

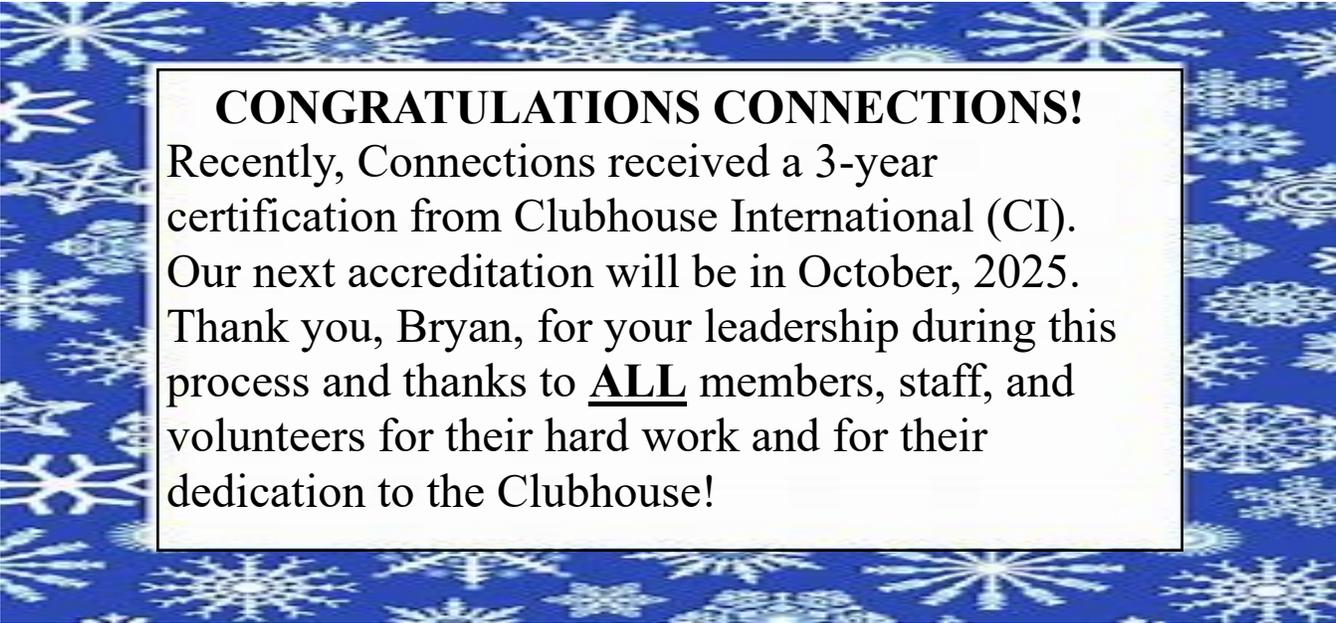
NEWS & KNOWLEDGE...
NEWS YOU CAN USE....
January, 2024



HAPPY NEW YEAR,
2024!



Connections Clubhouse held its annual pottery fundraiser on Saturday, December 9, 2023, at the Mud Shack. So far, the pottery fundraiser has brought in \$5,694.00. Connections Clubhouse wants to thank everyone for your support during the pottery fundraiser! Your support directly helps our Clubhouse maintain and support our recreation budget. We want to extend our gratitude to the following local businesses that allowed us to post our event banners on their property including: Crowne Plaza, Robinson Builders Mart of Newton, Western Steer, City Electric Supply in Newton, Brookwood Cafe and Catering in Maiden, and Hickory Motor Speedway. We would also like to thank our dedicated volunteers and Clubhouse members helping making this annual event a success! We also would like to thank D&J Catering for providing us delicious food. We hope to see you all again next year and at our upcoming vendor festival on May 4th, 2024, Market on the Lawn!



