

DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

The Dragon Boat Festival or *Duanwu Jie* 端午节 falls on the fifth day of the fifth month of the lunar calendar, which this year is Thursday, 25 June.

Popular customs include racing long narrow wooden boats adorned with dragons, and preparing and eating steamed glutinous rice balls wrapped in reeds or bamboo leaves - *zongzi* 粽子. These can be filled with egg, beans, dates, fruits, sweet potato, walnuts, mushrooms, meat or a combination. Another important ritual is the hanging of mugwort and calamus at the door to deter evil and disease.



The most popular legend explaining the origins of the festival is that of Qu Yuan 屈原 (c. 340–278 BC), an advisor and patriotic poet in the ancient state of Chu during the Warring States period. Qu Yuan warned the King of Chu that the King of Qin wanted to invade. However, other jealous advisors slandered Qu Yuan, and the King of Chu sent him into exile. Here Qu Yuan is believed to have written the epic poem Encountering Sorrow - *Li Sao* 离骚.



After the state of Qin conquered Chu, Qu Yuan was devastated and drowned himself in the Miluo River on the fifth day of the fifth month. Villagers raced in

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their boats in search of Qu Yuan and drummed to scare away evil spirits. They also threw rice into the water to prevent fish from consuming his body.

The story of this race to search for Qu Yuan evolved into the tradition of dragon boat racing, which is now a popular international sport. It is said that the winning team will bring good luck and a great harvest to their family and village.



NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello,

I hope this finds our members and their families well. While Australia and Canberra have been deep in social distancing, working and learning from home, our childcare centre has been open, business as usual. It has been an incredibly unique time with our educators and staff continuing to maintain a wonderful standard of bilingual education and care for our children and families. I would like to personally thank all of them for their courage and commitment to our children and families during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

With so many usual activities on hold, the 2XX Mandarin program has been a delight to listen to on a Friday evening. I've attached the link to a recent show where children from our childcare centre performed under the guidance of our educators. If you haven't listened previously or if it's been a while, I'd strongly encourage you to have another listen. It's certainly something I'm adding to my family's listening repertoire to help us all improve our Mandarin, while continuing social distancing.

https://2xxfm.org.au/Ondemand.html?ondemand&stream=https%3A%2F%2Fondemand.nucleusstreaming.com%2F1xxr%2Fmandarin%2F202005081900%2Faac_mid.m4a&program=mandarin%2F2020-05-08%2019%3A00

We will continue to follow government guidelines and to ensure the safety of our community and members. I am optimistic that events will resume and I hope to see you at some of them later in the year.

Stay well and stay safe.

Kate Friend
President, ALMA

CHINESE AUSTRALIAN EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRE (CAECC)

澳华幼儿教育中心新闻

Hi everyone,

It has been an unusual time for the Centre as it has been for the rest of the world. Many of our families chose to keep their children at home; however, during it all our families have continued to be very supportive. We also welcome a few new students who were eager to have a place at our Centre.

Although we were not able to have our usual family celebrations such as Easter and Mother's Day, we celebrated and created special items with the children to take home to their mums, and we had the Easter parade which our families were able to view from StoryPark. This is an app we use to communicate with our families and document the children's activities.

All our educators are currently working on exciting educational projects with the children. Some are doing mathematics, such as sorting, counting, geometry and number recognition, and some on science – colour mixing, making mummified apples and learning about eggs. To follow on from our egg project we had eggs hatching at the Centre, which the children have loved.

We have also introduced the topic of Reconciliation Day to ensure that our children learn to recognise and respect the historical connections of Australia's first people to their land and their ongoing contribution to Australia's future.

All these sensational learning experiences – and the children are learning everything in two languages. They are so clever! I leave you with this quote:
"One language sets you in a corridor for life. Two languages open every door along the way."

- Frank Smith

Annette Chemin
Director, CAECC

ALMA ACTIVITIES

Mandarin Community Tutoring

ALMA has continued to coordinate this project this year despite various challenges. Restrictions on international arrivals due to COVID-19 have led to fewer tutor registrations than usual since international students from China have always been a major source of volunteer tutors. Then the social distancing regulations and closure of the ANU and meeting places like coffee shops and libraries in March put a stop to face-to-face tutoring sessions. Nevertheless, the 14 tutors who have volunteered so far this year have all have been introduced to one or more learners. Some are meeting online or are keeping in touch by email and phone. Others have opted to wait until they can meet in the real world. With the gradual relaxation of restrictions, we hope the project will revive and expand in the second half of 2020.



