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ALL COUNTRIES CAME TOGETHER TO HELP HAITI

This month's lunch was hosted by the National Representatives, and the money col-



lected from the sale of raffle tickets was for those in need in Haiti. The NR ladies prepared some nice appetizers from their countries, and provided different presents for the raffles.



It was really fun when we all sang the SOPC song together, led by Ingeborg Brevick and Anne Smith-Sivertsen. We all learned from French Navy Officer Yan Leroux, who spoke to us about the dramatic situation in Haiti, and left us speechless.



Thank you, NR ladies, for your time and effort organizing this fantastic lunch, and for the lovely gifts!

Dates:

- **4th May:** Reservation deadline for the SOPC Luncheon
- **4th May:** Sponsor Information Session. Details on pg. 13
- **12th May:** Turkish Luncheon
- **22nd May:** Summer Party

Inside this issue:

- Luncheon Schedule
- Turkey—a report from the host of May's luncheon
- Legally Speaking— requirements for departing the USA
- Charity News— I wish to go see the snow!
- Club of the Month—Bowling
- News Round-Up - What's going on in your community

Dear Friends,

We are nearly at the end of this season, just one more lunch and almost everything will be done till September; time goes fast!

May's lunch will be the last before summer break. At this time we will say goodbye to a lot of members who will go back to their countries. I truly believe they are leaving Hampton Roads with nice memories, but especially leaving many friends who will always remember them. For this reason, I encourage you all to attend this lunch to wish all the best to those who are departing soon.



I would like to take this opportunity to say to all of them a big THANK YOU! Thanks for the good moments, the friendship, the support we have always received from you during this year and for the great fun we had together. We all wish the ladies who are leaving a safe trip home together with their families and their loved ones.

Turning to another matter, I hope to see you all on May 22nd aboard the "Spirit of Norfolk" to celebrate the SOPC Summer Party. We are making a big effort to make it happen, so your attendance will be our reward. Get your tickets now because they are limited! To see the event details visit the SOPC website.

Last, I want to say that next season, SOPC activities will start on September 15th at 10 AM. There will be a kick-off lunch at the Princess Anne Country Club to let newcomers know about the SOPC issues and the clubs they can join.

To all who will stay with us next season, I wish you a wonderful summer and hope to see you all in September!

Best regards

Bea Bande
SOPC Chairperson



REMEMBER

SOPC

SUMMER CRUISE

Start the summer by taking to the high seas .

The annual SOPC Summer Party will be a stylish cruise aboard the "Spirit of Norfolk".

SATURDAY 22ND MAY

Put this date on your calendar NOW

SEE PAGE 6 FOR FULL DETAILS

DON'T LOSE THE MEMORIES!

BUY YOUR SOPC DVD

NOW

If you don't want to forget about the good times you can buy the SOPC activities 2009/2010 DVD at the luncheon hosted by Turkey on 12th May for only \$7 or contacting Photographer Rachael Buttler.

photographer@sopc.us .



WELLCOME LUNCHEON

&

SOPC SIGN UP

SEPTEMBER

15TH



HOSTED BY

SOPC

Arrival at 10:30am

Princess Anne Country Club,

3800 Pacific Ave,

Virginia Beach 23451

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS AT:

reservations@sopc.us

RESERVATIONS must be received by

Tuesday Sep 7th 2010

Send your check for \$20, payable to SOPC to: SOPC,
4204 North Witchduck Road, Virginia Beach VA

You can check the “Am I Attending?” list on the website to ensure that your reservation has been made. Please let the reservations team know if this is the last luncheon you will be attending. If you have any special dietary requirements, please let the reservations team know and they can arrange a special meal for you

For more information on luncheon guidelines and procedures, please check the website: www.sopc.us

SOPC LUNCHEON SCHEDULE

Date	Host Country	Reservations and Payment to be received by
12th May 2010	Turkey	4th May 2010
15th September	Welcome Lunch & SOPC Sign Up	7th Sep 2010
October	Switzerland	TBA
November	Estonia	TBA
December	Hungary	TBA

The Cradle of Civilizations / A Country For All Tastes

By Isil CINEK



TURKEY



General Overview

Turkey is a transcontinental Eurasian country that stretches across the Anatolian peninsula in Western Asia and Thrace in the Balkan region of south-eastern Europe. Main land of Turkey, is the cradle of civilizations in which people have lived together in peace and harmony for centuries. Its extraordinary location at the heart of Eurasia is not just in a geographical sense. It is also a country you can find a healthy and unique synthesis of Eastern and Western cultural values.

