

Australia China Friendship Society

ACT Branch Inc

澳中友好协会

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Bulletin

2024/9 October 2024

Coming events

Panda Competition presentation

6 Nov

50th Anniversary dinner

20 Nov

Christmas dinner

11 Dec



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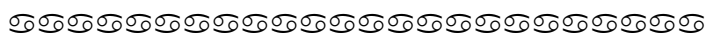
Promoting friendship and understanding between the Australian and Chinese people

Panda Competition presentation ceremony – help needed

The annual Panda competition prize-giving ceremony will be held on Wednesday 6 November at the Chinese Embassy.

The presentation ceremony for the panda competition is from 11-1.30pm. It is always a most rewarding event and lunch will be provided. Parking will be available inside the Embassy grounds and you will need to provide your car's registration number.

If you would like to come and assist on the day please email acfsevent@gmail.com by 1 November.

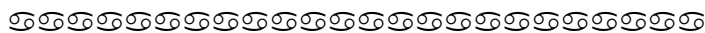


50th Anniversary reception

On the occasion of the Society's 50th anniversary celebration the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China has very generously invited members of the Society and their families to a reception to be held at the Embassy from 6.30-8.30pm on Wednesday 20 November. There will be a presentation of the Society's many achievements during the last 50 years.

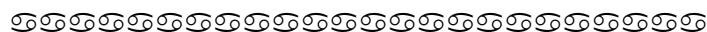
I strongly encourage you to attend and look forward to seeing you at Embassy.

Please RSVP to acfsevent@gmail.com by 13 November. You will need to bring photo-id with you.



Christmas dinner

Our final function for the year will be a Christmas dinner to be held on Wednesday 11 December. More details in the next *Bulletin*.



ANU Centre on China in the World Events



Navigating relational landscapes: contextualising restorative justice in Taiwanese juvenile justice
Reynol Cheng, PhD scholar at RegNet
Tue 29 Oct, 12:30pm | Online

Drawing from reintegrative shaming theory, this study explores how restorative justice is understood, practiced, and institutionalised in Taiwan's social and cultural context.

Fast facts from the *Beijing Review*, October 2024

- China's investment in water conservancy projects totalled 802 billion yuan in the first 8 months of this year up almost 11% year on year. Investment on this scale has contributed to employment, creating nearly 2.1million jobs this year, up 6.9% in a year. 42,000 water conservancy projects have been implemented this year; 28,000 projects were started this year.
- China is working on serving a more diverse range of food options for future deep-space exploration missions. During the mid-autumn festival, the crew on the Shenzhou-18 space station enjoyed "space mooncakes" stuffed with lotus paste. The also enjoyed favourites such as spicy lamb and braised pork chops. China has standards for space flight nutritional supplies that can help address physiological issues caused by weightlessness and radiation and stay healthy for space missions lasting over 180 days.
- Of China's 6 million manufacturing enterprises over 515,000 were related to strategic emerging industries.
- China's vehicle software market is worth over 65 billion yuan, accounting for 30% of the countries software market. Between 15 and 20% of Automobile semiconductor chips are now made locally. China's automobile industry is now about 10% of GDP.

Thanks to Neil Birch for compiling these.

George E. Morrison Lecture

THE 85TH GEORGE E. MORRISON LECTURE IN ETHNOLOGY will take place on November 5, 2024. We have invited Leigh Jenco, Professor of Political Theory at the London School of Economics, to speak at the event. In her talk, she will explore political acts of transmission by Chinese thinkers, and how transmission might signal defiance at times of subjugation and shore up identity and community at times of catastrophic loss.

Refreshments will be provided from 5 PM, and the event will start at 5:30 PM. Visit the Australian Centre on China in the World website to register.



Malaysian Maoists and "Anti-Red" Planning **James Gethyn Evans, Ph.D. Candidate at Harvard University** **Thu 31 Oct, 4pm | Online**

This talk focuses on the dynamic interactions between the Malayan Communist Party (PKM) and the post-colonial Malaysian state as each side manoeuvred to either promote or eradicate localized communist organizing in the 1960s "post-Emergency" era.



