

Be the Change through Positive Energy

www.agoracubinternational.com



Travel light, live light, spread the light,  
**BE THE LIGHT**

Yogi Bhajan

1st ISSUE 2014

Even a small  
star shines in  
the darkness.

FINNISH PROVERB

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Kelly Geisler

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SECRETARY

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IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT

Sandy Van Niekerk

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Dear Ladies, dear friends

I am so honored to be your new ACI President! I can assure you that I will give the very best of myself to continue in the footsteps of Sandy, Veerle and the other presidents that have served before, and to continue to make Agora International such a wonderful association.

We are a dynamic group of women that have connected on this solid platform of Agora. We are so colourful in our backgrounds, personalities and paths, our strength coming from

this diversity and yet we are so similar and have such common ground in our hearts, our desire and passion to give back to those in need, to build bridges, to paint our souls and leave our footprints and make a difference where needed... realizing along the way that although we are many, together we are one.....one very strong circle of friends forever! That my friends, That's Agora!

We are so incredibly blessed to have this foundation of Agora to gather together in friendship, to share our ideas, to find ways to bring some goodness in to a world that needs it ever so much, to stay connected and invested in our world! To BE THE LIGHT!

Life is precious. Each and every one of us and all of those lives that cross our paths, and many that we only know through others...every single life matters.

You have touched uncountable lives in numerous ways through your many giving hearts.

All giving makes a tangible difference, from the varied fundraisers that have brought so much to so many in a multitude of ways...

to giving time from your life, volunteering yourself, your gifts, from the most qualified specialized skills to the most simple, pure and precious – your heart – your light from within – which comes to life in your smile and positive energy!

Your love, your light! It is so incredibly powerful! Your joy, your compassionate heart passed on to another in an energetic love-filled smile, a gentle touch, a kind word, a compassionate deed, - when shared, transforms the energy within you and outside of you!

How beautifully powerful is your heart, your inner light manifested and come to life!

As we live out our lives together in spirit, though we may be physically separated across lands and seas, as our paths cross the lives of others that may face seemingly insurmountable challenges, know that all that you bring to this life matters..

So my friends, my challenge to you this year is to be the

very best you can possibly be, to Be The Light where there is darkness, to bring positive energy to all challenging encounters, open your heart and share your love, bring goodness, and make a difference, one smile, one touch, one gift, one donation, one life at a time.

As we stand steadfast, compassionate and strong together, persevering along with our sister and brother organizations, in these most challenging of times - our light grows stronger and we are the change in this world!

And in a world so much in need we must always remember the words of Martin Luther King Jr. "Darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that."

**Let us go my friends and Be The Light!**

*Kelly*

KELLY GEISLER  
ACI PRESIDENT 2014/15



**LY THI THANH THAO  
ACI VICE-PRESIDENT 2014/15**

Dear Agora friends,

I am so happy to be your Vice-President! And I do hope you are as happy to have me on the International Board!

I'm Vietnamese-Italian, and I should say that I've vividly benefited from the diversity of these two extraordinary cultures.

What's more, I should say that the Vietnam War and my entrance in the art world have made me the person I am today.

As you can guess, I belong to the generation that has witnessed the horrors and the absurdities of the Vietnam War. I was among millions of people who ran away under bombs and fires and magically, I find myself among the few who can still embrace life. I feel so grateful and privileged, and firmly believe that life is so beautiful that we all have the duty to live it to the fullest.

Then twenty years ago I set foot in the art world, in the beginning as gallery owner, then as art promoter. My job has taught me the sensibility in front of beauty, and the willingness to cultivate and preserve beauty.

These factors have always accompanied me in my circling life.

I was a passionate Lady of Ladies' Circle. My motto when I was National President of Ladies' Circle Italy, in fact, was "Happy to be Ladies".

Then I entered Agora Club after the establishment of Agora Club Milan in 2010.

I've found beauty in Agora Club!

Its beauty has been manifested through its energy and enthusiasm to involve head and heart in kindling friendship among women all over the world and in giving happiness, light, and warmth to less fortunate people.

In other words, the beauty of Agora Club lies in its core message that life is so beautiful that we all have the right to enjoy it.

I am so happy to be part of this lovely Board, of this unique Club.

