



Australia-China Friendship Society

Victorian Branch (Inc).ABN 39 746 574 225

NEWSLETTER

JULY 2013

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President Report

President John Breheny has been called away and has asked me to give a summary of the things we have been doing over the past month.

The Consul General to Victoria and Tasmania, Mr Shi Weiqiang, has finished his tour of duty here. A number of ACFS Committee members attended the farewell function for the Consul on 21 June 2013 at the Consulate. We look forward to meeting his replacement soon.

In April, Mr Shi and a number of his staff joined the ACFS Committee at a pleasant Saturday afternoon BBQ and excursion to Mount Macedon to view the autumn leaves. This was a great opportunity to share cultural exchanges and informally chat about matters of mutual interest including the environment. The Consular staffs were especially taken by the Rhododendron and Camellia Gardens.

With the return of Kevin Rudd MHR as Prime Minister, we look forward to his continuing improved diplomatic relations with China developed by his predecessor, Hon Julia Gillard. Apart from Mr Rudd's obvious advantage of speaking Chinese, he has a particular understanding of China, which will be intriguing to watch in the months ahead.

The ACFS is planning a number of functions and we look forward to seeing you. There is another members' lunch with a young opera singer from Melbourne who astonished Chinese musicians with her mastery of Beijing Opera. There will also be our fundraising dinner with a very special guest who has strong links between Victoria and China. Stay tuned for more details, which will happen soon.

Stay warm and enjoy the unseasonably mild weather.

Anthony M Leong
Vice-President.

Luncheon

ACFS WINTER HOT POT LUNCH

GUEST SPEAKER: RMIT STUDENT CLARISSA BALENTI

SUNDAY 14 JULY - 12.00PM

NO. 1 STEAMBOAT RESTAURANT, 1 LYGON STREET (CNR VICTORIA ST).

\$25 PER HEAD (ACFS MEMBERS), \$30 PER HEAD (NON-MEMBERS)

Bookings by Friday 12 July

e-mail: acfs.vic@gmail.com or call: 0469622254

Australian Student Staged Chinese New Year Eve Gala

The Melbourne born RMIT student, Clarissa Belanti, studies music in the Chinese capital. She sung to an audience of over a billion people on the biggest national television station, CCTV, as part of the New Year countdown earlier this year.

During her studies at RMIT, Clarissa was called an "EGG" by her peers, for being "white" on the outside, but "yellow" on the inside. "Rather than the name 'Banana', used for ABCs (Australian Born Chinese). My Chinese friends all call me an 'egg'!" she says. What a fitting term. Clarissa has a great interest in all things Asian – especially Chinese culture. She is proficient in Mandarin, having studied it throughout high school. She's also been on exchange to China at the Beijing Language and Culture University for one semester in 2011 and she won first prize in the eleventh China Bridge Competition for Foreign University Students in 2012.

Since she started her undergraduate program at the Conservatory of Music in Beijing, Clarissa has been invited to perform at many major events.

These include a grand Gala for foreign diplomats in Beijing on March 8, 2013 at the People's Great Hall. Her performance was highly commended by the Australian Ambassador in Beijing praising her as a young ambassador to Australia. In April this year, the then PM Julia Gillard led the largest Australian government delegation to China. Clarissa was again invited to attend the official dinner and sing songs at the event. Her outstanding performances were greatly appreciated by all audience members.

She is currently having a three-month university holiday in Melbourne where she has been frequently invited to interviews by media including SBS and ABC, speaking to university and school students learning the Chinese language and culture, and TV productions promoting Melbourne and Australian culture to the world.

*Guosheng Y Chen
Head, Language Discipline &
Director, Chinese Proficiency Test Center,
Director, China-Australia Forum
School of Global, Urban and Social Studies
College of Design and Social Context
RMIT University Australia*

Farewell to Consul General Mr Shi Weiqiang

On the evening of Friday 21 June 2013 the National and State President of the ACFS, Mr John Breheny, and members of the ACFS Victorian Branch Committee attended the farewell reception for the Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Melbourne., Mr Shi Weiqiang.

