Are you going to Seoul in 2016? Hoping to see our Fellow ITHF members at next year’s gathering in the beautiful and enchanting capitol city of South Korea. Please check out all that’s happening at the following website and make sure you get registered: http://www.riconvention.org/. We also organized the following events with Seoul Convention: an ITHF booth at house of friendship, which will display update information of ITHF & all events & activities in this year and the ITHF Annual General Meeting & ITHF breakfast on May 31 at 07:00 at Shilla Stay Hotel-B1 Cafe, address: 163 Migeun Dong, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul, 120-020 South Korea, Phone: +82-2-6388-9000, exit the Seoul subway Seodaemun station., reservations for members will available in March 2016. The ITHF Board meeting will be held on May 30, 2016 12:30-14:00 at Kintex Exhibition Center Business Lounge 2B; all ITHF Board members & VPs/Officers, please plan to attend the meeting.

From the Administrator
“Aircon”

Putting the “Travel” in ITHF!

My dear fellow ITHF members: I’d like to take this opportunity to give you ITHF update; in conjunction with the 2016 RI Seoul Convention, we offer two amazing tours:

Highly Recommended—ITHF Tour to Southern Japan and Korea; NOT JUST A TOUR, a unique experience with ITHF members exploring Japanese culture. We love Japan because of:

1. THE FOOD: maybe you know of sushi and ramen, but Japanese cuisine is much more. It’s the essence of 2000 years life. Each city that we visit has its own unique taste and we will sample them all.

2. THE CULTURE: Japanese culture from its years of isolation, transformation after the war, and merging of east and west makes for a unique experience. You will learn to appreciate the differences.

3. SHOPPING: Japan is the shopping paradise of unique home appliances & electronic gadgets. They come from the refined sensitivities, ingenuity, team spirit, and work ethic of the Japanese people.
4. LONGEVITY: Japan has more people over 100 years old than any country in the world. Tour to Japan, you may catch some senses to improve your quality of LIFE.

5. ROTARY: Japan is one of the largest Rotary countries and some of the biggest donors to the Rotary Foundation. You will meet Japanese Rotarians who will share their projects and unique programs. You will learn about the real Japan through the eyes of Japanese Rotarians.

6. HOTEL IN SEOUL: we expect big crowds and heavy traffic in Seoul, so we blocked rooms at the hotel in Seoul, near the train station, where our members can stay together. We have our Korean PDG friend to greet us and tell us about Rotary in Korea.

7. OPEN TO ALL: in order to reach our goal, we are opening this trip to your friends, family members, and non-ITHF members. We hope that this will create an atmosphere of good fellowship and family fun.

8. JAPAN ONLY: if this tour is beyond your budget, consider a Japan only option at reduced cost. Let us know if this interests you.

Now you know why our Tour Organizers PDG Steve & Noko Yoshida are so sad. They were looking forward to sharing our love of Japan with our friends. Few have answered our call, but it's not too late.

Please find the application for the tour and hotel in Korea on the ITHF.ORG website; for details please visit: http://www.ithf.org/index.php/20-english/english-current-tours/72-seoul-2016-tour-documents

A 2016 Post-Convention Taiwan Tour is also available on ITHF website; Medicare has planned for 3-day home stay hosted by local Rotarians, which will offer visitors a good opportunity to observe Taiwanese life style/culture in depth, for details, please visit: http://www.ithf.org/index.php/members-only/taiwan-2016-tour-documents

For those members who are going to attend the Seoul Convention and are interested in joining these tours, please download tour documents & fill the application form as soon as possible.

ITHF Connection in Connecticut USA
Medicare & Linda Hsu, Taiwan

Taking the opportunity of our trip to East coast of USA, we paid a visit to ITHFer John & Martha Bradshaw at their old home, North Stonington. We had chances of travelling together with both of
them at Sydney Preconvention ITHF Tours. John retired from Pfizer Pharmaceutical, after more than 30 years of service, which was also the service company that Linda served for 17 years. What a pity was that Martha couldn’t join Sao Paulo Preconvention ITHF Tour for her commitment in a Rotary fundraising and left John alone.

