



Dear Friends!

It is again with great pleasure that I come to you with my monthly letter.

November is a month that has important celebrations in the US: Veterans Day on the 11th and Thanksgiving on the 26th.

I would first like to stress the importance of Veterans Day. This day, originally Armistice Day, started as a celebration of the peace that followed the conflict of World War I. In the following years it evolved into Veteran's Day — a day to honor those who have served in uniform, past and present, as well as those who died in service to their country. The liberty, freedom and democracy we enjoy is entirely due to the women and men who serve in uniform and especially to the thousands who fell in combat defending these values. It is a most important celebration rightfully acknowledged with great pomp and circumstance.

Thanksgiving in the USA is also a very important occasion. On page 9 of this newsletter you can read all about its origins and history, stemming back to the summer of 1621. I believe that it is a very heartfelt and emotional celebration, although in my country we don't have this tradition. That's a pity, because I see great value in gathering with our loved ones and expressing thanks for all our material and spiritual possessions. Prosperity and well-being should never be taken for granted, which is why it makes sense to take the time to reflect on the world and show appreciation.

I therefore kindly ask you all to use the inspiration and motivation of these 2 celebrations to think about those the SOPC supports as we strive to make their lives less painful through our contributions.

Once again thank you for your love, support and friendship.

Love, Anabela
SOPC Chairperson



Dates:

- **4th November:** SOPC Luncheon Hosted by Italy
- **9th November:** Opera House Tour
- **11th November:** Veterans Day
- **17th November:** Crafts Bazaar
- **18th November:** Latvian Flag Raising—Spouses Welcome
- **24th November:** Deadline for Newsletter Articles, Reports & Letters
- **24th November:** Deadline for December Luncheon Reservations
- **26th November:** Thanksgiving Day



Inside this issue:

- **Chairperson's letter**
- **Luncheon Schedule**
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- **Social Events— Opera Tour, Craft Bazaar, Zoo Passes**
- **Club of the Month—Mums & Toddlers**
- **Thanksgiving—The History of a Wonderful Tradition**
- **SCARY HAIR—the best and worst hairdressers in town**
- **Travel Report—Ecuador. Where north meets south. The journal of an epic adventure.**
- **NATO Festival—The New Face of the Azalea Festival**

SOPC
LUNCHEON
DECEMBER
2ND



HOSTED BY THE
NETHERLANDS

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 November 24th

Send your check for \$20, payable to SOPC to: SOPC,
840 Five Point Road, Virginia Beach VA 23454

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

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
2nd December 2009	The Netherlands	24th November 2009
13th January 2010	Canada	5th January 2010
10th February 2010	Germany	2nd February 2010
10th March 2010	Norway	2nd March 2010
14th April 2010 to be confirmed	Host Country Needed	6th April 2010
12th May 2010	Host Country Needed	4th May 2010



THIS MONTH, THE SOPC LUNCHEON IS HOSTED BY

ITALY



Italy is a democratic republic and has a population of 59,619,290. The capital city is Rome and the monetary unit is the Euro. Italian is the official language spoken by the majority of the population, but there are several distinct dialects corresponding to the different regions. It is divided into 20 regions and also includes two major islands: Sicily and Sardinia. Two independent mini-states lie within Italy: San Marino and Vatican City, seat of the Catholic Church.

This Southern European country is a boot-shaped peninsula surrounded by the Mediterranean Sea. Its northern, Alpine boundary confines with France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia. Italy has a very diverse landscape, but can be primarily described as mountainous with the Alps and the Apennine mountain ranges running through it.

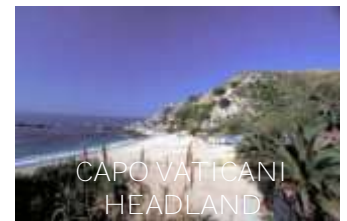


The country known today as Italy, has been the cradle of many European cultures and peoples, such as the Etruscans and the Romans. Later it was an important centre of the Renaissance and also played a major role in the development of modern science, astronomy, University and opera. Today, Italy is home of the largest number of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in the world (44). Art and monuments are everywhere around the country. Italy is also famous worldwide for its cuisine, luxury sports cars and motorcycles, as well as for its beautiful mountains, lakes and coasts. Italian fashion is renowned worldwide. Many of the world's most famous international brands have their headquarters in Italy.



Italy's mountain regions offer plenty of good ski resorts, and during the summer months, hiking, biking and walking for nature-lovers, who can explore the many natural parks and savor the splendid cuisine. Also in the north at the foot of the Alps are the larger lakes, mainly of glacial origin. Among these are *Lake Garda* (the largest lake in Italy), *Lake Como* (the deepest), *Lake Maggiore*, *Lake Iseo* and *Lake Orta*.

