

Chairperson's Letter

Welcome to the newcomers.



Page 2

The SOPC

What you need to know about the SOPC



Pages 4 & 5

The May Luncheon was hosted by Spain

Last May the Spanish ladies hosted a cheerful and colorful SOPC lunch. It was the last lunch of the season and we all said goodbye to many friends that was time for them to go back to their home countries.



We enjoyed delicious food and some fantastic Spanish dance "Sevillanas" by some ladies dressed with the typical flamenco dress.

We managed to raise quite a big amount of money for our charities, well done! Let's keep it up this year!



Dates:

- 5th Sept:** Labor Day
- 6th Sept:** Reservation deadline for the SOPC Luncheon
- 14th Sept:** SOPC Welcome Luncheon and Sign Up Coffee

Inside this issue:

- Luncheon Schedule
- Learn about the SOPC
- Legally Speaking— Newcomer Issues
- The SOPC Clubs— All the different clubs you can sign up
- News Round-Up - What's going on in your community
- Symphonicity—Thirty First Season
- Oktoberfest 2011
- Recipes from Spanish Luncheon
- SOPC for Newcomers—by Silvia Martinoni

Dear members and newcomers!

First of all a big welcome to all newcomers! I know it can be breathtaking and exhausting getting established in a new place and also for most a new country, but trust me; suddenly normal life starts hitting in. Hurricane “Irene” gave you quite a welcome, but the good thing is hopefully there will not be another one for your time here!



One of SOPC’s main goals is to provide information and friendship for our members/ potential members to make life easier and your stay here memorable for more reasons than the beach. Hopefully you have received a hardcopy of our “Helpful Hints in Hampton Roads” already, but if not please contact one of us or go to our Website www.sopc.us where you will find it. It actually gives you great insight to most questions you might have. On the Website you will also find information about all the activities we organize; e.g. the different Social Clubs that you can join where you meet new friends and enjoy all from sports, languages, cooking, reading or games. I urge you to try it out so you get a feeling for the possibilities early on and then decide what works for you.

One of our main attractions is our monthly lunch hosted in turn by the different member countries. Check out all the fun pictures on our Website from previous lunches! The last lunch we had in May was hosted by Spain. Many thanks to all the Spanish ladies for the wonderful decorations, food and last but not least the performance; you were magnificent! Our first on September the 14th is a Welcome lunch organized by the SOPC where we will present ourselves and all the different Clubs. Please come and join us there! Because we have to change venue by January 2012 due to renovations at Princess Anne Country Club; we will try out Virginia Beach Resort Hotel for this event. The following lunches in 2011 will be at PACC. There are other options too that we will evaluate, before the SOPC Board makes a decision in October on which venue to use.

Our other main goal is to raise money for our charities. This is mainly done through selling raffles at the lunches. You can read about the organizations we support on the Website.

Usually I end my newsletter with input on characteristics of different nationalities. Personally I find learning about all the different cultures one of the most rewarding experiences from my stays within the NATO community. This time I haven’t asked anyone and I take the opportunity to give my own impressions of our hosts in this great country. After having spent close to 10 years of my life here at different stages in my life, my experience is that Americans are very friendly, helpful, polite and last but not least they have a great sense of humor; this is what I love about them! I hope you will have the same experiences as me and that we try to understand instead of judge when we see and hear things that seem strange to our own culture!

Let’s enjoy being together and learning from each other; this seems more important than ever! Come see us at the Welcome lunch on Wednesday Sept 14th!

Best regards

Anne



SOPC LUNCHEON &
SIGN UP COFFEE

September 14TH



HOSTED BY

SOPC

Arrival at 10:00am

Virginia Beach Resort Hotel,
2800 Shore Drive,
Virginia Beach 23451

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS AT:
reservations@sopc.us

RESERVATIONS must be received by
Tuesday 6th September 2011

Send your check for \$20, payable to SOPC to: SOPC,
2321 Edmenton Drive, Virginia Beach, VA, 23456

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

Date	Host Country	Reservations and Payment to be received by
14th September 2011	SOPC	6th September 2011
12th October 2011	Belgium	4th October 2011
9th November 2011	Slovenia	1st November 2011
14th December 2011	Greece	6th December 2011

SOPC LUNCHEON SCHEDULE

ALL ABOUT THE SOPC

The **SACT Officers' Partners' Club** (SOPC) is an international organization which, as well as supporting charitable ventures, provides a valuable self-help and networking environment for the spouses/partners of NATO Officers or civilian equivalent working in the Hampton Roads area.