Let's live our circling life beautifully and meaningfully so that in the future we will have beautiful and meaningful memories to cherish.

Your Vietnamese- Italian friend,

Thanh Thao



**KARIN CHAFFART  
ACI SECRETARY  
2014/15**

So another year has passed...

A year where I've learned a hundred things and met a hundred new people; made new friends and discovered beautiful new countries. I had a wonderful time with my dear friends at the board

and I'm sure gonna miss my dear friends Veerle and Nikkie but I'll cherish the great moments and the laughs we shared.

Sometimes the combination of my job as a dentist, my two young adult children, my mother that needed attention and my work as ACI secretary made my life more than hectic and chaotic. But... I wouldn't have missed it for the world. The hours I've spent working for ACI were returned tenfold with happiness, with friendship and personal growth.

I am more than enthusiastic to start this New Year with the new board and to be at your service once again.

Kelly's motto: 'Be The Light' means to me to offer help to people who need help, be positive, try to brighten someone's day... and smile... the world will smile with you.

The best things in life are free. To give attention, time, love and appreciation gives one positive emotions.

Let's make it all a wonderful year of light and joy.

And please... share your beautiful moments and projects from your club. Let's all spread some light on the lives of others.

Lots of love

Karin



**SANDY  
VAN NIEKERK  
ACI IMMEDIATE  
PAST-PRESIDENT  
2014/15**

As IPP of this wonderful organization AGORA, I am set to complete my circle as a member of the ACI board. These past two years and the women I have met and corresponded

with, have shaped my life, for the rest of my life, and it is a privilege to serve this organization for another year.

The AGM in South Africa was a vibrant, colourful occasion, with such energy, made all the more meaningful with reports of what AGORA INTERNATIONAL have achieved. This is truly a MODERN CLUB FOR MODERN WOMEN. Women who have compassion, who love life and value friendships. Women who have positively left their footprint in the lives of others.

My portfolio will be to focus on strategies for growth and working closely with the ACI board, making new contacts and friends worldwide. I look forward to this challenge and trust that as an organization we will continue on a positive way forward.

I am so very proud to be a member of both ACI and the ACI board and am more than ready for another superb year working closely with Kelly, Thanh Thao, Karin, and Martine, and to the friendship we will share.

So dear friends, BE THE LIGHT this year and MAKE IT BRIGHT

Love

Sandy



**KELLY GEISLER**  
**ACI PRESIDENT 2014/15**

Dear Ladies, dear friends,

I am so incredibly thrilled to be serving as your president! This is a wonderful opportunity and a privilege, one that I appreciate and take to heart. Your trust, your support and your energy will be my foundation and my rock throughout this year! I know that with all of you there have been many good things happening and they will continue to happen in this world because of all of you!

I have shared my theme with you, "Be the Change through Positive Energy" and my logo "Be The Light". I gave careful thought to these, wanting to capture the heart of Agora. We can all make an impact in this world, sometimes on a grandiose scale and sometimes with a kind word, look or touch. All of this matters, and although we may not see the fruits of our labor, when positive intention and energy are sewn, we have to trust that it will manifest whether we are privileged to witness the outcome or not.

I recently had lasik surgery on my eyes, my vision since the age of 10 has been impaired and progressively worsened until I could not see past my nose without correction. I understand this impairment and know how precious sight is, so when a friend and current AC USA member, Linda Trier, asked me to accompany her on a vision mission clinic to rural villages in India in 2003, my heart immediately said yes! This was a journey that proved to be a tremendous gift to me also, for I saw the impact the gift of sight made on people that I helped to treat. People that had never seen clearly, whose lives were forever altered due to their lack of vision. This journey was incredibly humbling for me, to be looked upon like a god and thanked so profusely by our patients. These people were human beings the same as you and me, but due to circumstances beyond their control they knew not how or were unable to have their vision corrected.

To see their faces, the awe, the smiles as they gazed around them as they realized they could see their world now, was so overwhelming and heart touching I could have cried with joy! This my friends is creating extraordinary change through positive action by a team of ordinary human beings. And we had the pleasure to share in this moment of victory! What a wonderful experience my friend Linda introduced me to, that would forever be life changing. I will never underestimate the possibilities of positive action and energy of ordinary people to make extraordinary change!

