



CONNECTIONS

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Always Room for One More

The RI Convention on Sao Paulo Brazil is quickly approaching. As most know, this year the Convention is starting on a **Saturday**, rather than the customary Sunday start. Even though the deadline has passed for the pre-registration discount this is still time to visit www.Rotary.org to register; the dates are 6 - 9 June, 2015.

Even with the January 5th deadline having passed for the guaranteed price there is the possibility of having space available on our ITHF Pre-Convention tour or Brazil. You can see all the information about the tour on our www.ITHF.org site. If you are interested, you should contact John Steven, our ITHF Tour Chair at johnsteven@bigpond.com as soon as possible to see if you can be added to the tour. Don't miss out on this great tour by waiting too long.

Discovering Taiwan Adventure - A Terrific Eye-Opening Journey! ***Jean & John Henderson***



The March 12 - 23 "*Discovering Taiwan Adventure*" was a fantastic full circle trip around the island of Taiwan which provided unending surprises and delights for 33 fortunate fellow ITHF travelers from 7 countries. Arranged by our ITHF Leader, Medicare Hsu and a large, hard-

working team of hosts and volunteers, it was a treasured experience that exemplifies the value of our fellowship and the wonderful world friendship and learning it promotes.

Staying with host families as we began our explorations of this fascinating island nation gave a warm welcome, as did joining with 13 local Rotary clubs for the 22 anniversary celebration of the Taipei Sunshine Club, complete with 10 course meal, singing, dancing, speeches and a major good time!

After enjoying capital city Taipei's sights (Yehliu Geologic Park with its unique geologic formations, the incredible National Palace Museum's with its world renown treasures, the bamboo-shaped Taipei 101, (riding its world's fastest elevator up those many stories) an exquisite Rotary sponsored Japanese embroidery exhibit, Dr. Sun Yet Sun's massive, impressive memorial hall and history, night markets, foot massages, etc., we began our 7-day bus and train trip—a true journey of delights and highlights!

Beyond great natural beauty (seashore, mountain vistas, lush tropical paradise views) and incredible colorful eyeball -popping temples, shrines and pagodas (have you ever climbed from the mouth to the tail of a giant dragon on a lovely lake??) we found Taiwan very technologically advanced, with impressive high tech applications in many areas. One illustration for example involved an extensive overview of an advanced recycling center run by #1 PDG William Tseng demonstrating efficient environmental efforts that could serve as models worldwide, We experienced aboriginal culture, "made " and judged tea on a tea farm, enjoyed huge, luxurious well-run hotels, relaxed in hot spas—even individual ones in our hotel rooms, walked, biked and admired countless natural parks and gorgeous scenery and ate too many delicious many-course banquets and lazy-Susan/sharing feasts. With so many beautiful and unique sights we took photo after photo!



Toroko Gorge

Our large red ITHF Rotary banner was happily unfurled so often that going through our very numerous group shots will be a challenge!! So many happy memories... we cannot thank Medicare, his wife Linda Chou, our outstanding guide Jun, our most gracious host families and the wonderful people of Taiwan enough for a fabulous experience we recommend to one and all. Try to arrange an opportunity to experience and enjoy the treasures of Taiwan- you won't be disappointed!!

Bill Boyd & Sandy Grasso –Boyd in South Africa

This February and March, six South African ITHF members and their spouses hosted us for a total of 17 days during our month-long visit to their beautiful country. They showed us the sights in their uniquely different areas; took us to their Rotary meetings; showed us their many service projects; helped us negotiate the airport challenges; wined and dined us; and made us feel like family members in their homes. A tremendous thank you to Joke Young (Somerset West), Roger & Bridget Carthew (Kenton on Sea), Fred & Deirdre Kroone and Peter & Greta Dupen (Hillcrest) and Carolyn Khoury (Johannesburg).

Joke introduced us to the Cape wineries and showed the spectacular False Bay coast and penguin colony. Roger and Bridget, were amazing hosts who in addition to hosting us in their home for four days and showing us their lovely area arranged for the four of us to go on five day journey to Sibuya Nature Reserve, Addo Elephant National Park and various other destinations on the Garden Route. Peter and Fred showed us the 1000 Hills area near Durban, a spectacular breathtaking area, including visits to their exciting Rotary projects. All our experiences were different and rewarding.