Italy has a typical Mediterranean climate. It has hot, dry summers, with July being the hottest month of the year. Thanks to this the 7,600 miles of shore-line bordering Italy and its islands, the weather is sunny most of the year and the seas are an ideal temperature for swimming, The Italian seas: Adriatic, Ionian, Tyrrhenian and Ligurian are healthy places certified by numerous awards from international organizations and institutions whose job it is to check that the environment is protected.



All main centers, most of the provincial cities and many quite small towns have museums. Some of them have national and international relevance: the Uffizi Museum in Florence is one of the greatest

museums in the world; the Egyptian Museum in Turin holds the second-largest Egyptian collection in the world, after Egypt's Cairo Museum. The Aquarium in Genoa is one of the largest and most beautiful in the world. The Roman Civilization Museum in Rome holds the world's largest collection about ancient Rome and a marvelous reproduction (scale 1:250) of the entire Rome area in 325 A.D., the age of Constantine the Great. The Automobile Museum in Turin is one of the largest in the world, with a collection of 170 cars covering the entire automobile history.



UFFIZI MUSEUM



A few Italian Cheeses!

Italians are extremely proud of their culinary tradition, pizza, pasta and tomato sauce are very well known around the world but we have much more: almost every city and region has a typical dish and some towns have centuries-old traditions: just think of Risotto, pizza, parmigiana, lasagna, arancini, polenta, gelato, tiramisu, pastier, cannoli. In Italy you can find nearly 200 kinds of cheese, including the famous Parmigiano Reggiano, and 300 types of sausages.

A traditional Sunday Italian meal is separated into several sections: *antipasto* (salumi, cheese, cooked vegetables, etc), *primo* (pasta or rice dish), *secondo* (meat or fish course with vegetables on the side), and *dolce* (dessert). But usually Italian meals for working days are simpler: small breakfast (coffee and milk with a pastry or a piece of bread and jam.), one course for lunch and one for dinner. Coffee is welcomed at nearly every hour, especially around 10:00 in the morning and at the end of a meal. Italian cuisine varies greatly from region to region (sometimes also from town to town), and wine reflects this variety. Italian wine names like Barolo, Brunello and Chianti are known all over the world. Liquors to have at the end of a meal include Limoncello, made with lemon peel, and Grappa, made by fermenting grape skins.

Although wine is a traditional everyday product, beer is drunk as well, particularly when going out for a pizza with friends. Major Italian beers include Peroni and Moretti.

If you are thirsty while sightseeing the tap water is safe to drink and in Rome they have exceptional pride in their quality of water. This goes right back to the building of aqueducts, channeling pure mountain water to all the citizens of Rome during Roman times. You can refill your drinking containers and bottles at any of the constant running taps and fountains dotted around the city, safe in the knowledge that you are getting excellent quality cool spring water.



TOWN OF GALLIPOLI



DOLOMITE MOUNTAINS

Italian Luncheon
4th November 2009
Special Notice



This "filet Crocheted" doily was handmade in Italy exclusively for the Italian Lunch.

Extremely fashionable in Italy during the second half of the 19th Century, the 'filet crochet' technique is used decoratively around the home, as in this beautiful doily (see photo) or to embellish linens such as sheets, tablecloths and curtain borders.

'Filet crochet' is a real folk art. It is the most simple crochet technique as it is based on two fundamental stitches, the double crochet stitch and the chain stitch. The combination of these two stitches forms patterns by creating solid and open meshes, resulting in a unique item.

LEGALLY SPEAKING!

This month we are focusing on **Working and Volunteering in the United States**

Working

U.S. Law requires that individuals who work must present documentation proving that they are eligible for employment. Dependents who are in the United States on a NATO visa classification who work without appropriate authorization from U.S. authorities may be considered in violation of their status under Federal regulations and are required to have an **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)** issued by U.S. authorities prior to starting work. Please note that a NATO staff member (sponsor) is not permitted to engage in U.S. employment outside the scope of his or her official position pursuant to the same Federal regulation.

An Employment Authorization Document (EAD), more commonly known as a ‘work permit’, is available to the dependents of NATO personnel who serve in the Armed Forces of countries that have either bilateral work agreements or defacto work arrangements with the United States, subject to certain restrictions based on age and eligibility categories. This also applies to dependents of NATO international civilians.

Through negotiations with the U.S. Department of State, an EAD is available and gives the dependents from certain countries the opportunity to work in the United States while the sponsor is stationed here pursuant to a NATO visa. The following countries either have a bilateral work agreement or defacto work arrangement that permits certain dependents of NATO personnel to apply for a work authorization/EAD:

Bilateral Work Agreement Countries: Canada, Denmark, Lithuania, Norway, the United Kingdom.

Defacto Work Arrangement Countries: Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands.