Q&A Screening - Welcome to Babel **2024 The Capital Film Festival** **Sat 2 Nov, 3:30pm | Dendy Cinemas**

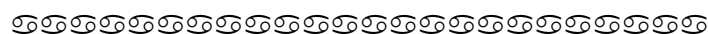
A fascinating and absorbing portrait of Chinese-Australian artist Shen Jiawei, WELCOME TO BABEL follows Jiawei's quest to create 'Tower of Babel,' a monumental mural depicting his homeland's tumultuous recent history.

In Mandarin and English language with English subtitles. Includes Q&A with with Artist Jiawei Shen, Director James Bradley and Producer Graeme Isaacs.



The War for Chinese Talent in America **David Zweig, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology** **Mon 4 Nov, 10am | Online**

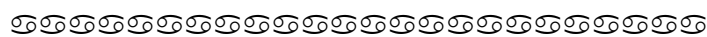
This seminar documents China's "over-the-top" effort to gain the help of these talented Chinese, as well as the US government's harsh effort to disrupt the transfer of US technology to China. It also highlights the harm this war has brought to Sino-American scientific collaboration.



ANUCCME concert 6 October 2024

This year's concert's theme was Mountains, Waters & Harmony. There were 24 musicians playing a wide variety of instruments: da ruan, san xian, zong ruan, Liu qin, pipa, guzheng, yangqin, percussion, dizi, xiao and erhu, drums and electronic piano. The program consisted of solos, duets, small ensembles and the entire ensemble. The pieces played by the small groups enabled an excellent appreciation of individual instruments. The pieces had evocative titles including: Majestic Imperial Melody, Orchid Pavilion Epistle, the Buddhist Monk Climbs the Cold Mountain and Camel Bells on the Silk Road. Afternoon tea was served during intermission and enabled audience members to chat with the musicians. It was disappointing that there were not more Society members attending but 54 tickets were sold and a share of the profits will help

support our Project Hope students. Thanks to Tanja, Jean, John W, Robert, Eliza and Mark for helping on the day, selling tickets and organising afternoon tea.



Committee News – 21 October 2024 meeting

Our October committee meeting was held at our meeting stalwart location - the 'China Tea Club' restaurant in North Lyneham and we welcomed Neil back from his family's recent overseas trip.

Those who had attended the annual society supported ANU Chinese Classical Music Ensemble's concert on 6 October at the ANU's 'China in the World' building thought the event was a success and well received by the audience, which enjoyed the variety in

performances – we also noted a slight change in catering requirements for the afternoon tea – not as many brownies were enjoyed as we had prepared for!

An order has been placed for the polo shirts celebrating the ACT Branch's 50th anniversary, so hoping that you will be able to wear yours later in the year!

We talked through the final arrangements for the Panda competition awards ceremony at the Chinese Embassy early November. It always proves to be an exciting event for the awardees and their supporters. A lot of preparation work goes into holding the annual competition – thanks to Amanda as the school coordinator for all the running around and many emails to and fro with the schools. Then, selecting the winning entries and prize allocation – held on two separate weekends – thanks to Amanda, Carol and Jean. The committee also thanks Carol and Brian for offering their home as the delivery and storage point of entries and venue for the judging and prize allocation.

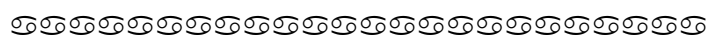
The 50th anniversary celebration of the ACFS's ACT Branch is approaching quickly, and we hope that you will be able to attend! Please keep an eye out for information about the evening, very generously being hosted at the Embassy late November.

Thought has already turned to the 2025 Lantern Festival – tonight we talked further on the best method to light up the lanterns for display and purchase. John has also started his search for small items suitable for children on the night of the event. Options for setting up the lighting at the stage area in Beijing Gardens are being mulled over, as the current practice of stringing the lights through the trees is becoming less feasible.

Following the meeting we enjoyed dinner – all was delicious, but the 'Sound of Music' dish (included crumbed pieces of tofu) was cheekily satisfying.

Enjoy the slightly warmer days!