A final note: Rotarian Khoury after seeing our article the January Newsletter, volunteered to meet us at Joberg airport, where we had a 10-hour layover. She helped us store our baggage, exit the terminal and then drove us to see "*The Cradle of Humanity*," stopped for a lovely lunch and Rotary sharing, and returned us to the Airport for our flight home. Many, many thanks to all our new lifetime friends. We hope someday we will be able to reciprocate such stellar hospitality. More photos are available at: <https://www.facebook.com/sgrassoboyd>



Photos: Sandy Grasso-Boyd, Roger and Bridget Cathew and Bill Boyd dining out at the Cattle Baron in Storm River Nature Reserve in South Africa. Roger and Bridget are members of the Kenton on Sea Rotary Club (L). Joke Young, President of Helderberg Rotary Club of Somerset West, South Africa with Bill Body and Sandy Grasso-Boyd (R)



***ITHF in Sonoma
Sandie Krutz***

You all can imagine how excited I was when I received a phone call from a fellow ITHF member wanting to come to visit us in Sonoma County. The crazy surprise was that the Hendersons are from a small town North of Chicago, called Elkhorn...the area where my husband's grandfather had a lake cottage many years ago!

By the time we ended the call we already felt that we were really good friends. Then they arrived and all the fun began. Wally and I didn't have a bedroom available, but another one of our club members and his wife eagerly agreed to provide the bed for them (actually a tricky way to expose other Rotarians to our fellowship).

For almost 2 whole days we ate non-stop, including a dinner with our current exchange student, France, from Thailand, and visited everything from giant redwoods, the Russian River Valley and where the river ends out into the ocean...plus a winery, of course! And a Rotary meeting.

Then they returned home to the cold and snow ☹️.

Jan and Bob Visit Australia
Mary Galae

The Rotary International Travel and Hosting Fellowship is ideal for anyone who is interested in travel and meeting new people, whether within Australia or internationally. Mike and I have just had the pleasure and honour of hosting a delightful couple from Missouri who are on a 6-week tour of Australia. They chose our names from the ITHF directory and contacted us to see if we were available for a “*connection*” of some sort.



Bob & Jan's 47th Anniversary

“*Connection*” is what we in ITHF know as some sort of availability during someone’s visit. It could be full accommodation with meals etc. or it could simply be advising them of somewhere to stay or a tourist attraction to visit. Realistically and if it’s possible of course, most people prefer to accommodate and get to know visitors. In this way, there is no pressure on anyone to provide anything in particular, and of course if it’s not convenient at any time, you’re not obliged to say yes to a request.

PDG Bob and Jan Cope arrived here on Sunday evening after a 2-week tour of the eastern states, and after a 2-hour delay due to a thunderstorm, sitting on the tarmac in Sydney waiting for takeoff, they finally arrived in Strathalbyn at almost 10pm. They hadn’t had dinner and had found their way from the airport in the dark, on the wrong side of the road (for them!) and in a strange car—no small feat!

After a welcome dinner and bed, we had four days to enjoy their company—and enjoy it we did! The first day was a bit of a wind down for them after touring for 2 weeks. That afternoon was a good time to visit Langhorne Creek and its famous wineries, and then sample the goods that night over dinner with our Group 4 AG Craig and Fran Maidment. It just happened to be Bob

and Jan's 47th wedding anniversary that day, so we made sure there was a special dessert – an Aussie Pavlova with candles!

The next day Mike took them for a trip on the river to Goolwa and back to Clayton on our boat, and then we prepared to go to our Rotary meeting that night. Do you know how some meetings just have a special zing to them? Well, that night was one of them and the room was just alive with fun and laughter. We had three amazing speakers that night; two fantastic Short Term Exchange Students gave their brief farewell talks, then our most recent RYLA attendee gave a talk about his experience. That was made even more special as he was then inducted as one of two very young and enthusiastic new members, both that night and both in their early twenties. To top the evening off, Bob and Jan won first prize in the raffle – a lobster caught by that very same new RYLA member!

The next day was a discovery tour for Bob and Jan as they went off on their own to explore Victor Harbor and surrounds, followed by dinner at a lovely local restaurant in Strathalbyn. Thursday was their last day in SA before heading off to WA across the Nullarbor on the Indian Pacific, so it was a good day to venture into the city and see just a little of all that Adelaide has to offer.

Mike and I have met and made firm friends with some amazing people around the world through this fabulous fellowship, and it cements for us all that Rotary means. We have an instant bond because of Rotary, we can go to a meeting anywhere in the world, and we know that wherever we go, that it will always be reciprocated. To us, ITHF is just an extension of the basic membership, and we recommend to anyone who is interested in travelling anywhere, whether it's locally or internationally, that you join and enjoy the company of like-minded people.

