



Connections

A Publication of the International Travel & Hosting Fellowship

Kimberly Carroll, Editor

August 2019



E Komo Mai—Welcome!

Aloha! Are you going to Honolulu? If you haven't registered, you can do so at this link:

<https://www.riconvention.org/en/honolulu/register>

Hotels are filling up fast, so don't delay.

ITHF is planning a pre-convention Hawaiian Island cruise and a 3-day post-convention cultural tour of Oahu. A flyer containing all of the information was sent out earlier this week. Details on the tours and the ITHF rooms at the Ala Moana Hotel are all in the brochure.

We look forward to seeing you in 2020!

Note from Past President Sheila

A heart-felt ITHF спасибо за ваше время и усилия to our fellow Rotarians who made our pre-convention tour of Russia such a memorable trip!

*RC Moscow-East
Rotaract Club Moscow-East
RC Stolichniy
Rotaract Club Moscow New Generation.
Moscau Metropol
RC Vladimir
RC Ivanovo
RC St.-Petersburg International
RC St.-Petersburg White Nights
RC St.-Petersburg Neva
RC St.-Petersburg*

**Joanne Rosener
Rochester Rotary Riser
On Tour with ITHF in Russia**



ITHF Members sightseeing in St.Petersburg and posing on the Rotary bench, a local service project. "One's destination is never a place, but a new way of seeing things." (Henry Miller, 20th C American writer)

Rotary Fellowships are a best kept secret of Rotary International. And, the International Travel and Hosting Fellowship (ITHF) is no exception. While the primary purpose of ITHF is connecting with Rotarians around the world to where our travels take us, one of the most popular activities of ITHF are the pre and post tours associated with the Rotary International Convention. This year, a pre-tour to Russia was offered to members of ITHF. While the organizers hoped to attract 35 interested members, in the end, 60 members participated and enjoyed a trip of a lifetime. The group provided us an amazing tour of Russia visiting four places and hosted by Rotary Clubs in the cities of Moscow, Kastroma, Ivanova, and St Petersburg. We learned so much about the country, their culture, and the people. They're a lot more like us than not! And, the Russian Rotary Clubs enjoy Rotary as much as we do and they especially enjoy hosting Rotarians from around the world. They do know how to put on a party! Throughout the 12 days, we made quick friends with the Rotarians with whom we traveled and we made new friends from each of the Russian Rotary Clubs we visited. Mark Twain said it best, "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry, and narrow-mindedness."

**Maheswor Bhakta Shrestha
DPIC RID 3292 Nepal Bhutan
Makes Two ITHF Connections:**

ITHF Connection Experience Sharing: Calgary



After the 109th RI Convention in Toronto, where we attended ITHF AGM first time on June 26 and headed to Quebec and Montreal. On a short request,

Rotarian **Surinder Khanna** (107, Oakbriar Close S.W. Calgary, Alberta) and his lovely wife Bunny of Rotary Club of Calgary Heritage Park, RI District 5360 quickly agreed to host me and my wife Pramila at their home in Calgary on July 2, 2018 on



way to our post-convention trip to Canadian Rockies and Vancouver.

Surinder and Bonnie were so kind and hospitable to cook sumptuous lunch for us and offered a comfortable room in their luxurious home. We shared our Rotary

interests, exchanges club and country flags and later they drove us around downtown Calgary. It was such a memorable connection that both of us felt that the one night visit was too short to understand enough about each other.

Rtn Surinder was so energetic and enthusiastic to know more about Nepal and Rotary services there that we handed over Nepal's unique triangular national flag as a symbol of honorary cultural ambassador. We have invited them and earnestly look forward to host them in Nepal.

ITHF Connection Experience Sharing: Boston

After a visit of Canadian Rockies and Vancouver, we flew on July 10 to Boston where the three Rotarian ladies of Brookline Rotary, namely Sharon Herman (present president), Joyce Graff and Susan Rack (both past presidents) received and hosted us for 3 days. Sharon asked me for a presentation on Nepal to the members in Rotary club of Brookline, which I did on July 12 amidst most interactive Rotarians. I look forward to my home club Rotary Club of Kopundol working with the Brookline club in some service project together. The trio and Arnie also of the club took us around Boston, Kennedy Library and the excursion to New Port.

