



UNITED STATES  
**SERVAS, Inc.**

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*Open Doors for Travelers to Homes and Hearts in More Than 130 Countries*

## Annual Letter to All Our Members

### 2008-2009 BOARD OF

#### DIRECTORS

Nancy Mitchell,  
*Board Chair*  
Robert Allekotte,  
*Vice-Chair and Communications*  
Grant Barnes,  
*Corporate Secretary*  
Daryl Ngee Chinn,  
*Board Liaison*  
John Gunther,  
*Chief Information Officer*  
Nancy Wilson,  
*Outreach and Communications*

#### LEGAL COUNSEL

Grant Barnes

#### PEACE & SOCIAL

#### JUSTICE SECRETARY

Mary Jane Mikuriya

#### TREASURER

David Rebstock

#### ARCATA OFFICE STAFF

Judy Sears (2006-2009),  
Shelley Mitchell (2009-)  
*Office Administrator*  
Xande Zublin-Meyer,  
*Office Manager*  
James Childs,  
*Technology*

In accordance with the State of New York Not-for-Profit law under which United States Servas, Inc. is incorporated, please find attached the 2008 Annual Report and the 2008 review of the financial operation by Hunter, Hunter and Hunt, Certified Accountants, of United States Servas, Inc.

Congratulations to Judy Sears who has left us to pursue a life- long dream of furthering her education and becoming involved in emergency preparedness. Good luck Judy and enjoy Servas as a member.

I would like to welcome Shelley Mitchell, our new office administrator. Shelley has many years of experience working with non-profit organizations and is a long time resident of Humboldt County. We expect that Shelley's experiences will assist us in furthering our goals and growing our organization.

Eight US Servas members recently attended the Servas International General Assembly in Argentina. Reports indicate a very successful GA with recommendations for further strengthening Servas worldwide. Among the recommendations the SI Executive Committee will be considering a possible increase in stamp fees which US Servas will need to consider in our planning. All National Secretaries have been directed to address three year goals with their organization. You can access information regarding the discussions and actions by going to <http://servas.org/siga2009news/> US Servas will be well represented on the Executive Committee of Servas International.

Grant Barnes was reelected as SI Archivist and due to his extensive work with SI documents we are now able to view our history as an organization through the minutes of past General Assemblies. This was a huge task as all of the records had previously been stored in a private residence. View them on the SI website at <http://www.servs.org/siexco.php/Archives>

In addition, Grant, with the assistance of Sarah Jarvi, an archivist intern hired by US Servas, catalogued and archived, according to professional standards, Bob Luitweiler's papers. These documents are a treasury of Servas history and a reminder of our founding purpose. Bob's documents and papers, as well as the Servas International materials, have been gifted to the Hoover Institution Library and Archives, located in Palo Alto,

California, on the campus of Stanford University. To learn more about the Hoover Library and Archives at <http://www.hoover.org/hila>

US Servas has also moved forward on a more problematic issue involving a legal action against Marco Kappenberger, former SI Peace Secretary, for his failure to return CH14,000, approximately \$14,000 to Servas, despite the Audit committee and 2006 General Assembly finding that he owed an accounting for this amount. The GA in 2006 removed him from the organization until he clears his accounts. Mr. Kappenberger frequently does business in the United States thus he is subject to the jurisdiction of California courts even though he lives outside the US. Mr. Kappenberger has refused all attempts to serve him with the official papers and ultimately he was served through a public notice posted in his countries newspaper and mailing the summons to him at all published addresses. Mr. Kappenberger has been charged with Actual Fraud, Promissory Fraud, Breach of Fiduciary Duty, Embezzlement, Breach of Written Contract, Breach of Implied Covenant of Good Faith and Fair Dealing, and Unjust Enrichment. US Servas has taken this action since the majority of the \$14,000 was US Servas funds. Again, Grant Barnes is assisting us in this process. Thank you, Grant, for a tremendous amount of work on behalf of US Servas and Servas International