HQ SACT Legal Affairs is tasked under US Federal regulations as the sole endorsing authority for applications for employment authorization for all dependents present in the United States on a NATO visa. For detailed information regarding eligibility, requirements and documentation required, see the **NATO Employment Authorization Document Policy and Guidelines for Processing** at www.act.nato.int, What is ACT?, Newcomers and then Dependent Employment. The required forms and supporting documentation must be submitted through HQ SACT Legal Affairs for certification and forwarding to US authorities for approval.

A-2 visa holders should consult their Embassy officials regarding eligibility, although there are no agreements or arrangements currently which extend employment authorization eligibility to the dependents of A-2 visa holders who are not posted directly to an Embassy or Consulate.

Please be aware that simply applying for the EAD is not sufficient proof of employment eligibility. A U.S. employer not only requires the EAD, but also a **social security number**. In order for dependents to receive a social security number, they must present their employment authorization card along with their passport containing their visa and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Form I-94 (the white immigration card stapled into your passport on entering the United States).

Please also be aware that, all Federal, state and local taxes must be paid on income earned by NATO dependents possessing a NATO EAD pursuant to Federal regulations. We are not tax experts but recommend that you read Annex C **“Common Tax questions/issues encountered by NATO Dependents applying for renewal employment authorization”** of the above mentioned guidelines to familiarize yourself with the tax filing requirements.

Volunteering

If you are not eligible or do not possess an EAD, you **are permitted to volunteer**, provided that you do not receive income or **payment in kind for your ‘volunteer’ services**. **You can however receive reimbursement for expenses such as hotel rooms, but keep detailed records should questions arise.**

If you have any questions regarding the NATO EAD program or volunteering please call Emma or Kathy.



Kathy Bair
Kathy.Bair@act.nato.int; 757 747 3640



Emma Hart
Emma.Hart@act.nato.int; 757 747 3228



WORKING AND VOLUNTEERING—2 BUSY WOMEN SHARE THEIR STORIES

A Woman's Work

Joyce Klee works for FUGRO a geotechnical firm in Norfolk. She was the first Dutch person to take advantage of the Defacto arrangement between the Netherlands and the US allowing Dutch military spouses to work here. I recently talked to Joyce about her choice to work while in the US and her experiences in the American system.



When Joyce and her family first arrived in the US, she was finishing her degree in Business Engineering. Although she was studying hard and busy looking after her family: 2 children, 2 cats, 1 dog and 1 husband!, she experienced a feeling of identity loss. After a successful career with the Dutch government, this was difficult to cope with, but as I discovered, Joyce is a woman of action and decided to take the initiative and look for employment. She started searching for jobs and soon was approached by FUGRO, granted an interview and swiftly started to work for them.

Since then she has uncovered many differences between working in Europe and the US. Her American colleagues more private about their family live. Paid holidays are much less than at home, and when they take time off it is no more than a week even though they may have more vacation days. Even during this time they stay in close contact: if there is a demand they will break off

their vacation and will return to work. This loyalty is unknown in the Netherlands where time off is sacred. The US workplace is leaning more towards task oriented based work rather than all round positions. In the Netherlands, Joyce was used to having a complete overview of the projects she was involved in: the various **stages of development and the "end product"**. In the Netherlands it is encouraged to have firm discussions and decisions are made on consensus, which is not the practise so much here.

In spite of the differences Joyce feels that she has gained a valuable insight into the US workplace and the psyche of her American colleagues. **"They are all very loyal to the company and work long hours"**. She has learned to accept the differences in culture and just go with the flow. Her resume has been kept up to date and now includes valuable international work experience. She has made friends with other non-US nationals as her workplace employs people from all over the world: Egypt, Nepal, Germany and, of course, the Netherlands and has learned an awful lot about the geotechnical industry and jokes that she now knows huge amounts about mud, dirt and sand!

So what is next for this dynamic woman? Well, already she has started studying for another degree – in law. She plans to continue to work and study when the family returns to the Netherlands, but meanwhile is enjoying life here. **"I would love to just take this plot – house, woods, lake-side view – and move it all back to the Netherlands."** Now wouldn't that be perfect!

Volunteering for the Cure

When Jane Salter isn't being secretary of her local golf league or working hard on the SOPC committee, you can find her giving her time and skills for free at **"Susan G Komen for the Cure"** an international breast cancer organization.

Jane, from the UK, is a very experienced business administrator and is used to working full time in the high pressure property management environment. She married Jeff, a naval officer, in 2005 and less than a year later, moved to Rome, Italy for a 6 month posting, where she kept busy with the spouses' program and travelling extensively. Jane and Jeff then spent the next 2 years in Belgium before moving out to Virginia and HQ SACT. On arrival here, Jane was not sure what to do. She had been told, that because of the fragile US economy, the chances of her getting a job were very slim. So she took matters into her own hands and decided to apply for a voluntary position. The search for something suitable started with logging on to www.volunteerhr.org.

