“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts. Broad, wholesome, charitable views of men and things cannot be acquired by vegetating in one little corner of the earth all one's lifetime.”

Mark Twain, The Innocents Abroad (1869)
I love languages. As a child, I dreamed of being bilingual, and was in awe of my classmates who grew up speaking a second language. I studied French in school, German in college, and Spanish after graduating whenever I found the time. When my friend Tess told me that she was going to Japan through Servas to work on her language skills, I filed the information away in the back of my brain, hoping that it would at some point prove useful.

Last year I turned thirty, applied to graduate school in Europe, and quit my job. Prior to my move, I had two months in which to pack up my things, say my goodbyes, and fit in any last-minute adventure. With the support of the US and Chile Servas groups, I was able to travel to Chile to work on my Spanish skills, share meals and ideas with my hosts, and dive deep into Chilean literature and history. I bought a Kindle, practiced packing light, and set off to see a small bit of South America prior to leaving the Americas altogether.

To prepare for the trip I spoke with Aneris, the SYLE coordinator for Chile. I had in mind to see as much of Chile as possible—going as far north as there were Servas hosts and then making my way south. We settled on nine cities that could be reached from Santiago by bus: La Sirena, Coquimbo, Curacaví, Santiago, Viña del Mar, Valparaíso, Linares, Pelluhue, and Concepción. I set off late August—late summer in Oregon, late winter in Chile… (read the full report)
A message from our new Peace & Social Justice Secretary:

Yosi (Jo) McIntire

- Chair, US Servas Peace and Justice Committee
- Interim SE Regional Coordinator
- Servas Interviewer

Dear friends,

This is my first communication to the US Servas community as your Peace Secretary. So before getting into business, I wish to thank you all, and the Servas Board in particular, for giving me the opportunity to chair the Peace and Social Justice Committee.

The search for peace and justice is the very basis of Servas. I love Servas, and will give it my best.

The Servas mission has been phrased by different people in different manners, but for me, essentially, we mean to build a better, less conflictive world by facilitating constructive dialogue. Servas is not simply an organization that facilitates travel. It is my hope that we, as a committee, will make it our business to accentuate this subtle yet meaningful difference – and in doing so, try to address some of the many challenges facing us today.

In our first committee meeting we will discuss how we intend to operate . . . We want to work synergistically with the International Peace Secretary, with other National Secretaries, with our representative to the UN Department of Global Communications and to the Economic and Social Council. The Peace and Social Justice Committee wants to be of service to our membership spotlighting your peace and justice issues, sharing objective information about those issues with the broader community in order to engage Servas members, and build partnerships.

So, I’m hoping to hear back from you and learn from you what peace and justice concerns and initiatives you would like Servas to take on board, what partnerships you would like Servas to pursue. I want us to be mindful but unambiguous. I want us to work with issues with which we have direct experience. I want to avoid potentially divisive causes, especially those we are aware of primarily via third-hand, potentially-biased narratives. Anyone feeling moved to be part of this committee, please contact me.

I look forward to working with you!

Yosi
jomcintire@bellsouth.net
Introducing Andrea Veltman, our new Board-Designated Volunteer Coordinator

With our Strategic Plan complete, US Servas is taking on new and exciting challenges. We need a host of new volunteers who can help move us forward. To this end, the Board recently created a new position, Board-Designated Volunteer Coordinator (BDVC), and appointed me to the task. Working closely with the office, I will manage requests from all committees, recruit the right people for the right jobs, and make sure new volunteers are informed and excited! I enjoy motivating others about causes I believe in, so here I am volunteering myself to volunteer for the sake of more volunteers!

Following my other passions, I have joined our new Peace & Social Justice Committee; I love to travel (I'm writing from Cuba at this moment); and I own a small landscaping company specializing in design, aesthetic pruning and fine gardening in the San Francisco Bay Area. In the last 30 years I have worked and volunteered for various non-profit organizations focusing on environmental and social justice issues. I was born and I grew up in Switzerland, where I obtained a business degree with a focus in advertising.

Andrea
aveltman@gmail.com
We welcome Steve Gaardner, new leader of our Tech Team!

As a retired systems administrator with just the right experience we need right now, Steve responded to our call for a new Technology Chair. We are jumping with joy that he is willing to lead us through the Servas Online transition and onward to an invigorated website. And more! Here is Steve’s bio:

I am 66 years old, married with 2 children and 3 grandchildren. I recently retired from managing the computer systems for the Math Department at Cornell University. I grew up in Maryland and spent 2 years in Vienna as a youth. Living one hour from the Iron Curtain gave me a passion for overcoming the barriers between peoples. I am a founding resident of Ecovillage at Ithaca, a world-class sustainable community located in Ithaca, New York, and have traveled to many parts of the world sharing what I have learned while learning from others. I am also interested in electronics and other technology, languages, literature, and traditional music and dance (I play the hammered dulcimer and call contra dances).