A chilly and rainy afternoon of Dec. 1, 2015, we were treated warmly with the homemade apple pie prepared by Marti who was in education profession and is active in her club. Their antique home full of memorable items will be a good one for ITHF members to visit. And of course they welcome all the ITHFers to visit whenever you are near the Northeast coast of USA.

Martin & Helen Anscombe
Watton, Norfolk, England
Much has happened in the 20 or so years of our membership of Rotary’s International Travel and Hosting Fellowship - one of RI’s many "Best Kept Secrets"(!). Most of the changes involve the inexorable advance of technology and the internet - so much easier to communicate, or so it should be. Or is it? The continual strive to improve and keep up with the advances does sometimes lead to oddities - the new ITHF website a few years ago has led to a number of anomalies, for instance: I am listed as a member for 23 months not the 20 odd years, and it took several communications for it to be realized that the new site did not recognize consecutive ‘free’ membership years arising from published articles in "Connections.”

One aspect of ITHF that needs to be addressed is the matter of acknowledging Connections inquiries. If the whole point of ITHF is fellowship between Rotarians on a person to person basis all round the world, then the very first requirement is to always respond to an ITHFers email. Helen & I exchange Christmas and/or New Year greetings with ITHF members with whom we have had exchanges in the past; I mentioned to some of them the apparent decline both in terms of actual "Connections" inquiries, and in the non-responses to emails sent out. I won’t name names but suffice to say that a general connection inquiry we sent from 'old' England a couple of months ago to a number of listed ITHF members in, shall we say, the New England area, but received not a single response or acknowledgement. We hope to be in the Boston area for a few days in mid and again in late September; so if anyone reading this would like to respond, please do email us!

One of the problems is that of changing email addresses, usual due to a change of server. We have lost email contact with several previous connections and we are not sure whether listed email addresses are still correct, or perhaps in some cases 'old age' has taken over. In that respect, we were saddened to hear of the sudden passing of ITHF member Hugh Lovelock (Whakatane, New Zealand) on 31st October. If you are reading this, you must be a member. If you are member, do you always respond to inquiries? If not, why not? If not, indeed, what is the point of membership? Please remember - an email sent is not necessarily an email received (they can get lost in spam filters when coming from 'unknown' respondents). Also, an inability to actually undertake or action a connection request is fully understood but the simple exchange of emails is in the spirit of fellowship and adds to the ITHF experience.

The Golden Gate Bridge
Linda Jenkins
Do these guys look familiar?? They should if you've been reading your ITHF NEWS LETTER!!
The view of the Golden Gate in the San Francisco Bay may also bring back some memories as numerous...but never enough...of the ITHF family have joined us. So to the picture...this wonderful ITHF couple, Rob & Robbie Insull were so gracious to us the first time we ever had an ITHF experience...when we first visited them in New Zealand. After their visit, I submitted pictures of all of us sailing on the SF Bay & picnicking on Angel Island. When we went back to New Zealand a 2nd time it was to see old friends...the Insulls were certainly on that list. To celebrate 50 years of marriage they took an amazing trip and included time with us. I'll let them fill anyone interested in on their trip.

When my husband decided to celebrate his 75th Birthday by driving as far East from California as one could drive without getting on a ferry the first book to turn to was an old ITHF directory. Sydney, Nova Scotia was the city. Ian and Anne Doyle the gracious ITHF hosts. It was a far too short of a time as we arrived in the evening but enjoyed a Rotary breakfast together in the local pizza place. Unfortunately we were all moving so quickly & the stay so brief I have no pictures of the Doyle’s. I do hope Ian and Anne will honor us with a visit as we felt we had far more in common with them than time allowed to be fully discussed. Could it just be a coincidence or is it part of the magic of Rotary??