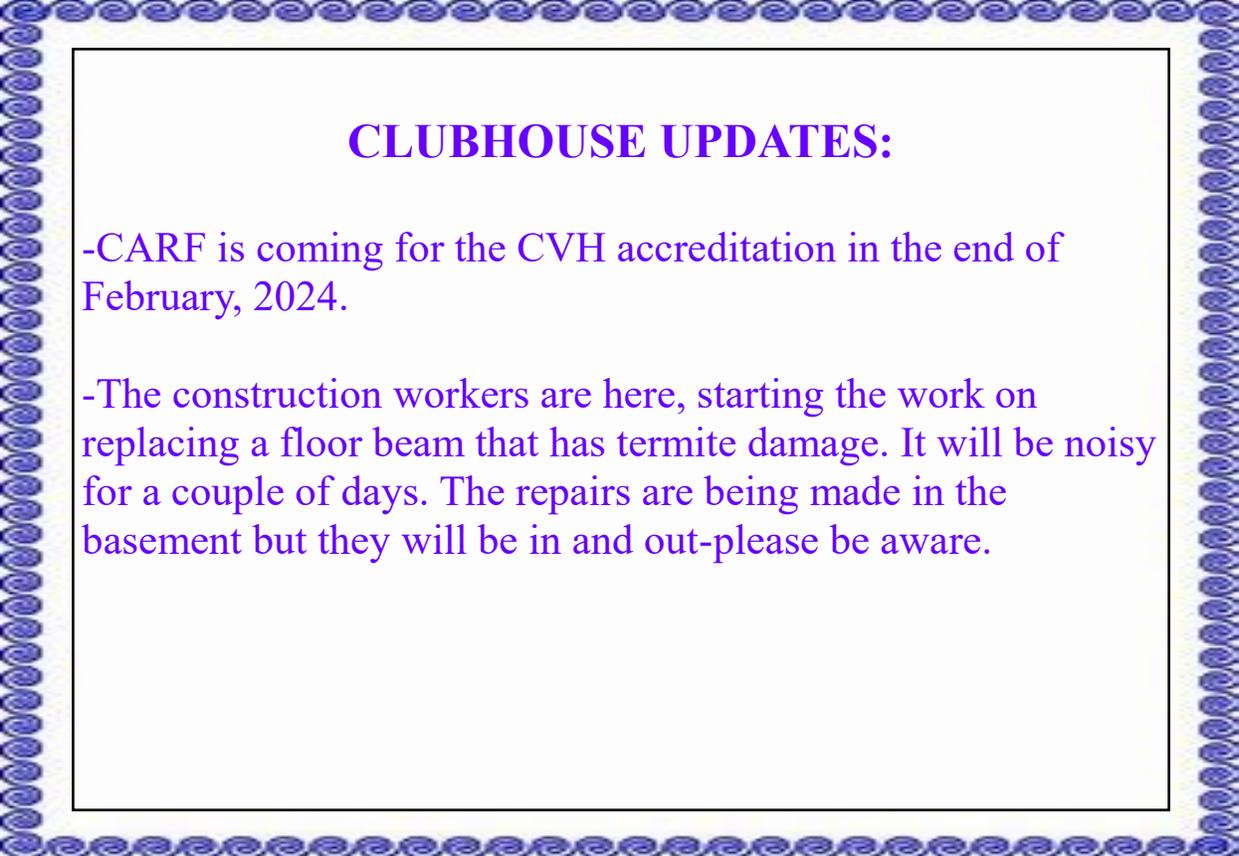
CONGRATULATIONS CONNECTIONS!

Recently, Connections received a 3-year certification from Clubhouse International (CI). Our next accreditation will be in October, 2025. Thank you, Bryan, for your leadership during this process and thanks to ALL members, staff, and volunteers for their hard work and for their dedication to the Clubhouse!



UPCOMING CONNECTIONS OUTINGS FOR JANUARY, 2024:

Monday, January 1, 2024-HAPPY NEW YEAR! New Year Social.
Wednesday, January 3, 2024-Water Aerobics at YMCA (\$5.00 per Class).
Thursday, January 4, 2024-Bowling at the Pin Station.
Friday, January 5, 2024-Unit Grocery/Supply Shopping at the Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market.
Wednesday, January 10, 2024-Water Aerobics at YMCA (\$5.00 per Class).
Thursday, January 11, 2024-Shoppng at the Wal-Mart Supercenter.
Friday, January 12, 2024-Unit Grocery/Supply Shopping at the Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market.
Saturday, January 13, 2024-Basketball Game at Lenoir Rhyne University.
Wednesday, January 17, 2024-Water Aerobics at YMCA (\$5.00 per Class).
Thursday, January 18, 2024-Employment/Education Dinner.
Friday, January 19, 2024-Unit Grocery/Supply Shopping at the Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market.
Wednesday, January 24, 2024-Water Aerobics at YMCA (\$5.00 per Class).
Thursday, January 25, 2024-Wellness Fun and Taste Testing at the Clubhouse.
Friday, January 26, 2024-Unit Grocery/Supply Shopping at the Wal-Mart Neighborhood Market.
Saturday, January 27, 2024-Going Shopping at Thrift Stores and Gabe's and Out to Eat.
Wednesday, January 31, 2024-Water Aerobics at YMCA (\$5.00 per Class).