Steve replaces Aaron Fowles who recently resigned as Tech Chair as he accepted a new job. We thank Aaron for years of hard work overseeing the initial stages of our integration with Servas Online, and we wish him all the best with his new position, his young child and, of course, his travels.

Hello Emma Parker, Social Media Coordinator!

A freelance photographer and an expert at blogging, tweeting, “Instagramm-at ing” and a lot more, Emma is enthusiastic about making the Servas mission of connecting and sharing widely known on social media, at colleges and in other circles we haven’t yet reached. She will collect important information, announcements, stories and tales from all corners of Servas to post on the ethernet. We are so jazzed to have Emma on board and adding flare to our social media presence!

Connect with her at: https://www.facebook.com/emmaparker.photo
Shine with your expertise, learn something new, and be included in a fun group: We have openings in various teams. Each committee consists of 3-10 volunteers with varying backgrounds and experiences, and they meet regularly by Skype or Zoom. Servas is run mostly by volunteers but assisted by 4 part-time staff. Most of us work from a distance but the office in Arcata, CA also welcomes volunteers.

Tech Nerds this way please! Together with our brand-new Technology Chairperson we get to celebrate the recent integration of our database with Servas Online (SO) and guide our members, staff and website developers through all the exciting changes coming up. You would join an existing team with diverse backgrounds and help with various projects according to your background and interests – website re-development, database management, improved communications plasorms and even a future app!

A Graphic Designer could do wonders! Eye-appeal, readability, and unified updated look – we would love for you to check out our newsletter and brochure, and suggest ways to give us maximum pizzazz. Our Communications Committee and Office Administrator are at the forefront of communication with existing and potential new members, showcasing who we are and what we do. We want that to shine. Would you lend us your creative mind for a little while?

Newsletter coordinator – putting it all together: Office staff, committees, board members and travelers – a myriad of volunteers regularly contribute to our monthly newsletter Open Doors. But assembling and overseeing the whole shebang is another matter. The office staff publishes the newsletter, and the communications committee edits the articles. You would contact contributors, suggest articles, find more authors and establish a timeline. If you have experience or not, as long as you’re interested and well organized you could be a greatly appreciated support for all of us! A talent for editing is also welcome, of course. This is great experience if you’re planning to work in the publishing industry!

Editors who like to play with words: Do you enjoy written information created with finesse, elegance, expressiveness, conviction, clarity, playfulness, humor, and full of vivid descriptions? We are looking for someone who would be excited about upgrading our newsletter articles, website text, brochure copy, booth banners, fundraising appeals, and other items that must represent our public face the best way. You would be part of our excellent communications committee and collaborate with office staff, members and the Board of Directors.

Fundraising You’ve been there, right: not enough money to implement great ideas, but you’d rather find solutions than complain? Whether you’re an old pro wishing to be involved in a good thing or you want to learn this important skill, we would like your help. We have a Strategic Plan being implemented by experienced leaders and a whole new crop of volunteers with fresh ideas. This is an exciting time to reach out to high donors and foundations, and support members in organizing events. The fundraising volunteer will work directly with the Board Chair and the Office Administrator.
Coordinators for Bylaws Revision
If you like to apply your sharp, analytical mind for a good cause and enjoy language, you’ll want to be here, at the center of where all parts of an organization interact. We would love to have a few more of you on this fairly new team that is just setting up its procedures. It’s helpful but not required if you have a background in non-profit management, law or editing.

Marketing Lead
Are you ready to share the excitement about our cause and our growing non-profit with the world? Servas is unique but not well known, and we must change that! Be part of the Communications group, one of our most active committees, and help them strategize about best media outlets, language and timing.

SERVAS INTERNATIONAL needs several editors:
We are searching for volunteers to help reshape and modernize SI's media and communications endeavors. With increased activity on the Servas International website (Servas.org) and social media there’s a growing need for editors.
You would be at the crossroads of information from all our international groups, the first ones to hear it all!

A) Web editors
We need members of all ages who are proficient in English, Spanish, French or German (the languages currently used on the site). If you have basic to well-developed skills in writing and/or editing written content, photos, graphics and other illustrations, we would greatly welcome your input. Experience with website editorial work and a content management system (CMS) is a plus but not a prerequisite.

B) Correspondents
If you have writing, photography and/or graphic design skills we welcome you to work as Servas International editor-correspondents. You will work in cooperation with the web editors on Servas.org and the editor of the newsletters SI News Bulletin and SI News, you will create and edit editorial content from around the world!

C) Graphic design specialist
As you might have heard, our most appreciated layout and graphic design editor Alan Stone is about to leave his position. We need someone to take on this important function! Among other things, you will handle the layout work and editing of the newsletter SI News Bulletin.

