



CONNECTIONS

JULY 2014

KIMBERLY CARROLL, EDITOR (KVCARROLL@YAHOO.COM)

Our page on Facebook now has grown to 271 of our members who have "LIKED" our page and are participating by posting photos and articles, requests and comments about their activities with each other. Please "LIKE" us and see what is going on with your fellow ITHF'ers. You can search for us in the Search Box at the top of your Facebook page by typing in our full name, "International Travel & Hosting Fellowship," or you might try this URL: https://www.facebook.com/pages/ITHF-International-Travel-Hosting-Fellowship/230255290323263?ref=br_tf



In Memoriam

José Jaécio "JJ" Ribeiro dos Santos
Rotary Club de Guará—District 4540

It is with deepest sadness that we note the passing of our fellow Rotarian and ITHF happy wanderer, JJ, and offer our most sincere condolences to his much-loved and dear wife, Edna Maria Barbosa de Matos (Rotary Club de Ituverava) and his family. To meet JJ, which many of us did on our ITHF tour of Portugal prior to last year's Rotary Convention, was to be his friend. His joy, his sense of fun, his kindness, and his dedication to the principles of Rotary were apparent to all and his loss, which cannot be adequately expressed in mere words, has been deeply felt by all of us.

Nós sentimos sua falta querido amigo e enviar o nosso amor e condolências a seus entes queridos.

Annual General Meeting

The second floor banquet room of the Rydges Hotel in Sydney was the site of the 2014 ITHF Annual General Membership Breakfast Meeting with 96 ITHF members and their partners, including many “first timers.”



As this was President Peter Ibbotson's last AGM, he gave a recap of his tenure, offered thanks and presented certificates to members of his board. President Peter then presented Medicare (Chang-Hsien) Hsu with the official insignia of the Presidency, the new board members were named, and those present were introduced.



New President Medicare presented Peter with a plaque, thanking him for his service during his 2-year tenure. He then spoke to the members present about his proposed tour on Taiwan early next year. Watch in the October newsletter for more information--this will be a very popular tour and will fill up quickly. *Don't miss out.*

The AGM always gives members an opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ITHF contacts. In all aspects the 2014 breakfast meeting was a great social occasion.

President Hsu addresses the AGM



Friends cannot believe we travelled a month, without using a hotel. PDG Douglas W Vincent, RC Woodstock-Oxford, Canada

We recently returned from the RI Convention in Sydney, followed by a three week speaking tour which included visits with several Rotary friends. Many cannot imagine the power of Rotary connections that allowed us to have this travel experience without using even one hotel room. It was a 32 year mixture of Rotary activities that brought us back to Australia, the country of my 1977 Rotary introduction as a GSE Team Member. Included this time was a visit with ITHF member PDG Allan Church from Townsville, North Queensland.

In Sydney we were hosted by our friend Geoffrey Little, whom we know through the Police and Law Enforcement Fellowship. Next was Wagga Wagga to participate in their Peace Ceremony and Dinner, in my role as Past Chair of the RI Peace Community Program. In addition to the Egan's and other Aussie friends, we had the benefit of sharing time with previously known India friends who were on a Friendship Exchange.

With a 32 year history of GSE, Friendship Exchange, Youth Exchange and Fellowships activity, one cannot help but experience and enjoy worldwide Rotary camaraderie and fellowship. I cannot imagine why these opportunities often remain unknown to Rotary Club members I meet. Even those in my own club cannot understand the concept of global home-hosting to the extent we enjoy.

Our next stop was at Bendigo to catch up with a former Exchange Student from 30 years ago. It was great to rekindle our relationship and catch up on her life experiences. What a delight to see her flourishing and still reminiscing about her much appreciated experiences in Canada. Melbourne followed we visited a former GSE friend, PDG Jenny Coburn. What a delight to see the Rotary engagement Jenny has developed through the years and now to be hosting a weekly Rotary Radio program.