Our aim is to extend friendship to each other through social and educational events and to use this unique multi cultural relationship to aid many worthwhile causes and charities both in the USA and abroad.

We hold an annual Welcome Coffee/Lunch every September to greet all the new arrivals and introduce them to the many and varied activities available. These include: Monthly luncheons are held between October and May, each lunch being hosted by different member nation, who choose a menu, decorate tables and provide raffle prizes. Our current venue is The Princess Anne Country Club, a beautiful facility located near the ocean-front. The luncheons are a great way to make new friends whilst enjoying delicious food and learning about other cultures. Several designated charities are supported and four children are sponsored through the money raised by the sale of raffle tickets.

The cost of each lunch is currently \$20 per person.

Various informal clubs and groups are available, such as: Book Club, Bowling, Bridge, Cooking, Mahjong, Teens, Tennis, Volunteer Gardening and Scrapbooking. Plus English, French, German and Spanish conversation groups.

We also organize a variety of social events, for example: Craft Fairs, Wine Tasting, Seasonal Celebrations, and Theatre Visits.



Annual membership is currently \$25 per year, information on how to join is available on the [Newcomers page](#). If you have questions please e-mail the [Webmaster](#) or you can ask your sponsor or National Representative.

The SOPC committee and the SOPC members have a mutual goal:

Helping our sponsored children, supporting them to have a better life as well as donating money to charity organizations with their volunteers putting all their efforts and time in helping families & children!

For these purposes the Benefits Committee sells raffle tickets during the monthly SOPC luncheons and the money obtained goes directly to the selected charities voted by the SOPC Board of Representatives and to the SOPC sponsored children. The awards are made at different times of the year and the amount donated depends on how much the SOPC achieves through the fund-raising at the luncheons during the year.

Please, see our website www.sopc.us for further details.

Furthermore the SOPC tries to support charities through social events and other activities such as collecting food for the Food Bank twice a year.

There are four children sponsored by SOPC from Philippines, Bolivia, India and Sri Lanka. We also donate money to several charities. We support two organizations on a permanent basis



Prakash



Pamela



Rea-me



Kavinda

and a further three charities are nominated every two years . These organizations are:

- Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society
- The Children's Hospital of the King's Daughters
- St. Mary's Home for the Disabled Children
- Foodbank of Southern Virginia
- World Childhood Foundation

LEGALLY SPEAKING

Welcome to our new NATO families!

We hope everyone has enjoyed the hot Virginia summer, and that some of you have had an opportunity to see more of the United States.

LEGAL AND PERSONAL TRANSITION ASSISTANCE. We have been providing legal and personal transition assistance to Headquarters personnel and their dependents for many years. Our assistance includes providing information and assistance on a variety of topics, including healthcare, TRICARE—questions/eligibility information; immigration, visa and customs issues; US employment requirements/restrictions; social security numbers; Virginia Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) information to include vehicle registrations, driver’s licenses, insurance issues and personal property tax exemptions; general consumer and contractual issues; lease reviews and landlord tenant issues; preparation of powers of attorney, etc. We are both Virginia Notary Publics, and as such are able to notarize/witness signatures, administer oaths and affidavits, and certify true copies of most documents. Assistance is offered on a walk-in basis from 0900 to 1130 daily, other times by appointment.

RELOCATION GUIDE FOR NATO PERSONNEL (latest edition is 01 August 2011)—not just for newcomers—is available in hard copy from Legal Affairs and also available electronically on ACT’s home page (www.act.nato.int) (place your cursor over “Organization” then “HQ SACT” and click on “Newcomers & Serving Staff”, “Legal Assistance”). This resource contains detailed information regarding many topics!

LEGAL’S ORIENTATION SESSION—Held every Tuesday through September 27th from 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm. Plan to attend this session—not just for staff members! We provide in-depth “how-to” information to survive US and Virginia bureaucracies!

