



A ROUND TABLE OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## Success Stories Sister Libraries

### **Cobar Shire Library, Australia / Helen Morgan School, New Jersey, U.S.A.**

Cobar Shire Library, 39 Marshall Street' Cobar NSW 2835

Webpage: <http://www.tafewestern.edu.au/current-students/libraries/tafe-western-libraries/cobar>

### **Friends Meet in Hawaii**



This photo shows Diane Hunt Braybrook, a retired librarian at Helen Morgan School in Sparta, New Jersey, and Bronwyn Smith, a retired librarian from Cobar Shire Library, Cobar, New South Wales, Australia, holding life jackets in preparation for a helicopter ride to view a nearby volcano in Hawaii.

In 1998, as America's First Lady, Hillary Clinton headed the White House Millennium Council, which set up a Sister Library scheme to match US libraries with interested libraries from around the world.

Diane Braybrook, the librarian at a school in Sparta, New Jersey, U.S.A. chose as her sister library the Cobar Shire Library, a mining town in far western NSW where I was then manager.

Although both Diane and I are now retired, we've still keep in touch over the last 19 years, via email, Skype sessions and more recently on Facebook.

Early in 2016 Diane had a close encounter with an aggressive form of lymphoma cancer; suddenly it seemed important that we should finally meet up in person.

We chose Hawaii as it is halfway from Maine where Diane now lives. The Big Island with its recent dramatic volcanic activity was a 'must see' priority for Diane.

I am amazed at how the internet has simplified travelling. I applied for my US visa, travel arrangements, insurance and ticket online. Diane booked the hire car, made our hotel reservations online and researched daily lava flows.

On February 1, 2017 our 2 weeks together began. In Boston, Diane's plane had to be de-iced prior to takeoff, such a contrast to the tropical delights we encountered. Snorkeling with manta rays at night, a sunset history cruise to Captain Cook's memorial, organic farms home to Kona coffee, waterfalls, banyan trees. Diane tasted passionfruit for the first time. I had never encountered such huge servings of American Hawaiian food.

We swooped over the Kilauea Volcano which continues to erupt at the summit and on the very day a lava tube collapsed revealing a fresh flow of lava into the sea.

Of course we visited libraries and bookshops too. We had a marvelous time, taking hundreds of photos for online friends who shared our journey with us. We enjoyed perfect postcard weather whilst dodging heatwaves and blizzards back home.

We are now planning for Diane to visit Australia next year, but not in summer!

Bronwyn Smith - Newstead Victoria, Australia

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