This brings us to the ITHF connection and our new friend PDG Allan Church. When he heard we were coming to his city he promptly began to roll out the red carpet for our visit. Knowing of our speaking activities, he starting by coordinating of a multi-club meeting which I spoke at. Through emails and conversations in Sydney, our friendship developed. Through his Rotary connections, we had a grand time with his Rotary Club and other friends. As it turned out, we also had a family friend in this city that helped host us. Together these chaps gave us the royal treatment.

So if you have the urge to travel and want to enjoy the opportunity to be with local native friends on an economical scale, then our Rotary ITHF connection is the key to a great experience. If you don't qualify for a GSE or Youth Exchange, you certainly can qualify for a wonderful time through ITHF.



Rotary has been here - at the Great Barrier Reef headquarters and aquarium in Townsville



Members of Parliament welcomed Doug at dinner with friend John Honeycombe

Ian & Eleanor Holyoke with Susie & Phil Komornik in New Zealand



One of the joys of an international convention is being able to catch up with so many Rotarians, all in one place and then, in the case of ITHF, to meet many fellowship members at our breakfast. A greater joy though is to be able to entertain fellow members at our own homes and this was particularly true for us in Hawkes Bay, New Zealand, when Phil & Susan Komornik stayed with us following the Sydney convention.

As it happened we travelled from Sydney to Wellington, New Zealand on consecutive aircraft and so when Phil and Susie came through Border Control we were able to meet them, show them to their rental car company and provide some suggestions as to how to find us some 300 kilometres away the next day. I am sure we were over anxious for, aided by GPS, they arrived safely at our home in Napier the next evening and partook of a roast lamb dinner.

We had one full day together and took them to some nearby hills to look out over the countryside where we live and described how much of the land had risen from the sea in an earthquake over 80 years ago. Then we headed into the Napier city, proudly claimed as the “Art Deco Capital of the World” following the architecture style of the 1930s when the city was rebuilt following the earthquake which had destroyed almost all buildings.

A hill top lookout in Napier provided a reference point and a rather smart vista of the area. Overlooking the seaport (one of NZs busiest) we were able to see (even on Sunday) containers being shifted, logs being loaded and point out where wood chips and fruit were stored and loaded at appropriate times of the year.

A tour through Napier city and a visit to the possum shop completed that part of the journey before we moved 20 minutes to the nearby city of Hastings to have lunch in a delightful Irish bar in Havelock before

a trip to Te Mata Peak, a point some 800 metres above the city and an amazing lookout over the whole of Hawkes Bay.

Our rather full day finished with an ice-cream at a specialty ice-cream shop in Hastings and then a drive back to Napier through vineyards, orchards, vegetable growing areas, plus sheep and cattle farms. Also included in this brief “*connection*” were observations of and lectures on the New Zealand iconic sports of rugby, netball and lawn bowls. Phil and Susie will take memories of these sports - and our activities, with them back to the US.



ITHF Booth in Sydney

Our booth in the House of Friendship at the RI Convention in Sydney, was successful, presenting the rewards and benefits of ITHF membership to Rotarians from all over the Rotary world. We thank Past-President, Barry Philps and Super Wife, Susie Komornik for getting all the posters on the walls and aiding in the initial set up of the booth.

President Peter Ibbotson and Rosemary; Past President Barry Philps and Jennifer; Susie Komornik; John Steven and Audrey; Newsletter Editor, Kimberly Carroll; Secretary, Melvina Lube; Past Newsletter Editor, Pat Graf and Coleman; Jim McMahaon; Rose Gray, David Connell, Bruce and Lillian Duggar; Tony Betts; Chris and Graeme Dodsworth; Larry Zillox; Bill Cilker; Marge Cole; Linda and Jim Bauer; Kathleen and David Tansey; and David and Beverly Garland; Bob Wooley and many, many other members volunteered hours to staff the ITHF booth, meeting, greeting and speaking with Rotarians and Rotaractors about the benefits of membership. They all stepped right up to give of their time. It is another testament to the truth of Rotary’s slogan, “Service Above Self.”

