of Mexico*”. As a takeaway in CSW68 I learned about the actions, policies, programs and investments that were taken, or could be taken, to end women’s poverty and gender inequality.

In short, over 100 million women and girls could be lifted from poverty if governments prioritized family planning and education, fair and equal wages, and expanded social welfare benefits.

Editor's Note: Servas offered two other virtual parallel events at CSW68 this past March. Servas USA member Rachel organized a parallel event on “**Indigenous Nations US and Canada: Poverty Sources, Solutions and Collective Vision**”. Servas Taiwan arranged a parallel event “**Empowering Taiwan Women's Independent Economic Abilities through Lifelong Learning Programs**”. We hope to have more on those events in the next edition of the SINB.

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Canary Islands 2024

By Sylvia Smitas, Toronto Canada

Editor's Note: For anyone going to the Canaries and wanting to hear more details about these islands, please email the editor: newsletter@servas.org. I'll send you a longer report. Thank you.

Summary

I spent January 6 to March 3 2024, visiting eight of the Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago off the coast of Morocco. I saw Servas hosts in Gran Canaria and Tenerife.

Nuria, a day host in Gran Canaria, invited me to go to see a movie with her. I walked with and ate with Nuria three more times in that week.

Don't ignore Day Hosts.





The next day, I went to Santa Cruz de Tenerife, where Tello and Verónica met me at the ferry docks! Verónica gave me a tour of the city and that evening they made a Venezuelan dish. Next day I went to the beautiful Anaga Mountains.



I took a tram to La Laguna, a beautiful historical town where I met José, who drove me to his home in Oratava; his stone house had an old aqueduct in the backyard. José showed me the historic part of Oratava, including the “house of balconies”, dating back to 1632. The next day, I went to Mount Teide, the highest mountain in the Canary Islands [and also Spain] at 3,718 m. There are 321 volcanoes in Tenerife, but only Teide is still active.



Photos, from top:

1. Sylvia [left], Nuria's friends, and Nuria, Gran Canaria.
2. Natalia & Tony, Bajamar
3. Kashmiri Servas student and hosts Fátima and José.

The next day, I went to La Laguna again, where I met Carmen, my third Servas host at the Museo de la Historia de Tenerife. She showed me some charming towns including Garachico where I invited Carmen for lunch; the islands have a lot of good seafood.

I went to three more islands before returning to Tenerife. After a plane and two buses, I got to La Longuera where Fátima, my Servas host, was waiting for me.

Carnaval was going on at various towns, on various weeks. Later I caught a bus to Masca, the last on my “must see” list.

My final Servas stay was with Tony and Natalia in Bajamar, Tenerife. They lived near the only grocery store in town and Natalia told me to ask for it if I ever got lost. I went for a walk alone -- I felt very safe on my trip.

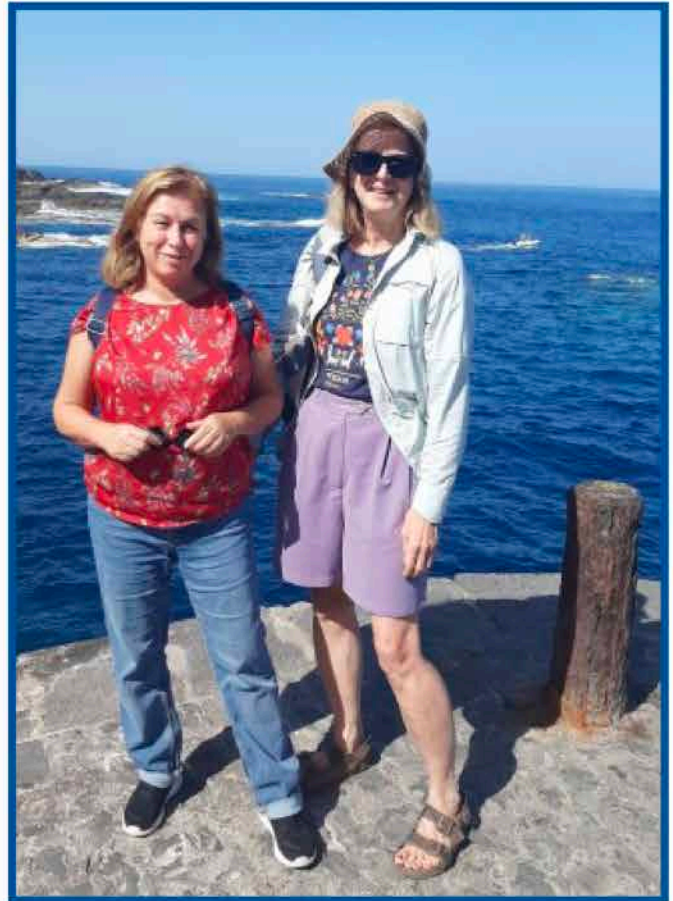
What a great journey with wonderful Servas experiences!