CLUBHOUSE UPDATES:

-CARF is coming for the CVH accreditation in the end of February, 2024.

-The construction workers are here, starting the work on replacing a floor beam that has termite damage. It will be noisy for a couple of days. The repairs are being made in the basement but they will be in and out-please be aware.

**The Fight for the Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday:
(From: www.history.com, Written by Erin Blakemore):**

Americans observe the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday on the third Monday of January each year. The day gives people an opportunity to honor the activist and minister, who was assassinated in April, 1968. Martin Luther King's Jr., accomplishments still continue to inspire generations of Americans. However, it took 15 years of fighting to make King's birthday a federal holiday. He was the first private American citizen to be honored with a federal holiday in recognition of his non-violent leadership of the civil rights movement. Four days after King's assassination in 1968, a Democratic Congressman from the state of Michigan named John Conyers, stood on the floor of Congress, insisting that Martin Luther King be honored with his own federal holiday. However, no one in Congress listened to Conyers, who was one of the few Black Congressmen in Congress. Conyers actively supported the Civil Right Movement and he also had went to Selma, Alabama in support of King and the 1965 Freedom Day, where Black citizen attempted to register to vote in spite of local resistance and armed intimidation. Despite the failure of his first bill, Conyers would persistently introduce the bill to Congress each year to create the Martin Luther King, Jr., federal holiday, and he also gathered co-sponsors to help him with his efforts. He also enlisted the help of the Congressional Black Caucus, of which he was a founding member. For 15 years, the Black Congressional Caucus tried to break loose the stalled legislation, advocating for the holiday in their constituent communities and they also helped Conyers introduce his bill each year. But their efforts failed, even after they brought the bill to the floor for debate. In the early 1980s, the tide turned in their efforts. By that time, the Black Congressional Caucus had collected six million signatures in support of a federal holiday to honor King. Stevie Wonder wrote a hit song called, "Happy Birthday," in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr., which helped to drive an increase in public support for the King holiday. In 1983, civil rights veterans gathered in Washington, DC to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the March on Washington, as well as to commemorate King's, "I Have a Dream," speech and the 15th anniversary of his murder. However, when the King holiday was introduced to the United States Senate, Jesse Helms, a Republican senator from North Carolina, made an attempt to defeat the bill by asking the Senate to let him introduce FBI smear material that painted King as a Communist and a threat to the United States into the Congressional records, which caused tensions to overflow in the Senate. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a senator from New York State, brought the records onto the floor and he threw them down on the floor in a show of disgust during a pivotal moment of the debate over the King holiday. The next day, the bill passed with ease with a 78 to 22 vote and then-President Ronald Reagan signed the legislation for the King holiday immediately. Even though the King holiday was celebrated in 1986, it took years for other states to commemorate the holiday. Several Southern states commemorated the King holiday, along with the observance of Robert E. Lee's birthday on January 19th. Arizona observed the King holiday at first, but discontinued it. As a result, there was a years-long scuffle over observing the King holiday, which resulted in multiple general public elections for the holiday and major boycotts of the state of Arizona. A final voter registration push led to a final general vote that resulted in success in 1992. However, the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday was not celebrated in every state until 2000. However, in a couple of states such as Mississippi and Alabama, the King holiday is still observed in combination with a celebration of Confederate figures as well. But after years of contention and controversy, the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday is observed in all 50 states in the United States.