Your Secretary, Tanja



Carol Keil's speech on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the PRC

I was invited by the China Media Group (CMG), one of the largest media groups in the world, to give a speech on the topic 'Written in the Sky: My China Story' at a ceremony at the Hyatt to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Peoples Republic of China. CMG has 51 TV channels including CCTV, 22 domestic radio frequencies, and programming in 80 languages for global audiences. There were speeches from the Ambassador, the Chief of CMG Asia-Pacific, myself and 5 others from a range of institutions and organisations in Canberra, Sydney and Tasmania.

Good morning. The Australia China Friendship Society is an apolitical association that promotes friendship between Australia and China. I am now in my 30th year as President which is something I certainly didn't envisage when I joined the Society in 1982.

1982 was the year I decided I had to visit China and the Society was one of the few ways of doing so. I went as part of a group of 24 and our route took us to Guangzhou, Shanghai, Beijing, Wuhan, 6 days on the Yangtze river to Chongqing, Chengdu and back to Guangzhou. The three gorges have now been flooded but the experience of 1 day from dawn to dusk seeing these magnificent mountains is something I will never forget.

From my first day in China everything was new and fascinating – the architecture, food, clothing culture to name but a few things. In those days people still dressed in muted colours except on the Yangtze River where the men wore brightly coloured singlets.

My next visit was again on a Society tour but this time with my husband Brian and my father Timothy Jones who is the author of a very well-regarded book 'The Chinese in the Northern Territory'. There were significant changes even in the 3 years since my previous visit: ex-army vehicles had been replaced by modern cars trucks, motorbikes and mopeds, clothing was brighter and more shops were open to name just a few of these changes.

In the years following my first two tours I have been on several private visits, been a member of a number of delegations invited by various Chinese organisations and taken a tour group. In all I have made 15 visits to the People's Republic.

In 1994 I was a member of the Gung Ho co-operative organisation, which was set up by Rewi Alley in 1939, and I attended a conference in Beijing and then went on to Shandan in Gansu Province to visit a number of small co-operatives. I remember being shocked at the complete lack of health and safety provisions. At one stage long, extruded lengths of steel were being flicked across a workshop floor, with no protective attire for the workers and in a granite factory no-one was wearing ear protection despite the extraordinary noise. But the co-ops were all successful and provided needed employment for many workers. On this visit to Shandan I had the great privilege of being able to spend time with Isabel Crook. Isabel was born in China, was a pioneering anthropologist, joined Mao's rural revolution and spent her life helping to build a new China. I visited her each time I was in Beijing and she died last year aged 107

In 1999 I was extremely fortunate to be able to attend the 50th anniversary parade in Tien 'An men Square. To get to our spot, which was in the east stand to the right of Chairman Mao's portrait, we had to leave very early and then walk through an almost deserted, eerily quiet Forbidden City. A massed band equivalent to ~7 normal bands played continuously and 100,000 school children performed in the Square. The parade started dead on time at 10am and for two hours we saw an extraordinary assortment of military equipment and personnel, flyovers, numerous floats interspersed with groups of performers, sports men and women and the thousands of participants didn't miss a beat. It was an extraordinary experience.

In 2004 I attended a Friendship Forum in Beijing and afterwards we went to visit a small township outside Dazu. I had previously visited Dazu, purely by chance in 1985, when after dinner we were told our hotel in Chongqing was fully booked and we had a 3hr drive to our, what turned out to be a very basic hotel, in Dazu. At that time it was a small town unused to foreigners and we were surrounded wherever we went. This time we were met by the Vice-Governor, who much to my astonishment had been our interpreter on a previous visit some years before. The township we were visiting, Gaoping, only had a dirt road in and we had to walk an additional 1-1.5km on a very gluey, clay track which did wonders for the floor of the bus as we could not remove the mud from our shoes! The township really wanted help to get a formed road so they could transport their produce further afield.

Our next stop on this trip was Tibet, a place I had always wanted to visit. The Potala Palace was all I had hoped it would be. However, altitude sickness struck our group with one member dying and 7 others sent straight back to Beijing. It was a very sobering lesson about the effects of high altitude. Tibet is a fascinating area and the air was so clear, the sky so blue and the mountains just extraordinary, making it an unforgettable experience. When it came time to leave a huge dust storm had blown up making it difficult to even see inside the terminal. As time went on there was concern that we wouldn't be able to leave as planes cannot take off after a certain time due to the altitude. Thirty minutes before the deadline an announcement blared out to say the flight was leaving and this generated a great surge to the boarding gate and we got off the ground with a mere 10 minutes to spare.