The other tip we'd like to make is that if you can, contact people outside the major cities even though it may mean a little extra travelling. Sometimes it's easier to make a connection there, and I can generally guarantee that if you go to a smaller country town, you'll be embraced by the whole community, not just one family! It will often be quieter too, and you may find gems of tourist attractions that you'll never see if you only go to major cities.

The Bauers hit the road!

Jim and Linda Bauer, from Richland Rotary Club in SE Washington, are embarking on a 3-month driving tour, and are delighted at the response of ITHF members across the country. We have

booked 10 ITHF stays so far, from Arkansas City, Kansas to Gainesville, Florida, up through New England, across Canada, and back across the northern U.S. We are thrilled that so many Rotarians respond so promptly. Those that can't say yes help find others who can, and we can't wait to make many new Rotary friends. Jim is intent on golfing all 50 states, and those states he needs to hit are causing some interesting route planning. Watch for pictures and stories-- adventures await! Be sure to stop by our place when your travels take you through the State of Washington.



Nominations Needed to Fill VP Vacancies

We are on the lookout for a few good ITHF members to fill our open Vice Presidents' areas.

VPs are asked to represent and promote ITHF in their areas by stimulating the formation of local, district and/or regional ITHF social groups and their activities. These groups are comprised of members and partners in relatively close groupings who come together to share ITHF fellowship. They generate ideas and enthusiasm for the ITHF concept, recruit new members, publicize the attractions of their areas, and develop friendship exchange ventures between groups.

If you are interested or know of an ITHF member in a vacant area who would be a prime candidate to fill one of the open VP positions, or want more information on the position of Vice President within ITHF, please contact President Medicare or Administrator Phil Komornik.

The VP areas currently vacant are Africa Southern, South East Asia, Central America, South America, USA South Central, USA North East, USA Great Lakes, Australia Queensland, and South Australia.

***Let's Meet at Our Booth
ITHF Past-President Barry Philps and Jim McMahon both of Australia
at the Booth in Sydney***



Again this year ITHF members will have an opportunity at the convention to really experience meeting and making new friends, rekindling old friendships, and just having a great time telling other Rotary members what it is like to live and travel the ITHF way.

Every year ITHF has a Fellowship Booth in the House of Friendship that allows convention goers to see us, talk with us, and become members of our wonderful fellowship. This year in Sao Paulo, Brazil we will have a booth in the House of Friendship, which we know will be extremely busy. The 20,000+ Rotarians who are registered will give all the booth volunteers unlimited opportunities to meet and greet old friends and invite others to become an active part of our ITHF family.

We have learned from years that we need at least three, and preferably four, ITHF members in and around the booth at all times because of the sheer numbers of people who stop by. We all like to share our feelings and thoughts with these folks; it takes time to really let them know who we are and how we feel about our experiences, so we need many volunteers. I am asking all of you to become a part of this special event in Sao Paulo by becoming a booth volunteer for an hour, 2 hours, half a day, or whatever you can spare out of your busy convention schedules, and enjoy yourselves while doing it.

The House of Friendship and our booth will be open the following days and hours:

Friday	June 5 09:00 AM - 18:00 PM
Saturday	June 6 09:00 AM - 19:00 PM
Sunday	June 7 08:30 AM - 16:00 PM
Monday	June 8 08:30 AM - 16:00 PM
Tuesday	June 9 09:00 AM - 16:00 PM

If you are interested in experiencing this new level of involvement with fellow ITHF members, please contact Phil Komornik through email, pskomorn@yahoo.com, providing your name and date(s)/time you would like to volunteer, etc. He will get in touch with you by return email in follow-up, and coordinate a schedule with you. You can also sign-up at the booth during the Convention.

ITHF Store Items

Six years ago, we introduced our light weight, blue windbreaker jacket with a hood hidden in the collar. It was so much of a hit that we sold out of them very quickly. At the AGM breakfast meeting in Bangkok in May, 2013, we debuted ITHF's new dark blue jacket. After strong sales there we have added it to the ITHF store inventory.

Other items for sale in the ITHF store include a stylish golf shirt with ITHF logo, a sew-on/iron-on ITHF logo patch for use on your favorite casual wear shirt, blouse, cap or hat and self-adhering luggage stickers that can be placed on your luggage for easy identification at airports, hotels, bus, and train stations worldwide.

Supplies of each and item sizes are limited. Prices (and shipping charges per item) in US dollars are as follows:

Jacket	\$34.00
Logo Patch	\$4.00
ITHF Golf Shirt	\$18.00
Luggage Sticker	\$1.00

Please contact Phil Komornik through email, pskomorn@yahoo.com, to order your ITHF items. Members attending the RI Convention in Sao Paulo, Brazil may pick up their items at the booth or after the AGM breakfast.

