Patagonia Adventure
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Hello?

How do you find hosts and how do travellers find you? Email, text, Facebook, phone, Whatsapp?
What’s the best way?
Let’s find out. Are you a member of Couchsurfers, BeWelcome, etc.?
Please tell me about it, include your age, country, and name if you wish.
I will publish your story. Thank you.
Your editor, Michael Johnson
newsletter@servas.org

Thank you members who shared your stories and photos.

Cover photo: Ana Manghi, Servas member since 1997 and organizer of the Patagonia trip holds a piece of the Upsala Glacier.

There are many worldwide Servas events this year just waiting for you: https://servas.org/en/events-meetings

Photos above are from recent events in Pakistan and South America.
Here are some future events:

Peace Riding along the Geumgang River, Korea, May 25
Medieval festival, Sweden, for members age 18-35, May 30
Swiss Pentecost Meeting, May 27
Peace School, Turkey, July 3-14 "Pathways Together", Piedmont Italy, July 7:
Servas for Peace Moraira, Spain, September 16
Alpe-Adria Meeting, Austria, October 6.

There are many worldwide Servas events this year just waiting for you: https://servas.org/en/events-meetings
Dear fellow Servas members,

It has been a busy first quarter of 2023 for Servas. In January, the SI Peace Secretaries, Mei Wang and Francisco Salomon Luna [laughing in photo] kicked it off with an online forum for all National Peace Secretaries, which was well attended. They also announced the first Peace forum to be held in April, and the topic this time is Youth and Families. [See page 27] It looks to be really interesting, and I hope it will plant seeds for growing our youth membership in every corner of the globe.

I am glad to report that Servas had prominent representation at the 67th Commission for the Status of Women organized by the UN in New York. Nearly a dozen people attended in person and many more virtually. As you are all aware, equal rights and opportunities are fundamental principles of Servas.

During this quarter, we had some natural catastrophes that affected our members – a massive earthquake in Turkey and floods in Malawi. [photos].

A severe earthquake in Turkey caused a lot of damage and we lost one of our dear members. Also, the village where we have had the Peace School for over fifteen years was severely damaged. There was a well-attended solidarity meeting organized by Servas Turkey.
Many members who asked how to help were directed to relief agencies in Turkey. Since then, there is great interest from members around the globe on how they can help. At the request of Servas Turkey, Servas International has agreed to receive and disburse money on behalf of the Peace School Project. We will be providing more information soon on how you can donate so that we can get the Peace School up and running again.

During this quarter, SI Exco started a new initiative to learn more about how each member group operates and to find ways to cooperate and help. To start, I wrote to five members groups – USA, France, Germany, Britain, and Canada – asking to meet with them. We will convene with the USA board in April and the Canadian board in May. I hope to soon meet with Germany, France and Britain and learn from each other.

I feel it will spread ideas to help Servas grow. I plan to write to a few countries each quarter.

Those who came to SICOGA 2022 will agree with me that it was a great experience. Unfortunately, because of the time and distance, we get to meet only once in three years. In the interim, the business of Servas is conducted through a distant vote. This year for the first time, we are thinking of having a virtual GA in the second half of the year (most likely in October). SI Exco has approved the idea and we will be providing more information later.

During SICOGA 2022 I ran a brainstorming workshop on “What does Servas mean to me?” Alvany (Servas Brazil) and I have been collating and analyzing the results of the responses from the participants. Today I am sharing the replies to the first question:

“What is one memory of Servas that you would like to share?”

Mostly, participants had very warm memories of their Servas interactions. For many people it was new experiences that they never imagined. Mostly, it was about making friends (for life), sharing meals and stories – and becoming part of the family. For me, that captures the essence of Servas. I will share a few quotes...

• Japan is close to Korea and I often visit, and many of them have become more than friends; they have become family. We open our hearts at the first moment, which is amazing.

• I went to this place and booked a hotel, and the Servas member in town, whose husband had passed away recently insisted on hosting me – “Servas don’t stay in hotels,” she told me.

• Three times Servas travelers came to my house on a bicycle – from the Netherlands, Uruguay and India (a family with an 8-year-old).

• I went to stay with a host I had never met. He was not home but he gave me detailed instructions on where to find the key and let myself in and make myself comfortable in his house until he came home.

• Visiting Wyoming and visiting a family on a farm – couldn’t have done it without Servas.

• A house concert in the home of a music teacher Servas day host in Iran.