Another small conference I attended in 2013 was at Chao Zhou in Guangdong Province and the topic was Intangible Cultural Heritage, where delegates from just about all

over the world each gave a presentation on 'Safeguarding and Promotion of Traditional Festivals'. I chose to talk about

- the Bendigo Easter festival which is a celebration of Easter and Chinese New Year and is the longest running continuously celebrated festival (since 1871)
- Moomba which has been celebrated since 1955
- the National Multicultural Festival which is a unique event in Australia and celebrated in Canberra
- Anzac Day

After the presentations we were taken to see an extensive variety of intangible arts, crafts and activities in the district ranging from exquisite embroidery, inlaid porcelain, red teapots, papercutting, lantern-making to lion dancing.

The most recent conference I attended was on 'China International Poverty-Alleviation', in Xing County, Shanxi Province. The trip did not start well as I had thoughtfully locked Brian's suitcase but left the key in Canberra!!

The descent into Luliang, was spectacular as the airport was created by removing the tops of 2 very high loess formations. Xing County was a 2 hour trip from the airport along an elevated 2 lane divided freeway through numerous tunnels of lengths varying from ~200m to 6 kms. We travelled in a motorcade of 12 minibuses with a police escort and all buses operating their hazard lights. There was very little traffic on the roads and little evidence of human habitation or activity. In 2017 the County was designated as being extremely poverty stricken with an impoverished population of 37,513. The County has rich resources with an estimated reserve of coal of 46.1 billion tons. It is a development zone with large scale projects related to coal, electricity and aluminium as well as agricultural industries. We saw significant afforestation efforts and visited a very modern school with free schooling for a sizable number of poor and 'left behind' children.

My most recent visit to China in 2019 was to lead a tour I had organized to Hebei Province and the Horticultural Expo. I had been to a previous expo in 1999, but this one seemed to be much larger with magnificent Provincial exhibits and pavilions. The tour's itinerary encompassed areas which were off the beaten track and we saw amazing numbers of very large solar panel installations and wind turbines.

Over the last 43 years I have witnessed extraordinary changes in China. The population has moved from being 80% in the countryside to 34% in the countryside; Neon signs, shopping malls, metros, Macdonalds and KFC, private cars, private schools, designer clothes labels, significant numbers of high rise apartments are just a few of the changes that come to mind. On the other hand, some things have almost vanished: cloth shoes, mao suits, walking tractors and the ubiquitous bicycle is on the decline. China is now a very modern country with an advanced economy and I have enjoyed all my visits and learnt such a lot over the years.

I would just like to say a little about the ACT Branch of the Australia China Friendship Society. We only have a small membership but we have our niche here in Canberra. We stage the Lantern Festival which is celebrated 2 weeks after Chinese New year in the Canberra-Beijing Garden. We have had up to a 1000 people from all walks of life and background attend and it is a wonderful promotion of a Chinese Festival.

We have a focus on students and hold the annual Panda competition for school children to do a drawing or make a model on a Chinese theme which has varied from 'A day in the Life of a Panda' to 'Ancient Chinese Inventions'. The students show amazing creativity and we generally award around 60 prizes.

We also make awards for the best and most improved students of mandarin at most of Canberra High schools and Colleges. Both these programs foster an interest in Chinese language and culture and encourage the students to persist with learning mandarin.

A program we have been supporting for 23 years is Project Hope which is managed by the Beijing Youth Development Foundation in China. We sponsor 10 students from

poverty-stricken backgrounds to stay at school in Labagoumen in the remote mountainous area of Beijing. The Society has made 3 visits to the Labagoumen primary school since 2002 when we began our sponsorship. Over the years we have seen the school's facilities improve considerably. We have made donations of approximately \$A42,000 which has enabled about 250 students to stay at school.