Connection with Tracey Wyatt in Melbourne by Madu Bishnu, VP—Eastern India and Bangladesh

I met Rotarian Tracey Wyatt in Chicago in 2005 when we were hosted by ITHF member Nancy Flemming during the RI Convention in Chicago. Since then I had been in touch with Tracey through projects which her former club in Brisbane sponsored for microcredits for women and otherwise. I connected with her since last year and expressed my interest to visit her in Melbourne and stayed in her lovely home between June 5-13, 2014. She has a lovely garden. Initially she was away visiting Europe and later she came back and we had a lovely time together visiting Australian Native animal sanctuary in Healesville where we fed the bird and saw some of the great Native animals and birds. We love chocolates and we visited Max Brener in Doncaster and had lovely hot chocolates. I also attended her Rotary club meeting which is Chadstone/East Malvern and enjoyed the lovely evening at her club. They

also had a wonderful speaker on that evening. I thoroughly enjoyed their warm hospitality and my stay with her and Paul was wonderful. On the last evening she cooked a wonderful meal and we enjoyed so much. Melbourne is a beautiful city.

Two Connections in June 2014 from Rotarians PDG Graeme Dodsworth and Chris

As a result of the World Convention being in Sydney this year, it was our pleasure to catch up with lovely new friends whom we had met on the ITHF bus trip around Portugal in 2013. Pat and Willis Sutliff travelled to South Australia before the Sydney convention from their home in South Dakota, USA, and we able to show them around our very pretty city of Adelaide and close Hills area, including some animal experiences at Cleland Wildlife Park. We originally bonded over our common interest in the School of St Jude in Tanzania. Thank you to them to making the effort to “*come south.*”



Pat and Willis meeting a koala with Chris and Graeme

The other couple were Australians Ken and Nola Tyson invited us to visit them at their beautiful property in the northern part of NSW at Dorrigo.

Here we were persuaded to stay an extra day to be able to tour their area and meet some of their friends on the adjoining properties, even watching the latest technology in milking 500 cows. It was great to hear of the travel and adventures that all these Rotary friends had experienced since our tour around Portugal together. Now it is time to plan our next connections with them.



Chris, Nola, Ken and Graeme in Dorrigo NSW

A Sydney highlight had to be the “*reunions*” ITHF breakfast and the chat at the booth at the “*Billabong.*” Thank you Peter and Rosemary for your leadership this past 2 years.

On the Road with Melvina Lube

I started my trip in May 2014 with spending 1 week on each of the islands in New Zealand. Auckland, where one out of every six residents owns a boat, is nicknamed the City of Sails. I loved the farmland of the Walkato, and Waitomo. The Grotto is illuminating by thousands of tiny lights from the glow worms suspended from the cave ceiling. Rotorua, is known for its geothermal activity, and features geysers. Enjoyed the Tamaki Maori Village. Wellington reminded me of San Francisco. Christchurch is New Zealand's only predominately flat major city. I traveled through diverse farmland to Lake Tekapo a stunning glacial fed lake. Aorak/Mt. Cook National Park, home of New Zealand's tallest mountain, south past Lake Pukaki and through the tawny tussock the Mackenzie County. Queenstown's stunning scenery is inspiring and revitalizing. Visited Milford Sound and dined at Walter Peak's farm. Franz Josef, walked to glacier, Canterbury Plains, Waimakariri River and the Southern Alps a scenic paradise.