CHIEF OF STAFF MEET AND GREET. Each fall, staff members and their spouses are personally welcomed to the Headquarters by Vice Admiral Cooling, HQ SACT Chief of Staff. The date will be announced by early September. This event will feature a welcome from VADM Bob Cooling, TRICARE Healthcare briefing (NOT just for newcomers), and also disastrous/hurricane weather and security awareness briefings.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS. If you have just arrived, or if you are assisting a new family, remember it will likely take six months to adjust to the different culture, customs, and obligations in Virginia. We often meet with both personnel and family members who are struggling to adapt to these changes—give yourself time to adapt to the US and Virginian way of life.

TOP 5 NEWCOMER MISTAKES!

5. Visiting DMV without the required/proper documents;
4. Not utilizing resources offered by HQ;
3. Healthcare Enrolment confusion/ issues;
2. Housing issues—oral promises not fulfilled, didn’t have Legal review the contract, etc.; and
1. Vehicles—no insurance, paid too much, no vehicle history report, etc.!

These mistakes can be avoided! Consult your sponsor, ask your colleague, attend Legal Affairs’ orientation session, attend healthcare briefing at Chief of Staff Meet and Greet.

Your suggestions and topics of interest for future columns and for the resources we publish are always welcome so please do not hesitate to contact us! Our services are offered to personnel and their dependents alike so please 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).



SOPC
Club Sign Up
September 14th
10:00am—14:00pm

At
Virginia Beach Resort Hotel,
2800 Shore Drive, Virginia Beach 23451

Not going to be able to come?

Missed the reservation deadline?

Don't Worry! E-mail any of the clubs below and the organizer will be happy to give you all the details.



BOOK CLUB
4th Thurs. of month
10am – 12.00pm
bookclub@sopc.us



BOWLING CLUB
Tuesdays
9.30am – 11.00am
bowling@sopc.us



BRIDGE CLUB
Wednesdays
9.30am – 1.30pm
bridge@sopc.us

ENGLISH CONVERSATION



Thursdays
10am – 12.00pm
englishconversation@sopc.us

FRENCH CONVERSATION



2 Fridays a month
10am – 12.00pm
frenchconversation@sopc.us



GARDENING
Wednesday 1st & 3rd
9am – 12.00pm
gardening@sopc.us



BON APPETIT
1 Wednesday
11.30am—1.30pm
cookingclub@sopc.us



MAHJONG
Mondays
9.30am – 12.00
mahjong@sopc.us

GERMAN CONVERSATION



Every 2nd Thursday
10am – 12.00pm
germanconversation@sopc.us

SPANISH CONVERSATION



Every 2nd Monday
11am – 12.30pm
spanishconversation@sopc.us



TEEN EVENTS
See newsletter for dates
sopcteens@gmail.com



TENNIS CLUB
Tuesdays
9:30am – 11am.
tennis@sopc.us



SCRAPBOOKIN
Thursdays
10am – 12.30pm
scrapbooking@sopc.us

HORSE RIDING



First & Third Friday
10:00-11:00
horseriding@sopc.us

TURKISH MARBLING



Tuesdays
12.30-14:00
turkishmarbling@sopc.us



GOLF
Mondays
Sewells Point
rcperks@cox.net

CAN'T SEE THE CLUB YOU WANT?

To find the right club or start one yourself, e-mail the SOPC social coordinator at social@sopc.us

SOPC NEWS ROUND-UP

SOPC LUNCHEON
HOSTED BY SOPC
WEDNESDAY 14th
September 2011



FROM 10.00AM
AT THE VIRGINIA BEACH RESORT
2800 SHORE DRIVE, VIRGINIA BEACH

SYMPHONICITY
THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF VIRGINIA BEACH

Symphonicity announces its thirty-first season, the fifth season at its home, the **Sandler Center for the Performing Arts** in Virginia Beach.

Season tickets may be purchased by calling 757-671-8611. **Single tickets** go on sale at the Sandler Center (www.sandlercenter.org) **September 1, 2011**.

More information is at www.symphonicity.org



The HQ SACT Officers' Mess will hold the annual Oktoberfest on **23 September**,

1900-2400 hrs

at **The Westin, Town Center, Virginia**

This event is meant for the pleasure of members of the HQ SACT Officers' Mess and their guests only. Mess members are permitted one guest couple at reduced price. Additional guests may be invited at full price (\$74 per person). As alcohol is served in this manner no one under the age of 21 is permitted to attend.