A memorable event in Australia China relations in 2014 was the gifting by the Chinese government to the ACT government, on Canberra's centenary, of the Canberra Beijing Garden in Yarralumla. It is a beautiful traditional garden and is very well used.

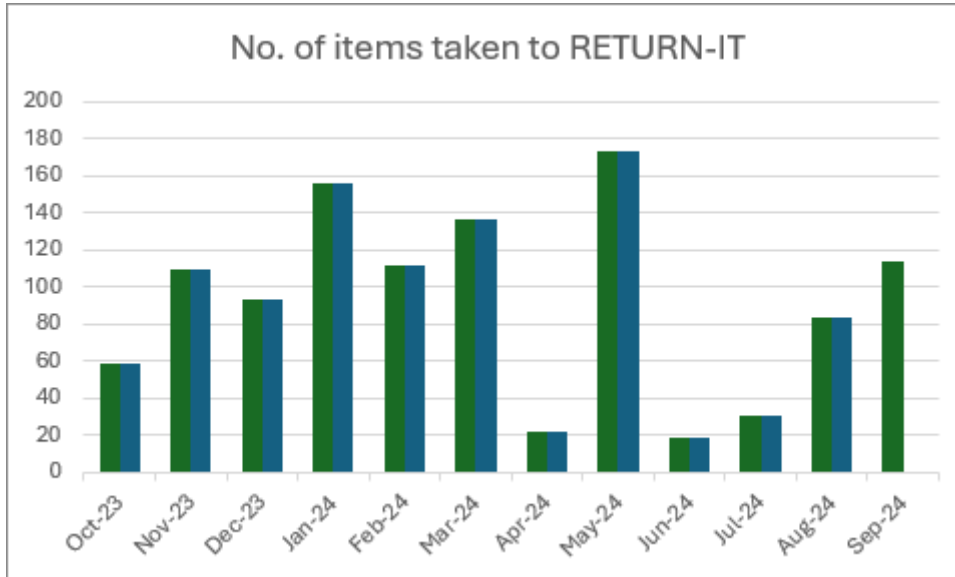
A major event for the Society was in 2020 when I and Ambassador Cheng Jingye planted a friendship tree in the Canberra Beijing Garden.

I have had extremely rewarding experiences in China and as President/committee member/Executive member of the Australia China Friendship Society, ACT Branch over the last 42 years. I have seen enormous changes in China over this time, our friendship has endured and I would like to warmly congratulate China on the 75th anniversary of its founding.

Carol Keil
President, ACFS, ACT Branch

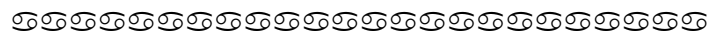


Recycling of cans and bottles



Many thanks to those members who have taken their cans and bottles to the RETURN-IT recycling centres and chosen to donate the refund to ACFS.

Instructions on how to credit deposits to our account are now on our website www.acfs.org.au under the tab 'Contribute to the Society'.



Book review

Peter Hessler, *Other Rivers: a Chinese Education*, Atlantic Books, 2024

Peter Hessler is a New York Times journalist who has spent two periods teaching English in China. He first went to a teachers' college in Fuling in 1996, as a US Peace Corps volunteer. Then in 2019 he went with his Chinese-American wife and twin eight-year-old daughters to Sichuan University.

On both postings, Hessler developed deep bonds with his students and had a practice of surveying their views on a wide range of topics each year. He was thus able to distinguish differences between the two cohorts of students, separated by almost a generation, and to compare their views on many subjects including work, their parents' lives, marriage, children, education and entrepreneurship.

At the same time, he and his wife were navigating the Chinese education system with their daughters, including memorising prodigious numbers of characters, grappling with complex mathematics homework and fierce competition among parents.

And then COVID. Hessler's insights into the Chinese government's handling of this situation are perceptive, as are his views on how the students coped with the various levels of restrictions.

An interesting perspective, worth reading.

Jean Norman

Australia China Friendship Society ACT Branch — membership application form

Annual subscriptions are due on 1 January and are current until 31 December of the same year. The monthly Bulletin is included in the subscription and is distributed by email.

Subscription rates are

Single \$20 Family \$35 Centrelink Concession Holder: Individual \$15 and Family \$25

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