With a 77 million population on it, Turkey is a vast peninsula, covering an area which is slightly larger than Texas State. The official language `Turkish` is spoken by 220 million people and is the world's 5th most widely used language. Above anything else, as a huge open-air museum, the huge amount of historical and archaeological wealth in Turkey seems more appropriate for an entire continent than a single country.

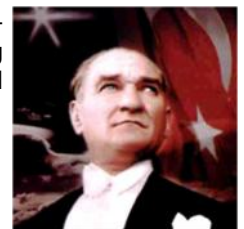
History



The Anatolian peninsula - Asian part of Turkey - is one of the oldest continuously inhabited regions in the world (e.g. The world's first town, a Neolithic city at Catalhoyuk dates back to 6500 BC). The first major empire in the area was that of the Hittites, from the 18th through the 13th century BC.

From the days of Catalhoyuk, to Hittites and then up to the present time Turkey boasts of a rich culture that through the centuries has made a lasting impression on modern civilization. The ancient sites and ruins scattered throughout the country give proof of each civilization's unique distinction.

Turkey also has a very fascinating recent history. Upon the decline of the Ottoman Empire, a young man named Mustafa Kemal, who has a great visionary in character, took the defeat of World War I and turned it into a shining victory by liberating Turkey. Through decades of change and growth Turkey still boasts of this success by effectively living by their adopted motto of "Peace at Home, Peace in the World".



Culture

Turkish culture is a product of a "modern" Western state, while maintaining traditional and historical values those have been inherited from both Turkish People's own past and the civilizations dwelled on Anatolia. This culture, being shaped for over 3000 years and moved from central Asia to central Europe, is a very diverse one.



You can feel and see the reflections of that unique culture in all around Turkey through Turkish People's daily life.

Turks have adopted classical and popular music from the West and developed genres that combine Western, Asian and Arabic elements. Centuries ago the music of Janissary "Ottoman Army" bands called "Mehter" greatly impressed Europeans who incorporated several Turkish instruments such as the cymbal and the kettle drum into European music. Composers such as Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven also imitated the music in a style called "A la Turca".

Turks have also produced some masterpieces of architecture especially during the Seljuk and Ottoman periods. The monumental buildings created by Turkish architects since the 11th century hold a distinguished place in the heritage of world architecture.

Turkish cuisine is considered to be one of the three main cuisines of the world because of the variety of its recipes, its use of natural ingredients, its flavours and tastes which appeal to all palates and its influence throughout Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

Briefly, Turkey, with these values, features and history definitely has a lot to enrich the cultural and social mosaic of Europe and the world.

Did You Know?

The only city in the world located on two continents is Istanbul, which has been the capital of three great empires, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman for more than 2,000 years.



The first known University in history is in Harran, Southeast Turkey.

Gobekli Tepe is the oldest human-made place of worship yet discovered (dated to 7500 - 6000 BC).



Anatolia is the location of the first known beauty contest, judged by Paris, with Aphrodite, Hera and Athena as leading participants. World's first known bank is Temple of Sard Artemis located

Salihli.

* The famous Trojan Wars took place in western Turkey, around the site where a wooden model of the Trojan Horse has been erected at the site.



One of the seven wonders, The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus today only base ruins remained in Bodrum, Mugla

One of the seven wonders, The Temple of Artemis at Ephesus (today only base ruins remained in Selcuk, Izmir)



* According to the Legend of Great Flood, after the withdrawal of the waters, Noah's Ark landed on Mount Ararat in eastern Anatolia



The Seven Churches referred in the Book of Revelation are all found in Turkey: Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea



St Nicolas – the original Santa Claus – was born in Patara in Turkey and has a church dedicated to him in Demre.

