



International Travel and
Hosting Fellowship

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August 2026



FANTASTIC ITHF HIROSHIMA PEACE TOUR!

May 2026 brought members of the International Travel and Hosting Fellowship together in Hiroshima for a remarkable Peace Tour. Members were from Germany, Holland, Canada and the USA. The tour was organized by PDG and PP of ITHF Steve Yoshida and his wife Noko. Centered at the Essor Hiroshima (Orizuru Tower), the orientation program was led by Mirei Tashiro, Program Manager. We were there to listen and learn. The sessions included visits to the Peace Memorial Museum. A remarkable highlight was the Hibakusha testimonial from Mrs. Sadae Kasaoka who experienced the atomic bomb at the age of 12, while at her home, 3.5 km from the hypocenter.

Gardens are an integral part of Hiroshima and the visit to the Shukkeien Gardens, dating from 1620, was a special treat. This garden was located 1.22 kilometers from the epicenter and was completely leveled during the explosion. This garden has a circular path around a central pond and was built in the Edo period as a garden for a feudal lord. Of note is the identification of many trees that actually survived the explosion. The Hiroshima Sankeien Japanese Garden was built in 1993 to commemorate the opening of the Hiroshima Airport. Typical of the circuit style of gardens in Japan, the garden is made of three zones, mountain, Natural forest and three stage waterfall. Highlights include the Maple Valley, Plum Garden and O-umi carp. Peace Memorial Park includes the A-Bomb Dome area. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony is held on August 6 of every year. The Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum exhibits the realities of atomic bomb damage, history before and after the bombing.



The Atomic Bomb Dome is the remnant of a building severely damaged and burnt by the first atomic bomb ever used in warfare. It symbolizes the pledge to convey the horrors of the atomic bombing and the call for the abolition of nuclear weapons and eternal world peace. In 1996, the dome was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

A highlight of the trip was a visit to the World Heritage site of Miyajima. The beautiful Itsukushima Shrine is a World Heritage Site, constructed in the 12th century, featuring a Shinden -style shrine complex and a grand O- torii gate built over tidal waters. The site has many deer who willingly share the area.

During the time in Japan, the group enjoyed the introduction to Sake and to the varied food of Japan including Udon, Miso, Bonito. One unique dish is

Okonomiyaki (お好み焼き), a Japanese street food which is very popular among Western visitors. It is a savory pancake with a batter made with loads of shredded cabbage then pan fried with egg, sliced meat and katsuobushi (dried bonito flakes) on top.

A special word of thanks to Steve and Noko Yoshida for arranging this tour and also inviting us to their home which they hope to develop as a peace centre. This article does not even start to cover the wealth of experiences that the group enjoyed but it is a start.

Contacts: Sheila Hart email: sheilahart@shaw.ca

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I joined the ITHF around 15 years ago and while attending the New Orleans Convention. We later drove several thousand miles around the U.S. in a sort of pre-planned trip, but we were hosted by the Rotarian we had met at the convention ITHF Booth. As well other ITHF members gave us advice of various things to see and do.

Back home in New Zealand we established our ITHF presence, and in the ensuing years hosted many visiting Rotarians and guided them around our "wine country" area of Hawkes Bay, NZ. We would host between two and four couples each year. After a while I became the ITHF Vice President for our country and sought to "coordinate" our activities nationally.

Over about ten years then, we hosted ITHF members in our city and were hosted by them or others, as we attended annual conventions and did further touring in those areas. In 2020 Covid struck and all travel slowed down.

As well we had shifted to a Retirement Village (assisted living to some) and no longer have the accommodation facilities we had earlier enjoyed. Our age has made long distance travel become harder for us, though we did achieve one other milestone by attending the nearby Melbourne Convention in 2023, interestingly exactly 30 years after our first one in that same city in 1993. (Incidentally, at that time I thought it would be a "oncer" – now we have done 16!)