This is a fantastic website that allows you to search for voluntary positions in your area based on various criteria: skills you have, time available, location and personal preference. It was here that Jane found **"Susan G Komen for the Cure"**. While researching this organization, Jane realised how breast cancer had touched the lives of her friends and family and that there was so much that

could be done to educate and prevent this disease and well as work towards a cure. And so she made up her mind to volunteer.

Jane now works every Tuesday, 10am—4pm in the Susan Komen Virginia Beach Offices. Although she mostly uses her vast administration experience, her work is not limited to the office. She has found herself doing many varied tasks from sending out T-shirts, displaying jewellery for auction and working with the **"Race for the Cure"** team this October, which she tells me was a particularly **"manic"** time. The people she works with have been an inspiration. **"Most of them are cancer survivors who are very open about their experiences and perhaps because of this are very strong people. The type of people you could call on if you had a real problem"**.

The only draw back Jane finds, is the fact that she rarely gets to see a project through from beginning to end. Because she only works 1 day a week this is virtually impossible and the perfectionist in Jane find this emotionally tiring.

Jane and I talked at length about the amazing work that this organization does and how breast cancer has effected so many people. She would like to encourage everyone to log onto www.komentidewater.org/get-involved and see if perhaps you could be part of the cure too.



GET INVOLVED!

This month, we are lucky to have a special contributor to our Newsletter. Melissa McQuarrie is Director of Community Relations and Media and Communications Development with Virginia Beach City Public Schools. Melissa is passionate about involving the community in the lives of local children, and here is her account of how you can help.



Virginia Beach City Public Schools

Volunteers, Partners, Mentors, and Parents....How you can get involved!

Volunteers make a difference in the lives of those they serve. In Virginia Beach City Public Schools, volunteers impact the lives of students, teachers and staff through the sharing of their time, energy and talents. These dedicated individuals support education and lend a helping hand to better the lives and learning of everyone in VBCPS.

In the classroom, volunteers can serve in a variety of ways. Speaking to students about their own careers gives volunteers the opportunity to share experiences and provide professional insight to students and teachers alike. **Volunteers can also enhance any teacher's curriculum** by making a classroom presentation about their areas of expertise. Tasks such as providing classroom materials or duplicating papers are all jobs that volunteers can do to assist teachers and free them for the busy task of instruction. Volunteers can also serve as tutors and mentors to students.

These and many other roles define the diverse talents of the individuals who so willingly give of their time to the students and educators in VBCPS.

Whether they are available to serve a few times a year, spend an hour a week or come as often as every day, volunteers are a vital part of the educational system. In fact, the school division enjoyed the contributions of nearly twenty thousand volunteers last year who contributed more than four hundred thousand hours of service to schools. That service is valued at more than eight million dollars, based on the **Independent Sector Organization's 2008 hourly dollar value** of volunteer service of \$20.25.

There are many ways to get involved and contribute as a volunteer. If you have a professional skill, talent, or interest, please share your ability with **students as a guest speaker**. If you'd like to mentor a student, there are many opportunities to do so. If your club, organization, church, or business would like to partner with a school, it is also easy to arrange. Furthermore, if you have a child in Virginia Beach City **Public Schools, your involvement in your child's education** is priceless in terms of strengthening academic achievement and fostering school connectedness. Visit www.vbschools.com/ParentConnection, to learn more **about the division's parent involvement activities and classes**, and to view a calendar of events.

Beach Bags....pack a Beach Bag for a Beach Child!

Did you know that there are children in Virginia Beach **who do not have enough to eat? It's hard to believe, but it's true. This is especially the case during week-ends and school vacations** when children cannot take advantage of available school breakfasts and lunches. In addition, tough economic times have created a situation where some families must choose between keeping their home and buying food for their family. Being deprived of food on a regular basis is called "food insecurity." The U.S. Department of Agriculture

defines food insecurity as *households that are uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food to meet basic needs of all their members because of insufficient money or other resources.*” When the guardian of a child has to choose between food and other necessities, e.g., **having electricity shut off because they don’t have enough money**, it is an indicator of food insecurity. It is impossible to predict the impact that being **deprived of food has on a child’s development**, but parents and teachers agree that even short-term hunger has an immediate impact on student alertness, behavior and academic achievement.

Fortunately, Virginia Beach City Public Schools Parent Connection parent involvement initiative, Department of School Social Work Services, and the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia are partnering to address this critical need through the Beach Bags program. Beach Bags provides needy students with necessary food items over the weekend. Currently the program serves approximately two hundred students from five elementary schools including the Tri-Campus, Birdneck, and Cooke. Food is packed by volunteers and distributed to participating schools. The Beach Bags are actually packed in brown paper (or plastic) bags and placed in student backpacks at the end of the day (so they are not embarrassed or stigmatized for having been selected).