International Standards for Clubhouse Programs:

WORK-ORDERED DAY:

15. The work-ordered day engages members and staff together, side-by-side, in the running of the Clubhouse. The Clubhouse focuses on strengths, talents and abilities; therefore, the work-ordered day must not include medication clinics, day treatment or therapy programs within the Clubhouse.
16. The work done in the Clubhouse is exclusively the work generated by the Clubhouse in the operation and enhancement of the Clubhouse community. No work for outside individuals or agencies, whether for pay or not, is acceptable work in the Clubhouse. Members are not paid for any Clubhouse work, nor are there any artificial reward system.
17. The Clubhouse is open at least five days a week. The work-ordered day parallels typical working hours.
18. The Clubhouse is organized into one or more work units, each of which has sufficient staff, members and meaningful work to sustain a full and engaging work-ordered day. Unit meetings are held to foster relationships, as well as to organize and plan the work of the day.
19. All work in the Clubhouse is designed to help members regain self-worth, purpose and confidence; it is not intended to be job-specific training.
20. Members have the opportunity to participate in all [of] the work of the Clubhouse, including administration, research, enrollment and orientation, reach out, hiring, training and evaluation of staff, public relations, advocacy and evaluation of Clubhouse effectiveness.



TAKE A
SMALL STEP
EVERY DAY

My Employment Journey (From: <https://clubhouse-intl.org>):

By: Susan Frank:

(Susan Frank is a member of Yahara House in Madison, Wisconsin).

I got home the Sunday night before last in a panic. I was behind in my accounting homework; I still not started on writing this speech; I needed to do my grocery shopping and my laundry for the week. And I couldn't start of this, because I was so stressed out that I was paralyzed. I thought, what right did I have to make a speech, telling people about being successful at work, when my own life was falling apart? I recognized the beginning of the familiar descent into my own personal Hell. I made some decisions. I decided I needed a little time off from the stress and sat down with a favorite tape in my boom box. I decided that, maybe, dinner would help me cope a little better. Maybe, I could couldn't write my whole speech that night, but maybe, I could write the first few paragraphs. And, maybe, if there was time, I could finish one or two accounting problems before I went to bed. As I noticed myself through this process, it came to me that, maybe, I did have something to offer. Because it's this process of reframing and redefining your goals-Meeting yourself where you are at that moment and deciding what you can do other than focusing on what [you] can't [do]-That makes you able to go forward. That, for me, is really success is about. That is what success is about for everyone, not just people with a mental illness, but, maybe, it is especially true for us. At the time that I was referred to Yahara House, I was spending as much time in the hospital as out. I was reminded that someone at the clubhouse not long ago that his first recollection of me was stepping over me as I lay crouched in the hall in front of my staff worker's door, waiting for someone to notice how much pain I was in and to please, please, fix it. Moving on was a slow process. I began by finding things at Yahara House that I *could* do. Some days just sitting in the same room with the people in my unit was all I could handle. Some days, gradually more and more, I would help out by collating, working in the kitchen or typing a newsletter article. Yahara House didn't expect me to do any more than I could, but when I did have successes, they were happy to celebrate with me. That made me feel good, a feeling that was new to me, but that I liked. But I might never have gone any farther than that if it wasn't for Beth. Beth was my staff worker, and I really liked her a lot. I took my first TEP, not because I wanted to earn money or work outside the clubhouse, but for a much more basic reason: Beth asked me to try. When she brought up the possibility, I could feel the butterflies in my stomach wake up, and the old familiar doubts and fears kick in. She asked me to try it for a week, with help from Marsha. She said she thought I could do it. And she said that, at the end of the week, we would go out for dinner to celebrate, if I stuck it out. My goal at that point was not to finish six months on a placement. That seemed like too much to hope for, too long to wait. I was shooting for dinner with Beth on Friday. Beth and I did have dinner that night, and it was great! Not only the diner, but that Beth was proud of me-and that I was proud of me, too! I had done something that I hadn't thought I could do, hadn't been able to do before that week, because I had enough support to give me hope and the courage to try. To my surprise (And a lot of other people's, too), I finished that six months as a typist at Isthmus Newspaper. I tried some volunteer work and another TEP, which didn't work out for me, but along the way, I learned about what kinds of situations were hard for me to handle, and, also, what I was good at. I had started to get more comfortable with people in general. Then, I got a TEP at the Memorial Union Accounting Office. Gus was my placement manager for that TE, and he struggled with me regularly over going to work every day. One thing he told me over and over was, "Don't give yourself a choice. As long as you're not physically sick, just GO!" I worked on that a lot those six months, and ended up that spring, feeling pretty good about my job performance and my relationship with the people in my department. That summer,