Mr Shi has been Consul General in Melbourne for the past three years and returns to China in July.

Testament to the important work and strong connections Mr Shi has made in his time in Victoria a broad range of Government, community and business representatives were in attendance, including former Victorian Premiers Mr John Brumby and Mr Ted Baillieu, as well as Victorian Education Minister Mr Hall, and Speaker Mr Ken Smith (who is also a member of the ACFS).

In his farewell speech Mr Shi spoke of the warm friendships he has made, the important social, business and cultural work that he has overseen in his time here, and the fond memories he will take home

with him of his time in Melbourne and Victoria.

Representatives of the current Victorian Premier Mr Denis Napthine and Opposition Leader Mr Daniel Andrews spoke about the important work undertaken by Mr Shi; and former Premier Mr Baillieu also spoke and wished Mr Shi a fond farewell and encouraged Mr Shi to continue to consider barracking for the Geelong Football team.

The ACFS wishes Mr Shi the best in his future endeavors and thanks him for his support of the Victorian Branch of the ACFS and it's work in the Victorian community.

Neil Barker
ACFS National Secretary and ACFS
Victorian Branch Committee member

Forum on Australia in Asian Century

organized by the Chinese Australian Alliance (CAA)
Date: 29 June 2013 Saturday
by Wai Ching Chan and Lia Cross

The Forum on Australia in the Asian Century kick-started bright and early on Saturday with an opening speech by Wah Yeo, AM JP who was also the Convener of the Chinese Australian Alliance (CAA). He spoke about playing an active role as a 'foot soldier' of Australia in forging multi-cultural relationships and cultivating strong political, cultural and economic ties between Australian and China. The Vice-Consul General of China, Fengwen Huang, also celebrated the burgeoning trade relations between China and Australia which set further expectations of a China-Australia friendship. Already there are many good examples of excellent Australia-Chinese relationships covering tourism, sports (including the Olympics and the Australian Open to name a few) and trade. Speeches by other speakers in the morning include the Speaker of the House of Representative, Anna Burke MHR and Deputy Leader of the Greens Party, Adam Bandt MHR. The focus of the discussions centred mainly on the Australia-China strategy paper which presents many opportunities for Australia to explore in the growing Asia Region, in part due to a booming China. There are many areas the two countries can foster bilateral relationships and create strategic dialogues in including education, scientific research, defence and people-to-people links. The Australia-China relationship could reach new heights

with Australia playing a pivotal role in assisting regional relationships whilst maintaining its friendship with the US. It is also heartening to see China embracing a strong climate change policy which Australia is a strong advocate of. Renewable energy can potentially be a great platform for the two countries to cooperate in a growing market which in 2012, generated \$212 billion worth of investments.

The afternoon sessions covered two book launches and academic lectures given by Dr. Baoqiang Gao (from La Trobe) representing Professor Likun Pei the Director of the Confucius Institute, who spoke about Educational ties with China- an important area. Community leaders from the Australia China Business Council, the National Gallery of Victoria (inspirational talk by artist Pison Hong (representing NGV trustee Jason Yeap OAM) not concerned with economics for a change but the important field of the Arts!

The Australia China Young Professionals Initiative (Stephanie Wang) also contributed with a speech as did a representative from the Liberal Party – John Nguyen – a little out of his depth at this stage of his career but who will no doubt grow in knowledge as he grows into the job. Finally the forum closed with an address by Albert Lee from the CAA and voting for a resolution re- The Asian Century (which includes

all East Asian (not just China), South Asia (India) and of course, the smaller, but extremely active South-East Asian Countries), as being not a temporary, but a continuing engagement by Australia with it's Asian neighbours to the north. It was also acknowledged that Australia is geographically part of Asia NOT a Western European country. About time!!!

