

Newsletter

April 2009

Australia-China Friendship Society Victorian Branch

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Since our last newsletter, the committee has been busy organising events for members and friends for the next two months.

Our first movie show of the year will take place on 24 April, with the feature "The Flowery March" set in Yangzhou City. The show will also include a documentary on Zhangjiajie, the most breathtakingly beautiful place in Hunan Province which I visited last year as part of the Friendship Forum.

There will also be a movie show in May, which will again include a feature film and a documentary. Details of the films are included elsewhere in this newsletter.

We are holding a yum cha on 3 May at Yum Cha Cafe in the city. Please bring your family and friends, as the word is that the food is excellent! I look forward to seeing members and friends at some of these events.

In March the Honourable Ken Smith MP hosted

Yum Cha

When: 12 noon, 3rd May 2009

RSVP: 30th April 2009

Where: Yum Cha @ **Yum Cha Cafe**, corner Exhibition and Little Bourke Streets, Melbourne.

Cost: \$23 per head

Why not take this opportunity to come along with your family and friends for a very enjoyable time. All ACFS members and friends are welcome. For bookings please ring the office on 9654 8099 not later than Thursday 30th April.



MAKE A DATE:

"People & life" Chinese movie show **Feature Film: The Flowery March** 7:00 pm
24th April 2009 @ Carrillo Gantner Theatre, Sidney Myer Asia Centre, University of Melbourne. (Corner of Swanston Street & Monash Road, Melway Ref. 2B E7)

Yum Cha 12 noon, 3rd May 2009 RSVP: 30th April 2009
@ **Yum Cha Cafe**, corner Exhibition and Little Bourke Streets, Melbourne
Cost: \$23 per head

"People & life" Chinese movie show **Feature Film: Turpan Love Songs** 7:00 pm
22nd May 2009 @ Carrillo Gantner Theatre, Sidney Myer Asia Centre, University of Melbourne. (Corner of Swanston Street & Monash Road, Melway Ref. 2B E7)



a delegation of six high-ranking Chinese visitors from Shandong Province. Ken, who is joint Chairman of the Victorian Parliamentary-China Friendship Group, hosted a banquet for the delegation at Parliament House, which I attended. It was interesting to meet and talk with the group, and heart-warming to see that our longstanding member and friend Ken Smith is so highly regarded and valued by the group with whom he has developed a strong friendship.

In March I attended a performance at the new Melbourne Recital Centre featuring noted Chinese-Australian artist Dr Wang Zheng-Ting (*ACFS member*). Dr Wang is a composer and master performer of the shen, a type of Chinese mouth organ. A graduate of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, Dr Wang had performed with many leading Chinese orchestras before migrating to Australia in the late 1980s. The program included the Golden Phoenix and some of Dr Wang's own compositions. Some members of the ACFS also enjoyed the performance of this brilliant musician.

In May, we are expecting two delegations of representatives from the Shanghai branch of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. We hope to provide a report on their visit in the next newsletter.

LOUISE CLAYTON

PRESIDENT VICTORIAN BRANCH

Our national body is moving forward

Joe Montero - Senior National Vice-President

On 7 April the ACSF had its National Annual General Meeting and regular quarterly meeting. This should be of significant interest to Victorian ACFS members and supporters, not only because the Victorian organisation is affiliated to the National body, but even more importantly because it is relevant to the work we do in promoting friendship between the Chinese and Australian peoples.

Since the Society re-organisation some three years ago, the ACFS has gone through a process of consolidating its organisation and work and fitting in better with the realities of today. This process is an

ongoing one, but it is clear that significant progress is being made.

The core national business remains inbound and outbound tours. For instance, the Shanghai Jiefang Daily inbound tour was hosted successfully in December 2008. One of the highlights was the lunchtime meeting with the Melbourne Age. There is a planned seniors group visit to Australia. Two Chinese union delegations will arrive during the first half of this year and both will be coming to Melbourne. There will be a visit from our Chinese friendship counterparts in June, amongst a number of other activities.