• When we missed our flight, I called a Servas host who came and picked me up and gave us a warm bed. He gave us a hot breakfast the next day and dropped us at the airport.

• Learning languages, biking trips.

Until next time!

■ ■ ■
Keep in Touch
By Michael Johnson, SINB editor/designer

I have really enjoyed meeting Servas members around the world for over 40 years. I still keep in touch with some. Tina from Denmark has visited me over four decades, and I stayed with her in Denmark. Once we worked together on three magazine articles for some Danish magazines. She wrote the stories; I took the photos. We drove around Canadian Mennonite farms with her family, laughing and snapping photos. I published a photo of her in SINB when she visited us last summer.

I have met many friends through Servas and have kept in touch with and/or visited them over the years.

I’ve been to Thailand four times, most recently January to April of 2023. There, my wife Dafi and I revisited two Servas Thai friends Pisit and Pawin and their families.

The photos:
From left: Michael, Dafi, Pisit [former National Secretary of Thailand] meeting in Bangkok.

From left: Michael, Dafi, Maew, Shawn (masked), Pawin dining on Songkran, the traditional Thai new year in April.

It’s always a joy to visit “old friends” and make new ones with Servas. Keep in touch.
Thank You Servas India
by Susana, Servas Spain

Photo: Susana with Dakshit, who works with Servas International Youth. Photo taken in India.

SICOGA (Servas International Conference and General Assembly) is the most important event of Servas.

Every three years Servas International meets to make important decisions to guide all the national groups for the next three years. SICOGA 2022 should have been in 2021 but because of the pandemic it was delayed. For any Servas member it is very interesting to attend an international assembly, and learn about the work behind this event.

EXCO, other organizers and several committees are mobilized a year before to prepare all the documentation and ensure that when the moment of decision-making arrives there are no mistakes.

Some national groups propose motions that are later voted on. But the host country of the assembly is the one that has to make a greater effort, since it handles all the logistics and all the responsibility of welcoming some 200 to 300 travellers from all over the world.

I am not going to talk about the conclusions of this assembly because these are on the website and that information was sent to each country. But here are my impressions and personal feelings.

My first SICOGA was in 2009 in Argentina as a Servas Spain delegate. There I realized all the work before and during the assembly, and I learned how important it is to work together to reach agreements. Then came Poland, New Zealand, Korea and my latest international assembly, in incredible India. I have to say that each one of those assemblies was fantastic and they all have something in common, the wonderful team of people working together. I would like to thank all the volunteers who made that possible. Thank you Servas India for your work and dedication.

This assembly was very special for me. I recently left my position in the Youth and Families Committee after seven years of creating and nurturing it. This was an important part of my life.
My family and I have been hosts for over 20 years but we were not travellers. I virtually travel with every person I welcome into my home who tells me what their country is like. I travel with every book I read or every National Geographic documentary on TV. But this time I had 10 days after the SICOGA to visit some hosts, and to have a Servas experience from a traveller's point of view. Also, this time my husband joined me after the assembly and we were able to celebrate our 30th anniversary in incredible India with wonderful hosts.

We only saw a small part of this huge country. Four cities gave us a taste of how colourful and diverse India is: Pune, Aurangabad, Nashik and Mumbai. For a normal traveller, this trip may not seem like anything special, but for me it was the trip of my life so far. We loved everything, the landscapes, the food, the monuments... but above all, its wonderful people. We saw mysterious Pune through the eyes of Shirish who revealed to us the most technological part of the city and we were pleasantly surprised.

In Aurangabad, our guide Akshay told us the history of India and its religions. In Nashik we had two unforgettable experiences thanks to our wonderful host Nitin, who took us to a wedding and a religious ceremony, and made us feel like we were friends forever. And in Mumbai our friends Hiren and Dipti, whom we have known for years since their daughter came to Spain, opened the door of their home and their hearts to us. What a country: full of colours and contrasts, life and sounds, intense flavours and the smell of incense.

But what I liked the most, what I will always remember is the wonderful hospitality of the people and all the friends I have left there. I hope one day they will tell me that they are coming to Spain and will visit us, because my dream is to give them similar wonderful moments as they have given me, and help make their trip as unforgettable as mine was. In the meantime, I will help all the travellers who come to my house to have the best hospitality experience I can offer them, because this is SERVAS.
My Patagonia Adventure
By Richard Skroder, Stockholm

Being Swedish and not used to group travel, I was both thrilled and curious to see what would come out of my new Servas membership and a trip to Patagonia, a land so exotic. I learned that Ana Manghi from Buenos Aires wanted to explore Patagonia with us. Ana’s enthusiasm and organizational skills inspired a group, which grew to 22 members, to set off for this adventure.