Then...on to Australia. In "Marvelous Melbourne," I wandered down broad, tree-lined avenues, and formal gardens, admired stately buildings, and shopped in fine boutiques. I toured Phillip Island and saw the little blue Penguins, 12 Apostles rocks along the coast. At Alice Springs, I visited the 1872 telegraph station, Royal Flying Doctor Service, The School of the Air, Reptile Centre, and purchased Aboriginal art. Ayers Rock/Uluru rises 348 meters from the desert and has a girth of 9.4 kilometers. (The world's most famous monolith estimated two-thirds of the Rock lies beneath the surface). Mala walking tours of SEIT Uluru waterhole and SEIT Kata Tjuta which evolved over millions of years. Flew to Cairns stayed at The Reef House Palm Cove enjoyed many vacation amenities. Cruised Australia's magnificent Great Barrier Reef. I was thrilled to visit these countries to create new memories!



The Burrows from Noosaville Host Ellen Haggerty

Warren and Pat Burrows from Noosaville, an hour and a half north of Brisbane, Australia wanted to host Ellen Haggerty from Pleasant Valley, New York, USA before the 2014 Sydney RI Convention. They had no idea how much they had in common. Besides their love of boating and Pat and Ellen's love of walking beautiful nature trails, Ellen and Warren realized they both had issues with hearing loss. Ellen is Chair of Rotarians for Hearing RAG (Rotarian Action Group www.ifrahl.org). Ellen was using a Personal Listening Device to supplement her hearing aids when Warren realized that a year ago he got something that looked similar that came with his new hearing aids, but he never used it. Ellen was excited that Warren had a streamer that when charged could connect clear, comprehensible sound directly from his iPhone, music player, TV and hearing loops into his ears! Now Warren can tell the world how "cool" it is to hear better and wear his hearing aids!

Nearly But Not Officially Yet and Wheels within Wheels by Rotarian Russell Marnock D9810 Emerald and District RC Australia

Nearly but not quite yet, sometimes things don't work out as planned but Rotary fellowship and hospitality are very much alive and well from our experiences.



We joined ITHF at the Bangkok convention where the booth was just across from the ISFR (Ski fellowship) stand we were looking after in the house of Friendship. Later on looking at the website we saw names we recognized from ISFR and Youth exchange, seems there's a cross pollination of membership between fellowships. After Bangkok we travelled to Europe and England where we spent a couple of enjoyable days with ISFR friends Margaret Hutchinson and Henry Blowey from Cockermonth/Manchester. The weather was cold and wet but the welcome was warm. Cockermonth had suffered some bad floods the previous season and Margaret was able to give us a local's insight into the disaster and how the community was recovering. Only after we returned home did we realize that Margaret and Henry were also ITHF members. (Photo: PDG Margaret Hutchinson with President Kris Ash and Russell at Emerald D9810 Rotary.)

Six months later we caught up with Margaret and many of our ISFR friends in Telluride Colorado for the annual ski week, where apart from lots of fellowship and good skiing some \$10,000 was raised for adaptive ski programs for disabled skiers.

After Telluride we planned to drive northwest across the USA to Canada including an official ITHF connection in Salt Lake City with Wally and Pat. As it turned out Pat was not well so we arranged a hotel downtown and Wally dropped by to see we made it OK and to give us some tourist pointers. But it was not good weather to be out, heavy snow falling and dangerous roads, so we opted to walk across to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir recital, but otherwise as I had a cold too we had a quiet day inside. Not what was planned but the best outcome under the circumstances. We continued on north via Yellowstone NP and to Kelowna Canada where our daughter has settled.

Moving on to the Sydney Convention we were manning the ISFR stand and again ITHF was just opposite. It was good to talk with some ITHF members there including past newsletter editor Pat Graf whose town Salmon Arm we had good memories of from another trip; but that's another story. Margaret and Henry from Manchester made the trip to the convention and we were able to organize a few days together in the Blue Mountains and afterwards at our place in Melbourne. Margaret was guest speaker at our Emerald Rotary club and did a great job of promoting the positives of international fellowships in enhancing the Rotary experience.

There's not space here but we have also had some wonderful fellowship experiences through Youth Exchange contacts and host parents, and we are certainly positive about pursuing more "connections" official ITHF or otherwise.