REMEMBER

SOPC

SUMMER CRUISE

SATURDAY 22ND MAY

“A NIGHT TO REMEMBER”

The SOPC would like to invite you to an evening on the high seas! Enjoy dinner, dancing and delightful company aboard the

“Spirit of Norfolk”.

You can keep the night going afterwards at the Marriot Hotel, drinks until 2am



Our Cruise sets sail from Otter Berth, Town Point Park, Norfolk at 7:15pm and shall return to port at 11:00pm.

Tickets are \$60 and are available NOW from:
reservations@sopc.us, or at any SOPC Luncheon.

The Dress Code is “Informal” (cocktail dresses & open collars).

LEGALLY SPEAKING!**LEGALLY SPEAKING**

SPONSORING A NEW FAMILY? Mark your calendars! If you are assisting new families who are transferring to the United States, we encourage you to accompany your spouse to attend the **Sponsor Information Session**, Tuesday **4 May 2010** from **1330 to 1530 at HQ SACT** in the SACLANT Conference Room. We will be providing written materials, including the *Legal Affairs Handbook for Personnel*, which is also available on ACT's home page at www.act.nato.int, click on the "Staff Info" icon in the lower right hand corner of the home page. We will be monitoring the HQ lobby area until 1325 and are willing to provide escort to spouses who are unaccompanied by their serving spouse. Please see detailed information regarding the sponsor information session on page 13 of this newsletter.

YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED that a new ("STAFF INFO") icon (also referenced above) recently appeared on ACT's home page (www.act.nato.int)! In the last two months, we have been working with the Public Affairs Office webmaster to re-design portions of the Newcomer information and also develop new resources for incoming and current HQ personnel and their family members. This link will be 'going live' within the next two weeks. Your suggestions and comments are most welcome to make this a great resource for YOU and future ACT families.

DEPARTING THE UNITED STATES? We recently published the first edition of the *Legal Affairs Handbook for Departing Personnel* to assist personnel and their families in preparing for their US departure. As this is a new publication, we not only welcome, but need, your suggestions to make it a better resource for our international families. This handbook is available from Legal Affairs upon request both in print and electronically. Very soon it will also be available on ACT's home page at www.act.nato.int, under the "Staff Info" icon in the lower right hand corner of the home page (once live). This handbook, like the *Legal Affairs Handbook for Personnel*, is a publication which is updated frequently so your suggestions are always welcome! Although a variety of topics are addressed in the departure handbook, in our experience, the topics of most concern or difficulty

for departing international families are:

Housing: The two most problematic issues related to housing are: (1) failure to provide notice in accordance with the terms of the contract; and (2) failure to do a proper move-out in

spection (which results in difficulties after your US departure).

Powers of Attorney: A power of attorney is a document in which you give another individual authorization to act on your behalf in a legal or business matter. A "specific" power of attorney is the most common document that we prepare when assisting departing staff, and is tailored to meet your requirements. The most common authorizations include: banking, US mail services, utility companies, and vehicle sales. Powers of attorney require notarization—which can be difficult and expensive if you have to have it prepared in Europe. Therefore, to the extent possible you should anticipate that it may be required and plan accordingly.

Timelines: If you are departing this summer, you are quite aware that timing is critical! Consider using the checklist at Annex A of the departure handbook as a resource to assist in the organization of your relocation. Often families underestimate the amount of time it will take, for example, to sell a car or to obtain the proper documentation to 'export' your pet. Be prepared and informed!

Detailed information regarding these topics, and more, can be found in *Legal Affairs Handbook for Departing Personnel*. Your suggestions are always welcome. Our services are offered to personnel and their dependents alike so please don't hesitate to contact us with questions, or for assistance. Kathy Bair (Kathy.Bair@act.nato.int; +1 757 747 3640; and Emma Hart (Emma.Hart@act.nato.int; +1 757 747 3228).