So much would have been impossible for us to arrange from home in Europe, North America or Australia. We all met at the airport in Buenos Aires… our destination: Ushuaia, the world’s southernmost town.

Our group became closer during the two weeks together. We lived and shared fantastic experiences in various places in Patagonia and were happy to benefit from Ana’s and the others’ experience when unforeseen obstacles arose. The security of the group was much appreciated when we were faced with blocked mountain
passes, cold temperatures, bumpy gravel roads and flat tires. It added to the adventure! But above all the Servas spirit was there. Our impressions of each other with all our differences helped to enrich the trip.

Twenty-two pairs of eyes looked in awe at the endless steppe, the icebergs, glaciers, sea lions, guanacos, and condors. Some impressions were almost spiritual: the 8000-year-old handprints in the Cueva de las Manos and the mighty glaciers. Together we pondered the hardship of those much braver than us who populated this remote corner of the world before the arrival of the European settlers. I wish we could have met the native populations and learned of their life in Tierra del Fuego. I am very happy to share this unforgettable memory for life!

Photos: Previous page: On Feb. 26 we found an abandoned ship and a flag from Cordoba, Argentina.

Next page: Visiting glaciers with a boat near the Beagle Channel.

Photo Below: Adventurers are:
Pietro Filippi Italia, Claudina Machado Portugal, Anna Halmanova Czech Republic, Carol Devisser Australia, Marie Jose Ruiz Botter France, Trinidad Sierra Spain, Nevenka Forgas Spain, Arnoud Philippo de Jong Netherlands, Jaroslav Raubo Sweden, Richard Skroder Sweden, Willam Troisi Uruguay,
From USA: Deborah Myerson, Barbara Berg, Joanne Ferguson, Judy Rintoul and Jeffrey Muhr.
From Argentina: Ana Manghi, Alicia Ciace, José Luis Gargiulo, Mirta Lugren, Susana Ayala, María Eugenia Nazar, and our guide: Guido Vittone.
Editor’s Note:
This is the 13th Servas group trip arranged by Ana Manghi for Servas Argentina. All 22 participants were Servas hosts including the writer of this article, Richard. There were members from: USA, Portugal, Italy, Czech Republic, Spain, Uruguay, France, Netherlands, Sweden, and Argentina.

Photos: Previous page:
22 members cruised Cabrera Lake in Chile that is also called Buenos Aires Lake in Argentina.

Right: Maria Eugenia [right] and Arnoud with his monkey Charlie.

Below: Barbara [left] and Nevenka at the Perito Moreno Glacier.
Join our Instagram Team
By Carla Kristensen

Servas International has a new team of **young volunteers** to manage the Servas International **Instagram** page, in collaboration with me, Carla Kristensen, SI Vice President.

Dakshit Chhadwa from India and Ester Poma from Italy will be coordinating this team of young volunteers from Brazil, Turkey, India, Italy and Rwanda.

**Photos, from top:**

Instagram logo

Logo designed by Ester Poma

Dakshit and Ester self-portraits, which they created.

If you are **under 28 years old** and feel you can contribute, with your skills and motivation, you are welcome to join our Instagram Team. Please send me a message with your name, age and Servas group/country, and you will be contacted for a meeting with the coordinators.

We are looking forward to more young members getting involved and making this Instagram page an attractive and exciting tool to spread awareness about Servas.

Carla Kristensen

[mailto:vicepresident@servas.org](mailto:vicepresident@servas.org) or [crsckris@gmail.com](mailto:crsckris@gmail.com)
Israelis Meet Again

By Claudia Sagie

In March 2023 we had our annual meeting of Servas Israel in the Golan Heights. We met on a weekend as suggested by our Druze Servas friend, Akab, a certified tour guide, who offered us a tour of his village of Buq’ata.

About 70 Servas members participated from all over the country.

Our program included: a picnic stop, a meeting with Akab's family in Buq’ata, the annual meeting, and dinner at a Druze restaurant in the village.

On Saturday a guided tour by Akab ended delightfully with a tasting of Druze foods prepared by Akab's lovely wife, Anam, and her relatives.

