



SERVAS - NEW ZEALAND

Servas for Peace

Newsletter – July 2013

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou

From the National Secretary's desk

When do we feel exploited as hosts? What does this feeling of being exploited mean? How do we as hosts reconcile this feeling and be a gracious host while honouring the basic tenants of Servas?

I have been reflecting on the comments raised by a member who found herself persuaded to have some young travellers stay with her although she was only a day host. Going back to the principles of Servas, helped see the whole picture. The word "servas" means to serve and the aim of Servas is to build world peace, goodwill, understanding and mutual tolerance by providing opportunities for personal contacts between individuals of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

In my experience as National Secretary misunderstandings between travellers and hosts is one of the common cause of concerns brought to my notice. Speaking with hosts, I find that stress is a common factor in many misunderstandings – the visit occurred at a time when the host was in a period of exceptional stress. When I ask a little more about the situation, I usually find the host was not able to say 'no'. With the many stresses in their life at the time, they were aware they should have said 'no' since they would not be able to host the way they would like to, yet in the moment when asked again they cave in, their inner wisdom says 'no' not this time. The ability to say No, for whatever reason, and maintain one's resolve is just as great a kindness as it is to say Yes. It avoids untoward feelings between host and traveller, or with Servas for that matter, and preserves the good will and understanding that is the spirit of Servas.

These are very difficult times in Christchurch. Some hosts are available and willing to host travellers, others have far less energy and resources and prefer to wait until they are in better situation. Whatever your position please honour that. There is ***no 'have to' or 'must' about hosting travellers*** just because you continue as a current host.

To say "*We are unable to host you at this time*" may be disappointing for the traveller, but in reality it is often the kindest response. Servas is not a travel bureau and the traveller should know they need to be resourceful and to have other options available.

I asked myself the question, "When do we feel exploited?" Do we feel exploited when having said yes we will do something, we find in reality we are not able to do so. When something more is asked of us, perhaps it is then that we feel we are being robbed of something, often time and energy. In times of high demand and stress our

personal resources need to be nurtured and nourished. There is only so much that can be given. And yet saying this, I am also mindful of the feeling of revitalisation that Servas visitors can bring to life. I suppose I am inviting hosts to really know yourself - ask is the time right, if not, have the courage and kindness to say No, not this time.

We can also ask what contribution travellers make when being hosted. One of the principles is that there is no money exchange between host and traveller. Travellers are invited to treat their hosts as they would family or friends. They may contribute either in time by joining in with tasks or contributing something to add to a meal.

Here is perhaps the challenge. Considering that Servas is about fostering relationships through exchanging views with one another and asking questions. Could the host if troubled by the behaviour of the traveller start a conversation to gain better understanding. Here are some questions that may initiate a conversation about service in Servas as well as a way of getting to know one another -

What do understand Servas to be?

What do you expect of hosts?

How will Servas meet your travel intentions hopes and dreams?

What would you like to discuss with hosts?

There may be others and I would be interested to hear them.

These thoughts were prompted by a letter from Leith McMurray a host in Christchurch. She has agreed to write a piece on her experience for the Newsletter, it is on page 10. Thank you Leith.

September 21st is the International Day of Peace. Both our Peace Secretary, Jocelyn Bielecki, and the Servas International Peace Secretary have written about this special day in this issue. We hope you will be inspired and motivated to join in activities marking the Day of Peace in your area on the 21st September

Marijke Batenburg

Renewal Forms

Please complete your renewal form as soon as you receive it. The closing date is 31st August. It helps the administration if this does not come in all at once.

This year you can pay your \$20 membership fee on line. The information you need to enter with your payment is at the bottom of renewal form.

**Bank Account: Servas New Zealand
Number: 02-0630-0321976-000**

**Particulars = membership number,
Code = region (see form),
Reference = name and initials.**

From Servas NZ Peace Secretary

International Day of Peace - Saturday, 21st September 2013

The International Day of Peace was established in 1981 by resolution of the United Nations General Assembly, a day of non-violence. The UN invites all nations to honour a cessation of hostilities and to commemorate the Day through education and public awareness, a day of global observance.