New Zealand & Australia
Mary & Kevin O’Flaherty

Kevin and Mary O’Flaherty from Kirra Beach on the Australian Gold Coast were given a warm ITHF welcome in Whangarei NZ during a December visit to Northland, north of Auckland, New Zealand. Mike and Liz Williams not only ensured that we met real kiwis at the local Nature Refuge where we were given a personal tour; but showed us around their marvelous Rotary and community renewal – an old abandoned quarry now changed into a vibrant sub-tropical oasis for the pleasure of locals and visitors alike.
But another garden that was just as beautiful was back at the lovely home of Mike and Liz. Mary would have loved to have transported their magnificent garden back to Queensland with us! Mike and Liz we hope you will come and stay with us sometime soon.

We enjoyed their Whangarei Quarry Gardens just as a Sculpture Exhibit concluded and the Visitors’ Centre was officially opened for business.

**Canberra**

Kevin was also hosted nearer to home by Tony and Katy Trumble on a couple of recent visits to Canberra. They were very hospitable – walking with me around their beautiful Lake Gininderra and with Tony we rode bikes around Canberra to the Australian War Memorial and National Library. A visit to the developing Arboretum followed our weekend at the 9710 Rotary District Conference in the Snowy Mountains. Mary and I are looking forward to returning their hospitality soon in Kirra.
Two Very Memorable Visits with Great ITHF Hosts
Beverley and David Garland

When one starts planning an extended international trip you ask yourself what do I want to achieve from the experience and almost always the answer will be “to meet interesting local people.” This is the wonderful benefit that is membership of Rotary’s International Travel & Hosting Fellowship.

Over the years we have stayed with and hosted wonderful Rotarians from all around the world all of whom have become long-time friends. When we meet again at Rotary’s annual Conventions and other events it is like meeting up again with a family members.

Beverley and David Garland from Tauranga New Zealand (New Zealand ITHF Vice President) extended this great friendship and experience when they visited and stayed with John and Shirley Clutton and Helen and Brian Perkins during a visit to the UK last July.

Our hosts John and Shirley, members of the Rotary Club of Rugby Dunsmore live in an apartment in a classical “Country Manor House, Beechwood” with interesting late 1800’s architecture on the outskirts of Leamington Spa in Warwickshire. A beautiful historic area not far from Stratford-upon-Avon the home of William Shakespeare. We visited many sites that featured in his life. The parks and gardens of Leamington Spa were wonderful.

While we did not visit Rugby, the home of the game on Rugby (we had visited with a nephew and his family a few days previously, his son attends Rugby School) we talked a lot about the game and the upcoming Rugby World Cup contest.

A highlight was the invitation from John’s Rotary Club for David to be their guest speaker when he told about New Zealand and about our great fellowship.

As always it was the personal times around the meal table were the very special times of this great visit. Thanks John and Shirley. Copy the link to view our picture show: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhtVmN0LWks
A few days later we arrived at the home of Helen and Brian and again wonderful welcome. Coming from New Zealand with only 200 years of history to be in their home, Laburnum Cottages Upper Penn, Wolverhampton, that was built over 200 years ago was a real experience. Again sitting and talking around the table was a delight.

The visit to the Black Country Museum was like going back in time. This area was the one of the cradles of the British industrial revolution. To see how people lived, how they worked and what they achieved was amazing.

A meal with and getting to know members of Helen’s Rotary Club of Wednesfield was a highlight and again an opportunity to spread the word about ITHF.

Our visit with Helen and Brian will always bring back memories of Brian’s wonderful Classical Guitar playing music: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b618WzAxwl4. Copy the link to view our picture show of our visit: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ekcsj-dC-LQ. Thanks Helen and Brian, you were great hosts!

From the Editor: my deepest thanks for all your warm wishes and kind words. My much-loved sister lost her brave battle and we are bereft, but ever grateful for the time we had together; your thoughtfulness helped make this difficult time bearable. I hope to see you all in Korea and on the Taiwan tour so I can give you each a warm hug… ke