After discussions reports and voting at the Assembly, several members agreed to continue in their key positions. Congratulations and thanks also to our newly elected representatives.

It was a wonderful weekend, strengthening the bond between friends, while learning about the life, culture and religion of the Druze. And we appreciated Akab, a man of values, educated and intelligent, who enriched our knowledge and brought us closer to the Druze community in the Golan – following the Servas tradition of closeness between communities, cultures and religions.

For more, please see the Servas Israel website: https://israel.servas.org/?CategoryID=167&ArticleID=523&Page=1

The Servas Israel Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/ServasInIsrael

Plus what Akab published on his Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/aburabea.shahen
The Cookbook in Support of the United Nations: for People and Planet

By Jeanne Devine

I was surprised and delighted that The Cookbook in Support of the United Nations for People and Planet was presented at the Food Systems Pavilion of COP27 (the UN Climate Conference in Egypt, Nov 16, 2022). This is a remarkable book of 75 international and sustainable recipes from indigenous communities, chefs and farmers and described by the New York Times as “A Sustainably-Minded Cookbook”.

It is a brilliant accomplishment under the direction of Earlene Cruz, Founder and Director of Kitchen Connection and reflects the true mission of the UN – to bring people of all backgrounds together to resolve today’s critical issues.

Earlene Cruz represented Servas at the UN in NY in 2016 and 2017 while she was enrolled in a Master’s program in Social Entrepreneurship and Food Studies at NYU’s Gallatin School where she founded the non-profit, Kitchen Connection, for her thesis. Kitchen Connection is a platform network where chefs and lay food lovers can teach online and in interactive cooking classes. Its mission is to empower global citizens with the knowledge to contribute to a better food system.
Kitchen Connection was inspired by her first homestay in Ghana whereby a homecooked meal of red-red stew inspired her to want to share this experience with others around the world, regardless of financial or visa restrictions that might impede someone from traveling or seeing the world – their world.

Earlene is an Adjunct Professor at New York University’s School of Global Public Health. Fluent in English, Spanish, French, and conversational in German and Italian, she later was awarded a Dennis Mogerman Scholarship for a SYLE in Italy. In 2017, she gave a presentation “Dancing and Eating Around the World” at the US Servas Conference in Washington, DC and later served on the US Servas Board.

She was awarded an internship on UN Peace Boat – a 3-week Peace Mission of Youth Representatives in Panama and she is a winner of the James Beard Scholar Award.

The cookbook has beautiful illustrations and backgrounds of recipe contributors. It focuses on food inequity and food insecurity through its partnership with Action Against Hunger.

Its goal is to eliminate hunger!

It is divided into 5 sections: Food System; Biodiversity; Sustainable Consumption; Food and Climate Change; and Reducing Food Waste.

It is sponsored by the Kingdom of Netherlands, Whole Foods Market and the UN Food and Agricultural Organization with the aim to improve our food system and to support the livelihoods of indigenous peoples and farmers.

Based on this cookbook, they are also working on a children’s book, about how our food grows and how climate impacts both us and the planet. Learn more at https://kitchenconnection.org/
Paris experiences a city vs. suburbs hosting imbalance. Like many other major cities, hosts in the city centre are flooded with hosting requests, and suburban hosts receive few, if any. I found a solution in 2018, which worked well in 2022, once the Covid crisis eased.

My plan "Itinéraire Bis" (French for "Alternate Route") works the following way:

I maintain a list of suburban hosts.

When a host in Paris cannot host, or when I – as coordinator – receive a request for hosting I do this:

1. I explain the system to the traveller,
2. I forward the hosting request in blind copy to all Itinéraire Bis hosts,
3. Available Itinéraire Bis hosts reply to the traveller.
4. If they reach an agreement, they inform me and I call off the search for a host (in blind copy).

The coordinator sends only two e-mails in blind copy... and it works, with a success ratio above 90%, even during the peak holiday seasons (summer and Christmas break). For some suburban hosts, Itinéraire Bis provides them with the only travellers they will host.

I encourage all travellers to consider hosts living in the suburbs: most are well connected by public transport to all the major sights, and they are much more available!

**Editor’s Note:**

Coordinators in London, Rome, Tokyo, New York, etc. please tell us how you cope.
Two Shores of the Río de la Plata
By Daniela Duarte, National Secretary, Servas Uruguay

The idea of having this meeting started when Servas Argentina and Servas Uruguay had their end-of-the-year party, just by chance, on the same day in December 2021.