To inaugurate the day, the Peace Bell is rung in New York. The bell was cast from coins donated by children from all continents except Africa, and gifted by the United Association of Japan as “a reminder of the human cost of war”. It is inscribed with “Long live absolute world peace.” White peace doves are the symbol for the day.

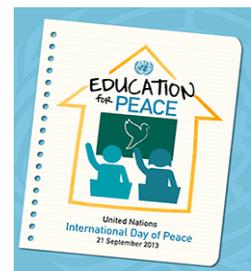
For 2013 the day has been dedicated to peace education in the hope that knowledge and understanding of the differing cultures will foster awareness and tolerance between nations, reduce war and conflict. As Servas hosts and travellers we are being active in building a foundation together for healthy, positive families, communities and nations without the barriers to peace, race, religion or greed.



An organization working for peace education and conflict resolution is Peace Direct, a London based organization, which aims to settle conflicts without the use of force, through getting local people to be the centre of all strategies for dealing with conflict, i.e. finding local peace builders in conflict areas, funding and promoting their work in conflict areas. Peace Direct believes local heroes are the best judges of how to achieve rapid and long lasting peace and they publicise the work of the local peace builders believing that it is critical that their message is heard and their knowledge shared. Peace Direct connects peace builders with journalists, policy makers, politicians, the public and anyone else who can help their cause. It has given much encouragement to the youth of countries in conflict using social media and gatherings.

For July 2013, some of their diverse projects are;

- Providing access to justice in the D R Congo.
- Healing divided communities in Sri Lanka.
- Truce 20/20 project in London’s East End to train young people in how to handle conflict in the street, in schools and in the community.



To read about more actions and their stories Google “Peace Direct” or subscribe to their monthly e-mail newsletters and updates.

How about a peace picnic for the 21st September with your family and friends? Or plant some trees?

Jocelyn Bieleski, Peace Secretary

From Central North Island.

We have had a small number of hardy visitors over the past few months but plenty of enquiries from N.Z. members who are organising trips away. Some very extensive journeys are planned; Iceland-Scotland-England-Belgium-Holland-Germany-Czech Republic, all by bike!! Another couple are starting in Patagonia and heading North through Argentina, Brazil, New York and then over to France, Germany and the U.K. before returning home via Asia. We look forward to hearing how you all get on.

Sarah and I went up to Hamilton in April to a well attended shared lunch with the very enthusiastic members from the Waikato. On the way home we visited members in Rotorua followed by another gathering in Whakatane. Following a request from the latter group, we are now listing the Eastern Bay of Plenty as a separate entity rather than part of the wider Bay of Plenty as was the case in the past. Many thanks to all the organisers and to those who attended, as a result, we can now put faces to many of the names we have known only by email addresses. We look forward to meeting with other groups of Servas members later in the year.

As more and more countries are publishing their Host Lists on line rather than in the printed books we have used in the past, we Regional Coordinators are able to download Host Lists from the Servas Dolphin website and e-mail them to travellers who are planning trips away. It is an excellent system but remember Host Lists, however they are stored, **are confidential to members of Servas and must be treated as such.** We had one overseas visitor this year who had lost her storage device containing several countries Host Lists and this could have resulted in a very embarrassing situation had it ended up in the wrong hands. Also, we ask that these files be deleted after use, we can issue you another more up to date version if you go away the following year so there is no point retaining them.

Rodney and Sarah Faulkner.

From South Island

After some very wet and cold weeks we are now enjoying warmer days with lots of sunshine. Recently, I have interviewed new Servas hosts and travellers who are going on amazing adventures, e.g. tramping solo in Northern India for 3 months. Also, existing Servas members are off travelling to Israel, Italy, France, Germany, etc. I get really itchy feet listening to their travelling plans and it makes me want to pack my bags as well. Reading through travel reports from returning Servas travellers is always refreshing, too and I would like to share one quote by a couple who enjoyed their first, very positive experience with Servas in Europe: "What will stay dearest to our hearts is the way we were met by strangers with a shake of a hand at the door and then left with a hug as friends".