Photos, from top:

A. Carmen & Sylvia [right]

B. Tony carves a leg of pork, a Christmas gift from his children.

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Hosting and Traveling for Peace

An empty or meaningful formula?

By Marie-Brigitte S.

In September 2022, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for tourism to be reinvented “as a powerful instrument for progress and mutual understanding”, tourism that serves people and respects the environment.

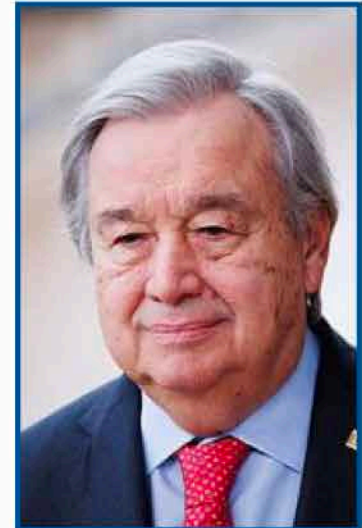
In November 2022, during our SICOGA, we worked on more eco-responsible and sustainable travel. At that very moment we were contacted by the organisers of the Terra Scientifica exhibition (in Paris) to set up a stand! Coincidence?

The Terra Scientifica exhibition is organised by the NGO OSI (Objectif Sciences International), a UN-accredited organisation like Servas, which organises a conference every December at the UN in Geneva entitled "Sustainable travel and tourism for peace and development"!

OSI's mission is to educate people by offering scientifically oriented trips to help participants better understand and respect the planet.

Terra Scientifica presents itself as the first “exhibition for meaningful travel”. The exhibition organisers recognised that Servas also offers meaningful travel.

Servas allows members to discover other cultures, understand people, make new friends, and overcome prejudice. Sometimes there are longer stays for a specific purpose: learning a language, taking part in a peace school, doing things together in the service of peace, etc.



Photos:

from top:

1. Author, Marie-Brigitte S.

2. UN Sec. Gen. Antonio Guterres

Source:

Wikipedia

We are vigilant about respecting the environment: using low-CO2 transport wherever possible, being hosted by native inhabitants, which is the most eco-friendly form of accommodation.

By respecting people, we make them proud of their own culture.

Yes, Servas can help to reinvent travel by giving full meaning to the slogan:

“Hosting and travelling differently for Peace”.

Photo: Servas display, from left: Bernard (tall man), Marie-Josée (in front of him), Françoise, and Geneviève welcoming visitors to the Servas stand at the exhibition, to explain Servas and its value for peace.



Sleep in your own Guestroom!

by Michael Johnson, your editor

Do you show your Servas guests their bed and bathroom before having a long conversation? Do they need water, food, to fix or buy something? A shower, a nap? Do some laundry? What's the Wifi code?

How many Servas beds have you slept in? Yes, we are in Servas to see **people**, but we **do** have some basic needs of comfort and privacy. Servas beds can be too hard or too soft for some travellers. Some people may prefer a hard floor, others need extra pillows.

Before you say: "Well, my guestroom is great"... **I challenge you to spend ONE night there.**

Pack a suitcase with clothes, towel, tooth-brush, etc. and go to your own guestroom or pullout couch. Is there any privacy? A place to put your luggage? Did you find a spot in the bathroom to leave your things? And where does a guest hang a coat, a shirt, or a wet towel?