Current funding, however, only allows for distributions to take place every other weekend. We would like very much to expand the program by providing food to identified students every week, adding to the number of students served, and expanding to additional schools.



Schools and the community can help in the following ways. Of course, the Foodbank will take tax deductible donations at

www.foodbankonline.org. Schools, PTA’s, parents, and community members can also “pack a Beach Bag” by assembling the ten items in the attached list in a paper or plastic (unsealed) bag. Beach Bags can be delivered to School Administration, to the Foodbank, or to par-

ticipating schools. Parent Connection will, in conjunction with the Foodbank, make arrangements for pickup and distribution.

Each Beach Bag Contains:

- 2 - individual cereal boxes
 - Small, individual sized boxes or bowls
- 2 – 8 oz shelf stable milk
 - Individual cartons (juice box sized)
- 2 – shelf-stable main course items
 - Ravioli, spaghetti & meatballs, beef stew, chicken & dumplings, tuna/chunk chicken, tuna helper, macaroni & cheese, chunky soups, peanut butter & crackers
- 2 – 4 oz or larger fruit cups and/or 100% juice boxes
- 2 – snack items



As you can see, there are many ways to help the students of Virginia Beach City Public Schools. What’s more, we would appreciate your support and service. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, mentor, partner, or if you would like to participate in the Beach Bags program, please contact Melissa McQuarrie, director of community relations, at 263-1936 or by email at melissa.mcquarrie@vbschools.com.

FOOD BANK

A Food Bank will be held on 2nd December during the Dutch Luncheon at the Princess Anne Country Club.

We will collect all kinds of non-perishable items (cans, rice, pasta, boxed foods, etc.).

As we did last year, all items collected will be delivered to Albano Cleaners on Shore Drive, Virginia Beach where they will be distributed to underprivileged families in our area.

**PLEASE GIVE GENEROUSLY
TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE SURE NO ONE GOES
HUNGRY THIS CHRISTMAS**

Thanksgiving USA

Thanksgiving holiday began as a thanksgiving feast in the early days of the American colonies almost 400 years ago.

In 1620, a boat filled with more than one hundred people sailed across the Atlantic Ocean to settle in the New World. This religious group had begun to question the beliefs of the Church of England and they wanted to separate from it. The Pilgrims settled in what is now the state of Massachusetts. Their first winter in the New World was difficult. They had arrived too late to grow many crops, and without fresh food, half the colony died from disease. The following spring the Iroquois Indians taught them how to grow corn (maize), a new food for the colonists. They showed them other crops to grow in the unfamiliar soil and how to hunt and fish.

In the autumn of 1621, bountiful crops of corn, barley, beans and pumpkins were harvested. The colonists had much to be thankful for, so a feast was planned. They invited the local Indian chief and 90 Indians. The Indians brought deer to roast with the turkeys and other wild game offered by the colonists. The colonists had learned how to cook cranberries and corn and squash dishes from the Indians. To this first Thanksgiving, the Indians even brought popcorn.

In following years, many original colonists celebrated the autumn harvest with a feast of thanks. After the United States became an independent country, Congress recommended one yearly day of thanksgiving for the whole nation to celebrate. George Washington suggested the date November 26 as Thanksgiving Day. Then in 1863, at the end the civil war, Abraham Lincoln asked all Americans to set aside the last Thursday in November as a day of thanksgiving.

In 1939 President Roosevelt set it one week earlier in order to help business by lengthening the shopping period before Christmas. Congress ruled that after 1941 the 4th Thursday in November would be a federal holiday proclaimed by the President each year.



Thanksgiving symbols

Thanksgiving is a time for tradition and sharing. Even if they live far away, family members gather for a reunion. All give thanks together for the good things that they have. In this spirit of sharing, civic groups and charitable organizations offer a traditional meal to those in need, particularly the homeless. On most tables throughout the United States, foods eaten at the first thanksgiving have become traditional.

Turkey, corn (or maize), pumpkins and cranberry sauce are symbols which represent the first Thanksgiving. Now all of these symbols are drawn on holiday decorations and greeting cards. The use of corn meant the survival of the colonies. "Indian corn" as a table or door decoration represents the harvest and the fall season.

Sweet-sour cranberry sauce, or jelly, was on the first Thanksgiving table and is still served today. The cranberry is a small, sour berry. It grows in bogs or muddy areas, in Massachusetts and other New England states. The Indians used the fruit to treat infections and the juice to dye their rugs and blankets. They taught the colonists how to cook the berries with sweetener and water to make a sauce. The Indians called it "ibimi" which means "bitter berry." When the colonists saw it, they named it "crane-berry" because the flowers of the berry bent the stalk over and it resembled a crane. The berries are still grown in New England. Very few people know, however, that before the berries are put in bags to be sent to the rest of the country, each individual berry must bounce at least four inches high to make sure they are not too ripe!