Take care and keep warm!

Bee Ruder

From Lower North Island

Mid winter has brought a real contrast in weather, gales, snow, road closures, and surprisingly some balmy days. Not to be too complacent there are forecasts for a succession of monsoon-like weather fronts continuing. We will be looking forward to the spring come September with the promise of warmer, sunny days. This has slowed perceptively enquires from travellers.

We have a busy July-August ahead of us with Servas renewals. It has been a positive trend of late to have a number of new membership applications coming in. The number of enquiries for LoI's from those intending travellers indicates an increasing confidence of NZers planning travel and embarking on new adventures.

The trend has continued with numbers of enquires based around the option of a cruise or a train journey with stop overs providing opportunities for Servas encounters. An interesting alternative for our NZ members planning international travel.

Many have indicated that they look forward to meeting up with Servas hosts as they travel without necessary planning to stay but at least share a meal out together. Day Hosting, being able to meet with travellers passing through our regions could well be something we in NZ need to encourage.

As has been noted, it does appear that there is still a strong move by NZers to explore and holiday around NZ. With summer ahead it is something we can all look forward to, especially if we are able to provide for families taking their children on those heartland adventures.

Do remember that the billy is always on the boil if you are passing through Masterton, and we can always find a bed if you are able to stop over.

Take care. Do remember to get those renewal signed off and posted by return mail when they arrive this month.

Peter & Sandra Debney

From Northland and Auckland

Nothing to report this time, Jessica Andrades

Auckland Peace City Celebration of Nuclear Free New Zealand

DVD Available on Loan – For local Servas group showings.

In June 2012 the 25th Anniversary of the New Zealand Nuclear Weapon Free Zone legislation of 1987 and the declaration of Auckland as a Peace City was celebrated by a major Peace event in Auckland's Aotea Square. The DVD weaves together coverage of this event with historical archival film on New Zealand's peace movement.

To borrow this 40 min DVD contact Marijke Batenburg – servasnz@pl.net

Servas New Zealand

- Incorporated under The Charitable Trusts Act 1957 14th March 2013.

Chris Patterson has been the chair of the Constitution Committee. Days after the last newsletter we received the great news that our application for incorporation had been successful along with the Certificate of Incorporation for Servas New Zealand - we are #2577081 – confirming that we are incorporated under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957!

Wow & whew, it is great to have this significant step for Servas in NZ completed. We have sent a thank you message to Michael Hockley the solicitor (and a Servas Host) who helped and supported us through what turned out to be a very long process - much longer than anticipated, but we got there and have a fine Constitution.

To confirm for yourself, go to the website below and type in Servas!

<http://www.business.govt.nz/companies/app/ui/pages/companies/otherSearch>

A copy of our Constitution, including a copy of the certificate is attached/enclosed.

Chris has written to the Secretariat and thanked all on the committee for their thoughtful and helpful contributions to the process.

What does this mean for our members?

- Servas New Zealand is now a legal entity, with our existing hosts and travellers as its members.
- We now have a Constitution that puts down on paper the purpose of Servas New Zealand, the set of rules that determines how we operate, the roles and responsibilities of our Secretariat and our Members.
- The Constitution provides for the election of the officers making up the Secretariat at a Conference of members to be held every three years. (Current thinking is for our first Servas NZ Conference to be in October 2015.)
- In drafting the Constitution and in choosing to incorporate under the Charitable Trusts Act 1957 we have aimed to retain the simple informal organizational style that Servas New Zealand has evolved over the years and has served us well.
- Incorporation under the Charitable Trusts Act does not mean we are or are seeking to be a registered charity. For Servas New Zealand, an organization with members throughout the country and limited financial resources, this Act provides a more flexible form of incorporation than the usual Incorporated Society while still making us a legal entity.
- The Constitution also provides mechanisms for dealing with serious problems - Members or the Secretariat can call for a Special Conference, and in the worst case scenario there is a process for winding up Servas New Zealand.