I decided to look for a part-time job. I applied for many, but didn't find one until months later, when I was offered a job that I had found in the classified ads. I was a data entry operator at Associated Bank. The first month or so, I was on my best behavior. I showed up for work every day, and [I] learned to do my job, so that it was coming more easily to me. Every night at 5:30, I would leave physically bone-tired, although, I had only worked four-and-a-half hours. I couldn't believe at first, that working half days would take so much energy, since I was good for hours of TV watching at home, no problem. It seemed, as if as the job itself got easier for me, I started having more attendance problems. I called in sick a lot the first few months, and I think the only thing that kept them from firing me was that I was good at my job-When I was there. One day, after calling in sick with, "the flu," my boss, Jerry, called me at home. I was scared of Jerry, but as we talked, I began to understand that he was on my side. He told me very matter-of-factly that they liked my work, but they needed my attendance to improve drastically, and could I think of a way to make that happen? The next day, I brought him a written contract for us both to sign, in which I said that I would be there every day for six months-**NO EXCUSES!** I kept that agreement, but I won't kid you that it was easy. A couple of times, I tried to call in sick, but Jerry wouldn't budge on letting me off. He said that my department needed me and I had better get my butt in to work or he was going to come and get me. I think he would have, too. One of the problems with showing up on my bad days, was that the pain I was trying to hide by staying home with the, "flu," was now showing up at work, and I was deathly afraid that my co-workers would shun me because of it. But I learned, to my amazement, that they could put up with my tears and mood swings as long as I got my work done and they didn't have to cover my job as well as their own. As they got to know me, I began to feel that the pain of exposing myself was worth the risk, as people asked questions about how I was doing, and shared with me their own stories about family members or friends that had struggled with mental illness. George Bush was President that year, and introduced the idea of a, "a kinder, gentler nation." Imagine that! After six months of perfect attendance, I had learned Gus' advice, and no longer gave myself a choice about going to work. I just went. When our department expanded, I asked for full-time hours-and [I] got them. That Thanksgiving, I had more to celebrate than a turkey dinner. I had health insurance, paid vacations, and a whole lot of self-respect. This year, I celebrated four years on the job, with two-and-a-half of them full-time. Jerry had moved on to another bank. I miss him, but I don't need him to be there for me to get there and get my job done any more. Last year, I decided to go back to school at night and on weekends to finish my bachelor's degree. I am finding that, in the financial services industry, there are new positions opening up, but most of them require a business degree. So, instead of just taking classes, my work has given me direction for my studies. This past year, the bank has acquired some new branches and my whole department has been stressed out about mergers and having to do more work with fewer people. It's been a real surprise to me that I've been able to handle it as well as anybody. I think the reason is that I've had a lot of practice learning to deal with stress. Whether it's internally or externally caused, is almost irrelevant. I can fight it in the same ways. One of the best things about working is that you have a chance to give back. After years of being a patient and having people do things for me or to me, I am now in control of what I give back and I want to make it something good. I let my co-workers know when I think they are doing a good job, because I've noticed that, in the workplace, most people don't get feedback when they're doing a good job, only when they're screwing up. And I know, from experience, that a little support goes a long way. I keep in touch with Yahara House, because I miss the people. Also, while I am beginning to share more and more experiences with my co-workers, there are some things for which they just have no frame of reference. My doctor and I tried a med change this spring, and nobody at work

understood about having to deal with a lot of physical and emotional side effects. It was a relief to go into Yahara House to talk without having to go through trying to make them understand what I was about. They just knew. Sometimes, I miss the safety and support of the clubhouse, seriously miss it. I get angry that I can't seem to find the energy for both spending time at the clubhouse *and* a full-time job. I'm mad about how hard it is *sometimes*. But I was talking to a friend about it a couple of days ago, and he asked me, "Would you go back to who you were when you first came to Yahara House?" I just said, easily, because it's the truth. "No, I don't want to go back. Because I have more self-respect this way, and, to me, it's come to be worth the trade!"