On the outbound side, up to 5 groups will be going to China this year. These are the union group, environmentalists, a heritage tour and two groups of young people. The young people are first cab off the rank. Both occur in August. All are asked to pay special attention to this. Contact friends, schools and clubs for applicants. We are focusing on ages 14-17. It will be a great opportunity for those involved and for the ACFS to go out to the wider community and establish new contacts. See the notices in this newsletter for more information.

Victoria will have to play a significant role in promoting and getting people to participate in the tours. It requires the whole membership of our branch to play a part by putting their names forward, finding others who would like to go to China, or helping with the distribution of information. Tours are a good way to help build friendship.

The outgoing office bearers were re-elected unopposed for the next year. The sitting Directors remain, because their term is for 2 years.

A unanimous decision was made to honour our past National President and Secretary Keith and Jing Jenvey for their contributions to the Society. Sadly, they have both recently had to resign from active involvement.

Adoption of a new national logo remains an ongoing issue. So far there has not been agreement on suggestions. Consequently people are being asked to come up with new ideas that are simple, look good, convey a clear message and are usable in various formats. Work is also continuing on a new brochure. Branches will vote on a final version that will then be considered by the National Directors at

their next meeting in three months time.

One of the shortcomings that needs to be overcome as a matter of some urgency is the financial position of the national body. The truth is that at the moment more is being spent than is being received. While this can be taken on the chin in the short term, in the longer term it is unsustainable. Ways have to be found to increase funds. Increasing the number of tours is a good way. Perhaps an increase in the contributions made by the States can be considered. If you have any ideas, please pass them on.

I just want to conclude by saying that although the Society faces some real challenges, the prospects for success are good. We should move forward with a great deal of optimism.

DOMING DUNA TOURS

China world heritage tour

3-18 September 2009

China is a country that has a 5,000-year long history of civilization. This tour is specially designed for you to discover China's world historical and natural heritages including the famous Great Wall, Forbidden City, Summer Palace, Temple of Heaven, Terracotta Warriors, the Giant Buddha, Mt. Emei and Zhangjiajie. The journey covers not only heritage sites, but also presents to you Chinese cultural diversity, awe-inspiring scenery and genuine interaction with the local people of the civilisation centres we visit.

Total all inclusive cost is \$A6, 068.00 per person

Shandong International Youngsters' Culture Tour 2009

3-8 August 2009

The year 2009 is the 60th anniversary of the People's Republic of China. To further strengthen youngsters' exchange between Shandong Province and her Sister Provinces/States, increase mutual understanding and friendship, foster friendship successors, the Shandong People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries plans to organize the 2009 Shandong International Youngsters' Culture Tour in association with the Shandong Education Department, Shandong Sports Bureau, Friendship Associations and Sister Provinces/States of Shandong Province. The Theme is Friendship,

Future, Peace, Progress.

Cost will be in the region of \$A. 800 per person
(Including accommodation, meals and transport in China)

Shanghai International Youth Interactive Friendship Camp 2009

2-13 August 2009

The camp is jointly sponsored by the Shanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the Shanghai Youth Federation, with a view to further promoting the exchange and friendship between the young people of different countries. Participants will have an opportunity to set up a bridge of friendship and an exchange platform beyond language and cultural barriers to foster and develop a spirit of mutual help and cooperation among them. A forum on Civilized Lifestyle and Qualified Talents will be held during the camp in accordance with the theme of "Better City, Better Life" of the World Expo 2010. The camp will provide full-time teachers.

This will be a good opportunity to see preparations for World Expo 2010 and enjoy other Shanghai and regional experiences.

Cost will be in the region of \$A1, 400 per person
(Including accommodation, meals and transport)

NOTE TO OUR READERS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In our February newsletter, we published an article entitled "2009 – Year of the Ox".

In fact that article was reproduced from the Chinese New Year newsletter of Chin Communications Pty Ltd, Chinese translation specialists. Unfortunately we had not obtained permission from Chin Communications to reproduce the article, for which we apologise. We acknowledge that we should have sought permission and cited the source of the article.