From the Servas International Peace Secretary

SERVAS and INTERNATIONAL DAY of PEACE

SERVAS and the United Nations

SERVAS is an organization which has had accredited status with the UN since 1973, with the following mission:

“Servas is a non-governmental and multi-cultural international Peace organization, which is managed by volunteers in more than 100 countries. Founded in 1949 by Bob Lutweiler as a Peace movement, Servas International is a non-profit making organization which works towards the development of understanding, tolerance and world peace.”



This accreditation gives Servas a certain number of rights, but also responsibilities, including that of widening knowledge of the work of the UN and, so far as is possible, of implementing UN decisions.

International Day of Peace

International Day of Peace was instituted by Resolution No. 36/67 of the General Assembly of the UN on 30th November 1981, adopting Resolution No. 55/282, on 7th September 2001 to fix the date as 21st September each year and reiterate that:

The General Assembly,

“Declares that International Day of Peace shall henceforward be observed as a day of global ceasefire and non-violence, an invitation to all nations and people to honour a cessation of hostilities for the duration of the Day;

“Invites all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, regional and non-governmental organizations and individuals to commemorate, in an appropriate manner, the International Day of Peace, including through education and public awareness, and to cooperate with the United Nations in the establishment of a global ceasefire.”

An extract from exchanges which resulted in this resolution:

“International Peace Day should be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace, both within every nation and every people, and between them. . . . This day will serve to remind all peoples that our organization, despite all its limitations, is a living instrument in the service of peace, and should serve all of us, at the heart of the organization, as a bell which rings out to remind us that our lasting commitment, beyond all our interests or differences of any kind, is to Peace.”

SERVAS and International Day of Peace

In past years an number of Servas countries have thought up various ‘simple acts’ to mark this day, for example:

- In Switzerland, on this day, Servas members sang peace songs in the streets to attract the attention of passers-by, and distributed leaflets to explain Servas.
- In Australia members organized picnics in the park.
- In Portugal Servas members joined in with activities organized by other (peace) groups in public areas.
- In Brazil, they did a Walk for Peace in Petrolina, by the Sao Francisco River.

What can SERVAS do in practice?

Servas International Peace Secretary invites every Servas national group to reflect on the best way, for them, to mark this day, seizing on the occasion to widen knowledge about Servas. We can also join in with initiatives organized by other groups who share a similar peace ethos.

Many Servas members are also members of one or more of these organizations. We suggest that the National Peace Secretaries (or National Secretaries in the countries where there is no National Peace Secretary) circulate a letter to all their members asking those amongst them who know of any activities being planned for the 21 September to come forward. It will then be possible to explore with these individuals practical ways in which Servas could be involved in these activities, and benefit from this in order to make Servas more widely known.

When explaining how Servas functions, we can draw on Article 2 of the ‘Action Program for a Culture of Peace’ (resolution adopted by the UN on 6/10/1999), which proposes that “The development of a culture of peace rests on a transformation to values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life likely to promote peace among individuals, communities and nations”.

We can take part in Peace Walks, observe a minute’s silence at mid-day, hang a peace flag at our window, make peace doves out of paper (origami), organize the release of peace balloons, put up displays of materials, write articles for local newspapers, put on a film/video, etc.

The SI Peace Secretary is currently in the process of forming a small group of people to work on this project. We would be grateful if you would inform SI Peace Secretary of all your planned activities, who is the key contact for them.

So far as is possible, we will try from now until September to share suggestions with you, leaving it to each country to decide whether or not to pursue them.

Danielle SERRES,

Servas International Peace Secretary, at peacesecretary@servas.org

Servas News from Africa

While Servas groups in Africa receive few travellers, the Spirit of Servas is strong judging by their activities. Servas NZ has an informal friendship and support relationship with Uganda – we exchange views and development ideas.