In 1988, a different kind of Thanksgiving ceremony took place at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. More than 4,000 people gathered on Thanksgiving night. Among them, Native Americans representing tribes from all over the country and descendants of people had migrated to the New World. The ceremony was a public acknowledgment of the Indians' role in the first Thanksgiving 350 years ago. Until recently most schoolchildren believed that the Pilgrims cooked the entire Thanksgiving feast, and offered it to the Indians. In fact, the feast was planned to thank the Indians for teaching them how to cook those foods. Without the Indians, the first settlers would not have survived.

NOTICE BOARD

WANTED
ARTISTS
&
CRAFTSPEOPLE

SOPC Craft Bazaar, on 17th November 2009
(see advert on page 11)

This is an exciting opportunity to reach members and friends of the SOPC to exhibit and/or sell .

There is no "Table Fee", but exhibitors are asked to donate a door prize and 10% of their gross takings on the day to the SOPC sponsored charities.

Not sure you can fill a whole table on your own? Don't worry. We will happily pair smaller exhibitors up to share display/vending space.

Contact Alison Sykes-Fryer **as soon as possible** to book your space at Craft_bazaar@sopc.us

SOPC LUNCHEON
HOSTED BY ITALY

WEDNESDAY 4TH NOVEMBER
FROM 10.30AM

AT THE PRINCESS ANNE COUNTRY CLUB
3800 PACIFIC AVENUE
VIRGINIA BEACH
VA 23451

McDonald's Holiday Lights

Virginia Beach Boardwalk

(between 2nd & 34th Street)

Lighting up on 20th November

Norfolk NATO Festival's

FAMILY DAY at the VIRGINIA ZOO

3500 Granby Street, Norfolk, VA 23504

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 22, 1PM – 4PM

Entrance is FREE for ACT staff and their immediate family when you wear your

"Free Entrance Wristband"

Wristbands will be available in the

HQ SACT Lobby from 12 – 1 pm on:

Tuesday Nov 3rd

Tuesday Nov 10th and

Thursday Nov 19th

Or e-mail: invites@azaleafestival.org

by Tuesday Nov 17th

Be sure to include the number of family members attending, how many cars you will be bringing, and your country of origin.

LATVIAN FLAG
RAISING

18th NOVEMBER
10 am HQ SACT



Spouses are invited to attend this event and the reception to be held afterwards at the

HQ SCAT Officers' Mess



Back after the huge success of this event in March.

THE BACKSTAGE TOUR OF VIRGINIA OPERA HOUSE

The Harrison Opera House, Norfolk
9th November, 2009 at 10 am

Come together for a Backstage Tour of the Virginia Opera at the Historic Edythe C. and Stanley L. Harrison Opera House in Norfolk, Virginia. During the tour learn about the technical aspects of mounting a professional theatrical production. The tour includes such details as the stage, set, fly system, lighting, wig shop and costumes. As we explore the elements of live opera, we will also delve into the history of this historic opera house and find out if “the pickle” is a tradition or myth.

We shall be meeting in the Opera’s parking lot at 9.45am prompt.

This event is **FREE**, although numbers are limited.

Harrison Opera House, 160 E. Virginia Beach Blvd., Norfolk, VA 23510

This is an extremely popular event, so don’t delay, make your reservation today!
For information & reservations contact the SOPC Social Team:
at social@sopc.us



SOPC

CRAFT BAZAAR

ON

TUESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER

FROM

11.30AM – 2.30PM

IN

LUBO’S WINE TASTING ROOM

1658 PLEASURE HOUSE ROAD, VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23455



Have fun shopping for unique hand crafted gifts in the friendly and stylish surrounding of Lubo’s wine bar, where you can enjoy morning coffee or lunch while choosing presents to send “back home” in time for Christmas.

NO ENTRANCE FEE.

Tickets will be on sale for great door prizes with the proceeds going to SOPC Charities.

For more information contact Alison Sykes-Fryer at craft_bazaar@sopc.us

Club of the Month

MUMS & TODDLERS

The Moms and Toddlers' club is a very friendly group of mums (although we would welcome any willing dad!) with children from birth to pre-school age. We come from various countries, Germany, France, Slovakia and Canada, just to name a few and we welcome people from outside the SOPC.



Our club meets every two weeks on a Wednesday from 10am until 12pm. Our members take turns to host the meetings and so the location of the venue varies. When we meet, needless to say that it can be a little messy and rather chaotic but one thing is certain: we always have fun! While the grown-ups enjoy, cake, coffee and grown-up conversation, the little ones enjoy their drinks and biscuits as well as the joys of learning to share (!) and all kinds of self-expression! Once a month (generally the 3rd Tuesday), we go out for a meal in the evening (without the children to entertain us) and enjoy a well deserved rest and try out different restaurants around town.