For those who are interested, the Chin Communications newsletter is available on line at: www.chincommunications.com.au

The Editor

Delegation from Shandong Province Visits Melbourne

On 10th March 2009 six important Chinese visitors from Shandong Province arrived in Melbourne for a brief two-day goodwill visit during which they met with members of the Australia-China Friendship Society.



Mr Li Hongxiang with Hon. Ken Smith and Mrs Smith

The Delegation was comprised of members of the Shandong People's Congress (SPC) was led by Mr Li Hongxiang Member of Shandong Peoples' Congress (SPC) Standing Committee Chairman of Legislative Committee of SPC.

The visit was hosted by the Hon Ken Smith MP, joint Chairman of the Victorian Parliamentary-China Friendship group and an Honorary Citizen of Shandong Province. Ken showed the Delegation around Melbourne's city sights, sporting and cultural venues.

They also visited the Mornington Peninsula's wineries, street markets and the beautiful Point Nepean National Park before meeting up with kangaroos, emus and koalas at the Ace High Ranch.

The Delegation visited the Victorian Parliament and was acknowledged by the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Honourable Jenny Lindell MP. They also met with a number of senior MPs including Opposition Leader Ted Baillieu, Dr Denis Napthine and other MPs who have visited China and particularly Shandong in recent years.

Over dinner, ACFS President Louise Clayton and Vice President Tower Liu and former President Paul Liu spoke to the Delegation of the Society's long involvement with Shandong Province.

Before flying to Canberra, Mr Li Hongxiang said the visit to Melbourne had been very worthwhile and a great experience of Australian hospitality and cultural diversity.

CHINA SEES BOOM IN OVERSEAS CONTRACTING PROJECTS

China has seen a rapid growth in overseas contracting projects in the first two months of the year, despite slumps in world trade. The country's commerce ministry says the surge shows the increasing competitiveness of Chinese companies. But it is also warning of potential risks emerging in the market.

The commerce ministry says that January saw an increase of 11 percent in China's overseas projects contracting volume from a year earlier. And the rapid growth extended into February, driven by some large projects. The mounting-up in the month stood at a whopping 64 percent year on year. The commerce ministry says this reflects China's strong competitiveness in the global contracting market.

By the end of 2008, China signed a total of over 430 billion US dollars worth of deals on overseas contracting projects achieving accumulative turnover worth more than 260 billion US dollars. Despite the impact of the global financial crisis, the value of deals signed last year also increased nearly 35 percent year on year.

As more and more companies enter the overseas contracting sector, the commerce ministry is warning about possible risks due to their lack of understanding of the overseas management environment. It also believes Chinese companies will seize the opportunity for further development.

Source: CCTV.com | 04-11-2009

Peter Larson is Canada-China Friendship Association Ottawa chapter founding president (1976). This article was written after his last trip to China in November 2008. As the article was so extensive, we divide it in 2 parts, the first of which was published in our February issue.

CHINA TRIP AN EYE-OPENER

Continued from last issue

Peter Larson

What about censorship, human rights abuses and political control?

China remains a “one party state”, something that no Canadian would like to see in this country. Even Chinese authorities agree that there is less political freedom in China than in Canada, the rule of law is less well developed and human rights abuses are more widespread.

However, I was surprised to see how little this seemed to affect any of the Chinese I spoke to. Most of the students I met, for example, were much more concerned by the control their parents exerted over their lives than by state control.

After centuries of poverty and social disruption, most Chinese seem to think that things are finally getting better. Not surprisingly, they don't really feel very sympathetic to anybody (or any group) who threatens to disrupt that progress. In fact, a recent poll undertaken by the Pew Research Centre in Washington, DC revealed that 81% of Chinese approve of the leadership of the Communist Party and feel that the country is heading in the right direction.

It's tempting to put that down to “brainwashing”. But a simpler explanation is that the Chinese are happy because for 30 years in a row, life has been getting better. China's ranking on the UN's “Human Development Index” (which in addition to GDP per capita also factors in health and longevity) has risen 50% over the last 3 decades. According to David Kang, China has brought over 400 million people out of poverty in the last 30 years – the biggest such improvement in the history of mankind!