ITHF Annual Membership Breakfast Scheduled

Thanks to the efforts of ITHF member and Tour Chair, John Steven, we have been able to schedule and book our Annual Membership Meeting at **Hotel WZ Century Paulista, Rua Teixeira da Silva, 647 - Paraiso**, Sao Paulo 04002-033 on Monday, June 8th. Their phone number is (+55

11) 3882-9977.

The meeting will start promptly at 07:15 with a buffet breakfast. The cost for this breakfast meeting is \$35 USD or 120 BRL. The breakfast continues to be a popular place for all of us to catch up with each other, and to welcome new members to this wonderful fellowship.

ITHF President, Medicare Hsu, will give us a recap of his year and the tour of Taiwan, which took place in March and will be conducted again in 2016. John Steven, who organized the pre-Convention Tour in Brazil will also give a presentation.

Although, you can register for the breakfast at the ITHF booth in the House of Friendship at the RI Convention it is preferred that you RSVP to Phil Komornik by email, pskomorn@yahoo.com, so we can reserve the meals.

WEB SITE CHANGES

Earlier this year we moved the ITHF web site from a shared virtual server to our own real server. Happily the move went smoothly and we were able to improve security and update the software we use.

As a result of our move the 'IP address' of the web site changed and we bought our own server security certificate from Thawte VeriSign. Normally this has no effect but if you make a credit card payment the site switches to secure mode and your browser checks our credentials.

This has led to some members seeing an 'untrusted server' warning when they renew their subscription. Previously their web browser stored the credentials of our old server but now it finds a different security certificate and warns that you are connecting to a new server.

Please view the details of the new certificate. This should confirm that you are accessing a web site of the ITHF as verified by Thawte. If it does, you can safely accept the new certificate and your browser will remember it in future.

Now to some improvements to the site. After complaints that hiding members' email addresses made it time consuming to contact possible hosts, we have removed this security feature. Search results now show the email addresses and you can cut and paste them to build up contact lists when planning your travels.

Please be aware that anybody with access to the '*Members Only*' area of the website can now quickly harvest all our email addresses, so make sure your password is not on the list that any hacker will try first (see splashdata.com/press/worst-passwords-of-2014.htm).

To change your password click on 'Edit Profile' and select the '*Contact info*' tab. Enter your new password in the '*Password*' and '*Verify Password*' boxes—and **MAKE A NOTE** of it. Finally click the '*Update*' button at the bottom of the form.

We have also simplified the subscription options. Members can renew their subscriptions at a discount up to 3 months before it expires or within 6 months after. If you are on a 1-year plan you can upgrade to a 3-year subscription.

In the 6 months after a subscription expires members continue to enjoy full access to our site and can renew their subscription at the discounted rate. Please note that a renewal runs from the expiry date of the previous subscription. Once the 6 months '*grace*' period expires you may need to re-register if you want to continue as a member.

Questions regarding and of the above should be directed to Roger at roger.siddle@gmail.com; contacting the Newsletter editor only delays remediation of your issue. Thank you.

Roger Siddle - Rotary Club of Kendal, D1190
ITHF Website manager

A Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words

Our profile photo is the first thing another member sees of us when they search our ITHF website. It is the first opportunity to set a connection. If your profile picture is out of date or missing there is no better time than the present to update it. Additional photos you feel are representative should be added too.

It's also a good time to edit your member profile and put in as much information as you can so other members can find you in their searches. Along with your address, make sure you fill in the Rotary Information, Additional Information, etc. Nearby Cities in Towns are important, since a member from say, London, would likely not know where Loveland,

Colorado, USA is. Attractions are also important. The more info you share, the more comfortable a fellow member will feel contacting you.

While we're talking about pictures, the editor is still occasionally having problems with photos which cannot be copied and pasted into the Newsletter, losing an important part of the submission (not sure if it's Windows 8 or the lack of technological capability of the editor). Please submit your articles directly to Kimberly at kvcarroll@yahoo.com and ensure that your photos (only one or two, please...having to down-select to only a couple of photos is like having to pick my favorite grandson—when I love them all equally) can be downloaded for inclusion and I will endeavor to learn how to insert them—I am getting better...thank you.

Please "**LIKE**" us on Facebook and see what is going on with your fellow ITHF'ers. You can find us in the Search Box at the top of your Facebook page by typing "International Travel & Hosting Fellowship," or you might try this URL:

https://www.facebook.com/pages/ITHF-International-Travel-Hosting-Fellowship/230255290323263?ref=br_tf