However, I continue to enjoy receiving the ITHF newsletters, reading of the various adventures and rejoicing over the "fellowship" that is shared. That took on a new meaning though, when this year I set about making my annual donation to the NZ Heart Foundation charity. Both my son and my wife had suffered heart attacks in the past year and had to be flown out of our city for heart surgery. So, when the heart foundation proposed "doing a marathon" to raise funds, my interest became more relevant.

I quickly confirmed that I was allowed to take a whole month to complete the distance and my Rotary Club members gladly offered to support me. I registered for the event and recorded my reasons for so doing. The Heart Foundation copied this to Facebook and to my astonishment, I had raised \$500 in the first 24 hours and reached a \$1000 after a week.

The most surprising feature though, was that not only did donations come from family, friends and previous workmates in NZ, where I was perhaps fairly well known, I also received donations from two ITHF members in the US and another couple living in Spain. By the end of the month of May I had received some \$3200 in donations and out of 7200 participants in our country, I was 15th in the fundraising.

But what astonished me the most was the donations received from those three separate ITHF members in other parts of the world. We have met at conventions, some we have hosted, some have hosted us, but the identifying feature is the "fellowship" (or friendship) of those in "our" fellowship, to take such a kind step. I am so proud and thank them. We all belong to a great fellowship – and share great "fellowship."

Contact: *Ian Holyoake*, New Zealand ianholyoake@xtra.co.nz





Upcoming Tours and Events

- **Discover the Magic of Mexico City,** September 20-27, 2026
More info at <https://www.ithf.org/events/mexico-city-sept-tour>
- **Uganda Safari Tour,** *RESCHEDULED* February 24 – March 6, 2027
Will include gorilla tracking and chimpanzee tracking! Contact: Andy Ullman at andyuco@gmail.com for more info. More info also at <https://www.ithf.org/events/tour-the-pearl-of-africa-uganda>.
- **An Amazing Journey to South America-Patagonia, Tierra del Fuego and Easter Island,** February 26-March 12, 2027

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

- August 30- Virtual Tour of Poland with ITHF member Michal Skup

Contact: Simmy Ahluwalia, – simmyithf@gmail.com

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

Michael Chen, Taipei, Taiwan

Olurotimi (Sam) Adeleye, Lagos, Nigeria

Fredi Bochnick, Bonn, Germany

Rosette Nabuuma, Vancouver, Canada

Gizem Bastas, Ankara, Turkey

Nma Onuigbo, Abuja, Nigeria

New Members – June & July 2026

Please note that the new member registrations processed from the paper application forms collected during the Taipei Exhibition may contain occasional errors due to difficulties in reading handwritten information on the forms.

We kindly request all new members to review their profiles and ensure that all the information is accurate. If you notice any errors or omissions, please update your profile or let us know so that we can make the necessary corrections.

Sivaprasad S Pillai; *Administrator*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Megan Ellinghouse
Sacramento, California, USA• Diane Kavanaugh
Tyler, Texas, USA• Seymour Hodge
Longbay, West End, Anguilla• William Sheridan
Broomfield, Colorado, USA• Luderce Camalon
Sainte Marie, France, Reunion• Elvi Quiazon
Muntinlupa, NCR, Philippines• GHEORGHE STEF
Alba Iulia, Alba, Romania• Christine OConnor
Surfers Paradise, Queensland, Australia• Joe McCaffery
Denver, Colorado, USA• Dani Conn
Brisbane, Queensland, Australia• Beehemal Hariprashad
Saint Cloud, Florida, USA• Cassy Venters
Lander, Wyoming, USA• Sarita Acharya
Kathmandu, Bagmati Zone, Nepal• Hema K Adhikari
Kathmandu, Bagmati Zone, Nepal• Tina Fischlin
Greene County, Georgia, USA• Yuri Huntington
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Gdańsk, , Poland• Dipak Bhatt
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Kolkata, West Bengal, India | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teng Hong-Chau
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Redwood City, California, USA• Adeurenmi Akunsanya
Lagos, Nigeria• Chor Tan
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Humble, Texas, USA• Michael Frimpong
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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA• Vikram Sahny
New Delhi, Delhi, India |
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