An Award for my Rotary Clubs Commitment and Service from the DG 3201. Ambalakat Ram Mohan, Chairman CBR Project



Our Rotary club's on-going CBR Project of helping Damayanthi family reached in the final stage and this Project is duly recognized by the District Governor and the award committee recently. The work we have done to change the lives of few disabled personnel (all five in one family of 10) by helping them to stand on their feet to earn their living and live in a fairly good secured house constructed with the help of friends, relatives, NRIs (specially from UK and USA), visiting Rotarians from India and abroad, Chief Minister, Chittilappilly Foundation, NAB, Rotarians and ITHF members is something unique and creditable to Rotary specially to RC of Ottapalam who coordinated this work. This definitely shows how Rotary Clubs and Rotarians can change the lives of less fortunate people of our region. Some more final work to be completed even though the family shifted to the new house before the monsoon. The old house/tea shop is replaced with a 3-room terraced house attached with a tea shop for the only able member from the Damayanthi family is an image booster to Rotary. The other ably disabled persons are also helping towards their living by selling lottery ticket/tailoring etc. provided by Rotary Club and local administration. Monthly medicine charges for them is also being provided by the well-wishers of Rotary from abroad. Our CBR Project made all this possible.

Photos show the newly built house and tea shop (yet to complete in full) old house and tea shop. I am happy being the Chairman of this ongoing Project for its successful implementation/completion.

Thanks to all those who helped our Club for implementing this humanitarian project.

A Passport to Happiness

In March 2014, 14 Rotarians, spouses and friends from District 5950 spent 2 weeks in Nepal and Bhutan. This trip was an indirect ITHF activity as a contact was made with ITHF member who no longer lived in Kathmandu but had a son who had a travel agency in the capital. Through Sagar Gurung we were able to do a service project in each country and had an opportunity to meet with several Rotary Clubs.

In Nepal we spent 2 days with children in a boarding school called "Life Vision Academy" run by a young woman named Haushala Thapa. Her organization "Children and Youth First" took in 53 children from abused families. The remarkable experience was that the children ages 5-15 were responsible for giving the tours of their school and dormitory. They also taught us how to make MOMO's, a steamed cooked rice and meat in a dough pastry. They were very good.

In Bhutan we met with the only Rotary Club in the country and did a service project with them in cleaning the main street of litter. The staff of one of the large hotels in Thimphu also joined us as we worked our way along the mile long stretch. At the end of activity the local Rotarians got a call from the Prime

Minister, thanking us for cleaning their country, but wondered why foreigners came half way around the world to clean their streets. The following day we met the Queen of Bhutan who also thanked us as she climbed up to the monastery called “Tigers Nest.”

During our stay we had many opportunities to interact with local citizens and learn about the two different cultures along with their historical landmarks. We noted the difference between the two countries with Nepal being primarily Hindu and Bhutan a Buddhist nation. One of the highlights in Bhutan was meeting with one of the monks who are working on a National project to define “Gross National Happiness.” Bhutan is known for this phrase and wants to incorporate it into their government policies.



Of course there were opportunities to do sightseeing some of the temples and Stupas in each country. Tigers Nest is a monastery that sits on a 2000 foot cliff and has 40 monks living there. All of their needs have to be hand carried up to the monastery. Check it out on Google.

Larry Zilliox, PDG 5950, VP of ITHF Midwest USA

ATLANTA AND DALLAS CONNECTIONS WITH NORFOLK, ENGLAND

In late March 2014, when Martin & Helen Anscombe were en route from Norfolk, England, to Albuquerque, New Mexico, they took a 3 night stopover in Atlanta, Georgia. There, by prior arrangement, they met ITHF member Garry Gaun at his North Atlanta Rotary Club’s Thursday lunchtime meeting. It was a brief but most enjoyable contact.