We feel that our club is very important because it helps parents with young children to beat the feelings of isolation that a move abroad, far from family, can bring when you have little ones. Our club is also a great way of learning or improving one's English as it is the only language that we all have in common. It is also a great club if you want to learn any other language as we all speak to our children in our mother tongue and so we are a very multi-lingual club too!

So if you have young children and you would like to join our friendly group, don't hesitate to contact us. See you around for some cake and coffee soon!

Contact: mumsandtods@sopc.us
Clarisse Hamilton (clarissehamilton@gmail.com) and
Martina Schilling (martinarehm@hotmail.com).

This month, we are very lucky to have a special travel report from one of our members: Olga Jansen.



Where North and South meet: Ecuador.

Before we went

This year, we celebrated our 25th Wedding Anniversary. Therefore we were looking for a very special vacation destination for our family of four (me, my husband, our son (20) and daughter (18)). We read something about Ecuador in AAA's Going Places, googled a lot on the internet and found the perfect destination: [Hakuna Matata](#), close to the town of Tena, in the province Napo, Ecuador. It's a small resort, maximum occupation is 32 visitors, owned by a Belgium couple, Rudy and Marcellina. They came up with a complete program for our trip, including a car and guide, Paul Salazar, for the first 5 days. The second part of the trip, 6 days, we were going to spend at their resort Hakuna Matata.



Now you can read Olga's day by day journal of this amazing trip.



July 29, 2009

We leave Norfolk at 11 am, to arrive on time at Washington DC. The transfer at the airport from Bogota (Columbia) is not successful: we miss the connection to the capital of Ecuador, Quito. Actually it is not surprising, as we only had 35 minute transfer time. But Avianca (the oldest Columbian airline) did a great job: a car was ready to bring us to a nice hotel, we got a voucher for a late dinner, and the next morning a car took us to the airport in time to catch the 8.45 am flight to Quito.



July 30

Our guide Paul picks us up at the airport, and drives us right away to the historical town center of Quito (at an altitude of 8,400 ft! We have to get used to that). It dates back to 1534, and you can see clearly that there was a big catholic influence. And a lot of gold leaf, used to brighten up the churches (there is still gold to find in Ecuador). For sure at La Compania de Jesus Church they used a lot of gold leaf: 50 pounds!

We also find the statue of Fray Jodoco Ricke, a Belgium Franciscan monk (the first Franciscan monk in Quito), who arrived around 1534 and brought bread and – not surprisingly – beer to the area.



To read the full report of Olga and her family's amazing adventures and see some great photographs, please go to : www.sopc.us/newsletters/Ecuador_Travel_Report.pdf. This a fantastic journal and probably the best and most honest travel report you will ever read.

SCARY HAIR!

A SURVEY OF SOME OF THE BEST HAIRDRESSERS IN THE HAMPTON ROADS AREA

Name of salon: **WINK** Reviewed by Sue Crump

Where is it? 1544 Laskin Road, Hilltop East Suite 222, Virginia Beach, VA 23451
(opposite the Otani Japanese Restaurant) , 757-425-WINK,
www.winksalon.com

Name of the stylist who treated you: Lynne Rivera

On a scale of 1 -5, (1 being terrible, 5 being excellent):

Quality of cut: **4/5** - Sometimes it isn't quite as short as I'd like!

Quality of color: **5** and Lynne gives great advice

Cleanliness of salon: **5**

Price: I pay \$40 for a cut/blow dry, **\$85 with 'retouch' colour.**
A bit more for highlights. (Plus a tip of course!)

Would you go again? **Yes, I've been going there for last 18 months.** Very friendly salon, usually very easy to get appointments during the week - sometimes same day.



"I can just make it out.
She's saying, 'call my hairdresser!'"

Name of salon - **Towne Center Salon and Spa** Reviewed by Carol Buck

Where is it? - 532 Independence Blvd. Virginia Beach 23462

Name of the stylist who treated you - Jennifer Nobles has been cutting my hair for about 6 years

On a scale of 1 -5, (1 being terrible, 5 being excellent): rate the next 3 services.

Quality of cut - I give Jennifer a **5**. I am always happy with what she does with my hair. I had my hair cut yesterday and am totally pleased with my cut.

Quality of color-I have only had high lights done by Jennifer but she did a good job. Again I give her a **5** (clearly I am **sold on Jennifer**) but I haven't had them done in about two years. That has nothing to do with Jennifer and everything to do with me deciding I didn't want the upkeep anymore.

Cleanliness of salon - I'll give the salon a **4**. This is not a fancy salon but it is clean.

Price- The price gets a five. I have my hair washed, cut, and styled for \$20.00 (plus a nice tip!). The prices for highlights or colour are very reasonable (between \$50.00 and \$75.00).