ITHF gave us this opportunity to live in the family, share thoughts and experiences and strengthen club to club relations in Rotary.

Ghana & Nigeria with Rajesh Pamnani Hyderabad, India



I was on a business trip to Ghana & Nigeria (with my son) last month and could meet one member each in these countries.

It was nice to meet and discuss about Rotary projects and each other's perception and culture of our countries.



In Accra Ghana (24th April), I met with Rtn Amina Sammo for a lovely dinner in her home town. She also helped us to buy some nice hand-made beaded women's footwear. In Nigeria on 27 April, I met with Rtn. Elohor Abhulimen for a breakfast meeting.

Ellen Haggerty Dutch Visit Directly After the Hamburg Rotary International Convention



Every time I go to Europe, I want to visit my Dutch YFU (Youth for Understanding) International Exchange Student to see how she and her family are doing.

Before going, I asked ITHF Member Carla and her husband, Gerard Kuijpers (pictured above) if they wanted to host me for 2 nights. She said yes.



Carla recruited new Rotarians from their newly formed Rotary Club in Vierhouten (less than a month old!) where only

women were members, many young and still working (Ellen and new Rotarian Claudine pictured left). I missed their Wednesday night meeting because I was traveling from the Hamburg Rotary International Convention. Gerard met me at the train at Amersfoort, showed my private thatched roof guest house and brought me a traditional Dutch breakfast of bread, meat and cheese the next morning. Then, my first Rotarian host, Diane took time out of her busy Veterinarian practice to show me the Flevopolder or New Lands which were covered with water 100 years ago and the storks in people's yards, signs of fertility where Dutch children are told Storks bring babies!

We also saw a dairy farm where 250 cows and calves were either resting or feeding on specially made feed from the "kitchen" for their growth stage. Diane showed me the fortress town of Harderwijk and another Rotarian, Claudine treated me to a local fish lunch by the water and the quaint fortress town of Elburg--both built around 1270. In the evening 2 other Rotarians, Medi and Rian treated me to the best salmon I have ever eaten, half cooked the Dutch way and delicately seasoned along with bacon wrapped chicory, a new delicacy for me. Then, since it was still light out at almost 10pm, we went into Vierhouten's Soerel Forest to see the Hidden Village where Nazi Resistance Fighters hid hundreds of fleeing Jews, Allied Pilots shot down, a Russian, and a Pole.

The next day I met my ITHF Rotarian Host, Carla who invited me to stay with her to Vierhouten. She was coming back from a French Rose Festival. She showed me her beautifully restored 200 year old thatched roof farm house with some original hand blown glass, old Dutch ceramic tiles and some

original beams and rafters and the original Dutch Oven and fireplace. Then, I borrowed her Electric bike and we both biked into Nunspeet to enjoy lunch and climb the Nunspeet tower for a view of the city and a tour of the Nunspeet Nature Museum and Art Museum with a special exhibit of Rembrandt influenced paintings by the area's own famous artist, Arthur Briët. It was a short, but fun filled visit where I could also tell New Rotarians about my many ITHF visits, Rotary International Conventions, Rotary Club Projects and why I'm celebrating 15 years in Rotary!

Pat & Coleman Graf
Connection in Catania, Sicily
Salmon Arm, BC, Canada



As our cruise ship was stopping in many European ports, we searched through the directory for a connection and found one in Catania, Sicily. Rotarian

Lia Ragusa and her husband Francesco met us at the cruise ship dock and whisked us away to tour the city and to see some of its magnificent buildings: the opera house, Teatro Massimi Bellini; and the beautiful Monastero dei Benedettini, which today houses the Department of Humanities at the University of Catania.

Lia and Francesco treated us to a wonderful Sicilian lunch: appetizers of deep-fried squid, shrimp, octopus, sardines, oranges and eggplant, all prepared Sicilian style; bowls of seafood and squid-ink pasta, all washed down with a Sicilian red wine.