Servas Malawi's SYLE Program – Our 1st SYLE-Volunteer

Maria-Cristina VALENTI from Servas Italy: 7th April –16th April 2013

The aims of SYLE:

1. Cultural Understanding ‘World Peace’;
2. Support our Community links. (See above)
3. Get Servas Travellers for our Servas Hosts!

HISTORY: The SYLE (Servas Youth Learning Exchange) program was started by the youth section of Servas led by Pablo Chufini in Argentina to encourage ‘youth’ to get involved in Servas.

IN MALAWI we have adapted it slightly to include SYLE-Juniors (10-18years) and SYLE-Volunteers (people coming to support Community Links our Servas Malawi NGO).

WHY? Malawi simply does not get many Servas Travellers - so the Malawi 4–8 week SYLE program sees Servas Travellers stay with our Servas Malawi hosts. They stay with 1 host for 1-2weeks to carrying out volunteer work. Then another host for 1-2 weeks carrying out new volunteer work. Then travel for 2 weeks around Malawi.

From Demelza Benbow,
National Secretary, Servas Malawi

Servas Uganda - Blood Donation Drive.

In our country Uganda, there is a great shortage of blood in all major National Hospitals.

I have embarked on sending emails to all my Servas members in Uganda asking them to donate blood where ever they are. I have also a proposal for us to meet as a group (Servas Uganda) and raise a good number of blood Units for the National Blood bank. This will take place around September for some of our members are busy with studies.

It's good to give blood for blood saves life. Everest, my young brother is a blood donor and is a member of Servas Uganda. We see this as a very good strategy for making the Servas Organization very visible on the ground.

Greet everybody on our behalf.

In Peace.

Emmanuel Kakinda
National Secretary, Servas Uganda

Open letter from Leith McMurray

Stimulated by my reaction after my latest hosting for SERVAS and Marijke's lovely thoughtful reply, I am writing a short piece about my experience...

I live in Christchurch, New Zealand. In September 2010 we were shocked awake at 4.30a.m. on a frosty morning by a 7.1 magnitude earthquake. This caused a lot of damage, but, amazingly, no lives were lost. Several more large earthquakes occurred and then, on February 22nd 2011, just before 1pm, we had the most damaging one of all- 6.3, but shallower than the other one, and the epicentre right underneath the CBD. This one was almost twice the speed of gravity and moved first horizontally and finished with a sharp upwards movement. Practically all the old buildings (and some of the newer ones) in the city tumbled down immediately.

Lives WERE lost this time- 187. Residents of Christchurch were already grappling with the upheaval and bizarreness of life post-earthquake and this latest one really put the dagger in.

There is plenty of information on the Internet about all this but no-one really can appreciate what we have been through and continue to face, everyday. The problem here is, that just as the city is beginning to pick itself up and rebuild etc, SERVAS members want to come for a look and expect to be hosted. I think there should be a blanket ban on Christchurch for the next year or two, for intending SERVAS tourists. PLEASE don't expect us to host you! We don't have the emotional space for you and in many cases, we are in rental accommodation because our houses are unliveable and/or being repaired. A recent interview with a "Disaster Psychologist" on TV revealed that the third year after a disaster is worse than the previous years and may persist into the fourth year. EVERYONE in Christchurch is subject to this effect.

I was phoned by a young European couple recently. I was in the middle of combating a rat infestation and had had a plumber, an electrician, a carpet drier and painter in my little one-bedroom unit. I explained to this couple that I am a "day host only" and was rather terse.