Please send your application to president@servas.org
Jonny Sågängen
President, Servas International & Managing Web Editor
**EVENTS:**

*Hear Ye! New York Area Hosts Needed*

From March 9th-20th, the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place at the UN headquarters in New York City. Twenty Servas members from around the world are planning to attend, including five from the US. Some attendees are still seeking hosts.

If you are a host in the New York area and not already booked at this time (many of you are — thank you!), can you help? If you can host one or more Servas travelers attending the conference, ideally for more than two days, please let us know.

We look forward to sharing a report on the conference in the April newsletter.

If you can host Servas members attending the conference, please write to info@usservas.org and put “NY Host during UN conference” in the subject line.

And thanks!
HOW TO...

Navigate Our (Domestic) HOST-to-HOST program

One of the perks of being a US host is that you are able to also stay with other US hosts. This host-to-host program has existed for many years but information about it has not been readily available, so here we give you a little “how to.” We just made an information page for it, too! (It’s on the US Servas website, usservas.org, under “Programs,” which is in the “Community” menu.)

When you become a host, or renew, you get a “Welcome Host” email, which mentions this perk:

If you are a current host, the website also gives you access to the USA Host Listing. To get there, first log into your profile, then go to:

- “Member Area”
  then...
- “Host List USA”

Here you can either plug in a zip code or use the map to see what hosts exist in the area you are searching. Or, if you prefer a document you can use offline, you can download the 481-page PDF document, which is organized by state. It has a search bar that can be useful.

Two critical pieces of information to remember:

1. Traveling domestically through this program still means you are expected to follow the same protocols and expectations for good behavior that you would follow as a Servas traveler going abroad. That is why we attach the Traveler’s Responsibilities document to your “Welcome!” email.

2. If you are a host but not a traveler, you don’t have a LOI (Letter of Introduction), which can be a bit tricky when you write to prospective hosts. We encourage you to take a SCREENSHOT of your HOST PROFILE. This enables your host to see that you are a valid Servas member. When reaching out to potential USA hosts, be sure to tell them you will be traveling as a host so they can look in the host listings and find your profile. That said, it’s nice to save them the trouble and attach the screenshot!

On the next page you can see a host profile screenshot.
Sample Host Profile
(taken from usservas.org)

Here is a screenshot of a US Servas host listing (without a photo).

If possible, attach a screenshot of your own profile to the emails you send to prospective hosts within the US, saving them the trouble of verifying your membership. (Often the office makes it for you, and puts in the “Welcome!” email.)

Good News!
We are currently integrating with Servas Online (the international site).

Now, when you become a member or renew, we will put your information onto the Servas International website (servas.org). This has already been done successfully for some members but it is a work in progress. (More later how to log onto the Servas International site.)

Whether you are a host, a traveler or both, you can upload a photo onto the international site as soon as your data is posted. We encourage you to do so!

Once your data has been transferred to servas.org, the international site, prospective hosts will be able read your host profile, confirm that it is current, and see your photo...

- Be sure to tell them the city and state you live in, so they can easily find your host listing.
- Just as when traveling outside the US, every member of your party over 18 needs to be a current Servas member.
This is what you see when you look up Tawny Foskett on Servas International:

NOTE: You can log into the international site only if you are currently a traveler or host but we are working to add incoming travelers and hosts so they will be able to create their profiles in the online system.

Host-to-host travel is great for those who want to travel within the USA! We have SO MANY HOSTS here and many would like more visitors. They offer accommodations that range from high-rise apartments in New York City to a tree house in rural California. Some live in vibrant cities, some off the beaten path, many in-between. Both travelers with LOIs and hosts without can take advantage of this splendid opportunity for domestic travel. Please remember that the same travel protocols apply as for all Servas visits.

Happy traveling and hosting,
Servas style!
US Servas + Servas International = An Incomparably Useful Worldwide System!

Since January, 2020, we’ve been integrating our information with Servas Online, the easy-to-use, interactive membership database of Servas International found on the SI website, servas.org.

If you are not already a US host or traveler, you still need to join through usservas.org. Once you are a member, you can log into servas.org. The first time you do it, click “Forgot Password” to create your password, then fill in your profile and begin to search for hosts around the world—and much more!

Servas International Homepage

In addition to traveler and host data, here you will find a multitude of useful information about Servas activities and events; meetings and peace camps; the Making Connections program; and an exciting feature to connect you with Servas members around the world. Browse away!

Servas members can stay connected and also increase Servas’s visibility via integrated social media buttons for Facebook and Instagram. A help button is available to address questions you may have.
Upcoming Features

• UN Commission on the Status of Women
• Women’s TravelFest
• Travel stories: See the [latest additions on the Blog](#)
• 2020 Annual Conference in October

*And more!*

[Logo of SERVAS United States]

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