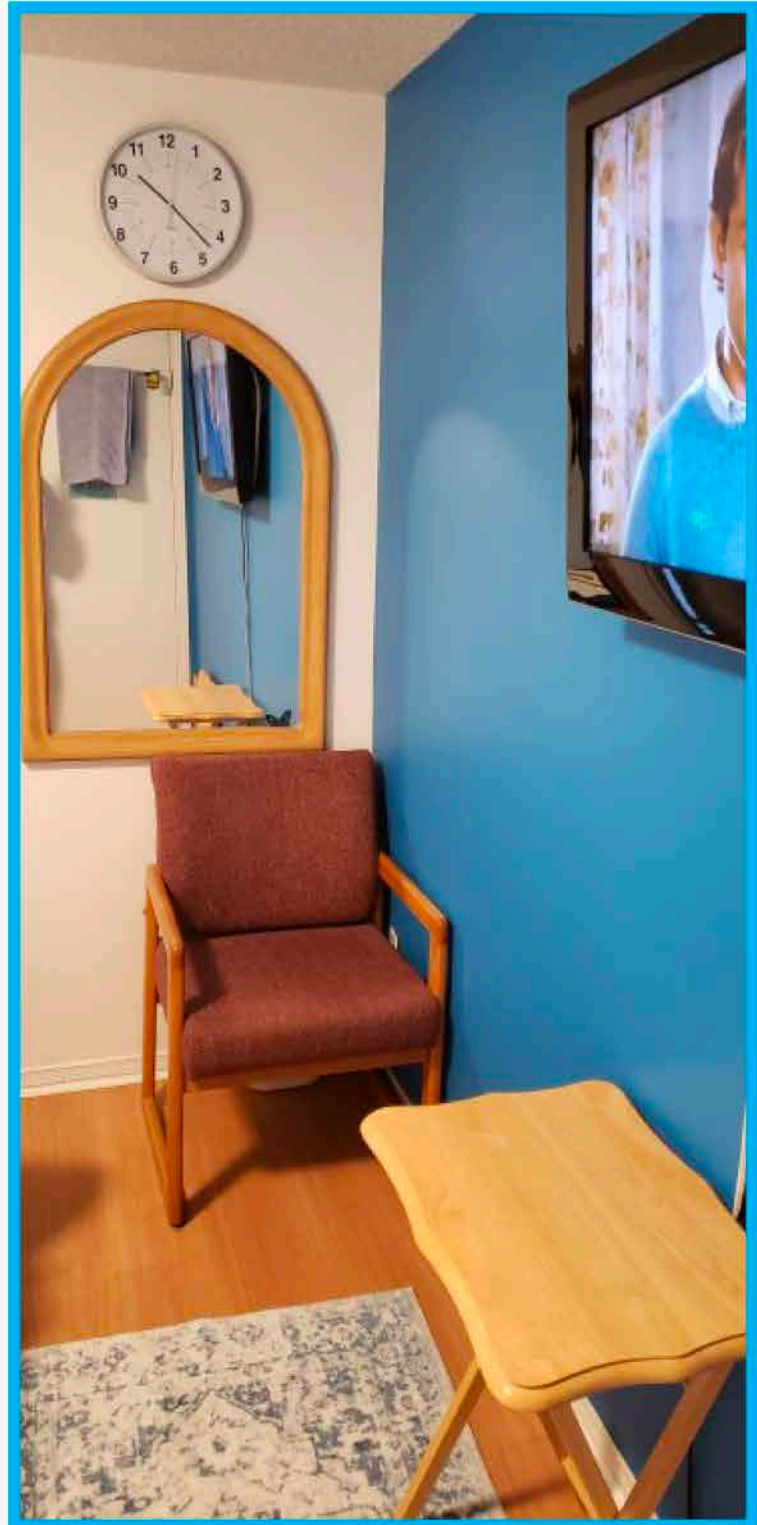


Photo: Guests appreciate a place for their suitcase/backpack, a chair, a mirror, a clock that doesn't tick.

Did you have to move things on the bed to get in?

Where do you put *this* stuff?

Where can you put *your* stuff?

I stayed in a guestroom with 19 pillows on the bed, but there was space in the closet for the 17 I didn't need. That's fine.

And in the morning, how is your back? One host's son asked me, "How could you **sleep** on that awful bed?"

Photo: Do you have a night-light, a place to plug in a charger, reading light, tissues, table space for the guest's things?