After a 12-day RFE, involving some 8 Rotary Clubs from Santa Fe in New Mexico to Ft Stockton in far west Texas, on their way back to UK, Martin & Helen took another 3 night stopover in Dallas, Texas. Here they were invited to dinner at the stunning Dallas Country Club by ITHF members Gilbert and Linda Brown (East Dallas RC). Next morning they took us to the famous Dallas Arboretum and Botanical Gardens, which were in full and magnificent bloom for the spring festival. In the afternoon, whilst Linda had another appointment, Gilbert very kindly drove Martin & Helen out to Southfork Ranch, the iconic and still in use external set for the TV series “Dallas”. That evening we all went to Ojeda’s, a genuine, family run, Tex-Mex restaurant, where we quaffed Margaritas and sampled some of the most authentic cuisine.

Once again, they were very grateful for ITHF connections that enabled them to see and do things that would be far more difficult to achieve as ordinary travellers.



Barry Gaun (N Atlanta RC) with Helen & Martin



l to r: Linda Brown, Helen & Martin, & Gilbert Brown



Martin, Helen & Gilbert with giant frog!



Helen & Linda

Rewarding Connections by Pat & Coleman Graf

After a prolonged drought of many years, both at home and away, we finally were able to make some connections on our recent trip to New Zealand prior to the Rotary International Convention in Sydney. We pre-arranged visits with four ITHF members and were also lucky enough to re-unite with former ITHF friends. As a bonus, we linked up with ITHF members from the UK who were staying in Australia for the winter.

All of our hosts welcomed us warmly and made us feel right at home. They showed us their communities, fed us wonderful home-cooked meals, and allowed us to become part of their worlds for a few days. The conversation never stopped; the sharing and exchange of ideas left us all richer and renewed. With them we visited wineries and local farmers' markets, attended a Rotary meeting in Nelson, where we learned all about New Zealand's Olympic rowing successes; helped pick olives and went deep-sea fishing at Wharkatane; watched the sluice gates open at Aratiatia Dam near Taupo; and toured a pottery manufacturer at Matakana. None of this would have happened had we simply kept to the tourist beat.

Our wonderful hosts were Jo & Rex Morris of Nelson, South Island; and on North Island, Gordon & Suzanne Stevenson of Taupo; Hugh & Jeannette Lovelock of Wharkatane; and Steph & Murray Allison of Torbay. Thank you all for enriching our visit to New Zealand with your local knowledge and your warm hospitality. We also were thrilled to catch up with our former ITHF friends Wally & Margot Simmers in Wellington, whom we had not seen since 2006 and with whom we had lost contact; our thanks to Gordon Stevenson for helping us re-connect. Finally, an extra thank you to Hugh Lovelock for connecting us with UK ITHF'ers John & Sheila Sully at Nelson Bay, Australia.

We have been members of ITHF since 1990, and although our connections are few and far apart, they are always so rewarding when they happen. For us, membership in the ITHF Fellowship is an absolute given!

Hearty Greetings



After attending RI Convention at Sydney, I flew to New Zealand and stayed with ITHF members Wally Hannam and his wife Jan Hannam at Christchurch during 9-13 June. They were excellent hosts and opened their home and hearts to me. They made me feel at home and also took me Hanmer Springs. They gave me a tour of Christchurch also and I was able to get familiarized with New Zealand and its rich culture. Their inputs helped in planning for my further to Queenstown. Wally took me to his Rotary Club Papanui weekly meeting where I exchanged my club banner and met many Rotarians.

Thank You ITHF for making this possible. Bharath Reddy, Nellore, India

2015 ITHF Tour

Planning has been underway for some time on our Pre-2015 RI Convention Tour in Brazil. Since Rotary International has moved the dates of the Convention up a day, changes are having to be made to accommodate the new start. We will publish the tour and get the itinerary out to everyone as soon as we can have it fixed. In the meantime, if you are interested in being a member on the tour, please contact, John Steven at johnsteven@bigpond.com. John has volunteered to step in and finish this planning with the unexpected passing of JJ.