



International Travel and
Hosting Fellowship

WWW.ITHF.ORG

May 2026



FRIENDS CANNOT BELIEVE WE TRAVELLED A MONTH, WITHOUT USING A HOTEL

A while ago we enjoyed a visit to Sydney, Australia, 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. You can share this same experience, by joining a Fellowship like ITHF.

It was a 30+ 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 as well as other Rotary fellowship friends.



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 Co-Chair of the RI Peace Community Program. In addition to John and Mary Egan, a COL Colleague, and other Aussie friends, we had the benefit of sharing time with previously known India friends who were on a Friendship Exchange.

With a past 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 do not 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 experience in Canada, years ago. Melbourne followed as 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. And while you are at it, why not give a presentation to your club on how you can travel for free with Rotary and ITHF, like we have.

Contact: Doug Vincent: vincent@execulink.com

Top News

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01/05

ITHF now has 1030 members

ITHF VIRTUAL TRAVEL COMMITTEE

Become an active volunteer member of this Virtual Travel Committee and help us bring the pleasure of visiting and learning about other countries from the comfort of your home, as well as informing our ITHF members about the opportunities for in-person travel that ITHF provides.

UPCOMING VIRTUAL TOUR PRESENTATIONS

- May 29 and 30 - Cambodia
- June - no session
- July 24 and 25 - Meet and Greet New ITHF members

Contact: **Simmy Ahluwalia**, – simmyithf@gmail.com

NMA ONUIGBO'S TRIBUTE TO ITHF MEMBER JOHN HENDERSON



My life halted with the news! The John Henderson that I know.

I met John and Jean at a Major Donor dinner (an event organized by Rotary International for those who have contributed at least USD10,000 to the Rotary Foundation) during the Rotary International Convention in Toronto, Canada in 2018. At the dinner, I wanted to take a photo with the then Rotary International President, Barry Rassin and with my phone in my hand, I was looking around to get someone to help with my camera. Without me speaking, John observed and quickly said to me; "I will help you take the photo" and he did.

After taking the photo, I noticed a vacant seat close to where John stood so I asked one of the ladies seated there if I could have the seat, the lady looked at John and John said; "yes please you can have the seat" so I sat down beside the lady and started a conversation with her. John then came closer and said to me; "meet my wife, Jean" pointing at the same lady I was having a conversation with, we all then introduced ourselves, I then realized it was John's seat that he gave up for me to sit down. I was very happy in their midst. That singular moment became the beginning of a wonderful friendship.

In 2019, we couldn't spend time at the convention in Hamburg, Germany so during my holidays in the United States same year, John got to know through a post I made on Facebook, that I was in Chicago, he got in touch and told me that I was not far from their hometown in the state of Wisconsin and that it would be nice if I could visit before leaving Chicago. We agreed on a date I could visit, on that day, he personally drove from their hometown in Wisconsin to Chicago to pick me up.

My time with him and his wife in their home is one of the best times I have spent with friends, there were no boundaries, I was fully myself and very free. They didn't just take me round their own city, they got three other friends of theirs to take me round three different cities in Wisconsin where those friends live. On two occasions, they gave me one of their cars, a brand new car at that time, to drive to two different cities to meet and spend time with their other friends who were planning to visit my country, Nigeria that year.

They introduced me to their brother and his wife who lived in Nigeria and who had their first daughter in Nigeria. They told me a lot about their children and grandchildren. They didn't just make me feel at home, it was just as if I was part of their family. While in their home, John told me about ITHF and I said to myself, if John and Jean belong to this group, I will join so I signed on and paid for the membership.

02/05

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We have remained very good friends ever since. Our friendship looks like a lifetime because it has been real and genuine. John and his wife always called me on the phone to find out how I'm doing. We all looked after each other.

When John discovered he had prostate cancer, he didn't hide it or keep it to himself. I was one of their friends they informed and updated on every treatment and milestones.

In June 2025, we spent quality time together in Calgary, Canada and another incredibly beautiful time in Chicago and Crystal Lake, Illinois and in Lauderdale Lake, Kenosha County, Lake Geneva and Elkhorn, Wisconsin, USA in July 2025. I was looking forward to hosting them in my home in Nigeria this 2026 since the COVID-19 pandemic destroyed our initial plan of having them visit Nigeria.

Dearest John, it's been so difficult to write a tribute to you since I got the news of your demise. My heart is broken, every single day I see tears rolling down my cheeks. We spoke several times between the time I left the USA last year and this January, 2026. You told me you eventually started chemotherapy which you didn't like and that it made you feel weak. The last time we spoke, you were very okay and was going to have dinner so our conversation was shorter than we ever had.

To hear that you had a fall in your house which broke your right arm and leg and kept you on a hospital bed and the doctor confirmed you would walk again but it would take some time, made me feel very sad. That you had all your family members around you in the hospital during the period was awesome but that one of those days at the hospital, you looked at them and told them you loved them and then closed your eyes and departed this world makes me feel you didn't want to feel pains and you didn't want to be confined in one place for long but you forgot that your family and people like me wanted you around for much longer. This is very painful John, even as I write this, my eyes are wet and uncontrollable.



John did so many remarkable, unimaginable, incredible and uncountable things for Rotary International and the Rotary Foundation for decades since the 1960s but so calmly and quietly. Many people across the globe from young to not very young have good stories about what John did for them but all to Rotary International's glory and credit. He was also proud of ITHF, always hosting people and talking about ITHF.