The first gathering was in Buenos Aires from 21 to 23 October 2022. Six Uruguayan hosts, together with some Argentinian hosts, were warmly welcomed on the first evening at hostess Cristina Monmani’s house.

On Saturday we met for a guided walking tour of the La Boca neighbourhood, and for a visit to the Benito Quinquela Museum, learning about the artist’s life. Then, some of us visited ‘Fundación Proa’ Cultural Centre, others saw museums, and some went to a ‘peña’ [a place with folk music and dancing]. On Sunday we went to San Telmo’s lively market. Then we had lunch together and finally said farewell to our hosts with the promise of meeting next time in Montevideo.

Photos: This page in Buenos Aires, next page in Montevideo.
The second get-together was in Montevideo from 9 to 11 February, where we welcomed twelve Servas members from various parts of Argentina, including the provinces of Entre Ríos and Santa Fe, as well as travellers from France, USA and Canada. Our welcoming party was at hostess Mercedes Ripoll’s house, where there was music, dancing, and delicious snacks.

On Saturday, we learned about the origins of Montevideo, with a walk in the Old City looking at museums, monuments, and iconic buildings such as the Port Market. In the evening we enjoyed ‘Las Llamadas’, a Carnival parade with candombe music dating from colonial times. On Sunday there was an outing along the Promenade driving past parks, squares and beaches of Montevideo, including a stop to visit our former National Secretary, Dinorah Sanz. Travellers enjoyed going to the beach and to Carnival events such as ‘murgas’ [popular local performers who sing and dance].

Both meetings were packed with activities and rewarding feelings for so many hosts and day hosts who gave their time generously to look after visitors in such a friendly way.
Flood Relief

From June 2022, Pakistan experienced devastating floods that claimed 1,739 lives and caused billions of dollars in damages. This was a result of heavier monsoon rains and melting glaciers, linked to climate change.

In response, Servas Pakistan arranged a six-person medical camp, self-funded and run under the supervision of Dr. Riaz, with two assisting medical doctors and three volunteers.

Additionally, a local relief camp was organized at Servas Pakistan headquarters in Lahore, under the supervision of Muhammad Naseem and Rana Akmal, to provide relief for those affected by the floods.

Peace March for Harmony

On December 16 2022, Servas Pakistan and the National Peace Committee for Interfaith Harmony organized a peace march at the Press Club in Lahore. Members of Servas Pakistan and various civil societies came together to demonstrate their support for religious harmony and unity.

The event was a powerful symbol of solidarity among people of different faiths and backgrounds.
Workshop on Peace and Expression

In February 2023, one of our executive members, Ms. Afifa Maryam, hosted a workshop aimed at promoting peace and freedom of expression. The two-day event was held at Iqra University Karachi and was the first in a series of such workshops planned by our organization.

The workshop was a resounding success and concluded with a mutually sponsored lunch that received high praise from attendees.

Muhammad Naseem and another executive member, Noreen Mirza, also briefly attended the workshop.

We hope our work in this area will foster a more tolerant and inclusive society that values the principles of peace and freedom.
Helping After the Earthquake
By Mehmet Ateş, Servas Peace School

Servas friends (Réka Csuros and her teams) from Romania campaigned, collected money, and came to Istanbul in their cars. They borrowed our bikes and went to areas hard-hit by the earthquakes, Kayseri and Mersin. They brought blankets, tents, and they a large amount of medicine for the hospital. They rented a truck and came to our village in Antakya and distributed these supplies with their own hands. They shared our tables and our lives. These good people made this journey possible and easier: Hüseyin Altun, Kayseri Cemevi, Deniz Ateş, Hüseyin Çam, Feray Kuyumcu, Gulizar and Ferdus Ateş, invisible supporters and maybe ones I forgot. A big Thank You to everyone involved.
I am happy that recently a large number of Servas events and meetings are being held worldwide, but each wants us to publish them and tell all members about them.

That long list of announcements creates a load for National Group leaders because we ask them to inform their members. As a result, many members feel flooded with too many emails. To avoid this a procedure was devised in 2019, as follows...

**Procedure stages**

1. The **Organizer** of the event composes the invitation in Word format (including his/her contact information) and sends it to vicepresident@servas.org by the 20th of the month.

2. The **SI Vice President** checks the information and contacts the Organizers if necessary.

3. Then the **SI Vice President** uploads the file(s) on https://www.servas.org/en/events

4. During the first week of each month the **SI Distribution Team** will send information to all National Groups, i.e. all country@servas.org and Servas International key persons, asking them to forward it to all their members.