*Be the Light*

Now my friend Linda, awaits as heaven is knocking on her door. A cancer has ravaged her breasts, her lungs and now has made its' way to her brain. Linda has led a very full and giving life. She has traveled to many countries with her nursing skills shared in their benefit to others. She has worked in shelters for women for years, counseling and providing health screenings and information to women that many would not even give a second glance to. She has given her heart her entire life, without question, without hesitation. Even until a month ago she was still trying to volunteer at the women's shelter and had to be told no, it was time for her to rest and care for herself. So why am I sharing this with you and what does it have to do with Agora? Well ladies Linda is one who has given so much her entire life, without expectation or seeking reward. She is the epitome of a giver. If I looked up the definition of a selfless giving heart, I would expect to see Linda's name. And that is the change through positive action she has made on me. She has been a light in my life, a guide to follow, my mentor and my friend. Without seeing or realizing, she changed me and how I chose to live out my life. These are the intangibles we have to trust in to develop over time in others. Linda did not invite me in to her life as her friend to change me, she invited me in as a sister with all of my flaws and weaknesses, my shortcomings and my willing heart. She saw the possibility and took action and then with knowing patience...just let it be.

For this I will be eternally grateful, and I will miss my dear friend when she is gone from this earthly world, but I know she is not truly gone, just absent from our sight, for she has created a ripple effect....she has dropped a pebble and has moved mountains, she has brought light to lives that were overshadowed in darkness. She has had victory and failures and has counted them not, but continued forward on her journey without looking back!

Thank you Linda for being my friend, my sister and my mentor. You will live on my friend in all of the lives you have touched, and I can only hope to measure slightly to your standard!

God bless and be swift, linger not, nor tarry, for many gifts will surely unfold from your love in life shared!

Wishing you all a successful and prosperous year in all of you endeavours!

Lots of love to you always xx Kelly



**MARTINE MONZO**  
**ACI TREASURER 2014/15**

Your new  
International  
Treasurer in  
five questions:

**1** Who is she?  
**Martine Monzo**

**2** Where does she live?



In the  
**South of  
France,  
at Hyères**

**3** What does she do?  
She's a **consultant  
and a trainer**



**4** What's her  
commitment?  
Take care of  
**ACI Finance**



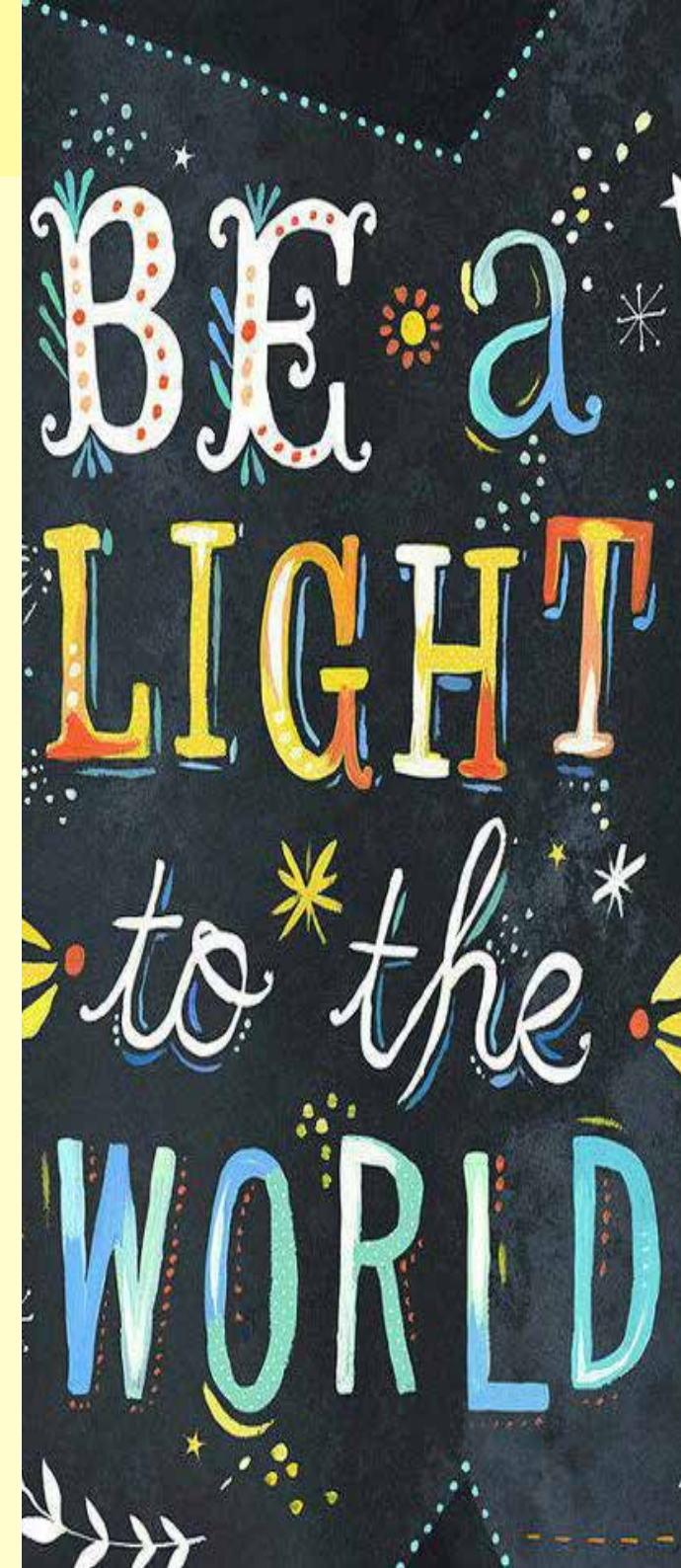
**5** Which Agora Club does she  
belong to? **Agora Hyères**