They phoned me again a day or so later and said they had had no luck with trying other people in Christchurch (some people have left town and others are not in any position to host). I was not very pleased, but felt a certain obligation to help out... I said "well, you could sleep on my floor". Apparently they had been camping but the nights were getting cold. They seemed surprised but accepted. I went and met them (because I was in that part of town anyway), on the day they arrived, to guide them through the maze that our streets are now. They were very charming and very young. I had a meeting in my house that night so my kind neighbour took the two in for coffee and cake. (By the way, we are both over 65 years of age and live in tiny units). The following night, someone else, living in rental accommodation, who had turned them down for staying, invited them to dinner. They spent all day out sight-seeing.

The next day, they were not leaving until late in the day, so I thought, as they were here, they should see the earthquake damage they still hadn't seen. So I drove them to the notable sites. We stopped for coffee in our port town and I rather expected they might offer to pay for mine, but no. When we got home they were looking a bit forlorn so I had to get out the last of my bread for their lunch. The young man did help me a little with the rat problem, going up into the roof with some bait. They offered several times to help with dishes, but in my little kitchen this was not practical or necessary, as I have a small dishwasher.

It was evident that both had had the kind of lives I can only dream about - much travelling, both in Europe and other parts of the world. So money has not been a problem for them. Apart from my asking for a little help with the rat problem, no other contribution was made to their upkeep. Showers every day, extra food, extra power for heating, they did not seem to see that they should not accept all of this without finding some way to help me. I began to feel that I had been taken advantage of by

people who were substantially better off than me and really could have stayed in a motel. (They did this on their trip down from Nelson).

I live on National Superannuation and have to be very careful with my money. I don't think they really had any idea. They certainly showed no interest in what my life is like, as opposed to what I do as a voluntary "job" - working for adults with Asperger Syndrome. They did find that interesting. It would have been easy enough to buy some groceries or petrol vouchers to show their appreciation.

I agree that I should find it within myself to say "no" in future. I decided to be a Day Host only for this very reason. I didn't expect such persistence when I had already said I was a Day Host only. A couple of years ago (pre earthquake) I hosted a young woman from the USA. She was singularly uncommunicative and unhelpful and in the end I asked her what she thought SERVAS was all about. She said "I thought it was a bit like couch surfing". She had had the interview and had her document. I wish I could have photo-copied it.

The older folk I have hosted have been much more pleasant as guests than these young ones because they have more life experience. Personally, I am so weary now that I have no emotional space for visitors from other places. Please, SERVAS tourists, don't ask us to host you for the next couple of years, at least!

Leith McMurray

From Servas Australia

Earlier this year we had an exchange with Australia regarding the Servas NZ newsletter:

"Thanks for sending us your newsletter. Is it OK to publish it on our website under the newsletter (then a new NZ category), so our Australian hosts and visitors can see that we are a truly networked organization! It may also give our hosts ideas on what they can do here to promote peace."

We confirmed that it was OK to publish our newsletter, and they replied:

"Our website now includes a link to our newsletters and a few other Servas newsletters (including New Zealand's). We are very happy for you to provide the link to our website in your newsletter or your website. The link to our website is servas.org.au, clicking Newsletters displays the issues available."

Volunteers Wanted

At this time of year, as we assemble our next Host List, we are always looking for member volunteers to be Interviewers, Host Helps and generally help with the work of running Servas New Zealand. If you want to get more involved, contact your local Regional Co-ordinator or any of the other key contacts listed on the back page.

Marijke Batenburg

This newsletter is intended to provide a communication forum for Servas New Zealand members. The content, collation and distribution is undertaken by Servas members for Servas members.

Contributions for Next Issue

Closing date for contributions: 30 September 2013 Distributed: October 2013

Contributions are welcome from members. Email (Word documents and photos as attachments) are preferred. Contributions are subject to approval and editing to fit available space. Late contributions may have to wait until the next issue.

Newsletters are compiled in March, July and October.

Newsletter edited by Marijke Batenburg – Send contributions to servasnz@pl.net

Disclaimer

Every effort is made to ensure information is correct at the time of printing, however no responsibility will be accepted for errors or omissions. The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Servas New Zealand or the Editor.

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Currently the Secretariat meets at least 6 monthly by phone/Skype conference call.