**Note:**

If an update is needed, it will be shown on the event’s web page at https://www.servas.org/en/events and will not be emailed again.

National Groups leaders are expected to send the monthly event’s list to all their group members.

Thank you for your cooperation and help,

Carla Kristensen,
Servas International Vice President
and the Servas International Distribution Team

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Curious about what’s new with Servas at the United Nations? In November 2022, Servas International’s Peace Secretary Paige Lacombe and three of SI’s Representatives to the UN (Hamsavahini Singh, Gopal Rajan, and Kent Macaulay) attended the Servas International Conference and General Assembly (SICOGA) in India. Between them, they led four sessions about Servas’ connection to the UN:

“NGOs at the United Nations, and SI’s Role and Activities at the UN in Geneva, Vienna, and New York”

“The UN’s Sustainable Development Goals: How Do They Promote World Peace?”

“Servas and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)”

“Servas and the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)”

Some of the SI UN representatives joined the hybrid sessions. Members who attended SICOGA participated with zeal and interest in these sessions. Watch for the video recordings of these and other SICOGA sessions to be posted for all Servas members soon.

Photo: Kent Macaulay (left) and Hamsa Singh leading a session at SICOGA about Servas’ connection to the UN.
And in March 2023, Servas members from several countries participated in the annual two-week UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) conference, held at the UN in New York. Eleven Servas members attended in-person and another 30 linked in online, joining more than 10,000 members of other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world.

Thanks to Julie Cormack (another SI Rep to the UN), Servas International offered its first-ever “parallel event” during CSW. In this event, two women from Afghanistan now living in Germany and Canada outlined the plight of women and girls under the current Afghani regime. They emphasized how education and connections with others within Afghanistan and abroad are essential for women and girls to gain more control over their lives. In the same parallel event, Gulsen Elyak (Servas Turkey’s National Secretary) provided a good description of the Peace School that Servas Turkey organizes each year. You can view the recording of the full parallel event on Servas International’s YouTube channel at https://youtu.be/t1e9649r4Lw

The purpose of CSW is to promote gender equality across the globe. Servas and other NGOs help press the member countries of the UN to take action toward equality among women, men, girls and boys. Despite setbacks in certain countries, there is some progress being made, bit by bit. A brief summary of CSW’s Agreed Conclusions among UN member countries is at https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/03/1134757.

In the next SI News Bulletin, we will share some of the comments of SI’s participants in CSW.
Show of recognition and appreciation for Chris Patterson, SI Distant Vote Administrator (SI DVA) 2009–2022

Note: This is an edited version of a letter by SI GS Jonny Sågängör. 
Photo: Chris Patterson

Dear Chris,

On behalf of SI Exco I would like to recognize the pioneering work you’ve done to develop and modernize democratic procedures as the Servas International Distant Vote Administrator (SI DVA) from 2009 to 2022.

You were a SI key person when the organization went through a troublesome time at the SI General Assembly (SIGA) in Spain 2004. For a person like you, who gives great importance to correct and fair democratic procedures, SIGA 2004 became memorable for its lack of preparation and organisation.

At the SIGA 2004 you and some others drafted a proposal for the SI Distant Vote. This was, in part, a response to the “top down” structure being proposed by the largest SI Member Groups.

The friction present at the SIGA 2004 was eased by teaching a friendly and cooperative approach to interpersonal communication, which was further implemented at the SI General Assembly in Italy in 2006. During the SIGA 2006 the SI DV section was added to the SI Statutes, and in June 2007 a trial SI DV was run by SI General Secretary (SI GS) Pramod Kumar of Servas India. SI DVA Burcu Duzguner ran a SI DV in May 2008.

At SIGA 2009 you, Chris, became the SI DVA. You were then reelected SI DVA at SIGA 2012 in Poland, SIGA 2015 in New Zealand and SIGA 2018 in South Korea.

At SIGA 2022 in India, Craig Melrose of Servas Australia was elected SI DVA. We wish the two of you good luck with the hand-over process.

Rules of order and Rules of Conduct

SI Exco also recognizes your continous work, with many others, at improving the conduct and democratic processes at SIGAs, in particular updating the democratic procedural documents, both the Rules of Order for SIGA and Rules of Conduct for SICOGA.

