



ALMA NEWS DECEMBER 2019

Association for
Learning
MANDARIN
汉语
in Australia Inc

澳大利亚学汉语协会

CHRISTMAS IN CHINA

In recent years, Christmas has become more popular in China. It is not a public holiday, but customs like trimming and lighting Christmas trees, sending cards and gifts, and holding parties are popular in major cities. The commercial streets and shopping malls are usually beautifully decorated and crowded with people, and festive music can be heard wherever you go. Popular Christmas songs include 'Jingle Bells', 'We Wish You a Merry Christmas' and 'Silent Night'.

Young people celebrate with Christmas parties, and it is a time when young couples buy gifts for each other.

In Mandarin, Merry Christmas is *shèng dàn kuài lè* “圣诞快乐”. Santa is known as *shèng dàn lǎo rén* “圣诞老人” [old Christmas man], and Christmas Eve is *píng ān yè* “平安夜” [peaceful evening].

Christmas is not a public holiday in Taiwan either, but is celebrated in a similar way to on the mainland.

Hong Kong and Macau, which used to be European colonies, are even more influenced by western culture. Just like here in Australia, they start preparing for Christmas in November and have public holidays: December 25th and 26th in Hong Kong, and the 24th and 25th of December in Macau.

ALMA ACTIVITIES

MANDARIN RADIO PROGRAM

ALMA continues to help present the Mandarin program on community radio 2XX every Friday from 7pm-7.30pm. Each program includes simple songs and a short story for children in Chinese. These are then discussed bilingually to help develop the language and cultural understanding of both Chinese- and English-speaking listeners.

To listen to the program, tune into 98.3FM on Friday evenings or listen online at any time through the website at <http://www.2xxfm.org.au/>. Just click 'on demand' and look for the Mandarin program in the program guide.

MANDARIN COMMUNITY TUTORING PROJECT

The project is slowing down as participants get ready for Christmas. Many of the volunteer tutors are tertiary students who travel or return home over the university break, or may be graduating this year and leaving Canberra. Some of the learners are university students too, and are taking a break from their studies.

To look back over the year and to take stock of the project, we have recently contacted the 21 tutors who have been helping learners in 2019 and asked them to comment on their tutoring experiences. Here are some of the responses we have had so far:

What did they spend most time on in meetings?

Practice in speaking Mandarin (with various amounts of English depending on topic and learner level) was the most common response. Also helping learners with what they were doing in a Mandarin class elsewhere, and 'extending a bit more knowledge that they want to know' as one tutor put it. One pair "usually had some lunch together at a nearby restaurant, then we took a walk around campus while chatting".

What did the tutors gain from the meetings?

Responses included help with improving English, learning more about Australian culture, meeting new people and sharing travel experiences. One tutor noted that the project gave her a chance reflect on and appreciate her own culture and language study. She was impressed by the keenness of the learners to find out more about China, and felt a sense of achievement from being able to assist them.

Ideas for the future

Several tutors suggested that ALMA put the tutors in touch with each other online, where they could ask questions or exchange information and/or through a social gathering once or twice a year. Learners could also be invited to a meetup: "I reckon it is more enjoyable for everyone, we will feel not alone". These are excellent suggestions, which we will follow up next year.

To find out more about the tutoring project or to register as a learner or tutor in 2020, please look at the Mandarin Community Tutoring page on <https://www.learningmandarincanberra.org/>

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

My name is Adam Daniel Sheridan; 我的中文名字是盛永鑫。I was elected President of ALMA for the coming year at the association's Annual General Meeting on the 29th of October 2019. Also elected at the AGM were Kate Friend (Vice-President), Syndy Marr (Treasurer), Rosa Harber (Secretary), Phil Harber (Assistant Secretary), and Mandy Scott, Mick Miller, Schererazade Rogers and James Marr (General Committee Members). On behalf of the new committee, I would like to thank the previous committee for all their hard work and commitment over previous years.

To introduce myself, I have a child in the Infants/Toddlers Room at the CAECC, am currently completing my Master's in Linguistics, and have travelled and lived in a number of countries. I work as a teacher, and am passionate about languages & linguistics, martial arts, travel, music, and physical health & wellbeing.

As incoming President, I would like to further the degree to which ALMA involves the community in teaching and learning Mandarin, as well as to increase our collaboration with Mawson Primary School. This is of particular interest to me given my professional and academic backgrounds. I also hope to engage more directly with other projects, including this newsletter and the Mandarin language program on Community Radio 2XX.

One recent ALMA activity I would like to mention is our collaboration with the ANU branch of the ACYA (Australia-China Youth Association, 中澳青年联合会). As noted in the September issue of ALMA News, we were one of the sponsors of, and helped provide judges for, the Second Language Speech Competition (第二语言演讲比赛) organised by ACYA on the 2nd of October. The event facilitated second language (English or Mandarin) public speaking opportunities for ANU students, was very

well organised, and received extremely positive feedback.

Information about other ALMA activities, news and upcoming events can be read in this newsletter.