KATHY



EMMA

CARIBBEAN CRUISE—REVIEWED BY MONIKA PLINTOVA

Name of the Place:

Western Caribbean Cruise (Bahamas, Jamaica, Cayman Islands, Mexico)

The ship: Costa Fortuna (Costa Cruises)

How long did it take you to get there and how?

15 hours by car to get to Fort Lauderdale, Florida. We prefer travelling by car because that enables us to stop and see the places on our way (Charleston, SC; Orlando, FL; St. Augustine, FL; Cape Canaveral, FL; Miami & Miami Beach and much more), depending on how much time you want to spend before/after getting on board. If you prefer airlines, there's an airport right in Fort Lauderdale.

Date: January 2010. Costa Cruises sail in Caribbean sea from October to March.

The price: Excellent! If you're not limited by children in school-age or are willing to take them from school (as we did) avoiding the top season, the price of this wonderful cruise can definitely surprise you.

What kind of accommodation did you have? Oceanview stateroom.

Is it suitable for families or only couples? Perfect for both families and couples.

Comments:

The room was nicely appointed and well-maintained. Great food. Lots of cultural, sport, fun or goofy activities on board during the day and amazing performances in Rex theatre every night.

The crew were the hardest working people and eager to please all the time. Costa Fortuna is a great ship if you like an international crowd (very popular with Europeans). We loved our 4 ports and in spite of the fact that we spent barely 6 hours on each of them, except for Cozumel, Mexico (10 hours, I believe) we were able to fill them with unforgettable memories (thanks to a proper planning in advance).

Hints:

Passengers who bought shore excursions on the ship kept winding up at the same locations as those of us who simply booked on-line (I booked swimming with stingrays in Cayman Islands from my bedroom in Virginia Beach) which is much cheaper and you don't waste time negotiating the excursions with dealers on-shore either. Honestly, if you are willing to do a little bit of research about your ports before you leave home, I think it is very possible to have very rewarding excursions on your own, not being tied up by the group.

If you're adventurous (as we are), don't avoid local places that may not seem attractive at first sight. We always want to experience the authenticity of the area, not only "artificial" places made for tourists. This was true especially in Bahamas and Jamaica.

Overall, the experience was better than expected and I recommend this cruise to everybody.

If you want to visualize what you've just read and get an inspiration, here's our cruise album:

<http://www.facebook.com/photo.php?pid=31007020&l=c9e2cdbc3e&id=1270707920>

Have a great trip, cruisers!

Monika

SOPC MEMBER PROFILE

Artist Statement—Johanna Colijn, January 2010

My cradle stood in The Netherlands and that is where I painted, drew, and sculpted in clay for a number of years under the guidance of renowned artist before coming to the United States. Since 2005 I enjoy studying art at Old Dominion University in Norfolk.



Over the years I've developed a pronounced preference for portraying people. Body language, facial expressions, hands and feet – to me they are the most fascinating

subjects to draw, paint or build from clay. My goal is to get better in expressing the being of that person, and I've discovered that the use of color really can help me with that, when painting and drawing.

Drawing nudes is one great thrill. To catch that essential of the model who only has his/her body as a means of expression. To record just that mood in the volatility of the moment. To control while drawing like one possessed. And to stay true without forgetting the vulnerability of the nude. Trying to stay focused with energy buzzing in the air. When the session is over taking my distance (and a big breath) to observe- did I do the model justice?

The human body will always fascinate me with its innumerable possibilities to express motion, and consequently to evoke emotion. For me it is true joy to create human figures in clay in all sorts of positions. My challenge is to express motion, or emotion, in a static object like a sculpture: the shape has to say it all. In a painting my colors speak for me, but with the sculptures I'm depending on body language. Any social or political issue can be subject to being expressed through a figure in clay as long as it moves me, but also what is going on in my personal life determines what I make. The observer is entitled to his/her own interpretation; I just hope my sculpture will touch him/her in some way.

For portraying or inspiration I like using people I know: friends and family, from children to older people. Knowing my models helps giving the portraits or sculptures a "soul". Not – perfect bodies are the most interesting to depict. Even for the graceful bodies of dancers that I sculpted in clay, friends were the inspiration. And I see traits of my friends in the bodies of the in the end not-so- perfect dancers.