Would you go again? Yes! I go all the time!

Needless to say, I enjoy having Jennifer do my hair. I find her friendly and easy to talk to and she listens. If I have an idea for something new she always offers her opinion and together we find something that works. She makes sure I am happy with my hair before I leave the salon. To make an appointment, it is better to call her cell phone (650-2762). I highly recommend her.

Name of salon: **AVANTI** Reviewed by Jackie Solomon

Where is it? 4216 Virginia Beach Blvd, Virginia Beach. (In the same section as Willis Furniture)

Name of the stylist who treated you: Kristen Vadney

On a scale of 1 -5, (1 being terrible, 5 being excellent):

Quality of cut: **5** - **And she is not "Scissor Happy" and only takes off what I want.**

Quality of color: **5**

Cleanliness of salon: **5**

Price: For foil highlights with 2 different colors, it costs about \$120 and that includes the cut and blow dry. I always tip well—**it's worth it**

Would you go again? **Yes, I've been going there for many years now and have recommended many friends to this salon.**

This is quite an up market salon with a lovely décor and atmosphere. Lots of European ladies go here and they are used to dealing with different cultures. They always offer me tea or coffee and you can even get your nails done at the same time if you want.

Name of salon: **SHEAR BLISS** Reviewed by Elana Cain

Where is it? 2817 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach. On the intersection of Great Neck and Shore Drive, next to Subway!

Name of the stylist who treated you: Bliss—the owner

On a scale of 1 -5, (1 = terrible, 5 = excellent):

Quality of cut: **4** Always looks good.

Quality of color: **4** **always happy and she doesn't do unnecessary touch ups**

Cleanliness of salon: **5**

Price: I pay \$140 for foil highlights with as many colors as I want. This includes cut and blow dry. Most of the time, though, she just recommends a touch up which is \$80 (also including cut and blow dry). I add a tip to this.

Would you go again? **Yes, and I'm not going to change!**

This is not a posh salon but it's clean, tidy, friendly and a little quirky! They always offer me something to drink and always phone a day or so before to remind me of my appointment. There are a couple of stylists working here and they all have great reputations.



"I tell you Shaz, I drank so much last night, my hands are still shaking!"



NORFOLK NATO FESTIVAL FRESH CHANGES FOR 2010

After more than 50 years as Norfolk's International Azalea Festival, the Norfolk NATO Festival has been renamed in recognition of its primary mission: to

honor and recognize all 28 NATO member nations and their staff and families living here in Hampton Roads **while working at Norfolk's NATO Headquarters, Allied Command Transformation.**

The traditional Festival Queen will be replaced by a "Festival Ambassador" who may be either a male or female military officer. This is building on the success and popularity of the 2 previous "Queens" who, because of their military and professional experience, proved to be excellent role models. Additionally, the Court will be replaced by a group of Youth Ambassadors: Hampton Roads High School students, one from each NATO member nation. This is a community service program and each Youth Ambassador will be recognized for his or her service to a number of existing programs in the city of Norfolk.

The Opening Ceremony has been moved to Town Point Park and

will be held on Wednesday April 28th, 2010, although the duration of the Festival has been shortened and it shall close on Saturday May 1st with the conclusion of the 2 main public events: the Annual Parade of Nations which runs through downtown Norfolk and will be followed immediately by NATOFest which will be held in Town Point Park.

Although there will no longer be a Coronation, Fashion Show or Ball, the traditional NATO Golf Classic will still be played at **Sewell's Point Golf Course on Thursday April 22nd**: the week before the festival.

The Education programs continue to be a key part of the Festival's focus and have not changed significantly. The 2010 Model NATO Challenge has been scheduled for Tuesday March 23rd, 2010 at Old Dominion University.

The International Azalea Festival was always a wonderful way of appreciating the relationship we have with the local community and as the Norfolk NATO Festival this spirit will surely continue. April 2010 may seem a long way off, but before you know it, winter will be over, the azaleas will be blossoming and the Festival will be in full swing!

If you require any further information, please contact your National Liaison Representative.

Write On!

We are looking for newsletter correspondents!

Would you enjoy writing a monthly column on any of the following subjects? Your English doesn't need to be perfect—we can sort that out here. But we need your enthusiasm, initiative and most importantly, your point of view!

Theatre, Film, the Arts—Concerts & Live Music—Restaurants and Nightlife—Local events, festivals and fairs—Travel & Sight Seeing—Books

We also love to receive "one off" articles on just about any subject. Remember, if you find something interesting, so will other people.

So get writing, snap a photograph or two and send it to newsletter@sopc.us. Just make sure it gets to us by the 20th of the Month.

Comments? Suggestions? Please e-mail us at the above address or write to: SOPC,
3752 Surry Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23455.

Thank you for your support
Elana & Maura
Your Newsletter Editors