The Servas International Rules of Conduct, based on Robert’s Rules of Order, are a guide for Delegates intended to ensure discussion and decisions at the SIGA session are based on mutual respect so that every person is equally valued. These Rules have been paramount at SIGAs, including SIGA 2022 in India.

In conclusion: You have done important work to strengthen the democratic procedures and traditions of SI in a way that will prevail for a long time.

Best regards
Jonny Sågängör
SI General Secretary (SI GS)
On behalf of SI Exco

Note: Anybody who’s interested to learn more about the history of the SI DVs can read the SI DVA section in SI Annual Report 2021/2022 and the website for SI Distant Vote.
Our First Peace Forum

By Mei Wang, SI Co-Peace Secretary

SI Peace Secretary Francisco and I, organized the first Servas Peace Forum (SPF) on April 22, 2023. The topic was SYLE (Servas Youth Language Exchange) in four countries (Italy, Israel, Spain, Malawi). 133 members from 44 countries and 5 continents registered for this meeting. 81 members participated. The founder of SYLE, Pablo from Argentina, was invited to the meeting [top left in group photo]. He was touched to see how his idea 20 years ago has benefited so many young members. SI President Radha [top right] asked every country to have a youth coordinator to organize such events. Francisco and I will organize a SPF online meeting regularly for members worldwide. Let’s have cultural exchange online even if we don’t travel. The meeting recording will be shown on SI Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/@servasinternational2037. The topic of the next SPF, on May 27, 2023, is the Peace School in Turkey.
Key Persons

Many Servas Groups elected new key persons and boards at the end of 2022 and in the first months of 2023. You’ll find the latest changes in issues of the SINB.

There may be more groups with new key persons unpublished if we haven’t received such information.

The outgoing National Secretary or another board member is supposed to inform exco (at)servas.org and rita.dessauvage(at)telenet.be. We are working hard to have an accurate key list, however this is only possible with the cooperation of all Servas Groups. Thank you.

**SERVAS USA**

Servas USA elected the following new key persons as of Jan. 1, 2023 [right, from top]

National President: Richard Weaver
National Vice President: Shyla Esko Bare
National Treasurer: Leena Desai
National Secretary: Joanne Ferguson Cavanaugh

Other board members: [far right, from top]
Bill Magargal
Tys Sniffen
Shelley Mitchell
Eileen (Lee) Rowley
Arnie Rowland
SERVAS INDIA

On 6-8 January 2023 Servas India held their AGM.
The following people were elected and will represent Servas India for the next 3 years.

[Photos are: first seven key persons, from the top]

National President:
Dr. Prakash Vyawahare

National Secretary:
Mr. Nitin Wankhede

Deputy NS:
Ms. Anjana Jain

National Treasurer:
Mr. Pradeep Korde

National Peace Secretary:
Dr. Hamsavahini Singh

Newsletter Editor:
Ms. Amruta Karkare

Online and HL Coordinator:
Dr. Rupali Memane

Outgoing Executive Committee members:
Avinash Shirode, President,
Abhay Shaha, Nat. Secretary,
BM Doddaiah,
Hiren Goradia, and
Ashok Padhye.

Special thank to Abhay, former NS, who realized his dream, to organize SICOGA in Panchgani, Maharashtra, India. Wonderful SICOGA2022 and superb hosts! We are all very grateful. Abhay and Servas India can be proud and so are we.
SERVAS GERMANY

Servas Germany elected a new board on January 7, 2023. [Photos: first three, from the top]

National Secretary:
Arne Schöffler

National Deputy:
Manuela Kuttig

National Treasurer:
Monika Gehde-Trapp

Outgoing National Secretary:
Conni Geisendorf

SERVAS PERU

On January 23, 2023 Servas Peru elected a new board. The aim is to reactivate Servas Peru and regain the SI member status that they lost at SIGA2022. They are well on their way and we wish them good luck.

[Photos: key persons, from the top]

National Secretary: Roxana Novoa

National Deputy: Ysabel Hoffmann

National Peace Secretary:
Kareen Rios

Outgoing board members:
Virginia Muente,
Ethel Tafur, and
Pedro Puente.
SERVAS TURKEY

We are incredibly sad that an earthquake struck Turkey and Syria. Our thoughts are with all the affected people. Despite the catastrophe Servas Turkey had the courage to elect a new board in February.