And finally, very **happy** to be part  
of a wonderful team...



...thanks to my **French supporters!**



# THE 14th of NOVEMBER IS **ACI DAY!**



**There are many things we express with light.** We use light to express **joy** during celebration of birthdays, in **honor** of loved ones gone, during ceremonies of **new life**, and renewed life, in honor of lives taken and cut short, of energetic athletes passing new **challenges** on to the best of physical expression, in the hope of a **new day** and possibilities.

Light encompasses us and is the energy of our lives. Life and light are so interconnected... we need light to grow and for our earth to survive. We wake to greet each new day with the promise in each sunrise... and the satisfaction or relief at the end of our day in a sunset as light retreats... and then we are once again sent into wonder as the miracles of night unfolds us as the skies alight and bring us yet another miracle to ponder... this vast universe and all of creation out there reflected from our life giving sun... our stars... planets...galaxies... and what beyond...

We may not yet be able to reach far beyond our skies, but we can reach the lives next to us. We can make an impact and bring light to darkness we encounter. We have done so, we can and will continue... no matter the challenge that we find... to the best of our ability, **bring hope and joy, love and promise**, in every breath, every touch... possibilities of a different life... a new day... each step taken... each encounter matters... so bring your light, love and promise to every living moment...

In celebration of Agora Club International Day on November 14th 2014, share your light and celebrate – **"Be The Light & Make It Bright!"**

Light a candle, a flashlight, a glow stick, strike a match, a lighter, on your own or in a group... send us your pics of glowing light!

Kelly



# Happy ACI Day

**Dearest friends,**

**After having served 6 wonderful and amazing years on the ACI Board, I felt I wanted to give Agora Club a goodbye/thank you gift.**

**The best presents in life are those which refer to the past and make the future promising.**

**My 2 favourite Clubs are, and will always be, Agora Club and Ladies' Circle. Our 2 Clubs are each other's past and each other's future.**



**Therefore, I decided to design a logo which consolidates our continued Side by Side cooperation.**

**May it officialise our lovely past and our even brighter future together.**

**Yours in friendship forever,**

**Veerle**

**Past ACI President**



**Agora Clubs worldwide  
have collected a total of ....**

**101 914 €**

**92 414 €  
for local charities  
in our Member  
Countries**

**9 500 € for the  
International Service  
Project 2013-2015  
CHILDREN OF THE DUMP  
of our Sister Club  
Ladies' Circle**

**The new ACI year has started well:**

**1037 EURO** HAS ALREADY BEEN RAISED, through sale of pins, tombola and scarves during AGM in South Africa.

Agora is indeed also passionate about service.