There is a casual dress code (as per mess regulations) that will be strictly enforced. Traditional Bavarian dress and frivolousness are encouraged.

Oktoberfest 2011

The all **Inclusive price of \$37** per person includes: Souvenir Mug, all night **FREE** Beer or Soda, a seat at a Reserved 10 Person Table, a Wonderful Oktoberfest Inspired Meal, Music all Evening from a 25 piece German Military Band, Games and Singing, and Entry in the Raffle Draw.

There is a maximum sign up of 300 for this event. First come, first served. There are no tickets. You must sign up to attend in the book at the Mess Office where there is more information available. **Sign up for the event closes at 1200 hrs on 15 September 2011. Questions can be addressed to Wayne Buck, 747.4321.**



SOPC for Newcomers

It seems just few days ago when Spain hosted the lunch before the summer break, and we are already approaching September! Wow, time goes by very quickly!

And of course I am very excited to meet new ladies as well as all friends I met a year ago when I arrived in Virginia.

I remember very well my first SOPC luncheon; I was so impressed by the organization and the quantity of clubs we have!

I also remember that I was confused, but at the same time very eager to sign up my name in almost all courses that were available!

I was right! I started to meet friends from a lot of countries, and among them I found ladies that for sure will be my friends forever, even when in two years I will be forced to return to my country!

Many ladies (me first!) have committed themselves to learn a new language, English, but from my direct experience I can assure everyone that women, even from different nations and traditions, always understand each other; maybe because of our sensitivity, and it doesn't matter if sometimes we are not perfect English speakers. Don't be shy, nobody will judge you, and in a few months everything will be a lot easier!

One of the most interesting ways to improve English and practice it is just enjoying the SOPC as much as possible. Our club is supported by many ladies who really want to stay together, help and support associations with charitable purposes.

Be always updated with our newly renovated Web site, and the newcomers who want to be an active part of the club would be more than welcome!

I can guarantee that the experiences I had so far in the SOPC were extremely positive; luckily I have two more years to spend, and I am happy and ready to share many more new beautiful experiences with you ladies!

That is what keeps me in the SOPC.

See you very soon!

Love,

IIIIII Silvia Martinoni



Here is the recipe for the delicious dish we enjoyed in the Spanish lunch in May

Atún a la Riojana - Tuna in Tomato Sauce with Roasted Peppers and Onions

4 people

Ingredients:

1lb of fresh tuna

1 big onion

2 green bell peppers

2 garlic cloves

A can of crushed natural tomato

Some flour, olive oil and salt



Method:

Cut the tuna in big diced pieces, add **a little bit** of salt and coat in **batter (flour)**

Fry the tuna in a pan with hot olive oil until golden brown

Cut the vegetables (peppers, onion and garlic) petit diced

In a sauce pan lightly fry the vegetables in a little bit of olive oil and add a dash of salt

When the onion is ready add the tuna and the crushed tomato, taste for salt and add a dash of sugar to correct acidity. Let it cook for 15-20 minutes. Enjoy!

HAMPTON ROADS 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 2nd of June 2011.

We discussed the following topics:

Members: we now have 272 members from 30 countries.

Webmaster: Facebook page is up and running!

Reservations: September lunch will be held at the Virginia Beach Resort Hotel as per the vote at the May Board of Representatives meeting. On September 14th, we will hold the Club sign-up and lunch. It will begin at 1000hrs and we will begin lunch at 1130hrs.

Next meeting – SOPC Executive Committee meeting 12th September 2011.

EDITORS' COMMENTS!

Here we are again beginning a new SOPC season. This month I would like to welcome Gwenola D’Astorg as the new Assistant Editor for the Newsletter. I would also like to thank her for volunteering and I am very sure she will do a great job. In a few months she will take over from me and become the Newsletter Editor so we need to look for an new Assistant Editor again for the month of December . If you are interested please contact us at newsletter@sopc.us.

Remember, this Newsletter is about YOU, and without your opinions and views it cannot be done.

Malena and Gwenola

Your Newsletter Editor

Send any articles, ideas or information to:

Newsletter@sopc.us