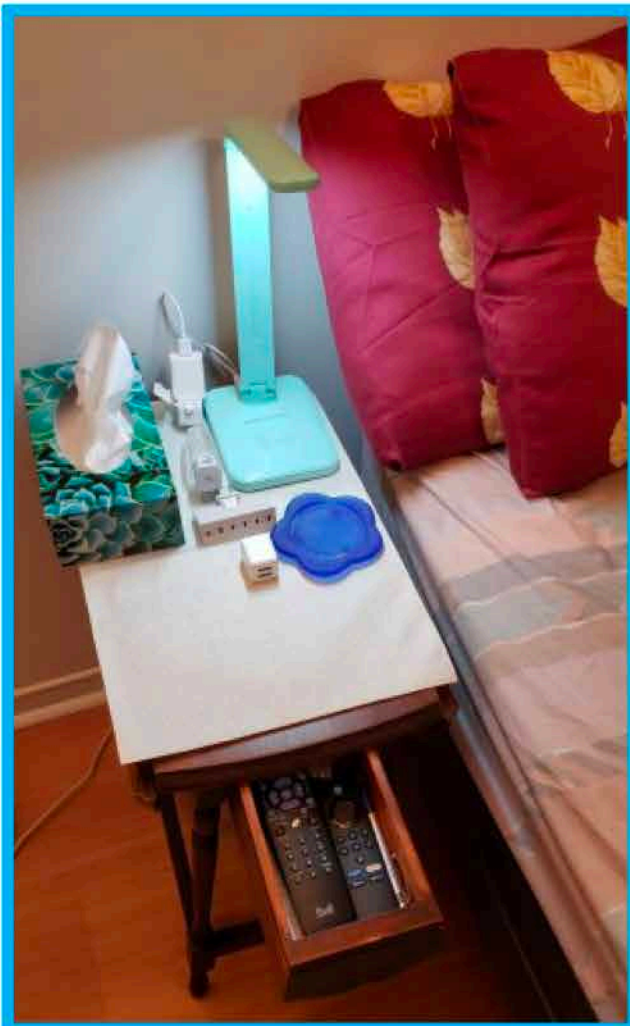


Photo: Anything missing in the bathroom?

I slept in **my** guestroom last week and later I added a towel rack to the back of the door in the bedroom and another to the guest bathroom.

A common complaint by hosts is "*I don't get enough travelers*". Maybe this will help.

Try it tonight.

...



International Youth Camp Nuremberg, Germany

By Bonnie H, with some photos from Manuela K

In May 2024, the international Youth Camp took place in Nuremberg, Germany.

Photo: About 30 young people from **ten different countries** exchanged ideas in workshops about travel, the tasks and opportunities of Servas, sustainability and more.

“On an excursion, we were able to learn about parts of the city’s Nazi past, the mass staging and activities on the Nazi Party Rally Grounds. A handful of participants even jumped into the lake for a swim after the hike through the Schwarzachklamm”.

“The connection with people was invaluable. The camp brought us together, helped us build bonds and exchange perspectives...”
(Bonnie H., Taiwan)

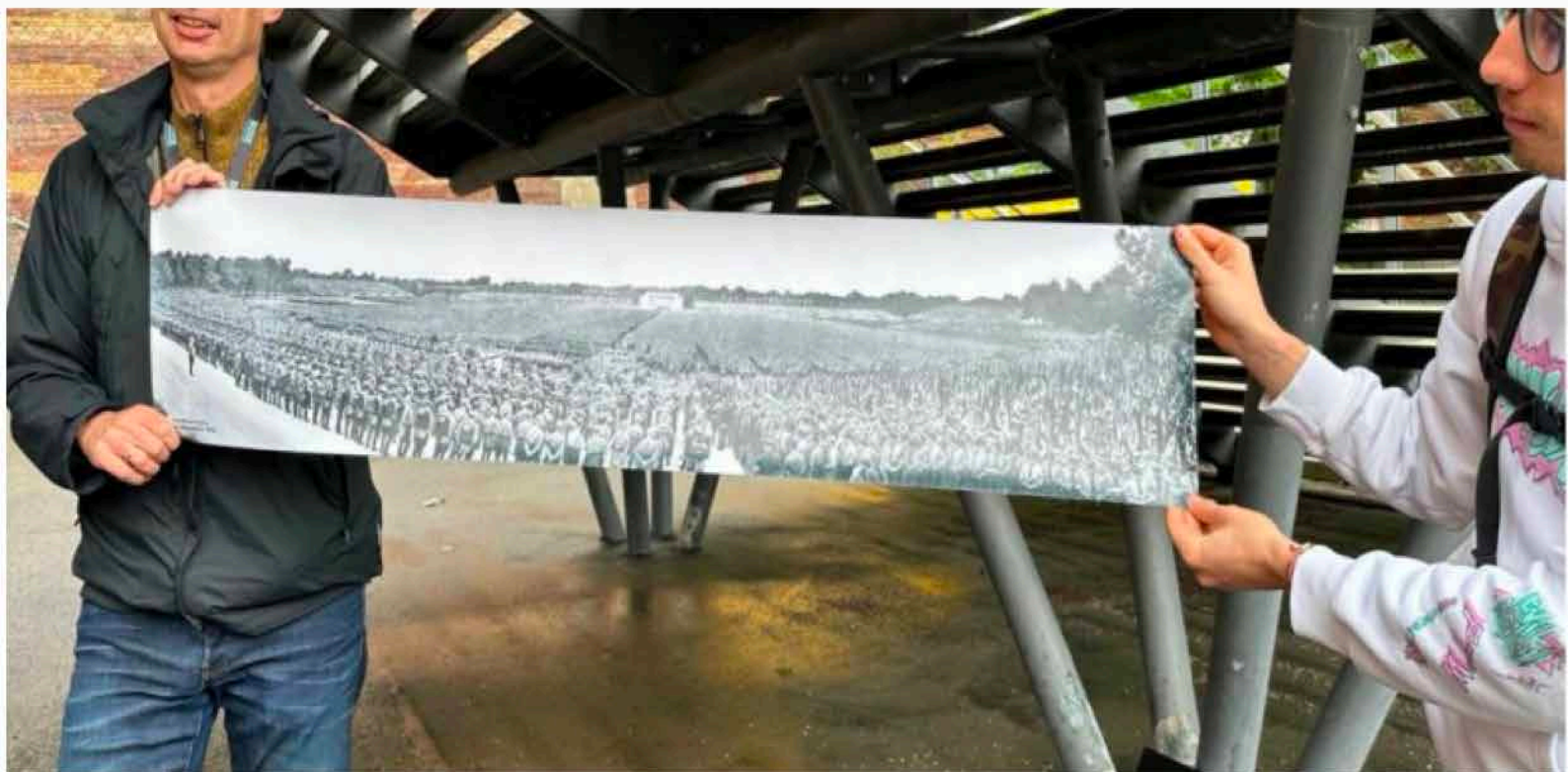
For the full story and to view two dozen photos of this event, click this link:

