

WINTER SOLSTICE FESTIVAL

The Winter Solstice Festival (*Dōngzhì* - 冬至) falls on 21st December this year. It is the day with the least daylight and longest night in the Northern Hemisphere. After this day, the daylight hours become longer and give people hope. It is considered an auspicious day when new life begins.

Zhang Zhongjing, a doctor during the Han Dynasty (25-220AD), discovered that during the cold winter, poor people suffered from chilblains on their ears. Zhang boiled mutton with pepper and medicinal herbs, wrapped this mixture in dough, and then boiled the dumplings (*jiǎozi* - 饺子). When his patients ate these dumplings, their afflictions were cured. It has been a tradition in Northern China to eat *jiǎozi* during the Winter Solstice ever since.



In Southern China, families serve glutinous rice balls (*tāngyuán* - 汤圆) cooked in sweet syrup or savoury broth, which represent reunion.

CHRISTMAS



While Christmas is not a traditional Chinese festival, it is popular to send apples (*píngguǒ* - 苹果) as gifts on

Christmas Eve. This is because of the homophone in the Mandarin translation for Christmas Eve (*Píng'ān yè* - 平安夜), which means “peaceful night.”

ALMA NEWS DECEMBER 2020

Association for
Learning
MANDARIN
汉语
in Australia Inc

澳大利亚学汉语协会

Christmas Words in Chinese

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|---|--|-------------------------|---|
|  | Christmas 圣诞节 Shèngdàn Jié | snow 雪 xuě |  |
|  | wreath 花环 huāhuán | fireplace 壁炉 bìlú |  |
|  | Santa Claus 圣诞老人 Shèngdàn Lǎorén | reindeer 驯鹿 xúnlù |  |
|  | elf 精灵 jīnglíng | present 礼物 lǐwù |  |

NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A big Thank You to all who attended the ALMA AGM both in person and via Google Meet on Tuesday, 17th November. The 2019/2020 committee was dissolved and a new committee appointed. Nominations for all positions were received prior to the meeting as per the constitution. The new committee is a balance of returning and new members. Your 2020/2021 ALMA Committee is:

President: Kate Friend

Vice President: Mandy Scott

Treasurer: Victor Yee

Secretary: Rosa Harber

Assistant Secretary: Cassandra Estrin

General Committee Members:

- Charlotte Foster
- James Marr
- Cherie Rogers (newsletter)
- Alexandra Zhang

I'm looking forward to working with this group for the next year. Thank you to all our members for your support this year. We all wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season and I hope to see more of our members in 2021.

Kate Friend
ALMA President

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE (CAECC)

澳华幼儿教育中心新闻

Our children have been excitedly rehearsing for their end of the year concert, which they performed on 27th November. It was spectacular and the children were wonderful. They already have a strong sense of identity and they are such confident learners. It was filmed for those family members who were unable to attend and photos will be in the next ALMA newsletter in 2021.

Unfortunately, this year we were unable to invite our usual special guests and dignitaries. We hope that we can invite them next year.



It has been a very different year; however our families have continued to support us and we are so grateful for this.

We will close for the Christmas and New Year break on 18th December and reopen on 4th January.

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

Annette Chemin
CAECC Director

ALMA ACTIVITIES

Mandarin Community Tutoring Project

One of the aims of this project is to give Mandarin speakers an opportunity to expand their social circle and share their knowledge of Chinese language and culture while helping them to gain tutoring skills and practise their English. The other aim is to help Mandarin learners improve their Chinese language skills by meeting informally with fluent speakers. Evaluations of the project over the years have shown that it has indeed met both these aims.

The majority of our volunteer Mandarin speakers have long been international students, which means that our project relates to some of the points made by Dr Yu Tao of UWA in a recent article: [5 ways Australia can get ahead in attracting and retaining Chinese international students](#) (The Conversation, 27 November 2020). Tao notes the importance of international education for the Australian economy as a whole, and the university sector in particular, and discusses various recent events which have made Australia a less appealing destination for Chinese students. One way to improve the situation, he suggests, is to integrate international students more meaningfully into society and make them feel proud of the contribution they can make. I think we can think of our small project as a trailblazer in this area.