They know that this improvement in living

standards has come about because the Chinese government has led the country with a very strong hand. When roads need to be built, or rivers dammed, or an Olympic site constructed, it has plowed straight ahead.

They know, of course, that these actions hurt some people and have sometimes caused strenuous resistance. According to figures from the Ministry of Public Security, 87,000 “mass incidents” were reported in 2005, including a deadly clash between police and villagers over the seizure of land for a power plant. However, in the interests of the majority, the government has pressed on.

For the same reason, censorship does not seem to be a major concern for most people. Although western reporters have focused on China's “pervasive” censorship, the Chinese young people I talked to in my recent trip seem to be very well versed in what is going on in the west (and certainly much better versed than their Canadian counterparts would be about developments in China). At the main bookstore in Nanjing, Barak Obama's autobiography in Chinese was prominently displayed, for example. Chinese youth are avid users of the internet. Several “blew off” my questions about censorship, indicating that it was a “snap” to get around.

Although I am not particularly internet savvy, at several internet cafés in different cities in China, I had no trouble accessing the Globe and Mail, the New York Times, the BBC and any other newspaper I could think of. Nor did I have any difficulty in finding articles in Wikipedia which were quite critical of Mao Zedong. (NOTE: I did see some evidence of censorship, however. When I googled “Falun Gong” in China, all I got were articles critical of that movement. When I do the same thing in Canada, most of the articles I find support Falun Gong and criticise the Chinese government).

It is now surprisingly easy to travel around China – and millions of Chinese do. We were able to travel freely by taxi, subway, bus, train and air plane. On a couple of occasions we were offered a lift in a private car by friendly locals. But in general, nobody appeared to care in the least where we were going, who we were talking to or what we were doing. At our hotels we did have to produce a passport, but then we have to do that in Europe as well.

“We know there are problems – we want

someone to keep them under control”

The Chinese are worried that any one of its many problems could boil over and disrupt the phenomenal growth of the last 30 years. Anger over a growing gap between rich and poor and an inadequate social security system could threaten the country's stability. Retirees increasingly cannot live on their pensions, crime and divorce rates have apparently escalated, and clashes have broken out between security forces and farmers whose fields and villages have been swallowed by development. Ethnic tensions in Tibet and Xinjiang are also bubbling. (All of these tensions can expect to be worsened if, as expected, the growth of the Chinese economy slows as a result of the global economic crisis.)

In 2006, as a result of these pressures, China's Communist Party formally endorsed a political doctrine laid out by President Hu Jintao that called for the creation of a “harmonious society,” a move that signalled a shift in the party's focus from promoting all-out economic growth to solving worsening social tensions. The four-day plenary session, according to the Washington Post, “was the first in 25 years to focus on social issues rather than on economic or political development.”

The Chinese seem to feel that these tough challenges demand a strong hand from their government – that in a country of 1.3 billion people, a “heavy hand” is sometimes the only way forward, and they are not particularly worried if some individual rights get squished in the process. Some examples:

- They want the government to deal with the population problem. (76% of Chinese approve of the 1 child policy. (Pew Research)
- They want the government to do something about the environment. In Beijing, for example, the city has banned 2 cycle motorcycles as an environmental measure. It has also restricted the number of days you can use your car in the city. Some car owners have complained loudly about their rights, but the majority seems to be fully behind the measure.
- They want their government to deal firmly with corruption, and do not seem in the least upset when a few greedy party bosses were executed for extensive graft.
- They also want their government to protect

China's sovereignty and borders (and that means finding a way to deal with unrest in Tibet and Xinjiang).

What should Canada do?

Canadians and their government need to take a careful and pragmatic look at our approach to China today.

It is in our interest to help China grow and find solutions to its environmental, economic and social challenges. A growing Chinese economy, particularly the elimination of poverty in the rural areas, will help stabilize the Chinese population, and solidify an economic market for our goods and services.