All of our new and renewing hosts have been able to register on-line, a more efficient way of handling this complicated task. Our host book was published and available by April of 2008, a vast improvement over the previous year. Despite recognizing the vital need, expansion of the new US Servas software system was suspended after creating the online host application and renewal system. The stoppage was in the hope of getting a much better system through the planned alliance with CouchSurfing(CS), however, CS has not yet been able to allocate the programming effort to develop the Servas version of their software. With the recent vote by the Servas International General Assembly to implement electronic host lists by 2011 through its Dolphin project, US Servas needs to balance the two potential software systems available to it. While we would strongly want to be part of the SI online system, the advantages of an alliance with the very successful and dynamic CS can't be ignored either. The ideal solution would be for a single set of Servas data to be accessed and updated by both systems, an approach which will be explored by US Servas in the coming months. Meanwhile, the US Servas website and smaller software projects are being ably handled by the staff technician, James Childs, in the Arcata office.

Our host numbers are continuing to increase from 1484 in 2007 to 1718 in 2008 to 1867 in 2009, an almost 16% increase. However, individual contributions continue to be lower than in previous years. Only about 57% of hosts donated this year with an average donation of \$39.00. We are encouraging unlimited host to host travel in the US. Traveler numbers in 2008 were down slightly from 2007 however 2009 numbers are looking like they will be equal to or exceed last year's numbers.

You will find the Financial Statements attached. Our revenues decreased by 11% between 2007 and 2008 but we were able to reduce our expenses by only 7%. Therefore, we had a deficit for the year in 2008 of \$69,922. As a result we have reduced our expense budget for 2009 by almost 16%. With the economic downturn our investments produced an overall loss of

16.8%, however, the major Stock Market indexes went down by from 34% to 39%. Our investments have bounced back considerably in the second quarter of 2009. The market continues to be unstable and these fluctuations can be expected to continue thru the end of 2009. Budget and Finance issues will be a major discussion and planning point for our 2009 Board Retreat.

Last year we began to participate in the Servas Youth Language Program and I am happy to say that we are continuing to both welcome young people to the US as well as to facilitate US young people to participate abroad. If you are interested in participating in this program you can learn more about it on the [www.servas.org](http://www.servas.org) selecting "Servas Youth".

Planning a gathering or want to share Servas with a local group? "THE BOX" is a wonderful resource that includes cards, brochures, a powerpoint presentation and a great poster. Contact your local University or College for a presentation to students. Remember that college students, both international and US can get a LOI for a \$25.00 fee for Domestic Travel. What a great way to introduce students to Servas and provide our US hosts with young travelers. Open Doors our quarterly newsletter to all members is available in full color on the US Servas website or via postal service. In addition, Key Notes has been sent out to all Interviewers and Key Persons as updates or changes in occur in any process that may impact hosts or travelers.

US Servas and SI members have partnered to develop a Peacebuilding Course. The central themes in this course include spreading Peace one person at a time, at the personal and community level. The basic idea is that you and each of the people with whom you share life can be a source of Peace. Through the Servas Peace Building Course you will learn that Peace is not just the time between war and conflict. Peace is from within, a gift of personal and inter-personal development. It is a way of taking active citizenship at the personal level in neighborhoods and around the world. Building Peace is taking action on these values, abilities, hopes both individually and through teams. Workshops and training can be arranged by contacting Gary Sealey, SI President.

Thank you to all of our dedicated and hard working staff and volunteers and the call is out for more volunteers. We need your assistance to continue our mission. Our committee structure needs your help. Share your ideas and talents. Please contact the office if you or anyone you know may be interested in contributing.

We continue to ask for your support. Your yearly host donation is very important as we depend on this money. There are many ways to contribute to US Servas. We especially thank those who have remembered Servas through their generous contributions in memory of a loved one. If you would like more information about a special contribution or steps to include Servas in your will please contact the office for resources to make this happen.

Happy 60<sup>th</sup> Servas. One Person, One World: You Can Be a Source of Peace