The "Egg series" started more than a decade ago, but will always know additions. The shape is addictive and the symbolism offers endless possibilities. An egg shell can be protective, but can also limit one's need for expansion. Eggs can be symbols for new life, but although the shape in itself is strong, nothing is easier to crack than an eggshell, crushing the life in it. There have been so many situations over the years that have made me use the egg as my means of expression.

Lately I've been building chubby little ladies I refer to as "Lizzies". Overweight girls have more problems getting around in society than the skinny or "normal" ones. The troubles they have to conquer are symbolized by the coil built bowls that keep them imprisoned. However, even though Lizzies's fat rolls, cute round butt and voluptuous breasts may evoke laughter at first, they do not make her look ridiculous: she has a self confidence not related to external beauty as we may judge it, a good sense of humor, is not shy at all and perhaps even proud of her body. I hope my Lizzies evoke a smile (of recognition) with the viewer.

The three dimensional way of working in clay provides for a large part of the appeal clay has for me. To be able to actually touch the surface, walk around the object to see it from all sides, the possibility to build instead of carve, and the plasticity of the medium that allows me to model and remodel forms, are what makes working in clay a favorite of mine.

Painting allows me the unlimited use of color that I miss in ceramics. Glazes are controllable to a certain extent, but paint allows me to go way behind that point. The colors used are chosen intuitively; when I "weigh" my choice in advance they'll have to "match" the person in my opinion. Therefore they'll describe the subjective way I look at someone. But no matter what colors are used, features need to be readable.

I'll never be able to choose between the disciplines of painting and working in clay. When I'm working in one, I long for the other and vice versa. Recently working in silver has become a new medium for me. I love to reveal beauty by making jewelry, using silver and precious stones. But also Lizzie allows herself to be immortalized in silver! I am thankful that as an artist I don't have to make choices, but can follow my heart in expressing what moves me, through creating my art.



WISH of THE MONTH

“I wish to go to see snow”

As you all know one of the 3 organizations that have been chosen by the SOPC committee in 2009 to receive support for the next 2 years, has been the great organization —Make a Wish.



Sometimes we forget to enjoy the small moments that make life so precious. Because of illness, some children who have been on earth only a short time also don't have the opportunity of enjoying many moments. Life is much harder for them! One of these tough little children is **Lanard**, an **8 year** old boy from Florida:



While being treated for kidney cancer, it was hard for Lanard to think about anything other than getting well. After two years of treatment, he started feeling better and finally decided that his true wish was to play in the snow!

Arriving at a resort in Minnesota, Lanard and his family got their cold-weather essentials and had a blizzard of fun while using the snowball-maker and snowman-making tools. Lanard dove straight into the snow and quickly mastered the art of making snow angels. Afterwards, a snowmobile took Lanard for a cool 10-mile ride through the snow-draped forests. As a highlight of the trip, Lanard also drove the snowmobile by himself.

Then he counted the deer feeding near the resort, and had a sled ride over the frozen ground, pulled by a dog team. Lanard enjoyed an incredible time, but was also happy to go home to his tropical state; with a smile, he told a local newspaper that Minnesota is definitely too cold for him.

*Make-A-Wish Foundation helps children to remember three important aims in life: **HOPE, STRENGTH & JOY!** We should remember them, too!*

Thank you all for helping make this boy's dream come true!

Club of the Month

BOWLING

Bowling might be right up your alley!!

Bowling is a sport that you can learn at any age and enjoy for a lifetime. Bowling is a good exercise that uses 134 muscles yet it does not take a lot of strength to become a good bowler. Every Tuesday morning the SOPC Bowling Club meets at the Gator Bowl on JEB Little Creek Base for some fun. Our league is made up of 12 teams and each team consists of three ladies of different bowling abilities. You do not need to bowl well or even know how to bowl to join our league. You just need to be willing to learn and have fun while playing.