On the other hand, if the current government of China is not able to solve its huge problems, the potential for political and social unrest is immense. Famine and huge internal migration is possible. China's potential as an economic partner could be diminished for a generation. And we also face the possibility of vast waves of immigrants – both legal and illegal flooding into neighbouring countries, including Canada.

Here are 7 steps we can take to help China evolve in a direction that is in our interest:

1. We should start by recognizing that the Chinese leadership faces huge challenges and adopt a positive, helpful approach that focuses on what we can do together, rather than leaping on every opportunity to criticize the country.

2. We need to recognize that Canada needs China much more than China needs us. This is true not only in an economic sense, but also in a geopolitical sense. What happens in Canada does not make much of a difference to China. But what happens in China will affect our world.

3. We should help China in its search for energy sources. China needs oil and gas, and we have lots of it. This is in our interest as a producer of oil and gas. And at a geo political level, it does not serve our interests to make it difficult for China to get access to the energy sources it needs to help its people move out of poverty.

4. We should reinforce current efforts to help

China modernize its political infrastructure. Currently, for example, Canada is helping train Chinese judges and is helping to modernize its public service. Both of these actions are in our interests because they help promote the rule of law and the merit based public service.

5. We should continue to criticize human rights abuses in China. Canada has a good record in human rights and this is one of our important values. But we should ensure that our approach is even handed and consistent with our approach to other countries. To focus on Chinese human rights abuses, while closing a blind eye to well documented abuses by some of Canada's "friends and allies" seems overly ideological.

6. We should be very careful about what we say and do with respect to Chinese internal affairs – particularly the sensitive (and complex) issues of Taiwan and Tibet. We should remember that China

has carefully refrained from making any statement in respect of Quebec independence, for example. Nor am I aware of any criticism it has made with respect to our handling of aboriginal issues. The Chinese rightly regard these issues as "internal Canadian affairs". We should show similar caution.

7. We should encourage exchanges between Canada and China at all levels – government, business and civil society. We should also encourage tourism - both ways. We can make it easier for Chinese visitors to come to Canada to see our country and how we do things. China's tourism infrastructure – roads, hotels, restaurants, national parks - has developed tremendously in the last decade. Canadians should take advantage of the "opening up" of China to take a look at the new China.

The Chinese have ditched their ideological approach to public policy in favour of a pragmatic one. Isn't it time we did likewise?

Editorial

As the saying goes, "people regard food as their prime want." The people cannot survive without food. As part of a national culture, Chinese cuisine has become more important in world culture as a whole.

A new addition to the Newsletters this year is some Chinese Everyday Dish recipes. Any of our members or friends who are interested in Chinese cuisine, can try this at home. May be soon you will become a skilful Chinese cuisine chef. The recipes are originally from Chinese cooking books altered by Tower Liu to suit Australian food conditions.

If you have any tasty, easy to cook recipes that you would like to share with members through this newsletter, please send or email them to the ACFS office.

CELERY SALAD

INGREDIENTS:

- ½ Bunch Celery,
- 1-Tablespoon salt
- ½ Capsicum and
small piece of ginger cut into strips
- 2 Tablespoons sesame oil
- ¼ Cube chicken stock

Cooking Method:

1. Slice celery into serving size, blanch them with a pinch of salt, drain and rinse under cold water.
2. Mix capsicum together with ginger and celery,
3. Dissolve chicken stock cube with sesame oil, add to the celery and mix well.

ENJOY



THE AUSTRALIA-CHINA FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY'S AIMS

Cultivate friendly relations with the people of China by fostering the study of China's history, language, culture, social and political structure.

Promote mutual understanding through friendly exchanges between the people of China and Australia. Strengthen ties through travel and exchange of ideas, information and trade between the two countries.

Seek to clarify misunderstandings between the peoples of China and Australia, which may arise from the misrepresentation of information.

PRESIDENT: Ms. Louise Clayton

VICE PRESIDENT: Mr. Joe Montero
Mr. Tower Liu

SECRETARY: Mr. Neil Barker

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