After lunch, we visited the Piazza del Duomo with its beautiful Cathedral of Santa Agatha and mysterious elephant statue and obelisk before driving along the coast up to the hilltop resort town of Taormina. There we visited the Teatro Antica di Taormina, an ancient Greek Theatre, with its incredible views of the sea and Mount Etna.

We had an amazing day with our generous hosts

Lia and Francesco and cannot thank them enough for their hospitality. Once again, ITHF has helped to create new friendships.

THE POWER OF ITHF –
AND NOT GETTING LOST!
Ian Holyoake

In 2017, ITHF members Jochen & Angela Barckmann from Flensburg in Germany toured New Zealand and linked up with VP Ian Holyoake, noting that both Jochen & Ian were retired police chiefs. Their activities around the Hawkes Bay area were reported in our newsletter at the time.

A parting comment “*Are you likely to come to the Hamburg Convention*” met with an uncertain response, but as the time passed the Holyoakes registered for convention, made contact with the Barckmanns and planned a couple of days for Flensburg. A fellow NZ PDG travelling with Ian & Eleanor was also welcomed.



The two couples met up again at the ITHF booth and then, after convention made their way to Flensburg by train, a

journey not without a degree of uncertainty and excitement but were reassured when Jochen met them at the station, became their tour guide around his area and “took over” all of the ongoing arrangements.



Travelling in another country and with no knowledge of the language can be a feat in itself. Then trying to

identify the “attractions” and get to them raises this to another level, however being able to get help from fellow ITHF members can fix this. This is where Jochen & Angela really came to the fore. When the visitors left for Berlin their anxiety was alleviated for everything was “mapped out” for them in fine detail. The places to change trains, the platforms to be on, how to get to their Berlin apartment and then later getting the suburban train to the airport

The value of ITHF was really epitomised in this “connection – or “reconnection!” That is what ITHF is about as “*Rotary Connects the World.*”

[The two photos show the hosts Jochen & Angela (standing/sitting on the right) at their home in Flensburg and two of the New Zealand visitors, Judy Bain and Eleanor Holyoake on the left.]

Madu Bishnu in Luxembourg



I had ITHF Connection with Kazi Asma Azmery in Luxembourg in June 2019.

I was on my own sitting enjoying Music programme in front of the

Town Hall when Kazi Asma spotted me and we got along chatting for 30 minutes.

Linda Bauer Travels to The Netherlands & Germany

May 27th we were off to Holland and Germany for 6 weeks. We had hoped for several ITHF connections, and were so happy with the two we were able to schedule. For both we were their first ITHF guests, and surely not their last! Hilda and Ludo have a beautiful home on the beach south of Amsterdam. A quick drive and we were in The Hague enjoying the galleries, including Escher. Hilde took us on a lovely drive to several old Dutch villages. And we had delicious Dutch breakfasts

around their dining room table. Joining Hilde for her Rotary meeting was a real highlight. If you've never been to Ratzeburg, in northern Germany, drop in on Michael and Batina for a few days and enjoy this small town, and their beautiful home on the lake. These hosts are great fun! Michael dazzled us with his guitar one evening, and did delicious cooking. We had an exceptional visit here!

The last & most important thing..... Linda Jenkins



Peter Opa from Benin Africa, going to an early morning Rotary meeting was the last thing Peter did before leaving us. Pictured here Don Jenkins is seen showing him a LN-4 hand that Don's club gives to each of the people who speak at his club. Well as you probably know,

they don't actually give the speaker a hand but donate the cost of one in the name of the speaker.

The speaker gets a lovely card with pictures we took while putting on the hands in Vietnam. (It is a wonderful Rotary inspired project & if you're not familiar with it check it out at www.LN4.org) but this is really about ITHF & our wonderful ITHF house guest from Benin.

Peter came to the US for further education, became a citizen but after 15 years in this “amazing country” felt a call to go back to help his country. He has been doing so ever since. His area in Benin did not have a library & children of his community begged him to send him books. This inspired him on knock on doors to get donations of books. He now has a ware house housing these books & is here this time in part to find funding to ship these books

to Benin so he can stop paying storage for them & get them to the intended location. For more information regarding all of this please write to peteropa@gmail.com