Photos of key persons, from the top:

General Secretary : Selvi Yeşilyurt
National Secretary : Gülsen Elyak
National Deputy : Evren Özkan
National Treasurer : Özgur Keskin
National Peace Secretary: Esra Alev

Outgoing board members :
Esra Sakin Gen. Sec,
Zeynap Aydin NS,
M.Bulent Savran, Ferride Utku,
Mehmet Ates, Özlem Engin,
Emin Olsen, Damla Tezcan.

All our support is with Mehmet Ates.
The Peace School in Ekinci, Antakya will survive!
Photo: Mehmet at 2013 Peace camp.
SERVAS ARGENTINA

On 24/25 February, 2023 Servas Argentina held democratic elections. There were two international observers to guarantee complete transparency.

Photos: first four elected key persons, from top:
National Secretary: Ana Eugenia Sanchez
National Deputy: Cintia Amor
National Peace Secretary: Maria Elena Gnecco
National Treasurer: José Gargiulo [no photo]
National Host list Coordinator: Ana Manghi [Also her photo is on front cover of this issue]

Outgoing key persons:
Guillermina Koch, Marcela Rosales,
Maria Angeles Andrieu Gnecco

SERVAS ISRAEL

The annual Assembly of Servas Israel elected a new board on March 11, 2023. About 70 members gathered on the Golan Heights for a weekend and participated in the Assembly.

Elected were:

Claudia Sagie - National Secretary, Main Contact [photo right]

Ishai Avraham - National Treasurer
Noga Rubinstein - Applications Management
Yair Werber - Travelers LOI Management
Nurit Elvia-Finkel - Events Management
Nirit Harel - Youth and Families, SYLE Management
Tsvika Lekach - National Peace Secretary

Outgoing board members:
Meir Hayoun, Orna Alkalay, Hana Brin
SERVAS VENEZUELA

On March 12, 2023 the term of Victor Gutierrez Guape the National Secretary of Servas Venezuela ended after many years of serving Servas often under difficult circumstances. His son, Victor replaced him.

Photos of the new board, from top:

National Secretary:
Victor Gutierrez Veliz

National Peace Secretary:
Asirahibra Baloa

Youth & Family Contact:
Fathima Perales

Outgoing members of the board:
NS Victor Gutierrez Guape,
Alejandro Benavides.

SERVAS NEPAL

Photo of the first meeting of the board of Servas Nepal. Names and roles are in SINB 2022-4.
CHILE

On Sunday April 2 Servas Chile had their GA in a hybrid format, with a nice group in Curacavi and some virtually. At that moment we could share Servas experiences and the Servas spirit, and we could also renew our board.

National Secretary: Javier Heusser [photo, right]  
National Deputy: Marianella Castillo  
National Treasurer: Paz Undurraga  
National Peace Secretary: Emilio Caicedo  
Servas Online Administrator & HLC: Angela Cortes  
Secretary of Culture: Pablo Gecel

Outgoing members: Aneris Cao NS, Michael Bier, Luis Pizarro, Joel Poblete, Alvaro Soto.

Photos:
Right: Javier Heusser, National Secretary  
Below: A Chilean Servas meeting including members of the board: Javier, Emilio, Paz, Marianella, Angela and Pablo.
JAPAN

Board members elected at the end of March, 2023.

**Photos**: Six key persons, right, in order from the top:

National Secretary: Yomiko Tomono
National Deputy: Fumiyo Tajiri
National Treasurer: Tomoko Ogata
Servas Online Administrator Chief: Hideaki Yoshioaka
Servas Online Administrator: Shinobu Nakazaki
Youth and Families Contact: Yokiko Namariyama

Outgoing members of the board: Nagata Suwako NS, Nabuko Kawamura, Motonobu Takeyama.

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To all outgoing board members: THANK YOU, Servas is grateful for the work you have realized.

CONGRATULATIONS and WELCOME to the newly elected, or re-elected key persons.
We wish you good luck and we thank you sincerely for your contribution and involvement.

Rita Dessauvage:
rita.dessauvage(at)telenet.be

Volunteer Servas International, Key List, & Member of Servas Belgium & Luxemburg.

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**Photo below:**
Servas Japan meeting in Kinki region.
SERVAS INTERNATIONAL NEWS BULLETIN

The SINB is a newsletter produced by and for the Servas community.
Editor and Graphic Designer: Michael Johnson
Proofreader: Picot Cassidy
Translators: Isabelle Girard, Lilly Kerekes

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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Peace Secretary: Francisco Salomón Luna Aburto peacesecretary@servas.org
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.