Each September, when the teams are made up, there is a lot of work put into making sure that each team is made up of ladies who have similar abilities so that all the good bowlers do not end up on the same team! Another



important part of making up each team involves ensuring that three different Nations are represented on each team. There is a fee to play and it works out to about \$40.00 a month. The only pieces of equipment that you need to play are bowling shoes and a bowling ball. Ladies usually start off by renting shoes and then eventually buy a pair of their own shoes as they are not expensive and it is nice to have your own. The bowling center has bowling balls for you to use and many ladies use those balls quite happily every week. Some of us, however,

get tired of trying to find a ball that fits our hand every week and decide to purchase our own ball. Bowling balls can be bought at stores like “Dick’s” for as little as \$40.00 so a person can be well equipped to bowl for around \$100.00.

Our club begins bowling at 0930hrs every Tuesday morning so we start arriving at the bowling center a little after 0900hrs. This gives us time to change our shoes, find our bowling balls, and chat with everyone. We enjoy being able to do something a little physical while socializing! For many of us, it is our only SOPC club that doesn’t involve a beautiful spread of food! We bowl three games each Tuesday morning and are usually finished before 1130hrs. Although we don’t play during the summer, we plan to start early in September so if you are interested in joining the club, please send an e-mail to bowling@sopc.us for more information.



SOPC NEWS ROUND-UP



A Food Bank will be held on 12th May during the Turkish Luncheon at the Princess Anne Country Club

We will collect all kinds of non-perishable items (canned food, rice, pasta, boxed foods, dried ready meals, etc.). You can also bring items such as wet-wipes, diapers, feminine hygiene products. All items will be delivered to Albano Cleaners on Shore Drive, Virginia Beach where they will be distributed to the underprivileged families in our area.

PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY

TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE SURE NO ONE GOES HUNGRY

**SOPC LUNCHEON
HOSTED BY TURKEY**



**WEDNESDAY
12TH
MAY 2010
FROM
10.30AM**

**AT THE PRINCESS ANNE
COUNTRY CLUB
3800 PACIFIC AVENUE, VIR-
GINIA BEACH**

THE SEARCH IS ON FOR:

**INTELLIGENT, ENTHUSIASTIC AND
IMAGINATIVE PEOPLE.....**

And there are plenty of you about!

During the summer months many NATO families are finishing their tours in the USA and heading back to their home countries. These great people not only leave holes in our hearts but also in the SOPC Executive Committee! That's why we need you! Now is your chance to use your time and brain constructively and at the same time, help your community. We are looking for:

Assistant Photographer

Assistant Membership Executive

Assistant Social Activities

Don't just sit and vegetate—Click the link and
PARTICIPATE!

ARE YOU SPONSORING INCOMING PERSONNEL?

- LATEST HQ REQUIREMENTS FOR IN-PROCESSING
- HOST NATION REQUIREMENTS UNITED STATES & VIRGINIA
- TOPICS OF INTEREST, such as Customs, Immigration, Housing (Availability, Areas, School, Lease Agreements), Vehicles (Purchases, Registration, Insurance, Taxes), ETC.
- AVAILABILITY OF HQ RESOURCES (Pre-Arrival CD, UNCLASSIFIED Web Page, Legal Affairs Handbook for Personnel, etc.)
- UPCOMING ORIENTATION/TRAINING SESSIONS
- TOP 10 MISTAKES MADE BY NEWCOMERS
- Many More Topics of Interest...
- **Questions: Contact Legal Affairs' representatives at ext. 3228/3640**

SPONSOR INFORMATION SESSION

Tuesday 04 May 2010
1330 to 1530

SACCLANT
Conference Room



Sponsored by Legal Affairs
In conjunction with
Staff Training Section

The Spring Fling Remembered

The SOPC sends a big thank you to the organisers of the Spring Fling from the HQ SACT Officers' Mess.



Two hundred forty people attended the event held at the Westin Hotel in Town Centre, Virginia Beach. The venue was

lovely with modern, bright décor. Unusual glass steps led us to the second floor for the cocktail hour. In the glass-fronted bar area we enjoyed drinks and conversed about volcanic ash and flight schedules as we looked over the street below. SACT Officers and their partners clean up well and the photographer was kept very busy taking photos of couples and groups. I thought the ladies gowns were

exceptional this year and the men are always handsome in their Mess kits or black tie.



