



WWW.ITHF.ORG



International Travel and
Hosting Fellowship

October 2026



THE RHYTHMS OF THE MARY RIVER, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA

It was a colder-than-cold morning in Maryborough, a charming city in Queensland's Fraser Coast region, about 255 km north of Brisbane. I was scheduled to make a presentation on the International Travel and Hosting Fellowship (ITHF) at the early morning meeting of Rotary Club of Maryborough Sunrise.



My wife Prasanna and I wrapped ourselves in at least four layers of clothing, being completely unaccustomed to such freezing temperatures. But any feeling of cold soon disappeared in the warmth of the welcome extended to us by President Robyn Dowling and her team. Their hospitality left us deeply touched, and I was delighted that my presentation on ITHF was so warmly received.

As the day unfolded and the sunshine gradually warmed the surroundings, our ITHF hosts, Glenda and Adrian Pitman, arranged a memorable journey for Prasanna and me into the agricultural heartland of Queensland. Thanks to Glenda, whose interests are horticulture and the environment, and Adrian, a defence acquisition engineer, we had the opportunity to visit one of the largest sugarcane farms we had ever seen.

Rtn. Helen, a friend of Glenda, gave us a wonderful surprise by taking us to her vast sugarcane and macadamia farm. What impressed me even more was discovering that much of this enormous farming operation was managed by a remarkable "one-man army", her husband, Jeff.

Talking to Jeff reminded me that farmers across the world seem to share a universal language, one of simplicity, humility and an intimate connection with the land. What a down-to-earth personality! Our heartfelt thanks to Jeff for giving us such unforgettable moments on a farm where every corner seemed to have a story to tell.



Top News

- THE RHYTHMS OF THE MARY RIVER, QUEENSLAND, AUSTRALIA
- ITHF VIRTUAL TRAVEL COMMITTEE
- HELP NEEDED



For me, the highlight was a once-in-a-lifetime experience: witnessing a sugarcane harvest from inside the harvesting machine, seated next to the operator. Sugarcane leaves flying past us, freshly cut cane cascading into the wagon alongside, and the vast fields stretching endlessly around us created an unforgettable spectacle. Amid all that mechanical activity, there was a strange and beautiful silence. We seemed to be the only human presence in that immense landscape.

Then came the macadamia harvest, with sweeping machines gathering the nuts from beneath the trees. As sunset approached, the macadamia orchards seemed to take on an entirely different character, glowing softly in the fading light. We also discussed the fascinating process of dehusking the macadamia nuts.

This day left me with a simple thought: living close to nature brings a special beauty to people - not merely physical beauty, but something deeper and spiritual that no artificial make-up can ever create.

On our way back, Glenda and Adrian patiently answered our endless questions about Queensland's rich and diverse agricultural landscape. Our Maryborough experience, however, was far from over. That evening, the Rotary Club of Maryborough Sunrise hosted us for dinner.

Our time in Maryborough also included visits to the Military and Colonial Museum and the Art Gallery, as well as an enjoyable Mary Poppins guided tour, each adding another dimension to our experience of this historic city.

And while we travelled through farms, museums, Rotary gatherings and the streets of Maryborough, one companion remained quietly with us throughout...

The Mary River - flowing steadily in its own timeless, musical rhythm, seeming to cheer us wherever we went. Perhaps that is the memory of Maryborough that will remain with us the longest, the warmth of its people, the beauty of its countryside, and the gentle rhythms of the Mary River.

Contact: *Sivaprasad S Pillai*, ITHF Administrator pillai.sivaprasad@gmail.com



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>
- **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

- October 30-31 – Virtual Tour of Turkey. Join Tulin Cetin and Gizem Bastas (ITHF Members from Ankara, Turkey) for a virtual tour of their beautiful country! Keep your eyes open for an email inviting you to register for their Zoom presentation.
- December 4-5 – Coffee and Connections

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 – September 2026

William Korbaly Laval, Quebec, Canada
Jane Courtice-Neocleous Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Cheryl Gzik Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
Anushka Shah London, Ontario, Canada
Claudia Rodrigues De Souza Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil
Jeane Geralda Camara Santos Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil
Evelyn Trinidad Bay Harbor Islands, Florida, United States
Patricia Thorpe Seattle, Washington, United States
Ladd Seekins Grand Terrace, California, United States
Brendan Charles Kingston, Tasmania, Australia
Mary Zongolowicz Scottsdale, Arizona, United States
Violeta Leal Imperial Makati, National Capital Region, Philippines