Throughout the day, speeches were made in English before they were aptly translated in Mandarin for some Chinese-speaking members in the audience. It was overall a productive forum with many discussions that took place among many leaders,

representatives and participants from the community who found opportunities to exchange contacts and facilitate friendships.

Friends from Beijing, China

On Monday 27 May, ACFS President John Brehney and Liz O'Connor hosted an artist delegation from Beijing. The guests enjoyed a delicious multicultural meal of local cuisine. The Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (BPAFFC) organised the overnight visit to Melbourne, including a trip to Ballarat.

The delegation had representatives from BPAFFC, Beijing Municipal Institute of Culture and History and four artists, Gao Beifeng, Li Defu, Chen Keyong and Han Pu.

The artists took their paintings to Christchurch (NZ) for an exhibition prior to their visit here and we were fortunate to see reproductions of the originals.



ACFS President John Brehney with Guests from Beijing

These traditional-style paintings demonstrate mastery of brush and ink, depicting landscape and nature themes. The poetry, calligraphy, painting and stamp complement each other to fully display the artist's emotions and sentiments.

The evening's lively discourse centered on art of the Cultural Revolution, current artistic practices and cultural exchanges. Derek the cat was very popular and made his acquaintance with some of the visitors.

Robin Matthews

Promoting Friendship and Understanding Between the Australian and Chinese People

Family of the People

After the first plenary session of the 18th CPC Central Committee in March 2013, Xinhua News Agency published a profile of Xi Jinping, which highlighted his political journey and offered a glimpse into his family life. The following is a summary of that article.



Xi Jinping's father Xi Zhongxun was a Party and state leader. The senior Xi served as chairman of the Shaan-Gan Border Region, a CPC revolutionary base of the 1930s, and was called by Mao Zedong a "leader of the people." Xi's mother Qi Xin, nearly 90 years of age, is also a veteran cadre and Party member.

The Xi family has a tradition of living a simple and disciplined life. After Xi Jinping became a leading official, his 90 year old mother called a family meeting to ban the siblings from engaging in business where Xi Jinping worked.

Xi married Peng Liyuan, a renowned soprano and opera singer. She was the first singer in China to obtain a master's degree in national vocal music. She is a representative figure of national vocal music and one of the founders of the school of national vocal music. Her most famous works include *On the Plains of Hope*, *People from Our Village*, and *We Are Yellow River and Taishan Mountain*.

Peng has attributed her accomplishments to the people and said she should contribute all her

talent to the people. Over the past 30-plus years, she has given hundreds of free performances for people from all different walks of life across the country as an expression of gratitude or appreciation. These included performances in impoverished mountain areas, coastal areas, oil fields, mines and barracks, as well as in deserts and the snowy plateau. She also performed in Wenchuan after the devastating earthquake of 2008, in Beijing's Xiaotangshan after the SARS outbreak and in flood-hit Jiujiang in Jiangxi Province.

Peng is very much committed to charity work. She is a WHO Goodwill Ambassador for Tuberculosis and HIV/ AIDS, a national AIDS prevention advocate, and an ambassador for the prevention of juvenile delinquency and for tobacco control. At a recent World AIDS Day activity raising awareness about AIDS, AIDS orphans called her "Mama Peng".

The couple have a daughter, Xi Mingze. Mingze in Chinese implies "living an honest life and being a useful person to society," which is their expectation for her and also a symbol of their family's simple style.

The Historical Significance of Mao Zedong:

The legacy of Chairman Mao may seem diluted under the relatively new leadership of Xi Jinping, but as Henry Liu argues, Mao's legacy is still vital to a vibrant and positive China.

As he says, *"...Wealth is good; it is the mal-distribution of it that is bad and creates socio-economic conflicts. And if that mal-distribution is carried out through class lines, then class struggle must be part of a socialist revolution..."*

*In the final analysis, Chinese Communist Party leaders would do well if they would follow the advice urged on their predecessors in 1944 by Mao Zedong: **Serve the People**"*

Written in January 2013 for the First Annual Conference on Mao Zedong, the author outlines the changes to China and the profound effect of Mao's political philosophy.