https://www.servas.de/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/240520_German-youth-camp_Bonnie-review-Kopie-3.pdf

Photo, top: The lovely organizing team of the 2024 youth camp.

Photo, bottom: Presenters holding a panorama photo showing the huge size of the Nazi rallies.

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Children's Art Competition to Promote Peace

Dhaka, Bangladesh - December 16, 2023



By Faridul

[*Note: This event was partially covered in the previous SINB issue.*]

Today, Servas Bangladesh proudly hosted an Art Competition dedicated to promoting peace among children. The event brought together talented young artists from Servas Peace School and neighbouring communities, uniting them in a creative endeavor to convey a powerful message:

"End Wars! We want Peace."

As Bangladesh commemorates its 53rd Victory Day, a day symbolizing the hard-fought victory achieved after a nine-month-long war that cost the lives of three million individuals, the organizers believe it is crucial to reflect on the true cost of conflict.

The red circle in the national flag of the People's Republic of Bangladesh serves as a constant reminder of the sacrifices made for the sake of human rights and peace.

The 'Art Competition by Children to Promote Peace' aimed to provide a platform for young minds to express their perspectives on peace and share their vision for a harmonious world.

These young artists conveyed a message of unity, to seek peaceful resolutions to conflicts. Servas Bangladesh extends its gratitude to all participants and supporters who contributed to making this event a resounding success. May these artworks inspire positive change on a global scale.

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Editor's Note: Please send me photos about Servas aims. Although not members, I spent the winter with very friendly Thais and Cambodians who confirmed my faith in people.



Key People

The Servas France Board, composed of all 16 regional coordinators and 8 elected members including 4 newly elected members, has just elected the new Executive Committee.

Photos, from top:

Marie-Brigitte S, président
Céline B, vice-président
Jean R, secretary
Christiane D-G, treasurer
Marie H-F and
Christine J, coordinators.

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SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS BULLETIN

The SINB is a newsletter produced by and for the Servas community.

Editor and Graphic Designer: Michael Johnson

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Translators: Isabelle Girard & her team, Cynthia Granados Posada

Please send your news for the SI News Bulletin to: newsletter@servas.org
We encourage Servas key people around the world to forward this bulletin to all members. Feel free to quote us but please mention the source.

SI EXCO 2022 — 2025

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Treasurer: Richard Cabassut treasurer@servas.org

General Secretary: Jonny Sågänger generalsecretary@servas.org

Membership & Technology Secretary: Paul Nielsen mts@servas.org

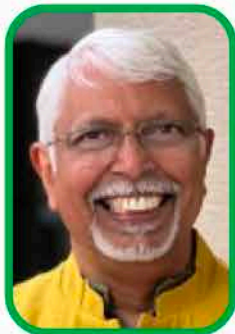
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Co-Peace Secretary, Mei Wang peacesecretary@servas.org

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.

•••



Radha Radhakrishna



Carla Kristensen



Jonny Sågänger



Richard Cabassut



Francisco Salomón Luna



Mei Wang



Paul Nielsen



Jim Leask