For dinner, we entered the dining room where the tables were set beautifully with green table cloths and elegant arrangements of peace lilies and hydrangeas. The hotel put on a delicious dinner with great table service. The band played during dinner and kept things hopping on the crowded dance floor for the rest of the evening. With the assistance of Dawn Knasas and Ashley Hockycko, Master of Ceremonies Wayne Buck handed out raffle prizes of restaurant certificates and beautiful jewellery from BeJeweled in the McArthur Centre. And, when our



lovely evening was over, we emerged into the warm Virginia night – it was spring and we had had our fling!

By Vicky Townend

FLOWERS AMONG FLOWERS

How nice was the SOPC Norfolk Botanical Garden trip! We really enjoyed the Virginia spring!



As soon as we entered the garden, we were shrouded in a cloud of charming, bright colored azalea flowers.

We took a mini rail track tram to the heart of the Botanical Garden, where we admired incredible azaleas blossoming along a string of romantic small lakes.

And what to say about the boat trip? The geese swam around our boat, turtles watched us from the bank, and we saw an eagle-mom tenderly taking care of her eaglets.



Those of us who stayed for lunch had a picnic on the shore of a little lake, where we entertained the geese, turtles and a blue dragonfly. It was

a very nice and relaxing open-air morning, and for a newcomer as I am, who never saw Virginia springtime before, it was a magnificent introduction to the beauties of the place!



And remember that in May, the roses will bloom!

By Susanna Sandonnini

HAMPTON ROAD HELPFUL HINTS

Did you know that there is a fantastic booklet containing all the information you need for a comfortable and happy life in the Hampton Roads Area?

“Helpful Hints for Living in Hampton Roads” is available on the SOPC website and is essential reading for anyone coming to this area. If you are sponsoring a new family, don't forget to send them the link, or print a hard copy. Even if you have lived here for many years the “Helpful Hints” is an invaluable source of reference.

Many hours of hard work by our webmaster and the Legal Assistance Department have gone into this publication to ensure all the information is accurate and up-to-date for 2010. Click this link to see for yourself.
http://www.sopc.us/newcomers_documents/SOPC_helpfulhints2010.pdf



COMMITTEE UPDATE

Keeping you in touch with
YOUR club

SOPC Executive Committee had our monthly meeting 12th April. We discussed the following topics:

SOPC pictures – A DVD with pictures from SOPC activities through 2009/ 10 is now available for 7 \$ at the lunches or by contacting Photographer Rachael Buttler. photographer@sopc.us.

SOPC Summer Party – Last possibility to buy tickets to our dinner/ dance cruise on “Spirit of Norfolk” is 8th of May; it will be fabulous so buy tickets now!

Monthly luncheons – It was decided that SOPC will host a “Welcome newcomers/ Sign up” lunch 15th September at Princess Anne Country Club.

Budget – Finances are satisfactory and the ACT Auditor will audit our books according to our Bylaws.

Members – We now have 251 members from 28 different countries. It was decided that we will send out updated lists to all members twice a year from September on.

Executive Committee – We are very happy to welcome Malena Avanzini as new Newsletter Editor from May and also Susanna Sandonnini who will take over as Social Activities leader. Will still need more members in the Committee; see open posts!

Next meeting – Board meeting Monday 10th May

Full minutes from this meeting are available on request. Simply send an e-mail to chairperson@sopc.us. Your comments are *always* welcome.

EDITORS COMMENTS!

This is my first newsletter as Editor. I would like to thank Elana for having the patience to teach me , and I also want to thank her for doing such an extraordinary job as Editor and Assistant Editor during the past two years. As you all might know she has to go back to her country, as we will all do at some point, I wish her all the best in her new life!

I also want to thank Laura Miller, the new Assistant Editor for her wonderful collaboration in this issue.

And for the rest of you, have a great summer with your families and friends!

See you in September!