**Weird Holidays for January, 2024:
(From: www.savingtalents.com):**

Monday, January 1, 2024-New Year's Day and Apple Gifting Day.
Tuesday, January 2, 2024-National Buffet Day.
Wednesday, January 3, 2024-Chocolate Covered Cherry Day.
Thursday, January 4, 2024-National Spaghetti Day.
Friday, January 5, 2024-National Whipped Cream Day.
Saturday, January 6, 2024-National Shortbread Day.
Sunday, January 7, 2024-National Bobblehead Day.
Monday, January 7, 2024-Bubble Bath Day.
Tuesday, January 9, 2024-National Apricot Day.
Wednesday, January 10, 2024-Houseplant Appreciation Day.
Thursday, January 11, 2024-National Hot Toddy Day.
Friday, January 12, 2024-International Kiss a Ginger Day.
Saturday, January 13, 2024-National Rubber Ducky Day.
Sunday, January 14, 2024-National Dress Up Your Pet Day.
Monday, January 15, 2024-Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and National Strawberry Ice Cream Day.
Tuesday, January 16, 2024-International Hot/Spicy Food Day.
Wednesday, January 17, 2024-Ditch New Year's Resolutions Day.
Thursday, January 18, 2024-National Gourmet Coffee Day.
Friday, January 19, 2024-National Popcorn Day.
Saturday, January 20, 2024-National Cheese Lover's Day.
Sunday, January 21, 2024-National Hugging Day.
Monday, January 22, 2024-National Polka Dot Day.
Tuesday, January 23, 2024-National Pie Day.
Wednesday, January 24, 2024-National Peanut Butter Day.
Thursday, January 25, 2024-National Opposite Day.
Friday, January 26, 2024-National Peanut Brittle Day.
Saturday, January 27, 2024-National Chocolate Cake Day.
Sunday, January 28, 2024-National Blueberry Pancake Day.
Monday, January 29, 2024-National Puzzle Day.
Tuesday, January 30, 2024-Bubble Wrap Appreciation Day.
Wednesday, January 31, 2024-National Hot Chocolate Day.

Details about the Clubhouse International Accreditation Process:
(From: <https://clubhouse-intl.org>):

Around Connections, everyone hears about the Clubhouse International Accreditation process. But people may not be aware of how Connections prepares for accreditation. This article and subsequent articles will go into the steps that all Clubhouses must undertake in order to receive accreditation from Clubhouse International. Here are a couple of the steps that all Clubhouses, including Connections, must follow to receive Clubhouse International Accreditation as follows:

Step One: The Self-Study: Both members and staff work together in the Clubhouse to prepare for the Accreditation visit from Clubhouse International by evaluating the performance of the Clubhouse against the Standards in a self-study of the strengths and the weaknesses of the Clubhouse and its units. Every area in the Clubhouse is reviewed and the details of the reviews are discussed in community meetings, unit meetings, and other forums gathered together to prepare the Clubhouse for Accreditation. The results of the self-study are submitted to Clubhouse International and to the consulting team in a written report, which outlines the Clubhouse's strengths and weaknesses as seen by both the members and the staff of the Clubhouse.

Step Two: The Site Visit: Members of the Clubhouse International Faculty for Clubhouse Development visit the Clubhouse. The Faculty Consultants are members and staff that come from strong Clubhouses from around the world. A team of one staff and of one member from the Faculty of Clubhouses Development visit the Clubhouse. After receiving and reviewing the Clubhouse's self-study report, the Clubhouse International Faculty Team go to the Clubhouse to visit for three to four days. While at the Clubhouse, the Faculty Team confirms the information included in the self-study report and they meet with Clubhouse members, staff, and board members, along with Clubhouse stakeholders. The Faculty Team participates in Clubhouse meetings, the Clubhouse work day and other activities in the Clubhouse. The Team also visits residential, employment, and education areas where the Clubhouse is working with its members. The Faculty Team members evaluate how well the Clubhouse has implemented the International Standards for Clubhouse Programs and they also provide ongoing consultation to the Clubhouse while they are at the Clubhouse site. At the last day of their visit, the Faculty Team members make a verbal presentation to all Clubhouse member and to all Clubhouse staff on their findings, covering both areas of strengths for the Clubhouse and making recommendations for improvement. The verbal report serves as the foundation for the written findings report given to Clubhouse International. The rest of the steps will be reviewed in other newsletters, so that people are not too overwhelmed by the details of this topic.