In one of my visits to John's Rotary Club where I was a Guest Speaker in 2019, I had to ask his Club President why John hadn't served as a District Governor, he told me John always didn't want to be nominated for the position with the reason that he was very okay with all the things he was doing for people especially young people from different parts of the world, to Rotary International's glory and credit and he believed it projected Rotary's image and won hearts for Rotary across the world. John was simply humble, kind, caring and extraordinarily friendly and was very lucky to have the kind of person he has as his wife although his wife says she's very lucky to have John.

I thought I loved travelling until I met John and his wife, I thought I was free with people until I met John and his wife, I thought I was open with things until I met John and his wife and I thought I didn't have any special attachments to material things until I met John and his wife.

Dearest John, you and your wife treated me not just like a friend but more like a family member and a daughter. I will try my best to help see that your lovely and most amazing wife who became my very wonderful friend doesn't feel too lonely. My not being able to make a trip to the United States of America to physically pay my last respect and say goodbye to you at your funeral, keeps tearing me to pieces. My heart goes out to your wife, children, grandchildren, your brother and his wife, your wife's twin sister, your father in-law and your other family members. During your funeral and memorial service, everything I planned to do, I suspended including the committee meeting where you should have been present, I didn't participate

At this point, my emotions are failing me and my eyes are wet and blurred.

I miss you John, safe journey and good night until we all meet again to part no more.

It's still very hard to believe!!



Upcoming Tours and Events

- **Traveling to the Rotary Convention in Taipei?**
Register for the ITHF Dinner at United Hotel Taipei, June 12, 2026. More info at <https://www.ithf.org/events/ithf-dinner-at-united-hotel-taipei>
- **Post Convention Taiwan Cultural Discovery Tour, June 18-22, 2026.**
More info and a link to registration at <https://www.ithf.org/events/taiwan-cultural-discovery-tour>
- **Discover the Magic of Mexico City, September 20-27, 2026.** *More info at <https://www.ithf.org/events/mexico-city>*
- **Uganda Safari Tour, September 26-October 8, 2026**
*Will include gorilla tracking and chimpanzee tracking!
<https://www.ithf.org/events/tour-the-pearl-of-africa-uganda> Contact Andy Ullman at andyuco@gmail.com for more info.*
- **An Amazing Journey to South America- Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego and Easter Island, February 26-March 12, 2027.**

April New Members

- **Niyizibyose Confident**
Kigali District, Rwanda
- **Christine Cegelis**
Palatine, IL, USA
- **Beverly Thompson**
New York City, NY, USA
- **Chien Hua Chen**
Douliu, Yunlin, Taiwan
- **Badri Gopalakrishnan**
Sammamish, WA, USA
- **Satish Rajmane**
Panaji, Goa, India
- **Amit Gupta**
Saugor, Madhya Pradesh, India
- **Eliane Boundjia**
Montreal, QC, Canada

HELP NEEDED-ITHF CONNECTIONS NEWSLETTER

We are seeking help from the ITHF members on these two items:

1. **ITHF travel experiences:** Please send us stories and photos from your most memorable ITHF hosting/travel experiences. We would like to publish at least one story per month to encourage ITHF members to engage with other members in hosting experiences.
2. **ITHF members "Ready to Host":** If you are interested in hosting other ITHF members, please send a brief description and photos of a unique attraction or experience available in your area/region. We hope to post at least one "Ready to Host" listing for each newsletter issue.

As before, any ITHF member who submits material which is published in one of these categories will receive an additional year of ITHF membership as thanks for their assistance.

Please send your submissions to Andy Ullman, ITHF Membership Chair at andyuco@gmail.com

Thanks in advance for your contribution to the ITHF Connections newsletter!

Your ITHF Connections Newsletter Team:

Andy Ullman, Chicago, USA
Rosette Nabuuma, Vancouver, Canada
Michael Chen, Taipei, Taiwan
Gizem Bastas, Ankara, Turkey
Olurotimi (Sam) Adeleye, Lagos, Nigeria
Nma Onuigbo, Abuja, Nigeria
Fredri Bochnick, Bonn, Germany

UPDATES ON TAIPEI CONVENTION



We are delighted to announce that the following International Travel and Hosting Fellowship (ITHF) events are scheduled during **Rotary International Convention Taipei 2026** in Taipei this June (*Please save the dates*)

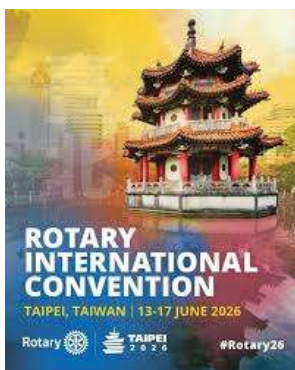
1. 12 June 2026 (Friday), 6:00 PM

Venue: United Hotel, B1 Ballroom – Pei-Full Restaurant

(No. 200, Guangfu South Road, Taipei)

Event: ITHF President's Celebration Dinner & Variety Entertainment Program

This much-awaited event has already been announced, and **seats are filling up fast**. We encourage you to reserve your seats at the earliest.



2. 13 June 2026 (Saturday), 11:30 AM – 12:30 PM

Venue: Room 504A, TaiNEx1 Floor 5F

Event: ITHF Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2025-26

A formal announcement regarding the AGM will follow shortly.

3. 15 June 2026 (Monday), 3:15 PM – 4:15 PM

Venue: Room 500, TaiNEx1 Floor 5F

Event: Beyond Borders & Boundaries – An Introduction to ITHF

All ITHF members are requested to bring along friends, associates, and prospective members to this informative session.

05/05

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