I look forward to working with the new committee and getting to know other ALMA members and friends over the coming year. Please feel free to contact us at canberraalma@gmail.com with any ideas or comments you may have about future directions for our association.

Daniel
盛永鑫

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE (CAECC)

澳华幼儿教育中心新闻



We had a very special end of year concert on November 29th.

We were delighted to see that so many family members and special guests from the Chinese Embassy, the ACT Chinese Australian Association, the Australia-China Friendship Society, the Shadow Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Canberra School of Contemporary Chinese, Canberra Chinese School, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office and Member of Parliament David Smith, who kindly mentioned the CAECC End of Year Concert on his Facebook page, attended.

All the children were very excited; they had been rehearsing for the concert for over a month. They performed songs in both English and Mandarin. The Infants and Toddlers Room performed four songs, saving their favourite - Baby Shark - for their Grand Finale.

The Preschoolers' performance included didgeridoos with their rendition of Wombat Wobble. Chinese Drums were a fantastic accompaniment to the Chinese song Little Fireflies (小小萤火虫).

The concert was topped off with a scrumptious

afternoon tea prepared and served by our staff. They are wonderful, and I thank them for all their support.

Our last big event for 2019 will be our end of the year party and the preschool graduation on December 12th.

The year is almost finished and it's hard to believe I have been at CAECC for six months already. We will close for the Christmas/ New Year Break on the 20th of December and reopen on the 6th of January.

Best wishes for the new year and have a wonderful holiday everyone.

Annette Chemin - Director

OTHER NEWS

MANDARIN LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The following activities are organised by Claire, one of our ALMA members

Free weekly Mandarin conversation class

- Woden Library, Fridays 12.30pm-1.30pm
- For intermediate and advanced level learners
- Native speakers welcome
- You can bring your lunch

Mandarin classes with U3A (University of the Third Age).

Over 55? These Mandarin classes could be for you. Beginners welcome. The focus is having fun. They laugh a lot, use apps, have excursions and incursions. People study what they want; some stay with pinyin whilst others tackle characters.

For more details about either of the above, contact Claire on 0412 305 538



A tutor from our ALMA Community Tutoring Project (second from right) helping some U3A students practice the Chinese they are learning in their classes.

MEDIA ONLINE AT CIW (AUSTRALIAN CENTRE ON CHINA IN THE WORLD)

'Power Projection: China's Hollywood Dream'

A Little Red Podcast from March 2019 discussing China's influence on film production in the USA. With cinema takings in the US at a 22-year low, Hollywood moguls are looking to China as a market where box office revenues are growing.

Chinese Philosophy and Universal Values in Contemporary China

Video of the 2019 George E. Morrison Lecture by Professor John Makeham

Consistent with its growing economic, political and military might, China wants due recognition by and engagement with the global community of nations. This aspiration is complicated by the fact that Chinese political leaders and intellectuals continue to struggle with how 'Chinese values' fit with 'universal values', and whether there is a single global modernity or whether there are multiple modernities and multiple — perhaps competitive — value systems.

For these and other China-related items <http://ciw.anu.edu.au/news-and-media/media>

UPCOMING EVENTS

BOOK LAUNCH: THE CHINA CABINET AND OTHER POEMS

- Monday 16 December, 5.30-6.30pm
- Smith's Alternative 76 Alinga St Canberra

A bilingual collection of poems reflecting 55 years of working on, with, and in Chinese. Written by Christopher Nailer, a Canberra-based poet, and translated into Chinese by Alice Ayres, He Wenhui, Connie Pan and Annie Ren. Come to the launch to hear Christopher and He Wenhui and Annie Ren discuss the joys and perils of translating poetry between English and Chinese, and to hear the poems read in both languages. This is a free event hosted by Smith's Alternative and Mother Tongue - Multilingual Poetry Canberra.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CHINA AND THE WORLD

- Tuesday 17 and Wednesday 18 December
- Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW), ANU
- Free only with advanced registration.

Co-hosted by the Columbia-Harvard China and the World Program (CWP) and CIW at ANU, this conference includes panel discussions and guest lecturers from a range of speakers on 17 December, and a keynote address and a moderated debate between Dr. Hugh White and Dr Oriana Mastro on 18 December.

For more details see: <http://ciw.anu.edu.au/>

LANTERN FESTIVAL 2020

The ACT Branch of the Australia China Friendship Society will hold the Lantern Festival for 2020 on Saturday 8 February in the Beijing Garden, on the lake near Nara Peace Park. This is a very popular free event with lots of colourful cultural performances, a lantern parade and prizes for the best home-made lanterns.

This event will be preceded the week before with a Lantern-making workshop on Sunday the 2nd of February between 1-4pm at the Community Hall at Cook.

Keep an eye on the ALMA website for more details nearer to the time.



CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUTURE ALMA NEWS WELCOME

Please email items to canberraalma@gmail.com by 14 February 2020

NOTE: Decisions on publication remain at the discretion of the editor

For more information about ALMA and to see past issues of ALMA News, visit the ALMA website: <https://www.learningmandarincanberra.org/>