We have recently had a number of registrations from volunteer tutors looking to help learners over the summer, so if you are learning Mandarin, or have learned the language in the past and would like to keep up your skills, we would be delighted to hear from you. To register for the project, or to find out more about it, visit the Mandarin Community Tutoring page on the ALMA website: <https://www.learningmandarincanberra.org/>

Please note, all participants in this project are volunteers. There is no payment involved.

Mandarin radio program

ALMA continues to help present a weekly Mandarin language program on community radio 2XX FM every Friday evening from 7pm to 7.30pm. It is a bilingual program (Mandarin and English) with an emphasis on stories and songs for young children and their families. We also discuss some local events and provide community information.

The program can be heard live on FM 98.3 or online at <http://www.2xxfm.org.au/>. You can also access past programs by clicking 'on demand' on the website and then the Mandarin program in the program guide. More information about the program, plus links to videos and/or words to some of the Mandarin songs we play, can be found on the '[Weekly radio show](#)' page on the ALMA website.

Where to learn and practice Mandarin in the ACT

ALMA aims to provide a comprehensive listing of the many programs and other opportunities in the ACT region to learn and develop Mandarin language skills for both children and adults. Visit the ALMA website for more details:

<https://www.learningmandarincanberra.org/learning-mandarin-in-australia.html>

If you know of other programs or find that some of those listed are out of date, please let us know at canberraalma@gmail.com so we can update our webpages.

New ALMA members

We welcome the following new ALMA members:

WANG Hao and family
Tina JONG and family
Naomi LE LIEVRE and family
PANG Swee-Meng and family
Iresha PERERA and family
Dushyanthi RAJENDRAN and family
Adelina TAN and family

OTHER NEWS

CBRLife

Have you seen the free bilingual magazine CBRLife around town? The magazine contains community news and information plus promotional coupons and items related to health, lifestyle, travel and Chinese culture. The latest edition (Vol 20) has



an interesting illustrated guide to Bubble Tea in Canberra. All items are written in both English and Chinese so you can use the one in which you are most proficient to help read the other

language. Electronic versions of the magazine are available at <https://www.cbrlife.com.au/>

CBRLife was established in 2016 to help Chinese residents, particularly those new to the ACT, to find out about local services, events and information. It does this through its magazine and various media platforms. CBRLife is also a media communication consultancy, providing advice and solutions in the fields of advertising and marketing. For more information follow the Facebook page @CBRLIFE or email contact@cbrlife.com.au

China in the World (CIW) at the ANU

The Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW) at the ANU (中华全球研究中心) brings together a wide range of scholars from various disciplines to promote greater knowledge and understanding of the Chinese world — the People's Republic of China, Taiwan and the Chinese diaspora, addressing both its traditions and contemporary developments in a rapidly changing world.

CIW offers a range of interesting talks, discussions, news and commentary about all things Chinese. For more information, see <http://ciw.anu.edu.au/>

Chinese language winners in the Taste of Languages Competition

Chinese dishes were popular among the entries for the recent fun food-based competition organised by the ACT Bilingual Education Alliance (ACTBEA). The winner of the Preschool to Year 2 category chose



ACT Bilingual Education Alliance

Laughing Cookies as his favourite and told us about it in English and Cantonese in his family's video and written submission. The winner of the Year 3 to Year 6 category was a student from Mawson Primary School. She told us about Bak Kut The ('meat bone tea' in Hokkien) and recorded her video in Mandarin with English subtitles. To see their winning videos and written pieces, plus the names of all the prize winners and shortlisted finalists with details of the schools they attend and the dishes and languages featured in their entries, visit: <https://actbilingual.weebly.com/news.html>

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALMA NEWS

Please email items for the next newsletter to canberraalma@gmail.com by 15 February 2021.



Wishing you a merry Christmas and happy new year!