

Australia China Friendship Society ACT Branch Inc



澳中友好协会

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President's report for 2018

We have had a good year in terms of activities for members and promoting Chinese culture to Canberrans however our membership continues to decline (it is now 81) and as I have said before we need to attract more younger members.

We had a good range of functions during the year: 2 film evenings :Camel Collar' at the Jamison Southern Cross Club and 'Wolf Totem' at the Canberra Labor Club in Belconnen; four interesting talks: Alex Olah on 'Chinese Culture'; Fred Chow on 'Impressions of Fascinating Northern Xinjiang', Shaoying Wang on 'Rural China – Jiaodong Peninsular, Shandong Province' and Peter Hack on 'The Art Deco Stores of Shanghai'. We helped with arrangements for the ANU Chinese Classical Music Ensemble's concert 'Spring Thoughts' which was not as well attended as we'd hoped. We held dinners at Chinese New Year and Christmas and a June yum cha lunch.

Our major event for the year was the Lantern Festival – the last activity for the celebration of Chinese New Year. The lantern-making workshop at the Cook Community Hub had 34 attendees and a record-making 1000+ attended the Festival. We had 9 performance groups of both adults and children and a ringing of the Peace Bell which was installed in Lennox Gardens exactly one year ago. The Beijing Garden is the ideal venue and it well and truly fulfilled our aim of promoting Chinese Festivals to the Canberra community.

An important aspect of the Society's work is the promotion of Chinese culture in schools. The Panda competition was again held for primary schools with the topic this year being 'Chinese Musical Instruments'. We had entries from 9 schools and awarded 73 prizes and certificates plus 27 special effort certificates for those students who put in extra effort but did not win one of the prizes. The ANU Chinese Classical Musical Ensemble and students from the Chinese Embassy gave performances and the prizes and certificates were presented by Minister Cai, Minister-Counsellor Yang and quite a number of other Embassy representatives at a ceremony at the Chinese Embassy which was attended by Principals from every school, teachers, students, parents and Society members who helped with the organisation of the day. This was the third time the presentation was held at the Embassy and it was a most rewarding and memorable day for all who attended.

Awards for the best and most improved students of mandarin were presented to students from 12 High Schools and Colleges, at a ceremony hosted by Minister Counsellor Yang Zhi at the Cultural Office attended by ~80 students, parents teachers and members.

We continue to support Project Hope students: 1 girl and 2 boys at Labagoumen primary schools, 1 girl at a Yanqing primary School, 3 girls at a Huairou middle school, 3 girls and 1 boy at a Miyun primary school and 1 boy at the Best middle school in Labagoumen.

Funds to support these students came from a variety of sources: profits from lantern sales at the Lantern Festival; takings from Fyshwick markets stalls; fees for running 2 lantern making workshops at the 'Wintervention' event in July; a portion of the profits from the ANNUCCME concert in October; 2 fundraising lunches held in Adelaide by Siew-Gim's sister. The latter funds support four students for 3 years.

Special thanks to Angela Wydeveld who has taken on the role of organizing the Fyshwick Markets stalls most ably assisted by John Corcoran, Siew-Gim McGregor, Eliza Ngan and Mark Fraser.

The Society was invited to participate in two delegations. Carol, Brian and John attended the China International Poverty - Alleviation Conference in Shanxi Province which was organized by the CPAFFC in July. After the conference we met with CPAFFC, Beijing and this resulted in arranging a tour to the International Horticultural Expo in Yanqing later this year. Jean was our representative to the 8th Friendship Forum of the CPAFFC in Hainan in November. This was the first time for many years that the ACT and NSW Branches had been invited to participate.

We obtained a grant from the ACT Government for the Lantern Festival but were unsuccessful in our bid for a grant for the Panda Competition .

After more than 25 years the monthly Chinese conversation evenings hosted and conducted by Shirley Johns came to an end in November due to family circumstances. Shirley was presented with a beautiful quilt made by Suzie Michaelis in recognition of her long commitment and untiring contribution.

The newsletter, which continues to report on our activities and provide items of interest, plays an important role for the Society as for many members this is the only contact they have. Thanks go to Jean, who is the editor, and to Roger Arnold for his regular and most interesting contributions on living in China and also to Teck who regularly sources items of interest.

Our website which helps us to maintain our profile is most capably managed by Siew-Gim McGregor and we have started using facebook to promote our events..

We have enjoyed close contact with and received considerable support from the Chinese Embassy and in particular the Cultural Office. We received literature, prizes and gifts for the Lantern Festival, Panda competition and School Awards; the Embassy hosted the Panda competition presentation; the Cultural Office hosted the school awards and their representatives attended all these events. We greatly value and appreciate the Embassy's support and extend our sincere thanks and look forward to continuing our very close relationship.

The Society places great reliance on the committee: Tanja Naeher – secretary and co-ordinator of performers for the Lantern Festival, Neil Birch - treasurer, Jean Norman - editor and lantern-workshop co-ordinator, Teck Lee - functions co-ordinator, Alex Olah – publicity, John Wong PA co-ordinator. Our committee worked together very harmoniously and I would like to thank all the members for their support and hard work. I would also like to thank the Society members who have helped at our events during the year. And as a final note it would be heartening to see more members attend and help out at our various events.

Carol Keil

President

20 March 2019