For more information about the project, please visit the Mandarin Community Tutoring page on the ALMA website:

<https://www.learningmandarincanberra.org/>

Mandarin radio program

As Kate mentioned in her Note from the President, ALMA is still involved in presenting the weekly Mandarin language program on community radio. Since March, however, we have not been broadcasting from the 2XX studios in Civic but have been recording the program in our homes. This has proved a bit of a steep learning curve, but as with other practices forced upon us in 2020, has led to the development of unexpected skills!

In early April, we were delighted to again hear from Richard Wan, a songwriter and producer in Singapore, who emailed to tell us about a new series of videos for children in his 'We Love Bilingualism' project. We have featured a number of songs from these excellent videos on our radio program. For links to the videos and words to the songs, visit the 'Weekly radio show' page on the ALMA website.



We were also pleased to be able to include a couple of songs recorded by preschoolers at the CAECC in a recent radio broadcast. We welcome further recordings of children singing or reciting short rhymes in Chinese. It is a lot of fun and really encourages children to continue their language learning.

To listen to the 30 minute program, tune into 98.3FM on Friday evenings at 7pm. Alternatively, you can listen online at any time at <http://www.2xxfm.org.au/> Just click 'on demand' and look for the Mandarin program in the program guide.

Opportunities to learn and practice Mandarin in the ACT region

The ALMA website has details and links to many courses and programs to learn and develop Mandarin language skills - for both Children and adults. For more information, see the website: <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.

OTHER NEWS

Panda Competition 2020

Organised by the ACT branch of the Australia China Friendship Society, this competition is open to students from pre-schools, primary schools and high schools in the ACT and Queanbeyan. The topic for 2020 is Chinese Mythical Creatures, such as the dragon, phoenix or Chinese lion.

Students can focus on any aspect of the topic and enter by submitting a drawing, painting, collage, essay, poem, or other creative effort. Pre-school and Year 1 and 2 students can also enter colouring in. All entries must be received by 5pm on Sunday 27 September 2020.

For more information visit <http://acfs.org.au/panda-competition/> or email acfsact@gmail.com

ABC Programs with Chinese Subtitles

Did you know that a number of ABC television programs are available with subtitles in Simplified Chinese? Programs include Mystery Road, Four Corners, Waltzing the Dragon, The Heights, Q and A, Catalyst, and You Can't Ask That. These are all available on iView at:

<https://iview.abc.net.au/collection/abc-favourites-in-chinese>

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 help further 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.

For interesting talks, discussions, news and commentary about all things Chinese, keep an eye on the CIW website at <http://ciw.anu.edu.au/>

Mandarin-speaking community in Australia targeted in telephone scam



The Australian Federal Police would like to warn Mandarin-speaking members of the Australian community – and particularly students – about a telephone scam as a number of recent cases have resulted in significant financial losses.

The scammer makes a phone call falsely claiming to be an official from the Chinese embassy or consulate, courier service, bank, customs, police force or the Attorney General's Department, and falsely claims the victim is being investigated for a crime such as drug trafficking or money laundering. The scammer threatens to arrest or repatriate the victim or their family, and uses software to change the caller ID number in order to prove their "official identity." The scammer might also send a fake arrest warrant and compel the victim to transfer money to a particular bank account.

If you receive a phone call like this, please hang up immediately. The Chinese Embassy and consulates will never call you in relation to expired identification documents or to collect a parcel, and will never request over the phone that you provide bank account details or transfer money. They will never call you in relation to a criminal investigation or your bank account. If you feel you have been a target of this scam or have information that could assist police, please call 131 444 or Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

The Australian Government website ScamWatch contains details of the latest known scams and advice on how to avoid them:

www.scamwatch.com.au

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ALMA NEWS

Please email items for the next newsletter to canberraalma@gmail.com by 15 August 2020.