Read the full text:

<http://henryckliu.com/page260.html>

Unique Wedding Ceremony in Northern Shaanx

This is an abridged version of an article from Women of China

Northern Shaanxi's rural residents tend to hold their wedding ceremonies during the winter. Why? This is the slow season for farmers, so they have more time to celebrate. And they do celebrate; a wedding ceremony usually lasts three days.



On the first day, friends and relatives of the groom's family gather at the house of the groom's family, to congratulate the family and/or help with the ceremony.

Early the next morning (the second day), the groom's family, with friends, will go to the village's entrance to greet the wedding procession. The procession is usually composed of 10 or fewer people (but not the bride, who remains at her home), among whom two of the women are relatives of the groom. Many of the groom's relatives, as well as villagers, carry colourful fans and umbrellas, which they use in the performance of the Yangge dance and is led by the groom's mother. After the dance, the happy crowd follows the wedding procession to the groom's house.

The groom's family loads presents, such as new clothes, bed clothes, jewellery, food and money, on donkeys' backs, and after firecrackers have been set off, the wedding procession leaves for the bride's house. Along the way, members of the band, beat drums and blow trumpets to mark the happy occasion.

The band continues to play as the procession reaches the entrance to the bride's village. The bride's family lead the people to their house, where

they serve the wedding feast which comprises chicken, duck, fish, meat and other local foods, such as noodles made from buckwheat, mutton soup and pickled cabbage.

The bride wears new clothes all in red to symbolize joy and happiness, such as a red cotton-padded jacket, a pair of red trousers, socks and shoes, and a pair of red gloves.

After the feast, the groom carries his bride to a donkey and the wedding procession heads to the groom's house. The wedding ceremony is held after the procession arrives at the groom's house.

A competition follows the ceremony; both the bride and groom try to enter the bridal chamber first, as locals believe the person who enters the chamber first will have greater say - and influence in the family.

After the couple toasts and drink to each other, they exchange presents. The groom usually gives the bride money or jewellery, while the bride typically gives the groom an embroidered dudou (diamond-shaped cloth worn over the chest and abdomen). The dudou is embroidered with various auspicious patterns, such as twin lotus flowers on one stalk and mandarin ducks playing on water, to symbolize a devoted couple living in peace and harmony. It also represents good luck; for example, kyllin (an auspicious legendary animal with a horn and scales) sending a son, which symbolizes good wishes that the couple will have a son as soon as possible. Finally, an elder relative of either the bride or the groom, combines locks of the bride and groom's hair, and then combs it.

On the third day, the groom, with his wife, visits his in-laws. The bride's family hold a banquet for the newlyweds and they do not return home until after dark.



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. Strengthening ties with travel, the exchange of ideas, information and trade between the two countries.

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

PRESIDENT: Mr John Breheny

VICE PRESIDENT: Mr Anthony Leong
Mr Tower Liu

SECRETARY: Ms Robin Matthews

TREASURER: Mr Dong Chen

COMMITTEE: Ms Louise Clayton
Mr Richard Lightfoot
Mr Neil Barker
Mr Phil Parker
Ms Lia Cross
Miss Wai Ching Chan

ACFS (VICTORIA) Inc. A0038007M ABN NO. 39 746 574 225

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Family Name (Mr /Mrs/Ms/Other)..... Given Names

Address..... P/code.....

Phone Email.....

VICTORIAN MEMBERSHIP RATES

Family \$40.00 Single \$30.00 Concession \$15.00 Corporate on Application

I/We support the Society's aims:Signature/s

I/We enclose the sum of \$ for my/our membership subscription.

Pay directly into the ACFS Victoria Branch Account, BSB: 063-019, Account number: 10040625

Please put your name in the subject line & email REFERENCE to acfs.vic@gmail.com

You may send cheques to the Treasurer at the address in the left corner below and YOUR DONATION WOULD BE GRATEFULLY RECEIVED

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