ACI has brought change through positive action in the lives of those less fortunate on a local, national and international level.

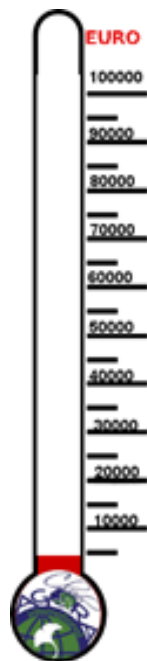
Thank you Agora... and please continue to keep us informed of how you have been the light through your charitable projects and funds raised to volunteer hours given.

All you do makes a difference! Continue to be the change you want to see! There are no boundaries and no borders for love and kindness.

We will keep our barometer going and moving up and up!

We also decided at the councillors meeting in SA to keep 20 percent of our fund raising in reserve for urgent disaster needs.

**Check our website [www.agoraclubinternational.com](http://www.agoraclubinternational.com)**



**1037 EURO  
raised so far:**

**0 Euro  
for local  
charity  
projects**

**1037 Euro  
for children  
of the dump**



**10 hours  
worked  
so far**



**CHILDREN OF THE DUMP**

CHILDREN OF THE DUMP was founded in 2004 when two young Flemish visited the Stung Meanchy (Pnom Penh) dump site in Cambodia during their trip through South-East Asia. They were deeply distressed by the degrading circumstances in which young children try to survive by collecting recyclable items such as glass, plastic or aluminum. The children grow up living and working long hours in a dangerous and poisonous environment where even breathing is unhealthy. These children risk their lives for a few pennies.

A local charity helper Mech Sockha, who grew up on the dump himself, founded the Center for Children's to Happiness (CCH) in 2002. The CHH currently supports more than 130 children some of them only toddlers. The main target for the CHH is to protect the kids and create opportunities by providing them a shelter, healthy food, clothing, medical care and education.

**Some images say more than a thousand words  
so please visit our website and click on the link to  
watch a touching two-minute video.**

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4gHBw6YP\\_M](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4gHBw6YP_M)



# *Painting our soul at the* SA CONFERENCE

During the ACI Conference in South Africa two of our Associate Member countries became Full Member countries :  
**Congratulations AC Romania and AC United Kingdom!**



And even more celebrations :  
During the conference, Agora Club Botswana officially became Associate Member Country of Agora Club International!  
**Welcome dear ladies!**



Veerle Dejonge was granted Honourary membership:  
**Congratulations Veerle!**

I must say in this past year as secretary I never had such a quick response from every country as to the affirmative of Veerle becoming honorary member!

That is a wonderful testament to her invaluable contribution to Agora Club International and how she continues to be a diplomat and representative of ACI with character and dedication.







## My Impressions of South Africa & Our ACI World Conference

Seemingly endless miles of colourful landscape filled with diversity in nature and mankind.

From the teeming bustling cities to the gentle lush and rolling green hills, the beaches with sands and rocks beneath toes, fragrant flowers blooming and assaulting the senses with such exquisite scents... Yesterday-Today-and-Tomorrow plant I am told is its name, how fitting is that for a land that seems to encompass all, from the downtrodden to the magnificent. This land, the Cradle of Mankind, will forever be etched in my mind as a place requiring further time and exploration!



What a tremendous setting at Heia Safari Ranch for our ACI World Conference!

How relaxing the surroundings, yet filled with excitement and adventure as we dared to visit enclosures of magnificent elephants, lions and lionesses preoccupied with their call of nature, rhinos with babes wandering on what seemed to be their daily stroll, giraffes and zebras seemingly indifferent to our presence. How surreal, how unbelievably impressive, so much so, that words cannot seem to do justice to the emotions felt, nor the beauty seen but hopefully captured in images and memories to recall.

All I can really say to the organization of this conference is well done Ladies, well done!

This was an amazing experience that will linger and stay forever more. Just know that you have altered the lives of many by sharing this wondrous land that you simply call home. Thank you for this gift and caring for us while here in your lands. If tomorrow the light comes not to my eyes, know that you have been my light in your land and that I am blessed by beauty and experiences never to be forgotten!

*Lots of Love, Kelly*





REGISTRATION



COUNCILLORS MEETING



FRIDAY NIGHT





ACI AGM 2014







PRESIDENT'S SUNDOWNERS





GALA DINNER





GALA DINNER







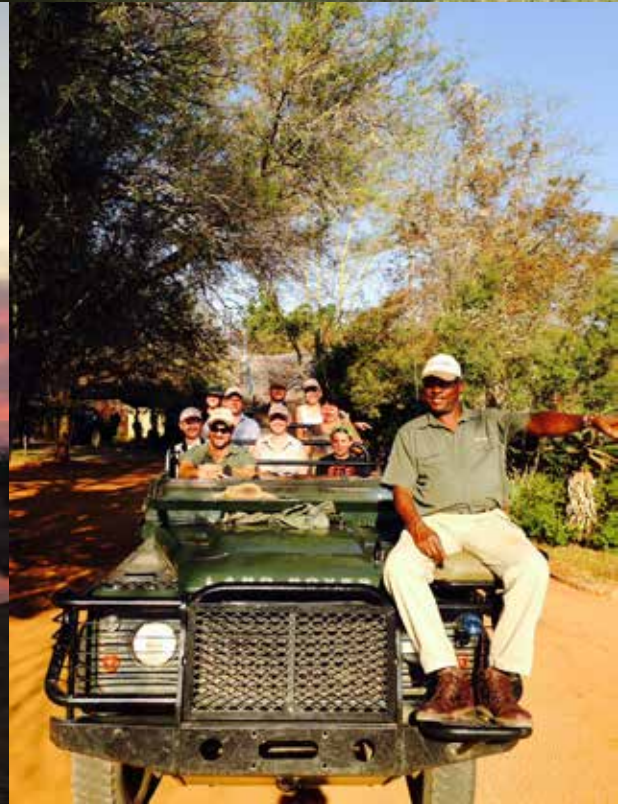
GALA DINNER



GALA DINNER



TOURS





TOURS





TOURS

## Agora's hosts successful annual general meeting

MULDERSDRIFT – Agora members from across the world spend weekend in Johannesburg to discover everything about Africa and its cultures.

20 October 2014 12:00

The Agora Club's International General Meeting (AGM) for 2014 that took place at the Heia Safari Ranch from 10 to 12 October was a big success, according to member Beverley Patterson.

"The weekend started with a welcome party on the Friday evening, where the theme was a shebeen evening and the women were introduced to gumboot dancing." Patterson continued.

"The formal AGM was held on Saturday morning, where the new board was introduced. The guest speakers were Round Table International president Jason Thomson and Dr Harold Braak, ex CEO of the Kruger National Park and San Parks."

She explained that the women from the Agora Club brought along their donations that will be distributed to hospitals and clinics in Zimbabwe, Botswana and South Africa.

"Women from various countries in Europe and from Louis Trichardt in Limpopo brought along hats, booties and jerseys that were knitted by them and will be donated to these countries."

"The conference ended off with a masked ball that took place on 11 October at Eduzani Lodge, Muldersdrift. Masks of the Big Five were given to all the women at the ball and it was quite a sight to see everyone dressed up," said Patterson.

She concluded and thanked the women that attended the conference from all around the world.

Links: <http://roodepoortnorthsider.co.za/180482/agora-club-to-host-international-weekend/>



Treasurer Martine Monzo with Agora President Kelly Geisler, Secretary Karin Chaffart and Vice President Ly Thi Thanh Thao and the Past President Sandy van Niekerk.



**We had a wonderful conference and we have to thank a lot of people who made this happen...**

**First of all, YOU - the members of Agora Club International that came to SA!**

**The presidents  
of RTI & LCI  
honoured us with  
their presence**



**TARYN  
our conference  
convenor**



**DIRK  
our webmaster &  
photographer**



**PAM  
our IT  
support**



**LAURA  
our graphic  
designer**





ACI AGM  
2014

Last but not least...

The ladies from  
**AGORA CLUB SA** and  
of **LADIES CIRCLE SA**  
did a wonderful job.  
You all made us feel  
more than welcome.

